Unruly Democrats:

Democratic Extremism and the American Democratic Polity

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The figure of the extremist looms large in modern democratic history. Derided and rejected since before the Age of Enlightenment, the extremist is a figure whose ardent devotion to a singular cause, unchecked passionate fervor, partisanship, intolerance, and Manichean worldview have caused him or her to be dismissed as irrational and intolerable. Echoing this sentiment of peremptory dismissal, contemporary democratic theorists have tended to neglect the extremist, focusing on conflicts between competing parties that are not irreconcilably opposed to each other and limiting legitimate political contest to those parties that accept liberal frameworks of mutual respect, consensus, and reciprocity. Intractable oppositional parties that reject frameworks of consensus, terms of mutual respect, and which are willing to use force to accomplish their political goals are often theoretically excluded as irrational anti-democratic extremists outside the bounds of legitimate political contest and democratic politics. Yet, extremism, fanaticism, and zealotry have historically accompanied the revolutionary and post-revolutionary prosecution of popular democratic politics.

In this paper, I argue that democratic theorists must address political practices that take the form of extremism. Yet, rather than treating extremists as inherently irrational and anti-democratic, extremism should be approached as a tactical form of political activity used on behalf of both democratic and anti-democratic claims. By ignoring or theoretically excluding extremism, democratic theorists neglect the ways in which extremists can aid, as well as threaten the pursuit of democratic political equality within a polity. After taking preliminary steps to clarify the interrelated and nearly synonymous concepts of "extremism," "fanaticism," and "zealotry," I demonstrate how contemporary theories of democratic politics have paid inadequate attention to political extremists, often neglecting or intentionally excluding extremism from theoretical and practical consideration as a form of political practice. This theoretical neglect

lumps most, if not all, forms of extremism under a general category, which obscures distinctions between democratic and anti-democratic forms of extremism. By failing to allow for these distinctions, much of contemporary democratic theory neglects both the persistent threat of anti-democratic extremists to the politics of a democratic polity, as well as the potential contributions of *democratic* variants of extremism. In so doing, theorists fail to recognize unruly and uncivil democratic subjects, uncivil pursuits of political equality, and the effects such practices and subjects may have on the democratic politics of a polity. Examining alternative perspectives on the potential contributions of extremism within a democratic polity, I turn to commentaries by Thomas Jefferson, William Manning, and Martin Luther King Jr. on contemporaneous events of extremism to demonstrate what may be lost by theoretically neglecting it as a potential form of democratic practice. Jefferson's and Manning's commentaries on the 1786–1787 armed uprising of Shays's Rebellion highlight how extremism on behalf of democratic claims has the power to raise public awareness of undemocratic obstacles to political equality while also compelling the popular exercise of deliberative judgment by citizens confronted with the possibility of a slip between ideals of political equality and the presence of concrete obstacles to the realization of equality. Where the commentaries of Jefferson and Manning illustrate the relationship between democratic extremism and the democratic polity from the standpoint of citizen-observers, King's response to critics of the 1963 Birmingham Campaign in his well-known *Letter from Birmingham Jail* considers this relationship from the standpoint of the democratic extremist. King's *Letter* illustrates how extremist politics on behalf of democratic claims can raise awareness of undemocratic obstacles and compel public deliberation by means of using force to create crisis within a community outside the constraints of institutional negotiation and consensus. Finally, I conclude by returning to contemporary democratic theory to consider how

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theorists might begin to addresses political extremism in a way that considers the threat of anti-democratic extremism while acknowledging the potential contributions of democratic extremism to the expansion and deepening of political equality within a polity.

Conceptualizing Extremism

The concepts of extremism, fanaticism, and zealotry are frequently invoked in popular political discourse, yet their use has often been plagued by a significant degree of conceptual ambiguity. Though early modern and contemporary uses of the category of "extremism" often suffer from this ambiguity, they refer to common descriptive characteristics such as ardent devotion, anti-deliberative intolerance, a friend-or-enemy framing, intense emotional passion, and a willingness to accept the use of force. At times an empty invective, "extremism" has a long history in the way we talk about and understand our political reality, particularly in the ways we think about and discuss bitter disagreements that have the perceived potential to violently disrupt an existing political order.

The origins of "fanatic" and "fanaticism" stretch back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though their roots extend further back to the Latin of *fanatic*, *fanatica*, and *fanaticum* which appear in the writings of Cicero and Juvenal.[1] Then, fanaticism commonly signified an excessive enthusiasm for frenzied notions, if not madness or demonic possession.[2] In its English form, "fanatic," – and its alternative forms, "phanatik," "phanatic," and "fanatique" – has seemingly always held a pejorative connotation linked to the excesses of enthusiasm and the powers of the demonic. It is this sense of fanaticism and extremism as inherently irrational that has underpinned the style of discourse that Joel Olson called the "pejorative tradition" of rhetoric and analysis.[3] Discourse within this tradition, when it is not outright condemnatory or dismissive,

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has tended to produce accounts of fanaticism and extremism that are almost invariably negativ.[4] The pejorative tradition simply tends to treat the subject of extremism as a psychological or moral defect in the individual rather than as a form of political activity and thought, frequently characterizing extremism and fanaticism in a reductive manner as irrational and intolerant. The English origins and use of "fanatic," and its use within a pejorative tradition, root the term in the feared irrationality and destructive violence of madness and demonic possession. To be labeled a "fanatic" is to be singled-out as irrational and violent owing to a personal moral or mental aberration. In contrast, "extremist," though it is nearly synonymous with "fanatic," characterizes the subject, not primarily in terms of a personal quality – i.e., of individually being psychologically or morally aberrant – but as locating the individual on a landscape of action and belief. Where the fanatic is individually isolated as a negative anomaly so irrational, passionate, and violent as to be outside or beyond an intelligible spectrum of belief, the extremist is primarily conceptualized as exceeding the limits of moderation or reason. The extremist's actions are severe or violent to the utmost degree while their positions are understood as situated at a distant remove from the center of a spectrum of belief.[5]

Approaching the pejorative tradition genealogically, Olson mapped four common characteristics of how the discourse of this tradition today conceptualizes extremists: against reason, against tolerance, fundamentalist, and ultimately terrorist.[6] Yet, if we are to approach the discourse of extremism from a critical standpoint, we must critique – and may ultimately reject – the presuppositions of the pejorative tradition. Rather than merely a psychological or moral defect, extremism should be examined as a contested form of political activity and a highly charged weapon of rhetorical conflict, as well as something meriting caution and concern. We should, instead, I argue, understand extremism as a political tactic, mode of behavior, and

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complex of practices rather than a personal mental or moral aberration. That is, looking to the concept of extremism as gesturing *towards* something and reflective *of* something apart from irrationalism.

