

Revolution, Constitution, and the Democratic Moment:
Sheldon Wolin on the Limits and Limitlessness of Democracy

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*Democratic peoples often hate the repositories of central power, but they
always love the power itself*

- Tocqueville

Part I: The Economic Polity

The Separation of Democracy and Politics

Tocqueville famously warned of “the danger that religion courts when it joins forces with power.”¹ “As long as a religion rests solely on sentiments that console man in his misery, it can win the affection of the human race. But when it embraces the bitter passions of this world,” or when its “joins forces with political powers of any kind,” religion itself descends into particularity and bitterness.² The unequal exchange is one of transcendent moral authority for temporal political power. In this sense, Tocqueville offers the paradox that “diminishing religion’s apparent strength could actually make it more powerful.”³ The separation of church and state is above all to the benefit of church (one wonders how well state comes out in the bargain).

American religion enjoys the enduring advantages of this separation. Realizing that religion “cannot share the material might of those who govern without incurring some of the hatred they inspire,” that it cannot command “respect ... in the midst of partisan conflict,” Americans “created a *place apart* for religion.”⁴ The influence of religion is “limited to a particular sphere, but there it is pervasive and dominates effortlessly.”⁵ The clergy in America are free to “blast ambition and bad faith in men of all political stripes” by “zealously” marking their distance from petty partisanship.⁶

In what follows, I argue that we have come to think of democracy’s place in the world in precisely analogous terms. We have created a place apart for democracy, from the standpoint of which we can blast ambition and bad faith in men of all political stripes. Democracy’s hegemonic, unlimited, unquestioned moral authority is contingent upon it washing its hands of material power, as it were. Democracy consoles us in our misery and wins the affections of the human race by remaining above the fray of bitter passions and partisan conflict and the hatred of those who govern. Democracy’s diminishing strength has actually made it more powerful.

To think through this separation of democracy and politics I turn to its most explicit and forthright formulation in the democratic theory of Sheldon Wolin. We have seen how the master term of modernity is *equality* for Tocqueville, and *uncertainty* for Lefort. For Wolin, it is *economy*. Modern times are characterized not by the leveling of authority, nor by the questioning of authority, but by the compulsive organization of existence for the increasingly efficient generation and projection of power. At its core Hobbesian, modern life truly is ordered and animated by “a perpetually and restless desire of Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death.”⁷ In this context, authentic democracy is all but impossible. As we shall see, given the inefficient and disorganized

character of the people's power, democracy simply cannot compete with what Wolin terms the "Superpower" of economy. In the "contemporary world democracy is not hegemonic but beleaguered and permanently in opposition to structures it cannot command;" it is "perennially outspent and overmatched."⁸ We are consequently "entering a moment in our history when it will become extremely difficult to find the terms for limiting power or for holding it politically accountable, much less for sharing it."⁹

For Wolin, democracy's prognosis is bleak, its prospects few and fleeting. Of course he recognizes the "near-universal acclaim accorded democracy," and its current status as a "transhistorical and universal value." Far from demonstrating the "vitality" of democracy, though, this rhetoric effects the cover-up of democracy's near-demise. Empty talk of democracy conceals "the degree to which democracy is attenuated so that it may serve other ends."¹⁰ The language of democracy has been systematically co-opted and is managed by the economic/political powers-that-be so as to pacify the people. Like a Freudian dream, the promise of democracy functions as a harmless vent for our forbidden democratic passions. Formal facade without substance, moral mask and sales-pitch image, "democracy" is today's opiate of the masses, a virtual simulation, the distracting spectacle of shadows on the wall. Perversely, then, the "fact that democracy continues to be invoked in American political rhetoric and the popular media may be a tribute, not to its vibrancy, but to its utility in supporting a myth that legitimates the very formations of power which have enfeebled it."¹¹ The myth of democracy is used to domesticate the demos.

Wolin describes three notions of democracy that take shape in these economic times, which we analyze in the following three parts. The first is liberal democracy. Meant to service the needs of power, this political system functions according to logic of efficiency and expansion. It is a politics rendered as economical as possible by the near-total exclusion of the people from any sort of meaningful participation in their administration. As we shall see, in the American context it is the "constitutionalized democracy" of the proponents of the Constitution, above all Hamilton. Throughout the 1980's, Wolin offered what he called "archaic" democracy as the primary oppositional mode of democracy. This is a conservative, centrifugal, unorganized, and robustly participatory practice of democracy, which exists today only as a remnant of the past (not unlike aristocracy for Tocqueville). In the preservation of the plurality of local cultural and traditional accretions, this Anti-Federalist mode of politics functions largely as sand in the gears of systematizing power. It is quite literally a place apart from liberal politics and the power of state. By the early 1990's, and culminating in his 2004 expanded edition of *Politics and Vision*, Wolin reformulated democracy as a "fugitive," at once on the run from and radically disruptive to the economical workings of power.

In its archaism, democracy holds out against the relentless creative destruction of economy; as a fugitive, democracy transgresses the laws and orders of economy. Archaic democracy is reaction; fugitive democracy is revolution. Archaic democracy is rooted in the common-place and prosaic; fugitive democracy is the epic poetry of struggle. Archaic democracy is willfully ordinary and uneventful; the revolutionary moment of fugitive democracy, when popular power finally bursts forth, is a truly extraordinary event. Archaic democracy is a matter of the people's *escape* from economy, fugitive democracy represents the people's (inevitably short-lived) striving for *mastery*.

I argue that fugitive democracy is Wolin's attempt to theorize the conjunction of material political power and democracy's moral authority without the degradation of the latter - without democracy's incurring the hatred of those who govern or descending into particularity and partisan conflict. The key is that the people's solidarity, their coalescing as a collective actor - a *demos* - capable of exercising political power is intrinsically impermanent and without need of mediating conventions. The people's power is limited because it is fleeting. But for that pristine moment between its coming into being and its passing, it is audacious, righteous, authentic, primal, vital - the exercise of material power without sinking into materialism or settling down into economic routines. We might say that material power and moral authority come together, but on condition that it is only for an instant. Here, democracy has not so much a place apart as *a moment apart* from the fallen present.

In the previous chapters we have seen how the democratic way of life is principled upon openness. In this chapter I argue that Wolin's democracy-as-fugitive, as pure revolutionary moment, is the putting into practice of this principle. It is democracy as event rather than as institution. Indeed, as the act of "rational disorganization," as Wolin puts it (in Lefort's "operation of negativity"), fugitive democracy takes shape as the subversion of institutional and conventional forms and norms, which cannot but operate according to the imperatives of economy. It is the savage response to the domesticating drive of economy.

Along these lines, Wolin's theory of democracy harbors the same dialectic of idealization and devaluation we have seen before. The "democracy" of the everyday, material world - participation in the liberal system of voting and elections, even Wolin's earlier formulation of grass-roots action and association - comes to seem co-opted and inauthentic and routine, more organized process than spontaneous movement. The democracy that transgresses the closures of the material world, the democracy that is itself re-opened and re-born with each new rupture, never settles down or compromises or grows corrupt. The dialectic becomes one of political *cynicism* and a sort of democratic *heroism*.

