

Crowds and Spinoza's Concept of the Political

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The relatively recent theoretical returns to Benedict de Spinoza in Marxist studies by thinkers as diverse as Gilles Deleuze, Antonio Negri, Warren Montag, and Étienne Balibar has paralleled an interdisciplinary shift in scholarship vaguely called "the affective turn." Much of the scholarship working within this affective turn shares a common sensitivity about the primary position of human bodies within discussions of literature, culture, and politics. This scholarship argues that passions, feelings, and emotions of the body have become constituent categories of individual identity, and also socially circulate to form and transform bodies collectively. It is hard to picture the Egyptian crowds in Tahrir Square succeeding, for example, if the collective feelings of the crowds were not present to motivate and sustain the bodies gathered there. The so-called contagion of Middle East protest movements from Tunisia to Yemen, however, does not mean that the same rage is present in all the crowds. Passions are always historically and culturally specific, even though the phenomenon of bodies feeling sadness, rage, euphoria, or fear is transhistorical and transcultural. These emotions and feelings can be called "affects" to the extent that bodies produce, transmit, circulate, and receive them socially through physical contact or through various media.

The movement of affects through this socioeconomic scale of production and distribution is interactive. Rage in Egypt can produce feelings of anxiety in Washington, D.C., for example. Affects can involve precognitive and embodied sensations that precede self-conscious decision making; President Obama's advisors don't choose to feel anxiety about Egypt, but experience it in their bodies as a quality of what Brian Massumi has in another context called the "autonomy of affect."¹ Affect, then, is not self-contained. Crucially, individuals or groups can also purposely produce affects, and can spread and attach affective sensations through others in order to motivate them to act.

When describing these crowds, commentators and intellectuals almost always render them as collective emotions. An emotional vocabulary appears to describe the

way affects become coded at the scale of bodies. Spinoza understood these affects to be the primary motivations for bodies, and extended his political philosophy from this thesis. The Marxist returns to Spinoza have made considerable use of this political philosophy, especially since he naturalizes his politics as an extension of his pre-Darwinian, unified field theory of evolutionary life in his *Ethics*. Theoretical attraction to his political treatises comes from the possibilities stemming from his concept of “multitude” as a powerful agent of change, and one immanent within political societies.

This essay is an intervention into Marxist appropriations of Spinoza. First, I challenge efforts to re-read Spinoza for his subversive elements only, and critique Antonio Negri’s and Michael Hardt’s conception of a subversive Multitude in particular. Instead, I argue that Spinoza’s multitude fits much more comfortably inside Ernesto Laclau’s political theory, in which various groups within states compete for power against one another. These antagonistic collectivities make demands through rhetorical and psychological strategies that first of all depend upon affectively engaged and motivated bodies. It is important for my argument that we imagine the most powerful expressions of these collectivities as crowds, and that furthermore we understand these crowds as singular expressions of Spinoza’s multitude. As with Laclau’s populism, however, these crowds do not know any one political party, and we must retain Spinoza’s own personal fears of them, however historical and personal his reasons, because the power of crowds can intersect with the power of violence. Crowds have a capacity for violence, and the state’s capacity to act violently to repress them comes from their “real” physical presence as bodies that can directly challenge the state’s monopoly of force, and thereby challenge the legitimacy of state power. It is this capacity to “really” challenge power that should interest contemporary Marxist theory, even as it potentially revises the revolutionary subject as one rooted in an economic class to one emerging from bodies temporally united by common affective postures in crowds.

The life and death stakes raised by crowds points to another important intersection with Laclau’s theory of politics. Along with his collaborator Chantal Mouffe, Laclau contends that the antagonistic collectivities competing for political dominance act as examples of Carl Schmitt’s theory of political cultures that depend on friend-enemy distinctions; Schmitt puts this thesis at the center of his theory of political power. The irrepressible presence of friend-enemy groups is what led Schmitt to his theory of strong states that could both monopolize violence and dictate those friend-enemy distinctions for the purpose of state power and political order. To be effective, states would maintain this order through the biopolitical management of life, but states could only achieve this management by inspiring bodies to kill or die for the state. This is Schmitt’s concept of the political. I argue that in Spinoza’s political theory we can also see a state-centered political order, but one where the state’s biopolitical monopoly on inspiring life and death politics can be challenged by multitudes.

Although I contend that we must imagine these multitudes as crowds, we must also extend Schmitt's concept of the political to them. We must imagine both sacrificial crowds and potentially violent ones, and further imagine that the legitimation of state power can radically depend not on the state's ability to inspire bodies to kill or die for it, but on the ability of crowds to kill or die for the multitude — and even when the rhetoric of a multitude insists that the crowd is dying on behalf of a state corrupted by its present leadership.

Multitude and Collectivities

In Negri's published lecture "The Labor of the Multitude and the Fabric of Biopolitics" in the Spring 2008 issue of *Mediations*, he iterated the assertions he made with Hardt in their *Empire/Multitude/Commonwealth* trilogy that "the" Multitude is a relatively new revolutionary subject of post-Fordist capitalism. Negri argues that capitalism was "in the past capable of reducing the multiplicities of singularities to something close to the organic and unitary — a class, a people, a mass, a set."² Yet today, Negri writes, the multitude "should thus be necessarily thought of as a disorganized, differential, and powerful multiplicity."³ This diffuse and disorganized multitude that converges into resistance against capital has been criticized as inefficacious and utopian, particularly by those with very different conceptions of how political action works and by whom. In his 2001 review of *Empire* in *diacritics*, for instance, Laclau claimed that one of the weaknesses of the multitude conceived by Hardt and Negri was that "the universality of the proletariat fully depends on its *immanence* within an objective social order which is entirely the product of capitalism."⁴ Laclau stresses the utopian and contradictory dimension of a universal multitude composed by "spontaneously" converging political actors.

These two positions are not totally irreconcilable, however. Negri's understanding of the multiplicities within his concept of Multitude can be bent to connect with Laclau's own emphasis on collaborating *and* antagonistic collectives competing for power within institutions, parties, movements, public space, as well as by attempts to control strategic symbols of supposedly universal signifiers, such as flags.⁵ In other words, Laclau's definition of struggles between different social collectivities that variously converge or diverge can describe multiplicities that operate within individual states. Rather than necessarily uniting, multiplicities also compete for hegemony and leverage over each other, spontaneously or not. This essay will develop that premise further by situating Laclau's politics within a Spinozist trajectory.