To resolve the conceptual ambiguity surrounding extremism, we should turn to Olson's re-theorization of the concept. Rather than conceiving of fanaticism, zealotry, and extremism as normatively determined categories of irrational action, Olson sought to conceptualize extremism as "*political activity, driven by an ardent devotion to a cause, which seeks to draw clear lines along a friends/enemies dichotomy in order to mobilize friends and moderates in the service of that cause*."[7] In this schema, extremism is understood as a mode of political activity that is explicitly driven by the commitment and passion of the intractable political agent as true believer. Extremism is a "political mobilization of the refusal to compromise" and a "form of engagement that seeks not to come to terms with an opponent but to defeat it."[8] It is willed and fueled by the ardent commitment of the zealot, proceeding undeterred and irrespective of "…boundaries of 'respectable politics,'" characterized by the prosecution of a friends-or-enemies distinction, and typically engaged in "…activities that lie outside the boundaries of conventional politics."[9] Olson's conception of extremism posits it as an approach to the prosecution of politics against, not only a specified enemy in Carl Schmitt's sense but also the referent of *moderation* itself as a political category.[10] Olson's emphasis on the category of moderate is crucial in his conceptualization of the target of the extremist, because part of what defines extremism as political activity is an explicit denial of the moral legitimacy of the middle-ground, the space of compromise, consensus, and tolerance. Though the extremist prosecutes the friend-or-enemy distinction against a specific primary agent of wrong – i.e., the extremist identifies an enemy actively responsible for committing or preserving the wrong motivating the

extremist – he or she also prosecutes this distinction against those that seek to occupy a middle ground as a legitimate moral and political position. The strategy of the extremist whereby the moderate is confronted with moral culpability in an in effort to gain friends from the body of moderates and designate those that remain as enemies, seeks to deny the legitimacy of any sort of middle ground between the persistence of what the extremist construes as a wrong and his or her goal of its elimination. Denying the existence of a middle ground between the alternatives of preserving or eliminating the wrong that motivates the extremist makes the question of a middle-way itself an issue of contentious politics and "the site of political conflict rather than a refuge from it," forcing those that would occupy this middle "to openly choose one side or the other."[11]

In violently rejecting the middle ground, the extremist denies politics its space of compromised consensus and reciprocity. The extremist is accordingly a figure of intractable and unruly conflict. Forceful, intolerant, passionate, and unwilling to compromise his or her principles, the extremist does not simply disagree with particular policies but rejects general terms of political consensus and seeks the enactment of a radically divergent ethico-political framework of order. It is because of their intractability, their position that principles always take primacy over interests, and their will towards antagonistic divergence that political extremists of any type pose a threat to the political order they speak of disrupting.

Extremism and Democratic Theory

Competing strands of democratic theory have normatively evaluated how democratic politics ought to be structured and conceptualized, or how a political order might best realize the basic democratic principle that the people rule themselves as political equals free from domination. Yet, much of contemporary democratic theory seems unable or unwilling to

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adequately address the theoretical and practical problem of extremism. Focusing on the question of "whether public deliberation is irreducibly agonal or whether it should strive conceptually for consensus," Olson argued that "both models [deliberative and agonal] overwhelmingly focus on conflict that takes place among parties who share a common liberal ethical and political framework that provides the principles and rules within which legitimate political contest takes place."[12] Because it largely ignores conflict over a common ethico-political framework itself, and often ends up eliding the problem of irreconcilable conflict in politics, much of contemporary democratic theory ignores or excludes the problem of extremism.[13] This failure is symptomatic of the tendency for contemporary democratic theorists to assume that extremism is inherently anti-democratic because it rejects the "official" or accepted framework of politics. Yet, though extremism often undermines democracy and may serve forces of domination, when disagreement concerns an ethico-political framework itself, extremism can be a "democratic tool if it rallies public opinion to expand the citizen body and its power."[14]

Liberal Democratic Theory

The reasoning of contemporary political theorists in response to the pressures of intractable extremism has often echoed the abstract logic of political order with its rejection of all extremisms as threats to order itself. Norberto Bobbio's analytical distinction between extremism and "moderatism," outlined in his more general project of distinguishing the analytical difference between left and right political positions, is reflective of a common way of conceptualizing extremism as inherently antithetical to democracy. For Bobbio, the criterion that distinguishes the extremist from the moderate is not necessarily a difference in ideas, but in the radicalization of ideas. It is a difference in strategy for the implementation of ideas in practice, a

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difference of method and not of values.[15] Arguing that the distinction between left and right is different from the distinction between moderate and extremist, Bobbio suggested that “opposing ideologies can have points of contact and agreement at their extremes, even though they are still quite distinct in terms of the political programmes and final objectives which define their positions *vis-à-vis* the left/right distinction.”[16] The point at which left/right extremists meet is in their shared rejection of democracy. Sharing an object of hate, “their rejection of democracy brings them together, not because of their position on the political spectrum, but because they occupy the two extreme points of that spectrum. The extremes meet.”[17] Their shared “radical rejection of democracy” is the most persistent and significant point of contact between extremists across the political spectrum.[18]

As Bobbio elaborated his theoretical distinction between left and right, he put the distinction between extremist and moderate in even starker terms, as a difference in their attitudes toward freedom itself.[19] Their varying regard for the ideal of liberty as it is “implemented through the fundamental rules and principles of democratic governments, and the recognition and protection of personal, civil and political rights” became central for Bobbio’s distinction between the extremist and the moderate.[20] Though they might share similar positions and values, the extremist holds the conviction that his or her ideals may only be implemented through force and authoritarian practice. For Bobbio, the analytical crux is clear, extremists reject democracy.

In structuring legitimate politics, the aim of liberal democratic theorists is to moderate conflict in a way that precludes irreconcilable disagreement between friends and enemies. Where there is irreconcilable conflict, politics have failed.[21] When confronted by the intractable opposition of the extremist, liberal democratic theorists tend to exclude it, treating the extremist

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as something apolitical to be excluded and opposed from the considerations of politics rather than as a political subject to be negotiated with or contested against. For a liberal democrat, the politics of reciprocity exclude the extremist who rejects the consensual terms of mutual respect that ground liberal politics. This approach is problematic in practice because exclusion from a theoretical framework, while understandable for maintaining theoretical integrity, does not necessarily exclude extremists from publicly voicing their opinions and acting on their positions. Though measures seeking to enact the exclusion of the extreme from the life of the polity may inhibit some extremist activism (e.g., laws against hate speech might limit the amount of public speech by extremist hate groups, just as laws against espousing the violent overthrow of government might impair the ability of extremists to do just that), extremists often use legal and accepted means to promote their intractable opposition (e.g. extreme right wing parties in Europe such as the Freedom Party of Austria and the National Front in France, regularly participate in popular elections while espousing positions hostile to national frameworks of democratic governance). While liberal democratic models suffer from the practical problem of how to actually exclude extremists, they also suffer from a theoretical problem. By excluding all extremists as anti-democratic, liberal theorists pre-emptively exclude extremists who may make contributions to democratic practice, rejecting even the possibility that extremists may serve the extension and deepening of political equality within a polity.