Modern Power and Postmodern Power

Wolin writes that, far from Tocqueville's democratic social state, we live today in an "economic polity."¹² We live not in the wake of the democratic revolution, but in the shadow of the industrial revolution. "The economic rules all domains of existence," and we (as pre-modern man before nature) are "hammered into resignation, into fearful acceptance of the economy as the basic reality of (our) existence, so huge, so sensitive, so ramifying in its consequences that no group, party, or political actor dare alter its fundamental structure."¹³ The irony, of course, is that so successful have been the techniques of economy in liberating us from fearful resignation to nature's basic reality that we have come to experience the economy as a sort of second nature. Economy thus stands today as an "autonomous entity independent of history, religious values, moral constraints, and political regulations ... (and) determinative of all other social and political relationships."¹⁴ Society is "absorbed" into economy, which operates as the "first principle of a comprehensive scheme of social hermeneutics" and "an interpretive category of virtually universal application. It is used to understand personal life and public life, to make judgments about them, and to define the nature of their problems. It

supplies categories of analysis and decision by which public policies are formulated, and it is applied to cultural domains such as education, the arts, and scientific research.”¹⁵ We thus end up with the following: equality as competitive opportunity, freedom as rational choice in consumption, justice as distributive, civic virtue as shopping, action as behavior, judgment as price valuation, prosperity as profit, progress as technological innovation, law as a matter of supply and demand, nature as a market, education as a means to the end of competing in the global economy, governance as administration, politics reduced to “it’s the economy, stupid.”

And in our economic polity the common currency - the “denominator common to all domains” - is power.¹⁶ Economy is the means by which we generate progressively greater amounts of power over the natural and the human world. The acquisition and exercise of power has become definitional for us today, like the habituation into and practice of virtue for Aristotle.¹⁷ We understand and evaluate ourselves as by nature power seeking animals.

Wolin explains the rise of the economic polity in two distinct phases - modern and postmodern - with the second half of the twentieth century as the turning point. He characterizes the modern phase in largely Weberian terms, as the rendering of the world as a stable and orderly *mechanism* for the production of power. Modernization is simply the process of rationalizing, systematizing, routinizing, homogenizing, etc., of the life to ensure that the machine does not break down. The engine of this rendering process is the unholy trinity of the centralized and bureaucratic state, the capitalistic business corporation, and Baconian science. Each worked to impose the norm of law-abidingness on self, society, and reality.

Insofar as politics is concerned, modernization is the centripetal process of accumulating power in the “commanding heights,” concentrating it in the monolithic institutional conglomeration of what Wolin terms the “megastate.” The instruments of governance of the megastate - “military and police power..., courts, legislature, political parties, and those interest groups that adapt their activities to conform to the ‘rules of the game’” - collectively form the “state system.” And this system (a term that “revealingly combines a technical bioengineering meaning with a technocratic/bureaucratic one”) strives “to become a totality in which the center is being transformed into a mechanism of management and control.”¹⁸

The vehicle of this drive for totality is the capitalist business corporation, along with a bureaucratic political system conducted according to the performative imperatives of the corporation. “Corporate power is driven by a dynamic (takeovers, mergers, buyouts) that aggressively promotes concentration of economic power - and of political power. Corporate politics prefers the ‘political economy of scale’ represented in a centralized state because it enables corporate resources allocated to political purposes to be used to maximum effect. Dealing with/controlling a single large state is more cost-effective than dealing with/controlling fifty smaller ones.”¹⁹ This perfect synthesis of politics and economy in the economic polity operates “most effectively under conditions of calculability ... in which outcomes can be predicted. When conditions are stable a government bureaucracy can govern by uniform regulations and can apply the same decision rules; similarly, stable conditions allow business corporations to plan operations

more confidently...” The ideal is “a uniform, mass society..., a mass market of consumers with roughly the same tastes.”²⁰

The modern idea of science lends the quality of objectivity and even transcendence to this system of power generation. Science is “an ideal that has its own theological resonance: power as immaculately conceived because born of the purest, most disinterested, and objective form of knowledge ever invented by mankind.” At its conception, “science was depicted mythically, not as a social institution but as the miraculous gift of ... geniuses...” As a “a social myth science came to represent expertise grounded upon ‘truth,’ the highest form of knowledge in an age that has mostly forgotten the meaning of “God’s omniscience’ but remembers its attributes: knowledge that in no way required validation by ordinary beings.” Thus the “scientific process” is the “perfect incarnation” of a “conception of power that was to be generated independently of any social contract or democratic agreement.”²¹

Ultimately, the common feature of capitalism, science and state “is that by nature each functioned best under conditions of autonomy: the capitalist was most efficient when least regulated, the bureaucrat most expert when least trammled by public opinion or self-serving legislators, and the scientist most productive when allowed the maximum freedom of research.”²² Modern power ceaselessly expands precisely because it is not arbitrary or capricious. It is a tyranny not of the personal whims of an individual or group, but of stability, of an “impersonal order governed by rational laws.” It is a “vision of power with no inherent limits” because it is “absorbed into reason” and so is “objective,” “etherealized,” and “pure.”²³ The power-mechanism runs smoothest when left to operate according to its own internal dynamic, unfettered by the slow-motion of popular power.

The second phase of the rise of the economic polity is postmodernization. Modernization is a matter of giving law-abiding, mechanistic form to the world so as to facilitate the production of power. While power’s raw material - the natural and the human world - is made to suffer perpetual change and dislocation, the operation of modern power requires a settled location. It is autonomous and impersonal but still incorporated. Encapsulated in the “Hobbesian vision” of the “behemoth” and the “leviathan,” its “embodiment was the administrative or bureaucratic state; its instrument was the government regulation.”²⁴ And in its physical formations it can still be seen and resisted through cultural and political counter-formations.

Postmodern power, by contrast, is fluid and unfettered by the heavy machinery of political forms. Leaving behind its stable shell of the megastate, postmodern power is what Wolin terms the “formless form” of power.²⁵ Postmodernization “signifies the concerted attempt to replace cumbersome bureaucracies with ‘lighter’ structures (with the capacity to) adapt quickly to changing conditions, whether those be in the marketplace, in party politics, or in military operations... Government bureaucracies are encouraged to become ‘leaner,’ to delegate more authority to sub-units, to ‘privatize’ their services and functions, and to govern as much as possible by executive orders rather than by the time-honored but time-consuming and unpredictable legislative process.” Where “modern power was heavy, settled in location, and hence tending to identify with national power and its fixed boundaries, postmodern power is agile, restless, contemptuous of national boundaries.”²⁶ It is fully “abstract” and “nonphysical,” - disembodied in a way that

accords “with a ‘virtual’ way of being in the world.”²⁷ Like Tocqueville’s mild despotism, postmodern power’s reach is radically extended by virtue of its disincorporation.

We might think of modern power as the mechanized infantry and heavy armored division of the Second World War - immense, but even in blitzkrieg mode slow by today’s technologically empowered aspiration to light, quick-strike, covert operations conducted largely without “boots on the ground.” With postmodernity, power is about speed and stealth and precision rather than size and brute force - from the “B-52 Stratofortress Bomber” to the “B-2 Spirit Stealth Bomber,” from a “Star-Wars” to a “The Matrix” image of power.²⁸

Superpower and Inverted Totalitarianism

The culmination of postmodern power is what Wolin terms “Superpower.” This is “the postmodern contribution to the Aristotelian taxonomy of possible constitutional forms,” defined by its own “distinctive virtue.”²⁹ This virtue is its “dynamic ... ceaseless reaching out ... extending the limits of the possible.” With the “distinctive capability for generating power virtually at will,” Superpower is “an expansive system of powers that accepts no limits other than those it chooses to impose on itself;” it “strains at limits as it projects power around the world.”³⁰ The excellence of the regime, we might say, is its immoderation - its hubristic ambition.³¹ Where modern power imposes its routines and laws upon the world, postmodern Superpower is utterly lawless. It is, in a word, the regime of *limitlessness*.