I'll pursue this premise in order to establish Spinoza's conception of politics and multitude within an alternate trajectory of contemporary Marxism — namely, one informed by Laclau's and Mouffe's discussions of "the democratic tradition of popular sovereignty."⁶ For Laclau and Mouffe, popular sovereignty and democracy are concepts that can describe competing political collectivities that operate within what they call the "pluralism" of a democratic tradition. This notion of pluralism stresses

the “conflict and division” between collectivities.⁷ This conflict and division occurs in part because these collectivities are constructed through “difference,” wherein also “every identity becomes purely contingent.”⁸ By stressing the contingency of various collectivities competing within a state for power, Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of difference speaks first to the Spinozist concept of self-preservation, where bodies compete against other bodies for power. This constitutes, for Spinoza and arguably for Schmitt, the material basis for politics within states. In *Ethics*, Spinoza traces this self-preservation as an extension from the evolving “substance” of nature and natural bodies, *conatus*, which acts as the underlying evolutionary force that propels all life. He argues that *conatus* expresses itself as the desires and appetites of the human body, called *cupiditas*.

For Spinoza, the human body strives toward power as an expression of the affect joy. Other affects or passions, such as anger or fear, are like felt directions that inform bodies about their relative position in relation to joy. Political discussions should consider bodily affections. Laclau and Mouffe argue against the rational and consensus-driven liberal pluralism of John Rawls, for example, because in his ideas “passions are erased from the realm of politics.”⁹ However divisive, passions influence and motivate political cultures. Following Schmitt, Laclau and Mouffe reject the notion that a “non-coercive consensus” is possible within liberal democracy, and instead claim that the lack of consensus and presence of affective passions in collectivities is what assures that “the dynamics of the democratic process will be kept alive.”¹⁰ They imagine a dynamic democratic process where passionate collectivities compete to exclude others from power. The power within this democratic competition lends itself to Spinoza’s contention that bodies, whether individual or collective, are constantly seeking to expand their power to act. This power to act occurs by natural right, and is coextensive with the actual capacity of bodies to successfully maximize power. This concept naturalizes the power to act without naturalizing explicit forms of domination.

The dynamics of passionate politics in Laclau and Mouffe furthers the possibility that Spinoza can deepen our understanding of a constitutively affective politics, and also the way Spinozist “multitudes” might materialize within states. This means examining how the passions work in a multitude, and also means defining when a collectivity materializes into a multitude. I argue that a collectivity materializes into a multitude when it becomes a physical *crowd* of bodies, and when it tries to coerce power from the state itself. Spinoza complements Laclau and Mouffe’s position, too, in another critical respect. His emphasis on the interactive role of affects circulating among individual and collective bodies is critical to his conception that politics extend from the human body, and thus how singular multitudes intervene in state power. I contend that Laclau’s own conception of populism and “populist reason,” with its emphasis on collective bodies excited to “excessive” positions on the left and the right, can be productively situated next to Spinoza’s descriptions of multitudes. Stripped of

its universal and spontaneous character, “the” multitude Hardt and Negri describe might still usefully describe smaller-scale qualities of revolutionary collectives — or *singular* multitudes — that Laclau conceives as “short-term” and “autonomous.”¹¹ The temporality of these multitudes, which act in “short-term” bursts of affective passion, is also consistent with other influential positions within contemporary Marxist thought — notably, in interpretations of Spinoza’s multitudes as crowds, such as in Warren Montag’s *Bodies, Masses, Power* and Étienne Balibar’s *Masses, Classes, Ideas*.

Crowds and Populism

Instead of a universal multitude evolving within empire in the post-Fordist era, Spinoza’s multitude is much more a temporally contingent and localized phenomenon. Its contingency stems from its composition in space; bodies must gather together and act. For Spinoza, bodies are excited together by the affects. Spinoza begins his *Political Treatise*, for example, by announcing that the “passions” are the constituent category of the political. In order to “understand human actions,” he proposes, we must look upon the passions such as “love, hatred, anger, envy, ambition, pity, and other perturbations of the mind, not in light of vices of human nature, but as properties, just as pertinent to it, as are heat, cold, storm, thunder.”¹² The “phenomena” of these affects are “inconvenient,” he writes, but “are yet necessary, and have fixed causes.”¹³ He refers to the *Ethics* to confirm that “men are of necessity liable to passions,” and soon affirms that the “steep” road to reason means anyone believing that “the multitude of men distracted by politics can ever be induced to live according to the bare dictate of reason, [sic] must be dreaming of the poetic golden age, or of a stage-play.”¹⁴ Here, Spinoza would seem to anticipate arguments about a necessarily communist multitude. What matters to Spinoza is that human nature *tends* to produce similar affects across similar situations: wealth produces envy, illness produces pity. These affects of envy and pity excite bodies, and that excitement forms the basis for collectivities.

The notion of the crowd as singular multitude cements Étienne Balibar’s own notion of the Spinozist multitude as crowd. Balibar sets his own discussion of Spinoza’s multitude in the context of mass movements. In his reading of Spinoza, “the masses become an explicit theoretical object, because in the last analysis it is their different modalities of existence, according to the historical conjunctures and according to the economies or regimes of passion, that determine the chances of orienting a political science toward a given solution.”¹⁵ Balibar’s concept of a mass acting as a regime of passion at a historical conjuncture defines the politically decisive crowd and recalls the contingency of conjunctures that define Laclau’s and Mouffe’s own politics. It is interesting that Balibar assigns his reading, in part, to Negri’s insistence in *The Savage Anomaly* that Spinoza adopted the “standpoint of the mass” even as he positioned himself in ways that showed he feared it.¹⁶ In this way, Balibar’s attention to the crowd also becomes an apparent connection between Negri and Laclau.

This excitement is arguably similar to what Laclau understands as “populist reason.” In *On Populist Reason*, Laclau opens his definition of populism from a reading of Peter Worsley, who claimed that understanding populism meant understanding its “performative dimensions.”¹⁷ Populism does not reflect a particular type or organization of political culture or ideology, but is instead an expression of politically excited bodies that describes collective behavior beyond the scope of self-contained, rational individuals. Laclau traces this behavior through crowd psychology as it developed in transatlantic nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thought, particularly through Gustave Le Bon’s *The Crowd* and Sigmund Freud’s *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, among others.¹⁸ Le Bon believed crowds corrupted the reasoning capacity of individuals, and infected the social and political sphere with degenerate socialist mass movements. Le Bon especially blamed the “contagion” of “pathological transmissions” among retrograde populations for socialist movements.¹⁹ His cynical manifesto infamously became a potent source for future fascists and psychologists alike, including Hitler, Mussolini, and Freud.²⁰ Within Le Bon’s scientific discourse and elite fears, however, Laclau is able to find “some crucially important aspects in the construction of social and political identities...[such as] the relationship between words and images, the predominance of the ‘emotive’ over the ‘rational’, the sense of omnipotence, the suggestibility and identification with leaders, and so on.”²¹ The elevation of the emotive above the rational here immediately recalls Spinoza’s own belief that the passions play a larger role in politics than reason, for better or worse. For his part, Laclau extends this notion of the “emotive” to the early sociologist William McDougall. He summarizes how McDougall distinguished crowds from other social bodies by emphasizing that the “crowd requires the exaltation and intensification of emotions.”²² More specifically, he asserts that McDougall’s idea of “self-regarding sentiment,” or the *sentiment* of self-identity, can be extended toward and cathected to images and objects beyond the self. This idea merges with Freud’s notion in *Group Psychology* that the emotional bond of groups requires an identification from one body to another. This identification, for Freud, takes the form of a libidinal investment in an object.

