

Essay 7: Young

Abhi Agarwal

Young proposes a minimal definition of democracy which I think is extremely powerful - “democratic politics entails a rule of law, promotion of civil and political liberties, free and fair election of lawmakers.” (5). I think she’s extremely clever here - the minimal nature of the definition allows for her to bring the aspects of inclusion into democracy that she proposes in the next chapter. I missed the definition when I attempted to understand her work at first, but I think her definition of democracy establishes all her principles and encapsulates it.

Alongside her definition of democracy her views on the inclusive democratic practice, in my opinion, expects a lot. Inclusive democratic thinking requires people to be “open to having their own opinions and understandings of their interests change in the process” (6). It’s hard to me to realize a society which follows these principles, and it seems like her inclusive principles very quickly break down for me after this sentence. It seems like the people who are unwilling or not able to open to have new opinions are excluded from her view of society, and aren’t technically able to contribute to this society (in accordance to her definitions on page 5). I feel like she’s also being very clever here to setup her

theories and framework. This exclusion would exclude people who are most likely to have problems with her theories - in a sense that people who aren't open to have their ideas change are excluded. This is quite a big majority of individuals - most people are fixed on their principles. It makes sense that she's creating an ideal theory.

One of my favorite quotation in this reading was on page 32. Young writes "Self-determination, the second aspect of justice as I understand it, consists in being able to participate in determining one's action and the condition of one's action; its contrary is domination" (32).

I didn't quite understand her feelings towards communities within democracies though. Her inclusion principle was intriguing, but what would she feel about people being excluded from communities within? I think the central questions she tries to answer and ask questions on revolve around this issue. I just didn't think we read enough chapters for me to get a gist of what her consensus was on this issue.