We see Superpower’s overcoming of all constraints, forms, and limits in its universal projection of power, and also in the micro-reach of its power through the perversion of the notion of privatization. Drawing on the market’s and scientific process’ indifference to human and natural borders, Superpower has “gone global,” as they say. At the same time power is “down-sized” to become more efficient. It is privatized, but only so as to be hidden and made more fully pervasive: “privatization is not the elimination of power but the elimination of ... public discussion and argument over how power is to be used, for what ends, and who is responsible.”³² Power is “simultaneously concentrated and disaggregated,” “decentered without being decentralized... , transferring formal accountability from traditional political processes, such as legislative oversight and elections, to the allegedly impersonal forces of the market.”³³ Superpower is able to “retain its centered power” in the sate, but also “to extend its reach by delegating and slimming down, thereby increasing effectiveness while acquiring greater flexibility.”³⁴ In postmodernity, power seems both everywhere and nowhere at once.

In its nascent mode of modern power, Superpower strove to render the world a stable, standardized, predictable system. “Social phenomena are renamed ‘inputs’ or treated as ‘costs’ and ‘benefits’... What cannot be accommodated or co-opted doesn’t ‘count’ and can be ignored.” All the multifaceted differences of lived experience are either absorbed or eliminated “in the yearning for totality of which systems-talk is the ideological expression. System thinking extinguishes difference ... by a combination of translation and abandonment...”³⁵ The “rationalizing mentality” in turn imposes “uniform rules” according to the demands of its “efficiency calculus.”³⁶ In its mature mode of postmodern power, Superpower renders the world less predictable system than frictionless vacuum. The “emptying” of the world “becomes one of power’s

preconditions.”³⁷ The process is one of *abstracting* from all-things-particular - from particular place to general space; from historical context to contextless time. “Abstractness” Wolin writes, is above all “a quality characteristic of languages of power,” defining as descriptively and normatively inessential all aspects of reality that obstruct the free-flow of power.³⁸ It is within this smoothed-out and streamlined, empty and abstract world that we find it difficult to find the terms for limiting power.

The human consequences of this striving for limitlessness are profound: “dislocation and deculturation;” “the destruction of established practices, institutions, ways of life, and values.”³⁹ We are left in effect homeless and amnesiac, stripped of place and memory, and exposed before power. Autonomous and “self-revivifying,” with its “unprecedented magnitudes” and its “peculiarly abstract quality,” Superpower is “at bottom, anti-human.”⁴⁰

Wolin calls our attention here to what he considers a transformation of our way of life no less profound and sweeping than the one Tocqueville perceived. Where democracy tore down aristocratic hierarchy, Superpower negates democratic freedom, public power, and pluralism. To grasp democracy’s plight, why democracy today is rendered either archaic or fugitive, we must comprehend the monolithic yet pervasive power of this new regime of Superpower. We must recognize its no less than “ontological ambitions” - the profound transformation of the real it seeks to induce. And we must recognize the resulting existential implications of this transformation, which are “as thoroughgoing as any experience of religious conversion.”⁴¹

This hegemony of economy, Wolin concludes, constitutes no less than a new type of totalitarianism, one Wolin describes as “inverted.” Its techniques of control are cast in terms of discipline, disorientation, and seduction rather than in the more overtly oppressive, coercive terms of force and domination. “The new form is represented not as ‘the state’ ... but as ‘the system;’” in turn control becomes a matter of assimilation and integration - a matter of leaving nothing outside⁴² Blurring the “domination of the state” by contracting its functions to the “private” sector, it is totalitarianism as administrative micromanagement, made possible by the fully synthesized and symbiotic political/economic system⁴³

Fueled “by the ever-expanding power made available by the integration of science and technology into the economy of capitalism,” this new totalitarian regime is,” Wolin writes, “Nazism turned upside down” “While it is a system that aspires to totality, it is driven by an ideology of the cost-effective rather than of a ‘master race’ ... , by the material rather than the ‘ideal.’ It may, and will, exploit its workers without duplicating the Nazi system of inefficient slave labor.”⁴⁴ This economic totalitarianism substitutes “profit and exploitation for war and ‘dynamic’ for ‘aggressive.’”⁴⁵ It is a matter not of the “perpetual mobilization” of “crude fascism,” but of “perpetual demobilization” by means of “continuous mobility.” We must understand it not in terms of the imposition of “rigid uniformities” but rather as “fashionism, conformity to incessant, inescapable change: in technologies, marketable skills, processes of production, and organized structures and strategies.” The consequence is “a sense of weakness, a collective futility that culminates in the erosion of the democratic faith, ... political apathy and the privatization of the self.”⁴⁶

Part II: Liberal Democracy

The Expansion of Democracy

Liberal democracy, Wolin writes, “is almost universally held to be the best form of government for the contemporary world. Its basic elements are formal provisions for equal civil liberties of all citizens; freely contested and periodic elections; mass political parties competing for the support of voters; elected officials who are accountable and removable by the electorate; a politics largely financed by powerful economic interests; and a constitution that specifies the authority and the powers of the main governmental organs and stipulates the rules controlling politics and policy-making. To this list should be added the ‘free market.’”⁴⁷ In symbiotic relationship with the market’s dynamic of competition and its mass demographic organization of rationally self-interested individuals, liberal democracy “is widely considered ... indispensable ... to a market economy” (which is almost universally held to be the best form of economy for the contemporary world).⁴⁸

We would thus be mistaken, Wolin argues, to take the universal appeal of democracy in liberal form as proof of the validity of the democratic hypothesis against all alternatives. What is “actually being measured by the claim of democratic legitimacy is not the vitality of democracy ... but the degree to which democracy is attenuated so as to serve other ends.”⁴⁹ The unquestioned universality of liberal democracy follows from its own abstractness and formalism - its talk of human rights and the individual; its routinizing procedural mechanisms - and so from its service to economy. The end-of-history hegemony of liberal democracy is largely a result of its assimilation into, and service to, the global hegemony of market capitalism. The unlimited *legitimacy* of liberal democracy is a function of the unlimited *efficiency* of capitalism. Liberal democracy has ridden capitalism’s coat-tails to the top.

When power was personified by kings and priests the liberal attempt to render power impersonal in the rule of law made sense as an oppositional movement. But when power is disembodied, when absolutism is less a matter of arbitrary power than of abstract and systematic power, the liberal form of democracy only reinforces the economy of power, against authentically democratic notions of shared power and engaged citizenship. Today, Wolin suggests, when we should fear the tyranny of the majority less and the totality of the system along with the apathy of the citizenry more, liberal democracy becomes part of the problem.

Some of the staunchest advocates of liberal democracy subscribe wholeheartedly to Wolin’s analysis. Stephen Homes, for instance writes: “It now seems obvious that liberalism can occasionally eclipse authoritarianism as a technique for accumulating political power. ... Liberalism is not allergic to political power. ... (It) is one of the most effective philosophies of state building ever contrived.”⁵⁰

Constitutionalized Democracy

Wolin argues that to understand how democracy is made useful to economy we must first recognize the “paradox at the center of the American Constitution and perhaps of modern constitutionalism generally;” constitutionalism emphasizes the restraint and division of power, but at the same time “makes possible the generation of power on a regular and assured basis.”⁵¹ Constitutional “constraints can be enabling,” as Holmes puts it.⁵² Power is *harnessed*, both contained by and contained in the constitutional

mechanism. Constitutionalism limits, authorizes, and organizes the generation of power. The question becomes: What types of power is restrained and what type made possible and authorized?

The constitutionalized form of democratic power is expansive in time and space, made to govern both perpetually and nationally. It is a democracy fitted to the modern nation state (with its scattered, diverse, and otherwise-occupied populace) through the organizing devices of representation, elections, parties, interest groups, and so forth. For Wolin, however, this constitutionalization of democracy - rendering democracy abstract and systematic and normal - turns democracy against itself. The “demos” is prohibited from ruling as a condition of a system structured so that “the people” reign. Constitutionalism is a matter of “enclosing the dynamics of politics within a determinate structure and designated political space..., conceptualizing various institutions..., normalizing their operation..., and projecting them over time. The purpose ... (is) the establishment of stability through the containment of the demos... (Democracy is) domesticated, rendered stable, orderly, and just.”⁵³ Democracy is “enabled” or “organized” by being disciplined.