From Freud, Laclau derives a cue for his definition of populism. Rather than dismissing populism as a “political phenomenon,” it should be considered “in its specificity as one legitimate way among others of constructing the political bond.”²³ Since Laclau is as interested in the discursive construction of this “political bond” as the bond itself, he pays more particular attention to how linguistic signifiers function actually to organize collectivities than he does the role of the affects specifically. His attention to the rhetoric and discourse of varying populisms, with their discourses of “vagueness and indeterminacy,” in particular, speaks back to Spinoza’s own arguments about affects and politics. Populist rhetoric first depends upon constituting the collectivities that it purports to represent. In particular, its use of “empty signifiers” works out for politics the poststructuralist arguments about how

language functions at the level of the signifier: namely, that words are distinct from the objects they represent, and cannot ever fully denote their meaning. The means by which language expresses something it can't Laclau calls *catachresis*.²⁴ Populist rhetoric is a discourse of demands and claims that works "at a very incipient level...to constitute the 'people' as a potential historical actor."²⁵ The vagueness of the "people" becomes the catachresis that crystallizes collectivities into larger formations. The very "indeterminacy" of the rhetoric allows it to unify several different kinds of demands and claims made by different groups, or what Laclau calls "equivalential chains."²⁶ This process of unification suggests how local collectivities might materialize into national multitudes.

It is through the function of these equivalential chains of indeterminate signifiers that Laclau explains the "contagion" of apparently spontaneous crowd actions observed by so many crowd theorists. Laclau turns to crowd scholar George Rudé and his discussion of eighteenth-century food riots for an example of how a "mixed" discourse of populist rhetoric allowed those riots to flourish by exciting several different collectivities to act as crowds with seeming simultaneity. Quoting from Rudé, Laclau cites how "the crowd may riot because it is hungry or fears to be so, because it has some deep social grievance, because it seeks an immediate reform or the millennium, or because it wants to destroy an enemy or acclaim a 'hero'; but it is seldom for any single one of these reasons alone."²⁷ Rudé's slip here between a hungry crowd and one that fears hunger is important: the sense of potential catastrophe can help animate the crowd as much as immediate bodily needs. For Rudé, though, all of the possible motives combine to perform a "leveling instinct." Laclau is quick to point out that for a leveling instinct to mean *all* of that, "it cannot, in itself, have a content of its own." It is consequential here that to explain populism, Laclau turns again to crowd theory. The food-riot crowd mentioned in Rudé's example does more than present the way populist rhetoric might function to consolidate social bonds. It makes visible how a multiplicity of collectivities can act against a centralized power, even seemingly spontaneously, in the way Negri might insist is possible for a global Multitude. More essentially, the leveling instinct Laclau cites itself depends upon a variety of affects felt in the bodies of the various collectivities that acted as crowds, whether those affects were fear, resentment, envy, or pride. The affects are necessary to make the rhetoric vital; inversely, the rhetoric lives, or becomes embodied, by coinciding with and also producing specific bodily states. In each case, no matter the particular affect or how the rhetoric functions, what matters is that the bodies become *excited* and energized by the affects themselves. Affects stimulate bodies and *intensify* excitement to produce and sustain crowds.

Spinoza might feel ambivalent about the power of this intensity, and excitement, to create the kind of dynamism that unites collectivities to act against power. It also potentially undermines unity among different collectivities: "In so far as men are tormented by anger, envy, or any passion implying hatred, they are drawn asunder

and made contrary to one another...and because men are in the highest degree possible liable to these passions, therefore men are naturally enemies.”²⁸ The potential for dissolution as a result of competition among collectivities and their accompanying populisms marks a divergence from Schmitt in the work of Laclau and Mouffe. They write that the political possibility of dissolution “also entails that the existence of such a unity is itself a contingent fact which requires political construction.”²⁹ Both unity and dissolution turn, here, upon particular situations where populism generates centrifugal or centripetal affects. Managing the body’s liability to passions that make them enemies and friends to other bodies would obviously be important. Exciting affects in bodies “from above,” as it were, should signal a warning, but, for Laclau, this danger inherent to populism is one innate in all political cultures. Spinoza admits that “because as we are treating here of the universal power or right of nature, we cannot here recognize any distinction between desires, which are engendered in us by reason, and those which are engendered by other causes.”³⁰ His admission is useful here because it deepens our understanding of Marxist ideology, particularly the Althusserian idea of interpellation that informs Laclau’s discussion of fascism in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*.³¹ Just as ideological interpellation “is practice [of] producing subjects” that can think and act “all by themselves,” Spinoza claims that bodies cannot “recognize any distinction between desires” which are engendered by reason or from other causes.³² Interpellation works because of affect, and this *felt* politics reveals another depth to the way populism works to produce crowds.

The relation between interpellation and affect also sheds light on Spinoza’s own awareness of his ambivalence about the human nature of political ethics. For him, bodies cannot always determine the causes of their passions. This indeterminacy occludes their ability to use reason, but it also allows those same bodies to act together. It is not just that what seems “ridiculous, absurd, or evil” arises from a “partial knowledge of things,” and a misrecognition of the “coherence of nature as a whole.”³³ For him, it follows that since “everyone is so far rightfully dependent on another,” it holds true that “he is under that other’s authority.” This intersection of authorities occurs between bodies of unequal power and right, and so some with authority “holds but his body” while others have been “made dependent” in both “mind as the body of the other.”³⁴ Crucially, Spinoza argues, this dependency and shared feeling of body and mind occurs “only as long as the fear or hope lasts, for upon removal of the feeling the other is left independent.”³⁵ Problematically, the independence from an authority that Spinoza alludes to here would seemingly foreclose the possibility of forming larger collectivities, crowds, or multitudes. Dependency on other bodies in mind and body seems necessary for both state power and for multitudes. Affect is constitutive for all political groups.

Ironically, perhaps, Spinoza will later argue that “without mutual help men can hardly support life,” and moreover “men in the state of nature can hardly be independent.”³⁶ Spinoza defines this mutual help as protecting themselves, defending

cultivated land, and repelling violence. He claims that bodies combined together possess these general rights, and that this "state" is a "dominion." This dominion, whatever its form as democracy or monarchy, "is determined by the power of a multitude."³⁷ The determining power of the multitude here is what allows Montag to champion Spinoza's attention to the "decisive role of the masses," and even "their insurrections, for any regime or form of government."³⁸ Montag is keen to note that Spinoza frequently refers to these decisive masses committing insurrections using Latin terminology that emphasized masses as *crowds*, and in particular the terms *vulgus*, *turba*, and *multitudo*. The names "often described entities composed of *plebs* organized for the purpose of engaging in threatening or openly violent behavior against their supporters."³⁹ At the same time, Spinoza insists that subjects who attempt to "seize sovereign power, or to place it in different hands," are committing treason.⁴⁰ He also claims that "the state must be preserved and directed by the sole authority of the sovereign."⁴¹ And yet Spinoza allows for the condition that if punishment for individual treason "were not to overtake him till he had succeeded, it would have often come too late, [since] the sovereign rights would have been acquired or transferred already."⁴² A populist insurrection, then, is treason except when it's successful. For Spinoza, the ethics of power ultimately depends on the effectiveness of revolution.

