



# The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism

By William E. Connolly

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## The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism By William E. Connolly

In *The Fragility of Things*, eminent theorist William E. Connolly focuses on several self-organizing ecologies that help to constitute our world. These interacting geological, biological, and climate systems, some of which harbor creative capacities, are depreciated by that brand of neoliberalism that confines self-organization to economic markets and equates the latter with impersonal rationality. Neoliberal practice thus fails to address the fragilities it exacerbates. Engaging a diverse range of thinkers, from Friedrich Hayek, Michel Foucault, Hesiod, and Immanuel Kant to Voltaire, Terrence Deacon, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Alfred North Whitehead, Connolly brings the sense of fragility alive as he rethinks the idea of freedom. Urging the Left not to abandon the state but to reclaim it, he also explores scales of politics below and beyond the state. The contemporary response to fragility requires a militant pluralist assemblage composed of those sharing affinities of spirituality across differences of creed, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

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**The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism** By William E. Connolly **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"*The Fragility of Things* represents an important turn in the thinking of William E. Connolly, a theorist whose work has a significant readership across the humanities and social sciences around the world. It introduces into the democratic and pluralistic *ethos* he has long advocated a new element: an informed sense of the 'fragility of things,' an awareness that human affairs are undertaken in a world of interacting systems of self-organization that place no special value on human flourishing or even survival. Connolly argues that an appreciation of the fragility of things must be incorporated into efforts to advance egalitarian, pluralist, and democratic values."—**Paul Patton**, author of *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics*

"In this book, William E. Connolly enlists his unique perspective and voracious knowledge to examine neoliberalism's contribution to the fragility of things. And he incites us into activisms large and small. Connolly understands the need to show critically the fragility of things and to reveal the insistent ideologies that make life today more fragile than it needs to be. He also understands the need to counter those ideologies with something more than critique. I learned from reading *The Fragility of Things*. It pulled me into its vernacular: its language, its impulses, its questions are compelling. It was a pleasure to read: instructive, accessible, imaginative, and inspiring."—**Bonnie Honig**, author of *Antigone, Interrupted*

"[T]he research agenda Connolly has been developing for the last decade or more on the political implications of alternative ontologies should not be missed by anyone concerned with the practices of governance. These books are an invitation to affirm a care for the world based on a very realistic and critical understanding of the human predicament without resorting to either resentment or utopias."

(Margaret Stout *Administrative Theory and Praxis*)

"[A]n innovative and enjoyable contribution to the recent speculative and materialist turns in political theory. . . ."

(Clayton Chin *Political Studies Review*)

"Ultimately, Connolly gives us not only a way of seeing the world, but also a way of feeling for it and engaging in it. . . . This book will appeal to a wide range of academic and activist audiences, and it is an opportune time to be reading it."

(Allegra Giovine *Somatosphere*)

"Like all of William Connolly's works, *The Fragility of Things* presents its readers with a rich and multi-layered text. . . . Connolly's gifts for synthesis and insight are extraordinary."

(Daniel W. Smith *Theory & Event* 2015-06-01)

"Connolly's analysis of our current political world is rich in its figuration and provocative in its theoretical and political implications, and he continues to engage in a productive way with some of the most important issues associated with our contemporary context. . . . [H]is work continues to perform an important rethinking of the political world around us that takes seriously a radical vision for a more democratic and just future."

## About the Author

William E. Connolly is Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University. His most recent books include *A World of Becoming*; *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*; and *Pluralism*, all also published by Duke University Press. He is a former editor of *Political Theory* and a founder of the journal *theory & event*. His classic study *The Terms of Political Discourse* won the Benjamin Lippincott Award in 1999.

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#### Gregory Stclair:

This The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book will be information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. This kind of The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism without we realize teach the one who looking at it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't be worry The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism can bring if you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even cell phone. This The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism having very good arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

#### Derick Heinz:

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