Institutionalization thus “marks the attenuation of democracy: leaders begin to appear; hierarchies develop...; order, procedure, and precedent displace a more *spontaneous* politics: in retrospect the latter appears as disorganized, inefficient.”⁵⁴ Fitting the free-flow of democracy to the ossified routines of conventional politics “has the effect of reducing democracy to a system while taming its politics by *process*... When democracy is settled into a stable form, such as a written constitution, it is also settled down and rendered predictable. Then it becomes the stuff of manipulation: of periodic elections that are managed and controlled, of public opinion that is shaped, cajoled, misled, and then polled...”⁵⁵ Such a tamed and inhibited political system is designed for “administration rather than democracy.”⁵⁶ Thus, Wolin concludes, a “political constitution is not the fulfillment of democracy but its transfiguration into a ‘regime’ and hence a stultified and partial reification;” democracy is “a *phenomenon* that can be housed, but may not be realized, within a form.”⁵⁷

We should think of this domestication of democracy by form not so much as adapting democracy to the modern “problem of scale” but rather to the requirements of economy: “requirements of organization ... or its equivalents ‘bureaucracy,’ ‘administration,’ or ‘management’ ... specifying a set of integrated conditions for the production of power. Among these are a hierarchical system of authority; centralization of decision-making; division of labor and specialization, especially in the form of professional politicians; and increasing reliance on expert knowledge”⁵⁸ Democracy is “smoothed” to permit the “effective organization of the power to govern.”⁵⁹ Such a democracy is “thin” and “procedural,” bound by rules and regulations, and reduced to “the formalistic and abstract politics centering upon the national government.” This is a politics of “image” rather than “substance” and “immediate... experience.”⁶⁰ And this “emptiness allows (democracy) to be used for almost any political purpose, including purposes that are diametrically opposed” to those of authentic democracy.⁶¹ Liberal democracy is not democracy made practical but democracy compromised.

Wolin concludes that to distinguish between authentic democracy and the liberal democratic form of government, we should distinguish between “politics” and “the political.” Similar to Lefort, Wolin writes that politics “refers to the legitimized and

public contestation, primarily by organized and unequal social powers, over access to the resources available to the public authorities of the collectivity.”⁶² Politics is economics by other means. The political, on the other hand, (and this is quite different than Lefort’s use of the term), is “an expression of the idea that a free society composed of diversities can nonetheless enjoy *moments of commonality* when, through public deliberation, collective power is used to promote or protect the well-being of the collectivity.”⁶³ The political is cast in the language of congregation. “To be political,” then, “is not identical with being a part of government or being associated with a political party. These are *structured roles*, and typically they are highly bureaucratized. For these reasons, they are opposed to the *authentically political*.”⁶⁴

Wolin does not shy away from the radical implications of this separation of democracy and state. On a conceptual level, no form of government can be considered democratic. “Democracy needs to be reconceived as something other than a form of government... Democracy in the late modern world cannot be a complete political system.”⁶⁵ Further, even “from antiquity ... political theorists ... have made a category mistake by treating democracy as a possible constitutional form for an entire society.”⁶⁶ Government and state “prefer order and stability to experiment and spontaneity” and so “the idea of a democratic state is a contradiction in terms.”⁶⁷ Democracy is no longer democratic when it becomes affiliated with the types of power that a governing state requires, just as religion is no longer properly sacred and spiritual when it becomes involved in the material power of the temporal world, whether of state or church.

Liberal Theory: Rights, Law, Order

The domestication of democracy by constitutional form is, for Wolin, the evident aspiration of liberal theories of democracy. Prioritizing liberal legality over democratic vitality, liberal theory works to depoliticize democracy by rendering it abstract and systematic.

Wolin argues that John Rawls, particularly in *Political Liberalism*, offers the paradigmatic attempt to circumscribe democracy. Specifically, by “assigning a mechanism, ‘constructivism,’ precedence over politics,” he attempts to impose an apolitical/prepolitical settlement of the political, thereby confining democracy to an objective normative form.⁶⁸ For the sake of legitimacy and stability, Rawls theorizes “agreement” as prior to contestation; a sort of abstract consensus becomes the foundational prerequisite of democracy. With Rawls, “the meaning and scope of politics is to be ‘settled’ beforehand, that is before conflict and controversy among social groups and the alignment of classes is recognized. (Politics is settled) into constitutional arrangements of representative government, periodic elections, a bill of rights, and judicial review ... lest it unsettle broader social concerns.” And this settlement is itself abstracted from the historical and cultural context of political existence and “made to appear to take place in a pure ‘political’ realm outside politics...”⁶⁹ Democracy here is drained of all but its most abstract normative elements.

Thus “democracy is not a distinctive presence in *Liberalism* ... Its supreme political value is not dispersed power but individual liberty; its pivotal institution ... is the supreme court; and it locates the true expression of political identity not in the vitality of local institutions but in the constitution Democracy is invoked only to be subaltern,” denying certain political “possibilities, realities, and ... memories.”⁷⁰

Conceptualizing a democracy without the demos as a political actor, Rawls' "politics of reason" is a "neutralizing" rather than a "neutral" principle, resulting in the notion of democracy as a "hermetically sealed condition of deliberation that allows rationality to rule ..."⁷¹ Against such an ideal of conflict-suppression-through-abstraction, Wolin argues that in an "age of vast concentrations of corporate and governmental power, the desperate problem of democracy is not to develop better ways of cooperation but to develop a fairer system of contestation ..."⁷²

Along these lines, Rawls perpetuates the anti-political orientation of political theory that long predates liberal contract theory. From Plato onward, this depoliticization has taken the form of "the constitutionalizing of surplus democracy" - of "depersonalization, legalism," and "objective normativity."⁷³ As with Rawls' notion of justice/stability, "theorists of constitutionalism qualified the question of who should rule and how they should rule by inventing the question of *what* should rule ... The essence of the contrast, which became, as well, the essence of constitutionalism, was between depersonalized principles and partisan politics" - between passion and reason, the people and the law. The "objective status of (such) principles (are) contrasted with the flux, uncertainty, and subjectivism attributed to politics." Thus theory speaks the language of constitutionalism, easily accommodating the "mechanisms that ... force the politics of democracy to be law abiding or, more precisely, to express itself structurally."⁷⁴ Democracy becomes no more than a list of administrative procedures, rules, and regulations constructed to re-present a law-abiding people, packaged as the constitutionally mediated idea of "the voice of the people."