I maintain that the effective insurrection is physically a crowd. The crowd can be a violent mob or a non-violent one; it is always a question of tactics, and what affects are most productive to generate. Crowds can act in the name of a state or party, or as a social movement. The force of the crowd, however, comes from the immediate assemblage of bodies, and the power of those bodies *in the present*. In this way, the crowd can form spontaneously or by choice, acting immediately or by planning to act. This notion dispels the long-running fear of crowds as mobs, present at times even in Spinoza, as irrational and unthinking. The affectively driven crowd is not irrational; rather, irrationality is a term of derision that one applies to crowds that act for an idea *one does not agree with*. There are not rational and irrational crowds or multitudes; one crowd is not pathological and another healthy. A crowd can be excited to act for various purposes. While crowds can appear in various non-political contexts, such as rock concerts or soccer games, politicized crowds mobilize for political ends.

Mass movements and political campaigns can spread and enact change through media, such as the Internet today or the telegraph yesterday, but a spatially dispersed movement must come together as bodies in "real" space in order to occupy, contest, or remake the distribution of power in a state. The politicized crowd is solely capable of *immediately* making institutions adapt to demands, act with urgency, or repress those demands *in the present*. The crowd can act outside the checks and balances of democratic institutions. For this reason, the crowd is uniquely capable of becoming a revolutionary collective: it has the physical power to overthrow governments, block transportation flows, perform general strikes. They enact Laclau's political idea of populist groups articulating demands as autonomous agents and acting in

the short term. Following Laclau and Mouffe, crowds are the affective expressions of political groups competing to represent the symbolic and political space of an already heterogeneous and antagonistic public sphere. This competition occurs in both the symbolic and affective field. Both states and political groups seek control of symbols that unite bodies, but also those symbols that can *excite those bodies to act*.

The inevitable antagonism between opposite populist positions within states further recalls the primary importance of friend-enemy distinctions that Laclau and Mouffe extend from Carl Schmitt's concept of the political. Schmitt's concept of the political understands politics as an arbiter of life and death. For Schmitt, political cultures depend on conflict. "For as long as a people exists in the political sphere," he writes, "this people must...determine by itself the distinction of friend and enemy. Therein lies the essence of its political existence."⁴³ The state must inspire an ultimate willingness to die or kill for it among its constituents. Underlying Schmitt's concept here is an affective state that excites bodies to sacrifice themselves or destroy others. When Spinoza considers a multitude that can overthrow the state in revolution, however tepid and contradictory Spinoza could feel at such a prospect, he also implies the prospect of such a state. "It is clear that the right of the supreme authorities," Spinoza writes, "is nothing else than simple natural right, limited, indeed, by the power, not of every individual, but of the multitude, which is guided, as it were, by one mind."⁴⁴ This "one mind" spread through many bodies explains the group psychology of Laclau's populism. It explains the capacity of crowds to act as real oppositions to state regimes under the sign of "the people." And it expresses the aspiration of state power to inspire in its citizens the passions that it needs. These passions are delimited by a passion to die or kill. Groups must compete to control the leveling instinct of crowds.

The State and Multitudes: Affects, Bodies, and Sovereignty

The project to incorporate what Negri calls a "subversive" Spinoza into contemporary discussions of post-Marxism requires us to reconsider the role of the state as a mediating power between collectives competing for hegemonic influence, and also as the power of "last resort" among them — that is, the largest power with the *most* sovereignty, and thus the entity most able to employ the use of force. The sovereignty of the state in regard to this use of force is seemingly at odds with a multitude that must, in turn, claim the right potentially to overthrow the state using its own force. In *Subversive Spinoza*, Negri asserts that Spinoza's general claims in the *Theological-Political Treatise* are in fact claims about early capitalism and modernity, and that "the fabric of the problem is that of a mass society in which individuals are equal from the viewpoint of right and unequal from the viewpoint of power."⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that this could be one of several moments where Negri might move Spinoza's discussions about the relationship between multitudes and the state into a Marxist discourse about class conflict. Negri's argument rests here, however, on a discourse of rights

and equality indebted to constitutional liberalism and social contract theory. Negri continues this line of argument when he writes that the “revolutionary character” of Spinoza’s “political proposal consists in the conjuncture of the concept of democracy and a radical and constructive theory of natural right.”⁴⁶ The natural right he refers to here is a fulcrum for the idea of an immanent multitude in his project with Hardt because it focuses on Spinoza’s insistence that individual and collective bodies *naturally* have the power to act; it is an immanent power. Further, a multitude’s power to act is in direct proportion to its ability to do so.

This is consistent with Spinoza’s articulation of political power. In the *Theological-Political Treatise*, Spinoza writes that we must conceive “every individual to be conditioned by nature, so as to live and act in a certain way.”⁴⁷ Using the example of fish, Spinoza writes that the greater fish “devour the less by sovereign natural right.”⁴⁸ Returning to his idea of nature more generally, Spinoza explains that “her right is co-extensive with her power.”⁴⁹ In the *Political Treatise*, Spinoza complements his discussion of right and power by theorizing the power of political collectives. “If two come together and unite their strength,” he writes, “they have jointly more power, and consequently more right over nature than both of them separately, and the more there are that have so joined in alliance, the more right they all collectively will possess.”⁵⁰ As Montag is keen to gloss, Spinoza insists that any understanding of sovereign power and natural right concern itself with the ways bodies combine together. “Inasmuch as the power of nature is simply the aggregate of the powers of all her individual components,” Spinoza writes in *Theological-Political Treatise*, “it follows that every individual has sovereign right to do all that he can.”⁵¹ From this passage we can confidently assert that bodies can always act with force, and thus always contain a modicum of sovereignty. For Spinoza, the ability to act with force multiplies as bodies unite into ever-greater formations and collectives: the larger the body, as a collective of many bodies, the more power those bodies have. Montag follows Pierre Macherey and Pierre-François Moreau in arguing that the combined power of bodies — what Macherey calls “assemblages” — form collectivities that “themselves comprise individuals, or singularities, that are no less real than human individuals.”⁵² The “specific character” of these singular collectivities, the “*ingenium*” Moreau emphasizes from Spinoza, “are what makes them what they are and no other.”⁵³ This *ingenium* can define a crowd or a nation.