Faced with the recurrence of popular political actors judged to be extremists, some liberal theorists have indirectly acknowledged this theoretical inadequacy and have sought to explicitly address the appearance of contemporary extremism. Jan-Werner Müller, in the context of his work on populism, has implicitly admitted the theoretical and practical inadequacy of simply excluding the extremist in theory or trying to exclude the extremist in practice, noting that

exclusion plays directly into the rhetoric of the extremist.[22] Yet, Müller's critique of populism, in its attempt to conceptualize an extremist phenomenon, echoes Bobbio's analysis, and reflects the theoretical problem of other liberal democratic theories because it treats extremism (and populism) as intrinsically anti-democratic.

Deliberative Democratic Theory

Focusing on Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson's work as presenting a paradigm of deliberative democratic theory, I suggest that deliberative models, like liberal models more generally, exclude extremists that reject liberal principles of consensus and reciprocity.[23] Though they may be treated as a subset of liberal theory, theories of deliberative democracy differ in their focus, largely acknowledging the "relative priority of the constituent power," while deliberative theorists "are not primarily concerned with the constitutional protection of basic rights, but with the need instead to reform institutions in western democracies in order to improve the quality of democratic debate and deliberation."[24] The problem of extremism in deliberative theory is not that deliberative democratic models exclude extremists but that they do not account for the implications of this exclusion.

Democratic deliberation admittedly does not seek to comprehensively resolve deep moral disagreements but to contain them within a deliberative framework governed by a principle of mutual respect and reciprocity. For Gutmann and Thompson, the goal of democratic deliberation "is not necessarily to induce citizens to change their first-order moral beliefs. It is rather to encourage them to discover what aspects of those beliefs could be accepted as principles and policies by other citizens with whom they fundamentally disagree."[25] Where deliberative consensus on deeply divided moral issues is not the goal of democratic debate because the

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divisions are too deep, processes of democratic deliberation would allow interlocutors to find greater common ground, enabling them to "work together in a mode of mutual respect" thereby making thorny issues more tractable and mutually understandable.[26] Parties with opposing positions may be deeply divided but they must be reasonable and open-minded when engaging in deliberation, they must enter with the intent of reaching agreement and be open to questioning fundamental beliefs and even changing their minds.[27] The objective of the extremist is not agreement or mutually-beneficial resolution, however, but zero-sum victory, and "the principle of reciprocity is ineffective when the objective of struggle is not to find fair terms of debate but to defeat one's opponent."[28] Though the extremist might respect her opponent, how could she be expected to abide by deliberative reciprocity when her zeal makes her unwilling to question her beliefs and the veracity of her animating cause is never in doubt? Deliberative democracy is bound to a liberal framework that excludes parties rejecting the framework. Accordingly, because the "deliberative principles of fairness and reciprocity predetermine what counts as legitimate political action," extremists are treated uniformly as threats to democracy to be excluded if they do not yield to liberal terms of deliberation.[29]

Agonal Democratic Theory

As with deliberative democratic models and broader theories of liberal democracy, agonal democratic theorists can be faulted for inadequately theorizing extremism. Agonal democrats are too focused on understanding those political conflicts that take place within a common ethical and political framework. Though agonal theories, unlike deliberative models, seek to accommodate conflict rather than constrain it, they are often faulted for placing limits (acknowledged or not) on political contest.

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In his survey and reformulation of agonistic democracy, Mark Wenman argued that much of contemporary agonistic theory suffers from an almost exclusive emphasis on "augmentation."[30] Borrowing from Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution*, *The Human Condition*, and "What is Authority?," a politics of augmentation "denotes moments of innovation that bring about genuine (i.e. open-ended and non-dialectical) change in existing norms and practices, but also, and at the same time, refer back to and expand a prior moment of authority or foundation."[31] For some of the most paradigmatic theories of agonal democracy – for example, the work of Chantal Mouffe, Bonnie Honig, William E. Connolly, and James Tully among others – augmentation describes the "essential structure of the constituent power."[32] In emphasizing augmentation, agonal models are often unable to adequately conceive of politics that entail radical breaks, origins, or differences whether such politics are revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. This, combined with the tendency of agonal theorists to explicitly endorse the basic grammar, traditions, institutions, and practices of modern liberal constitutional democracies underpins Wenman's general criticism of contemporary agonism. Similar in tone to Olson's line of critique, Wenman argued that "the combined effect of these assumptions is to limit agonistic politics to a non-dialectical expansion of the basic social and political forms that were founded in the eighteenth-century revolutions," which is problematic because forms of domination and obstacles to expanding political equality may require more radical politics of innovation to adequately address them.[33]

In contrast with augmentation, Wenman conceptualized "revolutionary politics" to describe characterizations of constituent power and its expression as "an absolute beginning – and consequently a moment of radical rupture – that brings a new principle or set of norms and values into the world, as it were *ex nihilo*."[34] Just as agonal theorists emphasize augmentation as

the only or most authentic form of constituent power – i.e. of democratic politics – Wenman charged theorists of "radical democracy" with equally emphasizing "the absolute priority of the constituent power in the form of revolution."[35] Radical democrats – under which Wenman categorized the work of Alain Badiou, Ernesto Laclau, Jacques Rancière, and Slavoj Žižek – reject the significance of augmentation as an authentic form of constituent power, stressing that "genuine moments of the constituent power, *always* take the form of a radical break."[3637] This exclusive emphasis on revolutionary breaks and radical origins as the authentic expression of constituent power leads radical democrats to be "inattentive to moments of genuine innovation found in less dramatic forms of politics."[38]

Though focused on presenting a highly critical but sympathetic reformulation of agonal democracy, Wenman's criticisms speak to the perceived inability of agonal theorists to properly conceptualize and account for extremism. Extremism, like Wenman's understanding of revolutionary politics, is predicated on rejecting, disrupting, and breaking from a status quo order, established institutions, or basic terms of reciprocity and norms of consensus. Because agonal democrats privilege augmentation as the only authentic politics and liberal constitutionalism as the bedrock framework of consensus, they tend to reject extremism and revolutionary politics that go against and disrupt a consensus-based framework. Echoing Wenman's criticisms, the general trend of Olson's critique of contemporary democratic theory is that the horizons of deliberation and agonism are reached when a party to political contest rejects a common ethico-political framework. Agonal and deliberative democratic theory are unrealistic because they limit political contest to the confines of a consensus-based framework. This limit is a problem because with it, agonal and deliberative democrats pre-emptively exclude extremists who may contribute to democracy, and they fail to account for the excluded extremist's

continued presence as a force after he or she has been theoretically excluded. Like Olson, Wenman finds the tendency of agonal theorists to reject disruptive politics and their commitment to the framework of liberal constitutionalism to be problematic because forms of domination may require the radical disruption and new beginnings of revolutionary – or, we might add, extremist – constituent power as much as they may be handled best by the exercise of constituent power through augmentation. Wenman's theoretical project involves a reformulation of agonal democracy in a way that does not choose between augmentation and revolution. Rather, Wenman argued for the necessity of making room for both the extreme politics of revolution and the more acceptable politics of augmentation because the "principally strategic nature of agonism compels us to keep open the range of possible moves available to situated subjects."[39]