This depoliticization of democracy, Wolin argues, takes shape today primarily in the reduction of democratic equality to the abstraction of equal rights - in the "liberal formula" of "Equal Rights + Freedom = Democracy."⁷⁵ Authentic equality is lost in the "idealizing blur" of the "ready-to-wear categories of equal rights for everyone."⁷⁶ Rawls is again exemplary. "The fundamental primacy accorded individual rights justifies unequal persons and powers, but because every citizen can claim them formally, the norm of equal rights gains priority over the fact of inequality. Thus liberal inequality is democratized and democratic equality is liberalized." Just how equal rights justify inequality "is illustrated when Rawls, apparently without sensing its antidemocratic character, insists on equal opportunity for all to positions of political and social power, that is, to positions in hierarchical organizations where they can exert unequal power and influence while receiving disproportionate compensation and protection ..."⁷⁷

Moreover, Wolin writes, engaged citizenship is diminished to "a matter of being able to claim rights" which derive from some "higher" realm outside of and above politics and in relation to which politics is understood as a threat.⁷⁸ We have come to assume that "the extension of rights (is) an advance toward the realization of democracy. In actuality, the ideal of rights is "usurping the place of civic activity ... (within a) liberal civic culture (that) never supplied any content ... (or) guidance to the exercise of rights."⁷⁹

As traditionally conceived, then, liberal constitutional theory is naturally amenable to the dictates of economy: to the primacy of law and so to the domestication of democracy by form; to the reductive elimination of difference through abstraction; to the paving-over of historical experience and cultural existence in the quest for objective reason and systematic order; to the reduction of equality to equal rights. Wolin

characterizes his own project as the attempt “to theorize democracy without resorting to anti-democratic or undemocratic impositions.”⁸⁰

The Imperial Citizen

With its domestication by liberal constitutionalism, Wolin writes, our democracy has become “a democracy without the demos as actor.”⁸¹ At a basic level, this is because we have “virtually ceased to think of ourselves as political people.”⁸² The citizenry no longer recognizes itself in political terms; it is not conscious of itself collectively, as a public, but instead sees the political role of the individual limited to that of “a voter, job-holder, taxpayer, and rule observer.” We have come to accept “a collective identity in which the collectivity - ‘We the People,’ in the brave words of the Constitution - becomes the passive object of power rather than the active political subject.”⁸³ Liberal political association is made to mirror capitalist economic association. The result is “the anomalous presence of the powerless many in a democracy;” a “ventriloquous democracy,” conceived in terms “that allowed the American political animal to evolve into the domesticated creature of media politics,” easily manipulated by “communication conglomerates, media pundits, television, public opinion surveys, and political consultants.”⁸⁴ Over the past fifty years we have witnessed “the demise of the political citizen and the emergence of the American voter,” characterized by a “passive and deferential” civic disposition, and the self-conception of “playing a ‘role’ in a ‘system - a supportive role requiring only (an occasional) vote, so that those who rule (can) thereby claim ‘authority’ for their actions and exactions.”⁸⁵

The product of this process of domestication is what Wolin terms the “imperial citizen,” characterized above all by the *willingness* to trade the democratic exercise of power, with its inherently small scale and limited potential, for “participation” in and identification with much more spectacular and effective power-systems. The imperial citizenry embraces shock and awe, even their own. They accept being “shrunk” to voters and “dwarfed” by the “spatial dimensions” and “power concentrations” of empire.⁸⁶ The citizenry demands “strong leadership” - with the powers and responsibilities of the presidency expanding, and those of the citizenry shrinking. They abandon themselves to being “periodically courted, warned, and confused but otherwise kept at a distance from actual decision-making.” They happily trade a democratic mode of being for an economic mode of being, accepting “purchasing power and ‘consumer sovereignty’” in return for “the surrender of their political power, and ... the practice of the arts of the citizen.”⁸⁷ At the same time, even as they welcome being “relieved of participatory obligations,” they are to be “fervently patriotic.” The ideal imperial citizen is “apolitical but not alienated,” participating “not in power but in the rituals and festivals of power.”⁸⁸ His sole function is to periodically grant legitimacy, or at least to accept that legitimacy has been granted.

Today, Wolin writes, we are in desperate need of a “genuine alternative.” We need to develop “a politics that cannot be co-opted, which is precisely what has happened to the original democratic dream of basing democracy upon voting, elections, and popular political parties... Democracy needs a non-cooptable politics, that is, a politics that renders useless the forms of power developed by the modern state and business corporations.”⁸⁹

What, then, is to be done? Confronted by the post-modern Leviathan of Superpower, what is to be done? Superpower's totalitarian economy of power is anti-democratic, even antihuman, yet we the imperial citizenry embrace the world it has wrought as second nature. Liberal democracy - democracy at once expanded and domesticated by constitutional form - is no solution. It is just the economy of power imposed upon politics, the rhetoric of democracy co-opted and made to serve its own subversion. It is the abstract and systematized politics - the streamlined simulation of democracy - proper to the economic polity.

In this context, Wolin argues that authentic democracy is rendered either "archaic" or "fugitive." It preserves either as vestigial remnant or as revolutionary moment. As we shall see, Wolin himself comes to reject the former as any sort of effective solution to the problems of the day. Such a limited, powerless practice of democracy might stand as a means of escape from domestication, but it cannot in any meaningful way oppose 21st century totalitarianism. In turn, Wolin switches his emphasis to the idea of democracy as an event wherein the demos transgresses the laws and orders of economy. This is a form-breaking democracy, undomesticated and wild, that if only for a moment generates the power to stand up to Superpower. And in living fast it dies young, not lasting long enough to be corrupted and co-opted.

I argue in what follows that fugitive democracy comes to take on the characteristics of its adversary. In his efforts to theorize a power-wielding democracy, Wolin offers an imperial demos that is as eager as Superpower to transgress limits and laws. He offers a revolutionary democracy that celebrates rupture from conventional norms and forms as much as postmodern power encourages rupture from cultural norms and forms. He offers a notion of collective action motivated if not by economic efficiency, than by economic necessity - we come together as a demos largely to oppose our material oppression. In either case, the mode of human association is depicted as spontaneous and unspoken, outside the need for mediating words and argument. And conceptualizing the unity and energy of the demos as produced by external crisis, and as essentially in opposition to the enemy of Superpower, Wolin offers a sort of executive action or emergency power mode of democratic action and association.

Ultimately, with these characteristics fugitive democracy comes to seem less the best we can hope for in times of economy than the best type of democracy as such. Back to ancient Athens, Wolin suggests, authentic democracy can only be fugitive democracy. Recalling Lefort, Wolin's democracy is simply synonymous with revolution, whether great or small.

Part III: Archaic Democracy

Domesticity versus Domestication

We have seen how post/modern power strives to in effect simplify reality, eliminating through abstraction and systematization all those particularities that muck up the perpetual motion machine of power-generation. Against this theoretical depopulation of existence, democratic archaism stands for the preservation of local cultures and histories - the conservation of the democratic many.

To say democracy is archaic is a statement of fact for Wolin: authentic democracy has been "excluded, forgotten, passed by."⁹⁰ At the same time, Wolin conceptualizes this

very obsolescence as a normative resource because it offers an oppositional pluralism to monolithic Superpower. The archaic is significant precisely because it could not be assimilated and so was left behind (as we shall see, even the non-democratic archaic is therefore worth preserving). Archaism introduces a countervailing cultural complexity to the reductive, uni-forming inclination of modern power. It counters the economy of power with a sort of primitivism, and the globalizing reach of economy with what Wolin calls “democratic feudalism” and “democratic fundamentalism.” It frustrates conglomeration through dissonance, like the difference of language that stymied power at Babel. It constitutes, Wolin writes, “the domestication of power by an unplotted conspiracy of difference.”⁹¹ While Tocqueville’s archaic aristocracy was to “teach democracy the importance of providing counter principles at the center of its system,” the “anomalous” and “anachronistic” element of democracy serve as a “counterprinciple to a new, postmodern regime.”⁹²

The key here is that archaic democracy’s *radicalism* thus lies in its *conservatism*. Archaism is continuity in the service of disorganization, remembrance as resistance. Wolin writes: “The central challenge at this moment is not about reconciliation but about dissonance, not about democracy’s supplying legitimacy to totality but about nurturing a discordant democracy - ... *discordant* because, in being *rooted in the ordinary*, it *affirms the value of limits*.”⁹³ In its very domesticity archaic democracy resists domestication. As archaism’s manifesto, Wolin offers: “the crucial challenge to radical democracy is to be as zealous in preventing things of great value to democracy from passing into oblivion as in bringing into the world new political forms of action, participation, and being together in the world. Radicals need to cultivate a remembrance of things past, for in the capitalist civilization ... of ‘creative destruction,’ memory is a subversive weapon... What is at stake simultaneously is the past *and* the future. Radicals cannot leave the past to conservatives... (The) highest aim (is) renewal and radical change.”⁹⁴