Varying, unique collectivities in turn assert power according to their strength. Their sovereignty and natural right is coextensive with their power, yet with every potential for a singular multitude, or crowd, to advance its own desires, there is still no guarantee that those desires correspond to the desires of other collectivities. With Schmitt in mind, it is worth noting that Montag resists any reading that would legitimize, for example, a clerical regime that forces its way into power and thus claim its right to do so based retrospectively on the success of that force. “While a regime may ‘possess’ absolute right to do all that it pleases by law or in theory,” Montag infers,

“no regime actually exercises absolute power.”⁵⁴ In other words, since there is no such thing as unlimited natural right in Spinozist politics, no government can claim to be completely legitimate. This argument affirms the horizon of Spinoza’s natural right, but it doesn’t negate that the clerical coup Montag exemplifies is *more* legitimate than not, given that it did successfully claim power. Montag continues by declaring that “absolute power can be nothing more than a juridical fiction,” and “one more example of a legal right that can never be actualized.”⁵⁵ True to his interpretation, Montag then claims that the right to property is another example of a legal right that can never be actualized. Indeed, Spinoza himself maintains that “contracts or laws, whereby the multitude transfers its right to one council or one man, should without doubt be broken, when it is expedient for the general welfare to do so.”⁵⁶ The instability Montag assigns to the mythical clerical regime and the state’s fictive claims to protect property both rest here, though, on any one state or regime’s claim to “absolute power.” Short of achieving that impossible strength, the relative power of the state and its legal fictions could nonetheless be abjectly muscular. So when Montag turns to Spinoza’s arguments in the *Political Treatise* that tyrannical regimes cannot by nature last long because they will produce indignation in their populations, the example is still one that depends upon the most extreme form of absolute power: tyranny. Yet it is somewhere between absolute power and a spontaneously convergent Multitude where Spinozist politics would seemingly appear. This tension would also suggest that positive feelings for state power, whether for a regime or democracy, play a not-insignificant role in sustaining power over time.

Montag’s qualification about the ultimate instability of tyrannical regimes points to the same basic ambiguity found in Spinozist natural right that defies Negri’s contention about Multitude. Spinoza understands the notion of right and power as “perfection” in *Ethics*, which again pivots on the idea that right is coextensive with power, period. This right of power is inherently un-ethical in *Ethics*: power *is*, as opposed to *should be*. The clerical coup Montag imagines has every right to seize power as an ambitious crowd does to, say, storm the Bastille or form a Paris commune. Even as this idea of natural right embeds the notion of sovereignty into all bodies, it does not imply that any one collectivity might act towards a teleological end, such as communism, or lead to a “withering away of the state” famously formulated by Marx. Indeed, for better or worse, Spinoza never imagines a political culture without the state.

The tension in Negri’s dual assertion of Spinoza’s “constructive theory of natural right” on one hand and his “unequal” individuals from the viewpoint of power on the other speaks, in fact, to the profound ambiguity in Spinoza about the politics of liberation and what we might today imagine as a politics free from capital — namely, a post-capitalist communism. Spinoza’s notion of right coextensive with power, by contrast, could arguably apply to corporations and transnational firms. Contra Negri, the inequality of power in Spinoza’s political project is a function of what he

calls “human bondage” in *Ethics* (to be attended to in the final section of this essay). His theory of natural right is much more ambivalent than constructive. True, this ambivalence rests upon Spinoza's conception of the multitude as a *potential* agent of force for or against the state. This is the immanent collective subject nestled in Hardt and Negri's Multitude, and recalls the power in Spinoza that Negri translates in *The Savage Anomaly* as *potentia*. For Negri, power as *potentia* arises from the natural right of multitudes, to which he opposes *Potestas*, or the power of the state and “command.” Following the discussion of natural right above, though, this *potentia* — like populism — is as ambiguous as the politics of any given multitude. As an immanent possibility within the state (or potentially within capitalism), it does denote the power of bodies to act together. Yet Spinoza's multitude much more resembles the war machine of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* that moves in packs than it does a revolutionary Multitude composed of multiplied and converging networks acting in resistance to *Potestas* (not incidentally, Deleuze and Guattari refer back to Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* as a model text for the war machine). *Potentia* can create and sustain *Potestas* as often as not.

This ambivalence in Spinoza is what allowed Leo Strauss, for one, to find so much commonality in his reading of Carl Schmitt and Spinoza, even as Schmitt was writing during the rise of the Nazi party. Schmitt's notorious association with fascism also coincides with his assertion that the state must manage its sovereignty through the explicit production of enemies within and outside the state in order to unify the largest collective possible. Yet the production of the enemy depended upon creating a love for the state, too, that solidified its power. Strauss found this idea in Spinoza's critique of religion in *Theological-Political Treatise*, and was able to merge that critique with Schmitt because the “religion of the state” would replace religion per se. The ability to manufacture this reading from Spinoza cannot be so easily disavowed, in part because it speaks directly to the ambiguous populism that extends from natural right and the necessity of a strong state in Spinozist politics. Granted, Spinoza believes that the object of the state is human freedom. In part, the state must secure that freedom for bodies because of the conflicts naturally occurring among bodies all seeking out their own joy, which Spinoza proposes is the natural desire of bodies in *Ethics*. The state, in that reading, must produce affects of love and hate in order to best manage bodies who might become affectively excited by other agents, whether religious or political, and which might pull the state apart and thereby inflict harm on the state's ability to manage life.

The strong state in Schmitt might be one extreme point of potential for politically excited bodies that can arise from a Spinozist politics. The fascist structure of the state is the ultimate populist state of “one mind.” In his own arguments about fascism in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, Laclau poses this same interdependency between populism and fascism in his review of Ortega y Gasset's reflections on fascism: “It asserts authoritarianism and organizes rebellion...It seems to pose itself

as the forge of a strong State, and uses means most conducive to its dissolution.”⁵⁷ In contrast to theories of fascism that emphasize its authoritarian character, Laclau’s discussion focuses on “mass mobilization” required for fascism to come to power and its character as a “mass regime” afterwards.⁵⁸ In Spinozist terms, the excess of affectively excited bodies would be fully captured for a state channeling that surplus into its own structures and symbols. This authoritarian threat of fascism is present in the privileged role that the sovereign plays in Spinoza’s imagination of monarchy, which Spinoza conceives alongside democracy and aristocracy. More generally, the sovereign’s individual body as a locus of state power is extremely influential in Spinoza’s imagination of political power.