Extremism and the American Democratic Polity

Both Olson and Wenman fault contemporary democratic theorists for conceptualizing politics in a way that excludes extremists from theoretical consideration. They suggest that theorists attend to political subjects that reject terms of reciprocity, consensus, or status quo frameworks of legitimate political contestation. These critiques have the added benefit of recognizing that sometimes the laws, practices, and institutions of a democratic polity itself can be obstacles to political equality. Likewise, they implicitly acknowledge that the terms citizens and theorists use to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate modes of politics present obstacles to the practice and pursuit of political equality. Contemporary democratic theory erects obstacles to our descriptive and normative understanding of the pursuit of political equality when it ignores, or actively rules-out, unruly and uncivil forms of politics that resist and aim to remove undemocratic obstacles. Liberal, deliberative, and agonal theorists commonly focus on political

practices that take place in accordance with terms of mutual respect, reciprocity, and consensus, effectively excluding all political extremists as categorically undemocratic because of their rejection of these terms. Expanding on Olson and Wenman, I argue that democratic theorists need to re-think how they conceptualize democratic politics and the boundaries that limit practices aimed at resisting and removing obstacles to political equality. In other words, theorists ought to re-conceptualize the nature of democratic politics in a way that allows for the inclusion of practices and actors commonly categorized and excluded as extremist. Failure to do so limits the descriptive and normative reach of democratic theory because it peremptorily neglects the relationship of unruly subjects and uncivil modes of democratic politics to the democratic life of the polity.

Extremism on behalf of democratic claims may contribute to the democratic life of the polity beyond expanding the range of options available in pursuit of political equality. This insight rests on three interrelated theoretical observations: first, that extremism can raise public awareness of important issues, potential wrongs, and the presence of undemocratic obstacles to political equality; second, that extremism can compel the popular public exercise of individual deliberative political judgment; and third, that extremism on behalf of democratic claims resists any attempted "closure" or uncritical acceptance of the democratic nature of politics, or efforts to displace politics whether by an ascendant power seeking to secure domination or other antagonistic force. That is, democratic extremism may impede hegemonic attempts to definitively affirm the status quo political order or concrete policies as being adequately informed by democratic principles, as properly resembling democracy, or as normatively settled. This challenge should be understood as disruptive of order, but potentially beneficial for the democratic health of the polity.

In their rejection of extremists, democratic theorists ignore or preemptively exclude unruly and disruptive subjects of democratic politics. They also miss the potential contributions to the democratic life of the polity that extremism on behalf of democratic claims may make. Contingent acts, agents, and discourses of extremism that seek to remove obstacles to democratic political equality resist "closure" and attempts at what Bonnie Honig has called, the "displacement of politics," by provoking the public reevaluation of policy and political order.[40] The practices of the democratic extremist are geared toward enacting a radically divergent ethico-political frame and are motivated by a perceived wrong or obstacle to the deepening and expansion of political equality. These practices characteristically operate by framing political action in the friend-or-enemy terms of intractable conflict. Antagonistically opposing the status quo, the extremist raises awareness of a purportedly undemocratic "wrong" while demanding that citizen-observers and members of the community acknowledge the friend-or-enemy frame offered by the extremist, and then personally determine which side of the wrong they are on. In the case of the *democratic* extremist, extremism impedes the closure of democratic order by raising awareness of a potential antagonism between democracy (i.e., the imperatives, principles, or ideals underpinning democracy) and the status quo of political order itself. Extremism draws attention to public concerns and compels citizens to critically reflect on the democratic nature of concrete politics and political order.

That instances of political extremism call attention to public concerns of political order resonates with Thomas Jefferson's 1787 thoughts on insurrection. In epistolary dialogs with James Madison and William Stephens Smith, Jefferson mulled-over news of Shays's Rebellion in Massachusetts, and upheld the value of insurrection while judging this particular instance to be inappropriate and "founded in ignorance."[41] For Jefferson, the "turbulence" of insurrection

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was the principal "evil" to which popular government was subject.[42] Yet, this evil was also "productive of good" because "it prevents the degeneracy of government and nourishes a general attention to the public affairs."[43] Insurrectionary extremism reminds the governing that the people "preserve the spirit of resistance" and it can be taken as a sign that citizens have not fallen prey to what Jefferson described as a "lethargy" that is the "forerunner of death to the public liberty."[44] Though, the people "cannot be all, & always, well informed," a will towards insurrection demonstrates that citizens will not suffer actual or misconceived abuses of political power, and that they are attentive to the public concerns of political order and policy – though they might be "led astray for a moment" by ignorance and mis-perception.[45]

The vigilance and energy that Jefferson observed in the act of insurrection are the qualities of a reflective and participatory political subjectivity that challenges the closure of political order. Even when such qualities lead to error and inappropriate political extremes, they still draw attention to the democratic nature (or lack thereof) of public affairs, compelling members of the polity to exercise critical re-evaluation. The vigilant American turning to insurrection "discontented in proportion to the importance of the facts they misconceive" is not alone in exhibiting democratic vigilance.[46] The positive challenge of extremism to the democratic polity is posed by both the extremist (judged to be democratic) and the democratic citizen confronted by the extremist. The citizen-observer must be just as attentive to the democratic nature of political order and the democratic or non-democratic quality of the extremist, as the democratic extremist is to the perception of an anti-democratic wrong.

Where Jefferson's comments suggested the participatory and reflective subjectivity of the democratic extremist, William Manning's observations on Shays's Rebellion compliment Jefferson's account and further emphasize the crucial deliberative role of the citizen-observer

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confronted by extremism in need of appraisal and political judgment. In 1798 Manning wrote a wide-ranging but brief treatise on government addressed to the "Republicans, Farmers, Mechanics, & Laborers in the United States of America." Among his many subjects, the eighteenth century New Englander who "lived near where this affair happened" and who had "received some frowns from the actors on both sides of the act" because he was opposed to their measures, offered a brief account of the causes of the "Shays Affair in Massachusetts."[47][48] Referring to this series of armed judicial interruptions and later insurrection, Manning wrote that,

> "In these circumstances, the few were all alive for the support of Government, & all those who would not be continually crying Government—Government—or dared to say a word against any of their measures were called Shaysites & Rebels & threatened with prosecutions... But a large majority of the people, thinking that there was blame on both sides, or viewing one side as knaves & the other as fools, it was with great difficulty & delay before a sufficient number could be raised & sent to suppress them."[49]