Memory and Place

Against power’s streamlining of existence, Wolin identifies Montesquieu as the leading defender of the particularities of the cultural *places* in which we live our lives. His “ideal might be (stated) as power moderated by the complexities of political culture or, more briefly, as acculturated power.”⁹⁵ Wolin juxtaposes Montesquieu’s culturally oriented thought with Cartesian reason, which is “stripped of myth, superstition, and religious fable, ... custom and tradition” and reduced to “scientific and mathematical modes of analysis.”⁹⁶ Cartesian reason, striving for “total harmony,” constructs a “monological” reality “abstracted from social context” - one that “obeys” the “necessary truths” of universal law. Based upon the “uncontested power of reason” law “appears ‘irresistible’ and ‘self-evident’ because the self has nothing to resist with. Selves, so to speak, have been severed from their ‘evidence,’ which has been left behind in the context from which they have been abstracted.”⁹⁷ Stripped of situation, the self stands naked and powerless before the necessity of reason and law.

Positing a “social whole” that has not been “assembled by theoretical reason but deposited by historical actions and inactions,” Montesquieu offers no such idealization of totality.⁹⁸ Society here is not “the artifact of (a) single founder” or a “‘system’ of rationally arranged and interconnected institutions.” but a rooted “‘labyrinth’ (characterized by) tortuous ..., undesigned, unpremeditated qualities... that time and

custom have smoothed into a working arrangement.” Its laws are a matter of accretion rather than of imposition and should be understood not “as “commands but as reciprocal relationships expressive of the natures of those to whom the laws apply.” In this sense, Montesquieu theorizes the “multiplicity” and “complexity” inherent in the ad hoc “accommodations” of practices to places - to “climate, geography, religion, morals, manners, and political understandings.”⁹⁹ Against the empty space of Cartesianism, Montesquieu’s world is cluttered and textured by all those variations of local places.

In addition to the conservation of a sense of place, Wolin speaks for the preservation *memory*. The central antagonist here is not Descartes but Hobbes, and more generally the “art of forgetting” that enables the social contract.¹⁰⁰ For Hobbes, the central demand of the move from nature to civil society - formulated as “compleasance” in his fifth law of nature - is that “every man strive to accommodate himself to the rest.”¹⁰¹ Accommodation requires the mutual absolution of past wrongs and resentments. Peace is a matter of forgetting, not allowing oneself to be buried by the past. The prospect of socialization hinges on leaving behind historical baggage, wiping the slate clean and starting over again. “In the act of reconstituting the self into a civic self, forgetting becomes a rite of passage and as such a condition of membership.”¹⁰² Hobbes’ covenant is thus “a device to incorporate social amnesia into the foundation of society.” The result is a society of “blank individuals who fake their nature by denying historically acquired and multiple identities”¹⁰³ Any perceived threat of faction or conflict or unruliness is to trigger the reversion to the peace-producing moment of contract when everyone put aside their differences for the sake of becoming one.

And the abstraction from identity and difference by which society is conceived enables the absolute sovereignty by which society is enforced. “A lack of traditions and customary institutions allows the will to extend itself almost without limit,” and so it is “made to order for despotism or for centralized bureaucracy.” Confronted only by a “vista of unimpeded action,” power can be truly unlimited.¹⁰⁴

Wolin goes on to argue that the creative destruction of the economy of power is “on the way to accomplishing the social amnesia that the seventeenth-century contractualists had only glimpsed.”¹⁰⁵ The acceleration of time and frequency of flux so characteristic of the post/modern celebration of innovation (whether scientific or economic) has left us amnesiac and homeless, disoriented and defenseless before the relentless workings of power. In turn, the conservation of memories and places stands not for “an atavistic urge to return to a simpler age,” but for “the creation of conditions which encourage complexities that live by different laws and defy Cartesian solutions” and Hobbesian accommodations.¹⁰⁶

For Wolin, the founding debate of the current American regime was precisely between a politics of the ordinary and the local, and an abstract and distant politics seated in a single national government. The choice was between “a *constitution* of government on one hand and a political *culture* on the other.”¹⁰⁷

The Revolution of 1776, Wolin writes, was “a protest of the periphery against the center . . . , of local liberties and institutions against . . . remote and hence abstract imperial authority.”¹⁰⁸ It was a “a revolution against centralized power, rule from a distance, and uniform principles” and so had a distinct “reactionary element” to it.¹⁰⁹ The ratification of the Constitution signified the suppression of this pluralism - *e pluribus unum*.

Pluralism was represented as “primal chaos.” Unity was represented as elevated, on “a different political plane, abstract rather than immediate, intellectual rather than sentimental, administrative or executive in its outlook rather than participatory or suffrage-oriented”¹¹⁰

The counter-revolution of 1787 thus marked the beginning of a return to empire and “the uniformity that a certain kind of power prefers.” It was a rebellion not against the “arbitrary power” of an “unjust and illegal” British Crown, but against the “inefficiency” and “weakness . . . associated with difference . . . exception, anomaly . . . (and) local peculiarities”¹¹¹ The “politics of particularism” represented by the thirteen states was depicted as irrational, “inherited and regressive,” something that must be replaced by “rational foundations” and “rational administration.”¹¹² And the discourse developed by *The Federalist* centered on the basic terms of political economy: “‘system,’ ‘efficiency,’ ‘energy,’ ‘power,’ and ‘administration.’”¹¹³ Combining “Old Testament conceptions of monotheistic power” with “eighteenth-century conceptions of a rational science of politics,” Publius justified the constitutional counter-revolution against the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation as “an exodus from a condition of political polytheism.” It was an exodus from the “disunity, even dismemberment, weakness, and division . . . of a nonsystem without a center.”¹¹⁴ The avowed goal was to found a commercial republic, with a concomitant political economy, conducive to the concentration/generation of power.

Yet, in one crucial respect this rhetoric of constitution was misleading. Given the existence of the diverse political cultures of the thirteen states, along with “state governments, various institutions of local government, jury systems, and a vast array of spontaneous ad hoc life forms,” the Federalist science and economy of power cannot be understood as the solution “to a political vacuum.” Instead, it must be seen as “the superimposition of a new . . . national form of politics.”¹¹⁵ Constitutional ratification was as much an act of destruction as it was of creation, not bringing order out of anarchy but re-ordering (depopulating) what was already in existence. The problem of a political vacuum had to be rhetorically sold before it could be solved.