The fascist potential in Spinoza’s state deepens the mark of ambivalence about natural right and the necessity of state power, and delimits the ultimate expression of the multitude as populist: the mass mobilization of fascism, too, derives from populist reason. Laclau appeals to this in *Politics and Ideology* when he argues that the populist concept of “the people” provides a catachresis “for the ensemble of political and ideological relations of domination and not just the relations of production.”⁵⁹ While for Laclau the class struggle overdetermines the hegemonic competition operating among collectivities claiming to represent “the people,” the class struggle is nonetheless given “coherence” by “presenting its class objectives as the consummation of popular objectives.”⁶⁰ Laclau argues that the mass mobilization of fascism depended on interpellating bodies so that they would “remain disconnected from any socialist perspective....the German petty-bourgeoisie which was experiencing in a confused way the post-war crisis, the iniquity of the Versailles Treaty, inflation, foreign occupation, etc., was interpellated by nazism [*sic*] as a *race*.”⁶¹ From his interpretation, we might in turn summarize the multitude’s potential to become fascist as one when the friend-enemy distinction has intensified to the maximum extent possible — in this case, the racial purities of the Third Reich.

The multitude’s connection to fascism as a *populist horizon* is possible because the multitude’s capacity to act stems from the intensities of affects circulating among bodies. Affects spread by economic cycles or material scarcity could overdetermine that circulation at times. This is audible in Laclau’s reference to inflation and the general economic crisis of postwar Germany, which hit the working class hardest. It is here that, among many potential places, Spinoza intersects Marx, though triangulated through Laclau. The fascism of the 1920s and 1930s evolved from a volatile and sad postwar period. The depression was unprecedented, in economic and historical terms, and so was the German response. It isn’t simply that the “lack of articulation of popular interpellations with socialist discourse left [the working class] flank increasingly exposed to the ideological influence of fascism.”⁶² The interpellation of ideology by subjects must be understood as a phenomenon of Spinozist affects that intensified the potential for multitudes. It was the multitude’s ambiguity, its capacity to become excited by the left or right, that allowed the German working class to fall under the

“influence” of fascism. The multitude here became a war machine for the state: its *potentia* formed into *Potestas*. This ideological influence occurred in the body through the friend-enemy distinction. The success of seizing power by the Nazi party extended the power of the bodies under its “influence” and increased, in turn, their natural right. It gave them, at first, joy. In his book *Political Affect*, John Protevi calls this “fascist joy.”⁶³ Ideology isn't false consciousness so much as the coincidence of a real material power intersecting with excited affects. In this case, the excited affects that produced Nazi joy were, in part, disgust and hatred for the Jews and pride in Aryan bodies. And true to Spinoza's formulation of sad affects in *Ethics*, these states of the body ultimately proved destructive to the bodies excited to them.

We can theorize that the Nazi bodies acting within fascist Germany did so within the framework of Spinozist natural right. The production of power that arose from those bodies was situational and historically specific, but all the same depended on a definite relationship to the circulation of positive and negative affects. This incredibly profound relationship to affects depended more than anything else on their felt intensity, on the methods by which that intensity could be sustained and reproduced through media and other bodies, and by the larger economic reality that overdetermined the joy or sadness of the state. This point of convergence between Spinozist affect and Marxism's insistence on the primary role of the economic in bodily life positions the Spinozist multitude closer to Laclau's “people” than to Marx's proletariat. Bodies that exist in poverty might not be ready collectivities for Marxist-style liberation because the circulation of affects might create a love for the state, as in Nazi Germany, or a love *for a particular collective*, such as a political party. The multitude that might act out a revolutionary campaign against the state, or capitalism, might be simply the collectivity where the circulation of negative affects about the state excites those bodies to act against it.

As ambiguous as the multitude might be in Spinoza, because *it can be excited against the state* it potentially has the power to overturn government. And because it is a contingent multiplicity and not simply a particular kind of laboring class, like the proletariat in traditional Marxism, it offers a better way to explain the formation of real revolutionary collectives. A revolution would thus take place when the natural right of a particular collective coincides with its ability to actually give itself real joy. To achieve immediate power in a revolutionary time, while the duration of the affects are still intense and exciting, the multitude must take the form of a crowd. The excited crowd that occupies the physical structures and spaces of power does so because it believes it can be happier there, with the old bodies literally thrown out. There is no reason to believe, though, that this crowd will be communist — or democratically inclined. For Spinoza, it will be whatever makes its bodies most joyful, and that joy is above all located *in the body*.

The State and Revolution of Human Bondage

It should be persuasive now that the ambivalence surrounding bodies excited to politics described in this essay — the singular multitudes called crowds — should force us to re-examine it as a potential subject of liberation and emancipation, as Negri and Hardt propose in their trilogy *Empire*, *Multitude*, and *Commonwealth*. The crowd is not the Multitude. It is essential, too, that we understand this ambivalence about natural right and state power as one rooted in the human body. This is because of the primary role of affects in shaping individual and collective psychology. It is crucial to contemplate, too, that this affectively excited body determines its expression of natural right, and that this natural right can be channeled into any of various kinds of collectives, including the state. But this affective excitement is what is immanent in human bodies, whether it's excited anger, joy, sadness, or disgust. By returning to Spinoza, we may be able to illuminate effectively the internal conditions of Laclau's populism, and how they operate in and through bodies.

Politics works affectively. "Everyone is drawn away by his pleasures," Spinoza writes, "while avarice, ambition, envy, hatred, and the like so engross the mind that reason has no place therein."⁶⁴ These affects are central to the "laws of his desire" that will determine how bodies order their lives.⁶⁵ Likewise, in the *Political Treatise* Spinoza acutely reveals that "men are more led by blind desire, than by reason."⁶⁶ Communism, for Spinoza, cannot depend upon any good will among bodies. That good will must have material benefits for those bodies, and bring them real joy. Communism must be necessary. The multitude that acts as a crowd to overthrow a government must excite bodies with the intensity of material joy. Almost by definition, the logic of the body insists that this would more likely occur in a period of relative deprivation. Moreover, the time of the multitude is *the present*. The time joyful affects spend "in" the body recalls the "short-term" duration of political actors mentioned in Laclau: the time of revolution is not necessarily a time to come, as Negri writes, but a time of coincidence between real power and intense excitement. Consequently, this power and excitement are the locus of Spinoza's political anthropology. For Spinoza, the problems of the state and revolution are not problems that originate in the state's relation to bodies, but in the human body itself, and its capacity to be excited by the affects.

Spinoza addresses this attention to the body in *Ethics*, which must be read alongside the *Political Treatise* in order to relocate a practical politics out of the latter. The reason the body is so central to this project is because, as Negri himself argues, "human passions [are] the sole effective reality upon which political analysis can operate."⁶⁷ These bodily passions are of the affects, but Spinoza argues that the affects most often capture bodies in what he calls "human bondage." It is only by using reason within this bondage that a body can come to know and love "God," and thus live without injury to others. It is through Spinoza's valorization of God that we can come to understand that much of what is politically necessary for Spinoza, including the

state and sovereign, occurs because knowing God is so difficult and rare. Knowing God produces the ultimate affects of blessedness and glory, which come from this love for God. Knowing God is the achievement of the *Ethics*, and it is only when each individual knows and loves God that natural right and equality become equivalent, for it is only then that each participates in the general intellect, which is to say, it is only when all feel blessedness and glory and intellectual love that the *bodily* affects pale by comparison. It is at this point that the self-interest of each coincides with the self-interest of all. Multitudes — crowds — in Spinoza are not liberating because they cannot produce blessedness and glory.