Looking back on the chaotic event, Manning appreciated the insurrection as a reaction to legitimate public grievances, noting that the "people were driven to the greatest extremity."[50] However, just like Jefferson, Manning ultimately viewed the uprising as illegitimate and misguided. The insurrection on behalf of Western Massachusites, who perceived their post-revolutionary judicial, political, and economic circumstances as impediments to their exercise of political equality, was a clear symptom of failings in the post-revolutionary American order on the part of both existing political institutions and their leaders, as well as the people who had not been properly vigilant and critical of political affairs in the region. Yet, after the insurrection had been suppressed, Manning wrote that it had "…put the people in the most zealous searches after a remedy for their grievances."[51] Having thrust the significant problems of political order, as well economic and judicial policy to the forefront of public awareness, the insurrection inspired popular involvement and deliberation in political affairs. Manning recorded that,

> "Thousands & thousands of miles ware rode to consult each other on the affair, & they [the people] happily effected it in a few months. Only by using their privileges as

> electors… [Bowdoin] was turned out from being governor (& in a few years sickened & died) & Hancock was almost unanimously Chosen in his room. Many of the old Representatives shared the same fate, & a full Representation sent to Court from every part of the State, which soon found out means to redress the grievances of the people…So that everything appeared like the clear & pleasant sunshine after a most tremendous storm."[52]

For Manning, this tempest of political extremism, brought about by economic, legal, and political woes compelled New Englanders to confront the unruliness of insurrection on behalf of democratic claims. In its aftermath, Massachusites vigilantly paid attention to their political order and popularly deliberated its actual and potential failings, while envisioning its ideal form. With sympathy toward the causes that gave rise to the insurrection and criticism of the failings of both government and the people, Shays's Rebellion appeared to affirm rather than undermine democratic order, proving to Manning to be a "striking demonstration of the advantages of a free elective government…" and demonstrating that "…a people may run themselves into the greatest difficulties by inattention in elections"[53] Though sympathetic to the plight of the people who had taken up arms, Manning believed that the insurrection showed how a people could "retrieve their circumstances again" only through public vigilance and electoral participation.[54]

Challenged to understand the insurrection by the extremism of the Shaysites, Manning concluded that "This Shays affair never would have happened if the people had been possessed of a true knowledge of their Rights, Duties, & Interests, or if the government had done their duty…"[55] Echoing Jefferson's sentiments, Manning's words suggest that forms of extremism that seek to resist perceived obstacles to political equality, even when ultimately inappropriate or misguided, have the potential to prompt the members of a polity to rethink how they make sense of their political reality, particularly in terms of the slip between democratic ideals and the concrete laws, institutions, and practices that serve to enact those ideals. Jefferson's and Manning's insightful comments on the value of insurrection seem just as applicable to the anti-

deliberative and divisive political speech of democratic extremism as much as they are to its contingent physical form in insurrection. Both the speech and acts of democratic extremists create tension and serve as catalysts towards the critical reconsideration of political order, and both the extremist and the citizen-observer keep alive the constant push-and-pull of democratic life.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s remarks in *Letter from Birmingham Jail* further speak to this dynamic whereby extremism may publicize a tension by foregrounding the dissonance between democratic ideals and undemocratic realities. Begun on the margins of a newspaper in April, 1963 while he was jailed after having been arrested for his involvement in the Birmingham Campaign, King composed his now famous response to a published statement critical of his politics of nonviolent civil disobedience.[56] On April 12, 1963, eight Alabama clergymen published an open statement critical of King's political tactics in which they defended the position that "in dealing with racial problems in Alabama…honest convictions in racial matters could properly be pursued in the courts," and urging that "decisions of those courts should in the meantime be peacefully obeyed."[57] Recognizing increasing racial tensions, the eight clergymen noted that "…we are now confronted by a series of demonstrations by some of our negro citizens, directed and led in part by outsiders. We recognize the natural impatience of people who feel that their hopes are slow in being realized. But we are convinced that these demonstrations are unwise and untimely."[58] Though they did not accuse King or other activists in the Birmingham Campaign of willfully employing violence, they suggested that "…such actions as incite to hatred and violence, however technically peaceful those actions may be, have not contributed to the resolution of our local problems," arguing that "We do not believe that these days of new hope are days when *extreme* measures are justified in Birmingham," and

concluding that "We further strongly urge our own Negro community to withdraw support from these demonstrations, and to unite locally in working peacefully for a better Birmingham. When rights are consistently denied, a cause should be pressed in the courts and in negotiations among local leaders, and not in the streets."[5960] The criticism that King's actions were extreme and should be condemned for inciting violence was not unique to the eight clergymen. In a nationally televised debate between King and the pro-segregationist editor of *The Richmond News Leader*, James J. Kilpatrick, Kilpatrick responded to King's opening remarks that described the peaceful nature of civil rights protests by stating "I have seen these demonstrations as he [King] has been involved in them and I know that they involve a great deal of tense pushing and shoving in an atmosphere that is electric with restrained violence and hostility, and in one city after another these demonstrations…have resulted in riot and disorder…Peaceful demonstrations may be fine, but what we've seen in Tallahassee, Chattanooga, and elsewhere are far from peaceful."[6162] Critics of King's supposed extremism often emphasized the tendency of direct action to incite – or invite – a violent response from Southern law enforcement agents and militant elements of the pro-segregationist community – figures King readily denounced as "pro-segregationist extremists," "deadly enemies of democracy," and "close-minded extremists."[63] Focusing on the violence and disorder that sometimes accompanied the use of King's tactics, critics and opponents condemned the campaign of civil disobedience for its willful violation of law and established political authority, and its intentional efforts to disrupt the political-legal framework of segregationist Southern states.

Responding to criticisms that his tactics of unlawful direct action should be subordinated to a strategy of legal dissent and institutionally-confined negotiation, King explained that the purpose of direct action – here in the form of nonviolently disobeying unjust laws and accepting

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the violent response of an undemocratic segregationist order – was to create the conditions that would make negotiation with an undemocratic order possible and necessary.[64] For King, this strategy sought to "create such a crises and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue."[65] Rejecting the constraints of an undemocratic status quo, direct action "seeks to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored…the purpose of the direct action is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation."[66]

The raising of a "type of constructive" tension that was "necessary for growth" and the creation of crisis entailed both publicizing the moral wrong of segregation as an unjust obstacle to democratic equality, and a strategy of intentionally disrupting a community that would not confront its undemocratic character.[67] By creating crisis through the intentional mass violation of an undemocratic legal regime, King's strategy sought to compel the community of Birmingham to confront an undemocratic obstacle it had actively reproduced and passively tolerated. This strategy of extremism provoked the re-evaluation of political order in part because it drew attention to the depths of the wrong of segregation (in Birmingham and the American South), and because it forcefully threatened the functioning and reproduction of an undemocratic order. King's extremism drew attention to an undemocratic wrong thereby prompting the deliberative attention of Birmingham's citizens, but it did so through the intentional use of a kind of force carried out on a mass scale against a community of inequality. Remarking on this dynamic whereby the quantity of nonviolence reveals its nature as violent force, Herbert Marcuse noted that "quantity turns into quality: on such a scale, passive resistance is no longer passive—it ceases to be non-violent."[68] "Passive" or nonviolent resistance, carried out an a large scale, as in the civil rights movement in the United States and in Marcuse's example of the nonviolent anti-

colonial resistance of Gandhi's movement in India, disrupts or threatens to disrupt, the reproduction, the very life of a political order.[69]