Ultimately, American constitutionalism effaced the very idea of difference. The key document is *Federalist 10*. Wanting to protect the diversity associated with inequality of faculties and acquisitions, yet “expressing the fear of being overwhelmed by difference,” Madison made the pivotal move of representing difference as faction.¹¹⁶ The American people were to forget or forsake their deep regional and religious differences in their economic factionalism, which despite its cacophonous quality is actually based upon the homogeneity of identities and interests. Madison domesticates difference, rendering it in terms of negotiable interests that can be accommodated (compromised) so long as they are “compelled to appeal to a center of authority to mediate” disputes.¹¹⁷

In significant ways, Wolin argues, we can consider ourselves the creatures rather than creators of the constitutional order. We have been regimented to our constitutional form and our commercial republic. In this context, Wolin writes, any counter-revolution to the constitutional counter-revolution - any return to the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation - will be dismissed as reactionary. With the present hegemony of economy - when, for instance, the centralization and extension of power is taken as definitional of progress - the archaism of the Anti-Federalists appears extreme and fanatical. For Wolin, anti-federalism is the beating heart of

radicalism today. In a passage that would seem to characterize his own position perfectly, Wolin writes: “the contemporary inheritors of the antifederalist tradition have seen themselves as radicals fighting against the centralization of power and the overproduction of it.”¹¹⁸ Their conservative vision is “driven to radicalism because there is no way for (their) conception of life forms to be maintained without opposing a system of power in which change has become routinized.”¹¹⁹

Democratic Feudalism and Democratic Fundamentalism

Tocqueville famously argued that in many respects democracy in France was never more robust than during feudalism, prior to the centralization and bureaucratization of power inaugurated under the old regime monarchy and accelerated by the French Revolution. While not a period of equality, power was never more dispersed and limited, and so freedom was never more extensive, than during the rule of the feudal aristocracy. It was an era of pure particularism, and of the ingrained “landedness” of traditional and customary social orders. Wolin theorizes feudalism along similarly democratic lines. Feudalism signifies a society in which “inheritance, with its implicit historicity, is the master notion.”¹²⁰ It is a disposition of preservation rather than innovation - of “tending to” and “cultivating” one’s own cultural place, understood as “a complex of shared beliefs, values, habits, practices, and experiences that define the particularity of a place and envelop its politics.” It thus “centers politics around ... habits of competence or skill that are routinely required... in the intimate political experience ... of everyday existence.”¹²¹ Because it was “a conception that depicted and explained political society as a concatenation of differences ... it could be said to pit political culture against political rationality, the centrifugal tendencies of the one against the centripetal impulses of the other.”¹²²

Like authentic democracy, then, feudalism stands against abstraction and systematization and for the entirely uneconomical and inefficient dispersal of power to the small-scale of first-hand localism. Like authentic democracy, feudalism is cluttered with what Tocqueville calls “intermediate bodies” that serve as speed-bumps in the generation of power.¹²³ Feudalism and authentic democracy both subordinate the needs of the economy of power to the non-malleable, non-negotiable “identity” of “historical and biographical beings” and to the “biography of a place.” As ways of being, they are less concerned with “straining toward the future” and “acting effectively” than with “the preservation of pastness ... (as) an important element in the narrative structure of identity.”¹²⁴ Democratic feudalism, we might say, represents the premodern antithesis to postmodern powers tendency toward totalitarianism.

The homogenization of “feudal” differences as a means of greasing the wheels power is, for Wolin, the singular trait of American political development. As opposed to the famous Tocqueville/Louis Hartz thesis that America had no feudal tradition to overcome, Wolin argues that such a tradition is precisely what has been paved over, beginning with the ratification of the Constitution and accelerating with most every so-called turning point in American history. The high-point of this tradition of affirming difference and particularity was the “feudal revolt” of the American Revolution.¹²⁵ The slow erosion (punctuated by a few periods of rapid retreat) of this democratic and antistatist line - extending from the Anti-Federalists “to the Virginia -Kentucky resolutions (1798-99), to the Hartford Convention, the nullification controversy, and the

Civil War” - is the actual political history of America. While the Civil War destroyed “the last serious defense of feudal politics,” the New Deal marked the beginning of the consequent “triumph of the state.”¹²⁶ We are left today with a “reversal in the status of democracy, from being modern to being archaic.” Like feudalism before it, “participatory politics centered around small towns, villages, cities, and state governments” has come to seem anachronistic, obsolete, and even bizarre.¹²⁷

As odd as the association of democracy and feudalism might seem, Wolin goes further to formulate what he terms “democratic fundamentalism.” In today’s ubiquitous dichotomy of fundamentalism and globalization - “Jihad vs. McWorld,” as Benjamin Barber famously phrases it - Wolin suggest that authentic democracy has more in common with the former, or at least that the common economy of both democracy and fundamentalism is globalization.

At times, Wolin suggests that democracy is forced to fundamentalist extremes by current conditions, forced to fight a rear-guard action against totalizing economy. Fundamentalist democracy is the notion of democracy “dictated by the inherently anti-democratic structures and norms characteristic of the ... the contemporary corporation and the Superpower state.”¹²⁸ At other times, Wolin suggest that there is a more intrinsic connection between democracy and fundamentalism. “Religious fundamentalism, ‘moralism,’ and racial, religious, and ethnic prejudices belong to the same historical culture as traditions of local self-government, decentralized politics, participatory democracy, and sentiments of egalitarianism ... (Both) are suspicious of distant authorities, centralized power, and new moral fashions. (The) prejudices (of fundamentalism) appear as anachronisms. But then, so does democracy itself.”¹²⁹

In either case, fundamentalism is allied to authentic democracy insofar as it is the expression of irreconcilable, non-negotiable difference that simply cannot be homogenized, abstracted from, or reduced to economic factionalism. In this sense, both hold out against the centralizing, depopulating thrust of post/modernity. Archaism, Wolin writes, has found its defenders in many brands of anti-modern centrifugalism: “the Klan, militiamen and women, neo-Nazis, Protestant fundamentalists, would-be censors of public and school libraries, champions of an ‘original Constitution.’”¹³⁰ While not always appealing, such non-accomodationism serves (like Tocqueville’s aristocracy) to introduce countervailing dissonance into the process of uni-forming. Their political value lies not in their truth or justice, but in their role as “provocateurs whose passionate commitments can arose self-consciousness in the public... The resulting controversies are crucial to the cause of anti-totality and its vitality.”¹³¹

Fundamentalism is thus allied to democracy insofar as it is the “religion” not of the “oppressed or deprived ... but of the (those) threatened ... by a relentlessly modernizing society that exposes their most cherished beliefs as archaic.” Protestant fundamentalism was shaped as a direct response to “efforts at modifying religious teachings to harmonize them with the findings of modern science;” it hungered “for nothing so much as a return to ... original principles.”¹³² In its archaism, democracy too is shaped as a direct response to efforts at harmonizing democracy to science and economy; it hungers for nothing so much as the preservation of our original slow-motion, small-scale democratic mode of being.

The Powerlessness of Archaic Democracy

Of late, Wolin himself has argued that theorizing democracy in terms of archaism - of feudal decentralization/fundamental difference - is inadequate to the challenges of the day. Archaism amounts to quietism, to escape rather than struggle. He writes: "While it is of the utmost importance that democrats support and encourage political activity at the grassroots level, it is equally necessary that the political limitations of such activity be recognized. It is politically incomplete. This is because the localism that is the strength of grassroots organizations is also their limitation. There are major problems in our society that are general in nature and necessitate modes of vision and action that are comprehensive rather than parochial."¹³³ General problems requires, beyond holding fast to particularism, democratic modes of action that can operate at a general level. A politics rooted in the ordinary cannot respond to the extraordinary power generated today. The very limitations archaism introduces into the economy of power rebound to limit the democratic generation of power. The uncompromising difference at the heart of archaism is so pronounced that democratic association along with economic systematization are dis-organized. A sort of identity politics of geography, archaic democracy tends toward the logic of secession from any mode of association not based on the quasi-familial blood-ties of memory and place. In this sense, archaic democracy is self-defeating - quite literally a lost cause.

The dilemma follows of how to envision a mode of "organization" and power generation wherein democracy rather than economy, with its greater efficiency, serves as the integrating agent. The difficulty lies in formulating a mode of association that does not efface difference, and that does not follow from economic abstraction and liberal formalism and institutionalization. To be effective, democracy needs to realize its power; to be authentic, this mode of realization must not fall into materialism or be co-opted into the economic language of organization, systematization, and so forth.