Knowing God is Spinoza at his most utopian. He is quick to clarify that without God the affects of bondage generally dominate. Loving God allows one to contemplate the body from a vantage that acknowledges death and the transience of the body, its affects, and its passions. The perception of the body's mortality is one of the key perceptions necessary to love and know God. Spinoza writes that for those that love God, they "hardly fear death" and are affected less by "evil" affects.⁶⁸ Even as one recognizes that the body dies along with consciousness and memory, the mind can contemplate its commonness with God "under a species of eternity." This intellectual love is not the same as those that come from bodily affects, because "only while the body endures is the mind subject to affects which are related to the passions."⁶⁹ Since they come from a knowledge that cannot change, the affects of blessedness, glory, and intellectual love are permanently accessible affects. They contrast with the transient duration of the other bodily affects. It is important, first, that the love of God lessens the affects of fear that surround death. Second, this fearless attitude toward death plays back into Spinoza's multitude in surprising ways.

For now, let us reassess the bodily affects of human bondage. What distinguishes these affects is their volatility, their movement, and their continuous flows — it is these very qualities, after all, that separate them from the "eternity" of God's love. Spinoza writes that "we live in continuous change," where bodies are dependent upon "external causes" for happiness.⁷⁰ This continuous change corresponds to a flowing economy of affects, against which bodies constantly strive for increased power and more joy. Bodies strive toward increased power of action through the excitation of joyful affects. In this bondage, exchanging joyful affects with other bodies is an end for itself; one seeks out more power in one's own self-interest to experience more joy. "The more each one strives, and is able, to seek his own advantage, that is, to preserve his being," Spinoza writes, "the more he is endowed with virtue."⁷¹ This passage underlines the problem of constantly expanding desires due to constantly expanding bodily constitutions, and suggests an infinite potential for human desires. "If men lived according to the guidance of reason, everyone would want to possess this right of his without injury to anyone else. But because they are subject to the affects, *which far surpass man's power, or virtue*, they are often drawn in different directions and are contrary to one another" (italics mine).⁷² This is Spinoza's challenge to Marx:

“Man’s lack of power to moderate and restrain affects,” he writes, “I call bondage” (italics mine).⁷³ This is the context for his aforementioned statement in the *Political Treatise* that “men are more led by blind desire, than by reason.”⁷⁴ This bondage works like fascism itself: it is ultimately self-destructive to bodies, even as it may, for a time, be expansively potent.

It is here that Spinoza makes a political intervention. The only affects stronger than desire, besides blessedness and glory, are love and *fear* of the state. Spinoza writes that the multitude believes that “they are free to the extent that they are permitted to yield to their lust,” and that they feel “bound to live according to the rule of divine law. Morality, then, and religion, and absolutely everything related to strength of character, they believe to be burdens.”⁷⁵ If the multitude knew that there was no reward to come in the afterlife, Spinoza writes, they would “prefer to govern all their actions according to lust.”⁷⁶ One can read here the necessity of the state. For Spinoza, sovereign authority becomes the check on the lust that underwrites human desire. “In order that men may be able to live harmoniously, it is necessary for them to give up their natural right and make one another confident that they will do nothing which could harm others.”⁷⁷ Poignantly, the state is necessary not only because of the difficulty of loving God, but because the state must produce ideologies that use an anxiety around death to offset a nightmare of existential decadence. “Society has the power to prescribe a common life by [making] threats,” he writes.⁷⁸ In other words, the state must use fear and the threat of death to control the infinite desires of bodies. In the *Political Treatise*, he writes that subjects are dependent upon the commonwealth “as they fear its power or threats, or as they love the civil state.”⁷⁹ The state must produce stronger affects than those of lust and desire, whether through fear or love. The purpose of multitudes is to make revolutions against bad states, but not to extinguish them.

The production of these stronger affects by the state falls to the sovereign, whether as the democratically elected head of state or as the monarch. Spinoza writes in the *Political Treatise* that a free multitude is better than one ruled by fear, however, and thus a commonwealth must “direct affairs in the best way” by channeling the multitude’s love of civil state. Since Spinoza believes “men’s natural passions are everywhere the same,” a commonwealth where laws are broken must be a “bad state of dominion,” and blamed on the state itself. The state must constantly evoke a love of itself, then. This love must rely on bodily affects, and therefore the sovereign’s capacity to produce joyful affects becomes essential to the preservation of the commonwealth. The intense production of positive affects for the state seems to be a necessary project for the sovereign.

The general problem of inspiring love of civil state as a preferable mode of power over the multitude allows us to pause on the political relation of the multitude and the sovereign. In short, the sovereignty of both the state and the multitude is a continuous problem in Spinoza. If we acknowledge that a strong sovereignty of a free state might

be necessary to counter the bodily affects, even one that can “compel men by force,” we also run into the problem of how sovereign power works to produce strong and joyful affects: how it would create a state religion.⁸⁰ These problems don't have solutions, but they are extant within Spinozist ethics. If the sovereign's body must inspire love in order to capture a love of civil state, or even if a council of sovereign bodies must do so, then what form should the commonwealth take?

The answers to such questions must always recall that the multitude's power of consent in any commonwealth depended on the multitude's own ability to use force. The ultimate sign of illegitimate power, then, is the presence of large crowds opposed to the state. Even in a democracy, consent would come from the power of crowds or their absence. “A commonwealth is always in greater danger from its citizens than from its enemies,” Spinoza writes.⁸¹ This danger from citizens speaks both to the power of the multitude's capacity to wage a just war against the state. Even in the commonwealth he imagines as a monarchy, Spinoza simultaneously argues that the proper condition of the multitude is mandatory conscription in militias. All citizens “are to be bound to have arms,” just as all citizens are to share public property. The armed citizens must want to die for the state, Spinoza writes, as a condition of monarchy: “the multitude may preserve under a king an ample enough liberty, if it [is] preserved by the defense of the multitude itself.”⁸² The sovereign must inspire the multitude to kill for him or her, and short of that the sovereign has failed the test of civil love.

This domain of killing is what Carl Schmitt saw as *the* concept of the political: he claimed that the possibility of dying and the reality of death was the only way to ensure civic responsibility. Like Spinoza, Schmitt understood the intense role that death must play as a *concept* that produces very strong affects. The most excited bodies are those that are able to overcome the fear of death. To overcome this fear of death without the use of reason implies a mass mobilization of bodies that would require a most intense form of love for the state, or else a fear of other states. These affects of life and death would seemingly be related to the blessedness and glory of loving God, since they both concern understanding the life and death of bodies. Either crowds must be full of bodies that feel themselves as extensions of the sovereign, armies of “one mind,” or they must somehow find in the crowd itself affects that allow them feel that the glory of “eternity” has arrived in the present. The sovereign crowd would feel, in a sense, that they know God.