King's defense of nonviolent civil disobedience explicitly accepted categorization as extreme, and he even went so far as to accept descriptions of himself as an extremist – a description he was initially uncomfortable with but which he gradually grew to appreciate, counting Abraham Lincoln, Jesus Christ, Thomas Jefferson, and others among his extremist peers.[70] Not simply a rhetorical maneuver to discredit the category of "extremism," King's multiple uses of the label and his acceptance of it as descriptive of his own positions reflects how a politics that willingly provokes and accepts violence, intentionally seeks to create crisis, and which rejects established legal and political regimes – i.e., a politics of extremism – can do so on behalf of democratic claims, can help draw attention to undemocratic realities, and ultimately serve the deepening and expansion of democratic political equality within a polity though it does so by unruly, disruptive, and forceful means.[71] King's comments on tension-raising extremism redirected the concept of extremism away from its primarily pejorative account and the question of "whether we will be extremist" to the tactical and normative question of "what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice – or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?"[72] Noting Christ's crucifixion as a punishment for the "crime of extremism," King appreciated the potentially democratic and constructive power of extremism, concluding that "…maybe the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists."[73]

Extremism and The Democratic Citizen

Though practices of democratic politics turn on the normatively favorable principle of

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equality, questions about force, violence, intolerance, repression, and exclusion arise when we consider political practices that differ from and disrupt that of an existing social body. The tensions raised by a democratic will to enact a community of equals on the same grounds as an existing social community of inequality are deeply embedded in the acts and agents of extremism on behalf of democratic claims. Violent conflict between the will to enact or realize an abstract community and the will to defend the integrity of an existing social order is at the core of fears about extremism, whether democratic or not. Yet, this rightful fear and trepidation of extremism ought not keep democratic theorists and citizens blind to the presence of uncivil and extremist democratic subjects whose actions and positions, legitimate or misguided, express a democratic will to deepen and expand political equality within the polity. Extremism may be beneficial to a democracy by impeding its calcification through the democratic extremist's demand for reevaluation of order by the polity's citizens, and when the extremist resists undemocratic obstacles to political equality. Confronted by the extremist with the potential that an antagonism exists between democracy and status quo politics, democratic citizens must be receptive to and capable of the deliberative reevaluation that extremism necessitates. Democratic extremism is a recurrent phenomenon in the history of modern democratic politics, and though I suggest that it always has value in calling for the reconsideration of politics and political order, it can only ever be a spark for democratic citizens to engage in deliberative reconsideration and cannot take the place of popular deliberation and the exercise of individual political judgment.

Political orders create subjects from the selves of a polity, but in every settled order there is the inevitable creation of remainders, those selves that do not fit a political order's normative model of subjectivity or citizenship. As Bonnie Honig noted, all formations of political subjectivity engender resistances and remainders.[74] Because "every politics has its

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remainders…resistances are engendered by every settlement, even by those that are relatively enabling or empowering" and it is in defense of those "perpetually generated remainders of politics" that the perpetuity of political contest must be secured.[75] With each democratic contest where undemocratic obstacles to political equality are resisted and democratic remainders assert themselves as politically equal subjects, new and other fissures, remainders, wrongs, and undemocratic obstacles are revealed or engendered, demanding public attention, political reconsideration, and action.

Recognizing that democratic practices may take the form of political extremism places a heavy burden on the shoulders of a polity's members. That a disruptive challenge to the ethico-political order of a democratic community arises from democratic claims, demands that when faced with potentially democratic extremists, citizens must be capable and willing to evaluate and deliberate whether or not status quo politics and political order fail to realize or enact the basic ideals and commitments of democracy. Though the extremist may resemble a vanguard of democracy, it is always up to the democratic citizen to judge the extremist and reevaluate the democratic nature of the political order the extremist opposes. That is, though the extremist's actions might expose a social and political tension between justice and injustice, or between democratic ideals and undemocratic realities, the creation of tension cannot substitute for the hard work of deliberatively and democratically addressing purported obstacles to equality that citizens must themselves take on. Democratic extremists compel the members of the polity to adjudicate whether the institutions, policies, and constitutional order itself are undemocratic obstacles to the deepening and expansion of political equality, the legitimate source of the extremist's wrong and motivation for his or her zealous pursuit of redress. However, because of its potentially violent and forceful quality, extremism, of any kind, is potentially harmful. For all

its potential contributions to the promotion of an unsettled and participatory democratic politics, theorists and citizens must also recognize the very real threat of violence and harm that accompanies extremism of any type.

The insights of Olson and Wenman support my conclusion that democratic theory must reconsider how it approaches those democratic subjects that reject terms of reciprocity, mutual respect, and consensus, and which challenge the framework of legitimate politics itself. There is much in Olson's critique of liberal, agonal, and deliberative democratic theories with which I agree and much of it builds off of prior and common criticisms of these models noted in Wenman's account and elsewhere. However, I depart from Olson's theoretical position by suggesting that, though democratic theorists are often blind to extremism, they need not stay in the dark.

My criticisms that theorists have paid inadequate attention to the challenge of extremism and have shown a tendency to treat all extremists as inherently undemocratic are predicated on charges of inadequacy not incapability because existing paradigms of democratic theory have elements that suggest a capacity to address extremism. To illustrate this, for example, with regard to deliberative democratic theory, we need only look to Iris Marion Young's comments on norms of "orderliness" and the importance of "disorderliness" as a democratic tool for marginalized groups. In *Inclusion and Democracy*, Young was critical of an "implicit norm of orderliness" in some deliberative accounts that "oppose disorderly, demonstrative, and disruptive political behavior or label a certain range of positions extreme in order to dismiss them" arguing that "such norms wrongfully exclude some opinions and modes of expression."[76] Against this, Young contended that "disorderliness is an important tool of critical communication aimed at calling attention to the unreasonableness of others—their domination over the terms of debate,

their acts of exclusion of some people or issues from consideration, their use of their power to cut off debate, their reliance on stereotypes and mere derision."[77] Expressing commonality with the agonal democratic theory of Chantal Mouffe, Young framed democratic debate as a process of struggle, and held that "disorderly, disruptive, annoying, or distracting means of communication are often necessary or effective elements in…efforts to engage others in debate over issues and outcomes."[78] Acknowledging that members of structurally disadvantaged groups "do not violate norms of reasonableness if they engage in seriously disruptive actions, or express their claims with angry accusations" could be taken as a step towards theoretically addressing the disorderly and disruptive politics of extremism within a deliberative framework without resorting to assumptions of extremism's irrationality or anti-democratic nature.[79] Additionally, that Young drew attention to the overlap between deliberative and agonistic democratic theory is particularly encouraging. Noting such common affinity raises the possibility that democratic theorists would do well to encourage theoretical pluralism or cross-paradigm conversation to address the challenge of extremism.

