

Acknowledgments

To work for community while reading and writing from perspectives influenced by Derrida? Exploring and celebrating this possibility sometimes creates the impression that Derrida's extravagance is the best postmodernism, or that his work is a likely candidate for the next so-called paradigm in social and political theory. Readers should struggle to erase this mistaken impression: Derrida does not offer a new "paradigm," but reading his work can make worlds of difference. This book draws attention to the difference Derrida makes and suggests how theories of community might live through the extravagance of his criticism.

Of course, I write under the influence of other authors as well, two of whom double as my teachers. Tracy B. Strong led,

watched, covered his eyes, etc., as my work took liberal, communitarian, and deconstructive turns over the past fifteen-odd years. Tracy directed my Ph.D. thesis in 1978, continued to read more pages than either of us can remember, and delivered a painfully close reading of the present manuscript. Four years ago I read Foucault and Charles Taylor with William E. Connolly in his NEH summer seminar, and my work still carries the imprint of his rigorous criticism. He has since then offered encouragement, sound advice, and more criticism, including a forceful reading of this manuscript. Perhaps having teachers I can never repay explains, in part, my effort to supplement notions of reciprocal exchange with free gift-giving.

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Two parts of this book have appeared in other places. A similar version of chapter 4 was published as “Pocock, Foucault, Forces of Reassurance” in *Political Theory* (17:77–100). Parts of chapter 5 appeared as “The Political Significance of Lincoln’s Epideictic Rhetoric” in the *Illinois Quarterly* (44:22–33). Thanking publishers for permission to reprint these articles in slightly different form is only a slightly different form of

thanking those mentioned above for their permission to print in the first place. And in the first place, I was encouraged by my parents, to whom I dedicate this book.

Lewiston, Maine

William Corlett