To do so, crowds must not feel afraid. When discussing the excited multitude, Spinoza famously said, “The mob is terrifying, if unafraid.”⁸³ This phrase interests me here because of the idea of being “unafraid.” In his description of loving God, Spinoza also said that knowledge meant fearing death less. In his discussion of how a single sovereign could maintain civil love, the test, as we've heard, is also the willingness of the multitude to die for the state. The affects that make death seem like a knowable “species of eternity” must be produced when the multitude overthrows the sovereign.

Let us imagine that killing is the domain of the political, as Carl Schmitt claims, but let us imagine that the sovereign and the state must be made into the enemy. Spinoza does say the sovereign must fear the citizens the most. But he also says that “the king can be deprived of the power of ruling, not by the civil law, but by the law of war, in other words the subjects may resist his violence with violence.”⁸⁴ I leave you here with this thought: the consent of the multitude rests upon its ability not to die for the sovereign, but to die for itself — that is, the “unafraid” multitude must be willing to sacrifice its bodies for another system. It seems the first and best choice would be to die because of sovereign violence, and thereby expose the lack of consent between sovereignty and citizen. The next choice would be to decide whether one loved the crowd enough to kill for it.

Notes

1. "Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is" (35). Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke UP, 2002).
2. Antonio Negri, "The Labor of the Multitude and the Fabric of Biopolitics," trans. Sara Mayo and Peter Grafe with Mark Coté; ed. Mark Coté. *Mediations* 23:2 (Spring 2008): 22. Negri's claim is similar to Paolo Virno's *Grammar of the Multitude*. Both emphasize the productive potential of the general intellect, new information technologies, and immaterial labor, in addition to networked communications and globalization more generally.
3. Negri, "The Labor of the Multitude" 22.
4. Ernesto Laclau. "Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles?" *diacritics* 31:4 (Winter 2001): 5.
5. Laclau, "Social Struggles" 7.
6. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*. (London: Verso, 2005) 19.
7. Laclau and Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* 19.
8. Laclau and Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* 21.
9. Laclau and Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* 31.
10. Laclau and Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* 32.
11. Laclau, "Social Struggles" 10.
12. Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theological-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise*, trans. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951) 288-89. See Benedict Spinoza, *Spinoza: Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002) 681.
13. Spinoza, *Treatise* 288. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 681.
14. Spinoza, *Treatise* 289. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 682.
15. Étienne Balibar, *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosophy Before and After Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 4.
16. Balibar, *Masses, Classes, Ideas* 5.
17. Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005) 14.
18. He also discusses the historian of the French revolution hostile to crowds, Hippolyte Taine, and the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, who believed crowd behavior originated in the physical malformations of individual bodies. He also traces the idea of behavior imitation through the French psychologist Gabriel Tarde, who clarified crowd behavior as "always present in the structuration of the social body" (42).
19. Laclau, *Reason* 28.
20. Laclau writes that "Le Bon saw the crowd as an inevitable part of the community, and devised some kind of manipulative catechism to keep it within its limits" (*Reason* 61). Indeed, perhaps as a nod to Machiavelli, even Spinoza admits in the *Political Treatise* that "public affairs are ordained and managed by men of the utmost acuteness, or, if you like, of great cunning and craft" (Spinoza 288).
21. Laclau, *Reason* 39.
22. Laclau, *Reason* 48.
23. Laclau, *Reason* 63.
24. Laclau, *Reason* 71.
25. Laclau, *Reason* 74.

26. Laclau, *Reason* 74.
27. Laclau, *Reason* 75.
28. Spinoza, *Treatise* 296. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 686.
29. Laclau and Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* 54.
30. Spinoza, *Treatise* 292. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 683.
31. Indeed, Casarino writes that no one has managed to combine Marx and Spinoza as well as Althusser.
32. Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism* (London: NLB, 1977) 108. chapter 2 #5
33. Spinoza, *Treatise* 295. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 685.
34. Spinoza, *Treatise* 295. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 686.
35. Spinoza, *Treatise* 295. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 686.
36. Spinoza, *Treatise* 296-97. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 687.
37. Spinoza, *Treatise* 297. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 687.
38. Warren Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power: Spinoza and His Contemporaries* (London: Verso, 1999) 80.
39. Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power* 76.
40. Spinoza, *Treatise* 208. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 533.
41. Spinoza, *Treatise* 208. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 533.
42. Spinoza, *Treatise* 208. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 533.
43. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 2007) 49.
44. Spinoza, *Treatise* 301. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 690.
45. Antonio Negri, *Subversive Spinoza*, trans. Timothy S. Murphy, Michael Hardt, Ted Stolze, and Charles T. Wolfe; ed. Timothy S. Murphy (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2004) 9.
46. Negri, *Subversive Spinoza* 9.
47. Spinoza, *Treatise* 200. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 527.
48. Spinoza, *Treatise* 200. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 526-527.
49. Spinoza, *Treatise* 200. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 527.
50. Spinoza, *Treatise* 296. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 686.
51. Spinoza, *Treatise* 206. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 530.
52. Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power* 69.
53. Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power* 69.
54. Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power* 66.
55. Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power* 66.
56. Spinoza, *Treatise* 311. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 698.
57. Laclau, *Marxist Theory* 81.
58. Laclau, *Marxist Theory* 88.
59. Laclau, *Marxist Theory* 108.
60. Laclau, *Marxist Theory* 109.
61. Laclau, *Marxist Theory* 120.
62. Laclau, *Marxist Theory* 128.
63. "The Nazis at the Nuremburg rallies were filled with joyous affect." John Protevi, *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2009) 50.

64. Spinoza, *Treatise* 204. In addition to framing modern politics, this statement seemingly works to contextualize contemporary consumerism and the persistence of capitalism's material comforts for the privileged classes. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 529
65. Spinoza, *Treatise* 201. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 528.
66. Spinoza, *Treatise* 292. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 683.
67. Negri, *Subversive Spinoza* 14.
68. Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. Edwin Curley (New York: Penguin, 1996) 178. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 380.
69. Spinoza, *Ethics* 176. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 378.
70. Spinoza, *Ethics* 178. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 380.
71. Spinoza, *Ethics* 126. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 331.
72. Spinoza, *Ethics* 136. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 340.
73. Spinoza, *Ethics* 113. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 320.
74. Spinoza, *Treatise* 292. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 683.
75. Spinoza, *Ethics* 180. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 381.
76. Spinoza, *Ethics* 180. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 381-382.
77. Spinoza, *Ethics* 136. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 340.
78. Spinoza, *Ethics* 136. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 341.
79. Spinoza, *Treatise* 304. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 692.
80. Spinoza, *Treatise* 204. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 529.
81. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 702.
82. Spinoza, *Treatise* 344. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 722.
83. Spinoza, *Ethics* 144. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 348.
84. Spinoza, *Treatise* 343. See Spinoza, *Complete Works* 722.