Though there are elements within each paradigm of democratic theory that could enable theorists to address unruly democrats, I suggest that agonistic theory is already well-positioned to negotiate the reality that practices of democratic politics may take on extremist forms. Raising this suggests an important theoretical question: what then are the implications for an agonal theory of democratic politics if a mode of politics that explicitly rejects the constraints of consensus, and resists the basic legitimacy of contingent liberal constitutional order, is still a democratic expression of constituent power and a form of agonism productive of positive democratic good? What sort of politics might a recognition of democratic extremism imply for contemporary democratic theory?

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For an agonal theory of democratic politics to negotiate extremism, it would have to be reformulated in a way that would remove the originary grounding of democratic agonism in liberal constitutionalism so as to allow for politics and political subjectivities that reject or disrupt contingent political orders. Critics and skeptics might respond that unmooring agonal politics from its theoretical grounding in liberal constitutionalism would undermine this theoretical perspective entirely. Yet agonal theory already has within it a different source of grounding; democracy itself and its inherent dimension of agonism. Agonal theories of democratic politics that explicitly ground themselves in liberalism may neglect the ends which liberal constitutional principles were historically intended to protect: political equality and freedom from domination. The limits to agonal contestation ought to be a commitment to the security and perpetuity of democratic agonism, not the status quo, liberal constitutionalism, or contingent liberal orders.[80]

Such a vision of agonal politics would conceptualize undemocratic actors as threats to the polity to be struggled against in defense of a commitment to the perpetuity of democratic contest. This approach would differentiate between the democratic and the undemocratic extremist, not on the grounds that the undemocratic extremist rejects a common institutional order or a shared respect for contingent policies (or rights), or because of his or her intractability, but because the undemocratic extremist promotes a political subjectivity rooted in domination and an alternative framework of political order that obstructs the pursuit of political equality. The undemocratic or anti-democratic extremist would be conceptualized in theory, and energetically contested against in practice. In contrast, the democratic extremist would not necessarily be excluded from consideration as a subject of democratic politics and its agonal contests nor would his or her practices necessarily be judged as legitimate. Treating extremists who seek to remove

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undemocratic obstacles to political equality as potential agonists possessed of democratic subjectivity, includes – by re-classifying them as agonists – those disruptive political agents who pose democratic alternatives to the status quo but which do so by appealing to the intense passions and sentiments disparagingly associated with zealotry and extremism. This re-imagining of democratic politics and democratic subjectivity in terms that potentially include extremists can enrich the democratic life of the American polity in part by legitimating a range of potential democratic alternatives to the status quo, alternatives that necessarily invite the deliberation of democratic citizens.

Theoretically acknowledging that democratic politics may take and has taken extremist forms highlights the tragic nature of democratic politics with its constitutive pluralism, unending contest, and perpetual need to vigilantly attend to the presence of undemocratic obstacles to political equality and the inevitable presence of remainders. These observations suggest that contemporary democratic theory would benefit from normatively and descriptively conceptualizing democracy as broadly agonistic but, recognizing the challenge of democratic extremism, unbounded by unalterable and ineliminable frameworks that pre-emptively exclude or ignore potentially democratic subjects from a polity's political contests. Yet, for all its celebration of pluralism and contestation, agonistic democracy relies on a grounding friend-or-enemy framing between the internal agonism bounded by consensus and the excluded other. In light of the challenge of democratic extremism, not only must agonal democracy make room for a democratic politics of extremism, it also ought to be grounded in a commitment to the preservation of democratic contest against the threat of undemocratic extremists, undemocratic orders, and the construction or reinforcement of undemocratic obstacles to political equality rather than the traditional framework of a contingent liberal constitutional order.

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Recognizing the historical recurrence of democratic extremism in modern politics, its potential value as an impediment to the closure of democracy, as well as its authoritarian nature as a form of extremism, we ought to take the additional step of acknowledging that the citizens of a democratic polity are often in-part the historical products of political extremism (e.g. contemporary American citizens should be considered the products of strands of democratic extremism on display among American revolutionaries, militant abolitionist, and civil rights activists, among others). Acknowledging this heritage can help us to foster a critically self-reflective approach to contemporary and future appearances of extremism and may serve to continuously call contingent democratic policies and concrete democratic orders into question. Recognition of this sort has the potential to invigorate an open and agonistic democratic politics of constant participation through critical reflection on the democratic nature of the status quo, and it should call us to rethink what democratic citizenship as a form of participatory political inclusion should mean in a political order subject to the repeated reevaluation and challenge of its very core no less than its particular policies.

Endnotes

[1] Dominique Colas, *Civil Society and Fanaticism: Conjoined Histories*, trans. Amy Jacobs (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 11–13, 372n6.

[2] Colas, 15–16.

[3] Joel Olson, “The Freshness of Fanaticism: The Abolitionist Defense of Zealotry,” *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 4 (2007): 685–701, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707072179.

[4] Olson, 686.

[5] Though Olson regularly used the term “fanaticism,” I differ from him in preferring the broad umbrella term of “extremism” to the more loaded term of “fanaticism” for the same reason that Olson favored the reverse. Olson preferred “fanaticism” on the grounds that “extremism implies a *place* on the political spectrum and behaviors, or dispositions associated with it, while zealotry and fanaticism connote *action*.” In contrast, my preference for “extremism” is precisely because the term connotes a sense of place on the political spectrum, implying that there is a delineated realm of acceptable politics distinct from “extreme” politics. Additionally, as the linguistic history of “fanaticism” and “zealotry” indicates, “fanaticism,” with

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its connection to the concept of "enthusiasm," has close historical and conceptual connections to spiritual notions of demonic possession, which I seek to decouple through my use of "extremism." Though he preferred "fanaticism," Olson largely considered the terms "fanaticism," "zealotry," and "extremism" to be interchangeable, and on this we agree. See Olson, "The Freshness of Fanaticism," 697n8.

[6] Olson, "The Freshness of Fanaticism: The Abolitionist Defense of Zealotry," 686–87.

[7] Olson, 688.

[8] Joel Olson, "Friends and Enemies, Slaves and Masters: Fanaticism, Wendell Phillips, and the Limits of Democratic Theory," *The Journal of Politics* 71, no. 1 (2009): 83, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608090063.

[9] Olson, "The Freshness of Fanaticism: The Abolitionist Defense of Zealotry," 689.

