

**Book Review:**

***Multicultural Immunisation: Liberalism and Esposito* by Alexej Ulbricht. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015. 209pp., £75.00 (h/b), ISBN 9780748695393**

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This is a very well written critique of liberal multiculturalism. To develop the critique of liberal multiculturalism, Alexej Ulbricht draws on the work of the Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito and his idea of immunisation. In the book, liberal multiculturalism is represented by Will Kymlicka, Bhikhu Parekh and Charles Taylor, and a chapter is devoted to each of them. Using Kymlicka, Parekh and Taylor, the book covers different forms of cultural difference (indigenous groups, immigrants and national minorities) and different aspects of the ways in which liberal multiculturalism deals with cultural difference (rights, consensus and toleration and recognition).

Ulbricht's argument is that liberal multiculturalism is first of all liberal and only secondarily multicultural. The inclusion of cultures is always conditional because it can only happen on the terms of liberalism. This introduces a hierarchical relationship between the culture and institutions of liberalism and the cultures tolerated by liberalism. Therefore liberal multiculturalism is not truly multicultural, and we need to move beyond liberalism. To make this argument, Ulbricht draws on Esposito and his idea of immunisation. The latter essentially means that liberalism can only include (cultural) difference up to the point where it does not threaten the liberal character of liberal multiculturalism. Even if I was not entirely convinced by it, the most interesting part of the book is perhaps Ulbricht's attempt to develop an alternative to liberalism. Here he draws on a variety of ideas to argue for a way to think a form of totality (community) that does not end up in totalisation where everyone has to be the same in some way in order to be accepted.

The book brings a new body of literature (Esposito) to bear on liberal multiculturalism thereby seeking to bring out new (critical) aspects of the latter. Esposito appears to be highly relevant for this purpose as much of his work is precisely concerned with the relationship between community and difference. Thus, this is a commendable project. However, if the argument is that liberal multiculturalism will always defend itself against the threat of 'the Other', and that liberal multiculturalism is therefore always inherently limited, this will hardly seem novel, even to many liberals themselves. In other words, I was not convinced that Ulbricht manages to use Esposito to bring something new to the critical literature on liberal multiculturalism. For instance, I did not think that the chapters on Kymlicka, Parekh and Taylor added much new, even if they are good and careful readings of these thinkers.

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