[10] Carl Schmitt famously understood political actions and motives as defined by a will to divide the world between friends and enemies. For Schmitt, the collective grouping of political "friends" is defined by a shared identity that is relational to a particular conflict and existential threat. The collective identity of political "enemies" is likewise the obverse shared relational identity. Where political friend denotes "the utmost degree of intensity of a union" or association, political enemy denotes "separation" and "dissociation." The political enemy is the "other, the stranger…existentially something different and alien." The existential distinction between political friends and political enemies comes about when existential conflict between the two groupings becomes a concrete possibility. In this sense, the political enemy exists only when "at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity." Schmitt was careful to emphasize that the friend or enemy grouping that defines the political solely concerns *public* enemies, "because everything that has a relationship to such a collectivity of men, particularly to a whole nation, becomes public by virtue of such a relationship. The enemy is *hostis* [public enemy], not *inimicus* [personal/private enemy] in a broader sense." Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab, Expanded Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 25–28.

[11] Olson, "The Freshness of Fanaticism: The Abolitionist Defense of Zealotry," 693.

[12] Olson, "Friends and Enemies, Slaves and Masters: Fanaticism, Wendell Phillips, and the Limits of Democratic Theory," 82.

[13] Olson, 83. I would add that in political science, much of contemporary political theory in general sidesteps the *theoretical* challenges of extremism, leaving analysis of extremism to the purview of scholars in International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Security Studies.

[14] Olson, 82.

[15] Norberto Bobbio, *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 20, 27.

[16] Bobbio, 21.

[17] Bobbio, 21.

[18] Bobbio, 26.

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[19] Bobbio, 78.

[20] Bobbio, 78.

[21] Olson, “Friends and Enemies, Slaves and Masters: Fanaticism, Wendell Phillips, and the Limits of Democratic Theory,” 84.

[22] Jan-Werner Müller, *What Is Populism?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 3–5.

[23] Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 86; Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[24] Mark Wenman, *Agonistic Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 83.

[25] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 93.

[26] Gutmann and Thompson, 93–94.

[27] Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16–51.

[28] Olson, “Friends and Enemies, Slaves and Masters: Fanaticism, Wendell Phillips, and the Limits of Democratic Theory,” 86.

[29] Wenman, *Agonistic Democracy*, 85.

[30] Wenman, 92.

[31] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 2006); Hannah Arendt, “What Is Authority?,” in *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 462–507; Wenman, *Agonistic Democracy*, 92.

[32] Wenman, *Agonistic Democracy*, 92.

[33] Wenman, 92.

[34] Wenman, 9.

[35] Wenman, 89.

[36] Wenman’s category of “radical democracy” is useful for drawing-out a contrast with agonal, deliberative, and liberal political theory on the question of augmentation vs. revolution but I do not entirely agree with his categorization of particular theorists under this grouping. Though space does not allow for a fuller engagement, and I accept Wenman’s categorization for the purposes of explication, categorizing the political philosophy of Alain Badiou as democratic is problematic not the least because of his rejection of “democracy” in favor of a reformulated non-Marxist ideal of “communism.” See for example, Alain Badiou, “The Democratic Emblem,” in *Democracy in What State?*, ed. Giorgio Agamben (New York: Columbi University Press, 2012), 6–15..

[37] Wenman, *Agonistic Democracy*, 90.

[38] Wenman, 91.

[39] Wenman, 93.

[40] Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[41] Thomas Jefferson, "To William Stephens Smith, 13 November 1787," in *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, ed. Joyce Appleby and Terrence Ball, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 110.

[42] Thomas Jefferson, "To James Madison, 30 January 1787," in *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings*, ed. Joyce Appleby and Terrence Ball, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 108.

[43] Jefferson, 108.

[44] Jefferson, "To William Stephens Smith, 13 November 1787," 110.

[45] Jefferson, 110.

[46] Jefferson, "To James Madison, 30 January 1787," 110.

[47] William Manning, "The Key of Libberty," ed. Samuel Eliot Morison, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1956): 242.

[48] Non-standard and archaic spellings that appear in the original have been modernized and standardized here to allow for readability.

[49] Manning, "The Key of Libberty," 242–43.

[50] Manning, 242.

[51] Manning, 243.

[52] Manning, 243.

[53] Manning, 243.

[54] Manning, 243.

[55] Manning, 243.

[56] The 1963 Birmingham Campaign involved a series of nonviolent direct actions led by King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Birmingham, Alabama to raise attention to efforts to integrate the heavily segregated city in direct confrontation with white segregationist leaders.

[57] "Statement by Alabama Clergymen (12 April 1963)," accessed February 3, 2017, http://kingencyclopedia.standford.edu/kingweb/popular_requests/frequentdocs/clergy.pdf.

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[58] "Statement by Alabama Clergymen (12 April 1963)."

[59] My emphasis.

[60] "Statement by Alabama Clergymen (12 April 1963)."

[61] Martin Luther King Jr., "Debate with James J. Kilpatrick on 'The Nation's Future.," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson et al., vol. 5 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 559.

[62] In response to Kilpatrick's accusations of violence, King responded that "…if there has been any violence it has not come from the sit-inners themselves but from the opponents and the extremist groups in the white community…we cannot hold the Negro students and the sit-inners responsible for the violence, but we must hold the individuals in the white community who have precipitated the violence responsible for it" (King Jr., 560.).

[63] Martin Luther King Jr., "To Dwight D. Eisenhower, 15 March 1956," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson et al., vol. 3 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 176; Martin Luther King Jr., "Address Delivered at the National Biennial Convention of the American Jewish Congress, 14 May 1958," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson et al., vol. 4 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 408; Martin Luther King Jr., "Address at the Fourth Annual Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change at Bethel Baptist Church, 3 December 1959," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson et al., vol. 5 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 340.

[64] Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from the Birmingham Jail* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994), 4–6.

[65] King Jr., 6.

[66] King Jr., 6–7.

[67] King Jr., 7.

[68] Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," in *The Essential Marcuse*, ed. Andrew Feenberg and William Leiss (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 46.

[69] Marcuse, 46.

[70] King Jr., *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, 22–23.

[71] Though King's method of civil disobedience was nonviolent because it did not advocate the use of force by activists and even involved a process of "self-purification" wherein activists committed themselves to accept suffering without violent reprisal, such civil disobedience was in-part predicated on the likelihood of provoking violence and publicizing the violent reprisals of opponents.

[72] King Jr., *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, 23.

[73] King Jr., 23.

[74] Honig, *Political Theory and Displacement*, 5.

[75] Honig, 3.

[76] Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 48.

[77] Young, 49.

[78] Young, 49–50.

[79] Young, 49.

[80] Unmooring agonistic democracy from its grounding in liberal constitutionalism does not necessarily entail opposition to all liberal orders or all vestiges of liberalism. It merely suggests that liberal orders, institutions, and practices ought not be seen as ineliminable forms structuring democratic life.

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