To this end Wolin theorizes democracy as fugitive. Wolin writes that "a range of problems and atrocities exists that a locally confined democracy cannot resolve. Like pluralism, interest group politics, and multicultural politics, localism cannot surmount its limitations except by seeking out the evanescent homogeneity of a broader political."¹³⁴ The solution to the problem of envisioning a powerful but essentially non-economical collective actor is to render its homogeneity evanescent. Democratic association and action are effective but incorruptible because they come into material existence for only a moment. The demos rides into town but doesn't stick around to govern.

Far from encouraging or empowering political activity at the grassroots level, I argue that fugitive democracy undermines such activity. Indeed, in many respects fugitive democracy seems more in accord with postmodern power than with archaism. The radicalism of fugitive democracy takes shape not as conservation but as revolutionary rupture with the patterns of everyday existence. It is a matter not of preserving cultural counter-formations against constitutional formalism but of transgressive form-breaking. A wholly *extraordinary* politics, its momentary quality stands in sharp contrast to the continuity of memory and the biography of place so central to archaism. Revolution replaces inheritance as the "master notion" of democracy; the metaphor of "overflowing" supplants that of grass-"rootedness." Ultimately, I argue that fugitive democracy amounts not to an imposition of limits upon power, but to a sort of counter-limitlessness. As we shall see, where archaic democracy is allied with feudalism

and fundamentalism, fugitive democracy is allied to imperialism - the demos' squandering passion for empire.

I conclude by suggesting that all three forms of democracy Wolin identifies - liberal, archaic, and fugitive - do have one basic similarity, though: they are incapable of envisioning political associations that take shape *despite* differences. Liberal democracy abstracts from deep difference even while formulating "association" as mere *aggregation*; for the system to work individuals need to act similarly but not necessarily collectively. Archaic democracy formulates association as the *community of memory and place*, as a sort of tribalism. Fugitive democracy takes shape not as the community of memory and place, but as the *community of victims*; the demos coalesces around the shared experience of oppression. The options seem to be individualism or communalism, (whether continuous or momentary) with nothing in between - association via abstraction or in terms of authenticity with nothing in between. Collective action is either tallied by a third party in terms of demographic and behavioral statistics, or it comes about through a sort of spontaneous affiliation with (in one way or another) identical others. All three modes of association are thus in effect unspoken, with no need for mediating words and arguments.

Part IV: Fugitive Democracy

Democracy as Revolution

Democracy, Wolin writes in a key passage, contains within it "two diametrically opposed notions that symbolize two equally opposed states of affairs. One is the settled structure of politics and governmental authority typically called a constitution, and the other is the unsettling political movement typically called revolution. Stated somewhat starkly: constitution signifies the suppression of revolution; revolution the destruction of constitution."¹³⁵ Wolin urges us to recognize that authentic democracy takes shape exclusively around the latter pole. We should embrace "the familiar charges that democracy is inherently unstable, inclined toward anarchy, and identified with revolution... Instead of assuming that ... the problem is to adapt democracy to the requirements of organization, we might think of democracy as resistant to the rationalizing conceptions of power and its organization. This democracy might be summed up as the idea and practice of rational disorganization."¹³⁶

Historically, democracy has been associated with the revolt of the many over the few or the one. The "democratic agon" is "performed," as Wolin puts it, in "revolution or popular uprising, collective disobedience, and mass protest."¹³⁷ In turn, democracy is metaphorically represented as passion over reason, energy over order, movement over settlement, flux over form, openness and closure, anarchy over tyranny, and so forth.

Conceptualized along these lines, democracy necessarily comes to a cross-road when it is time to transition from the revolt of the many to the rule of the many - from questioning to decision-making, as it were. Democracy can stay true to itself, to its original vital impulse, and remain in the street, or be housed in attenuated form in conventional forum. During revolution the "demos as autonomous agent ... gathers its power from outside the system" as the "political challenge of the demos inevitably overflows ... *customary* and *institutional* boundaries."¹³⁸ When the revolt ends and "the permanent institutionalization of politics" begins, the "democracy carried along by revolution comes to appear as surplus."¹³⁹ In ordinary times democracy's dynamic

appears “undisciplined,” “excessive, irregular and spasmodic.”¹⁴⁰ Similar to Superpower, democracy’s characteristic virtue is its own overflowing excess, which is deemed out of order after the revolution.

Liberal constitutionalism is precisely that mechanism whereby democracy is disciplined. The avowed ambition is to tame “continuous struggle” by means of “reified law.”¹⁴¹ With its discourse of objective reason - impersonal, impartial, higher - as vulgar passion’s harness, constitutionalism has always been as opposed to democracy as to absolutism. It amounts to an “attack upon the vitality and energy displayed by a demos. It is no exaggeration to say that one of the, if not the, main projects of ancient constitutional theorists, such as Plato (*The Laws*), Aristotle, Polybius, and Cicero, as well as of the modern constitutionalists, such as the authors of *The Federalist* and Tocqueville, was to dampen, frustrate, sublimate, and defeat the democratic passions. The main devices were: the rule of law and especially the idea of a sacrosanct ‘fundamental law’ or constitution safeguarded from the ‘gusts of popular passions’; the idea of checks and balances; separation of powers with its attempt to quarantine the ‘people’ by confining its direct representation to one branch of the legislature; the ‘refining’ process of indirect elections; and suffrage restrictions. The aim was not simply to check democracy but to discourage it by making it difficult for those who, historically, had almost no leisure time for politics, to achieve political goals.”¹⁴²

Archaism too would seem to constrain democratic excesses. In the dichotomy of “settled structures” versus “unsettling movement,” archaic democracy’s discourse of complexity and local *tradition* no less than liberal democracy’s abstract and universal *reason* frustrates revolutionary democracy’s simplifying and overflowing *passions*. “The rhetoric of the desperate is likely to be a simplifying one, reflective of conditions reduced to essentials. A rhetoric of complexity, ever since Burke, has found favor with those whose expectations are secure.”¹⁴³ Complexity obstructs democratic power just as with economic power; simplification - the reduction to oneness - remains above all a metaphor for power. Settled structures, whether constitutional or culture, threaten authentic democracy’s basic unruliness and restlessness. And democracy’s unsettling movement threatens archaic memory and place. “Revolution might be defined,” Wolin writes, as the “transgression of *inherited* forms. It is the extreme antithesis to a settled constitution, whether that constitution is represented by documents (‘basic laws’) or by recognized systems or practice.”¹⁴⁴ Indeed, revolution means “snapping the continuity between past and future” and “the destruction of ... prior identity.”¹⁴⁵ Revolution “wants to begin history, not continue it.”¹⁴⁶

On Wolin’s account, then, the inevitable course of democratic movement is from youthful and wild squandering to economization and domestication. Wolin identifies the overthrow communism in central and Eastern Europe as a leading example. During the revolt, “politics was primarily the affair of ‘civil society,’ not of conventional political parties or parliamentary processes. Various extralegal groups of ... ordinary citizens energized and sustained revolutionary movements whose internal politics was remarkably participatory and egalitarian. After the success of those movements, a different politics began to take shape, a politics of organized parties, professional politicians, and economic interest groups. Above all, it was a politics in which the overriding problems were declared to be economic.”¹⁴⁷ Paradoxically, democracy’s success marks the

beginning of its own attenuation. Democratic revolutions “seem to lose their dynamic once they succeed.”¹⁴⁸ We return to this point below.

Momentary Democracy

With the association of democracy and revolution, it becomes unclear whether democracy’s fugitive character follows from the post/modern conditions of the economy of power or from democracy’s own principle. Is democracy on the run from Superpower or of its own accord? Is democracy contingently rendered “rare” and “episodic” or is it intrinsically so?¹⁴⁹ In theorizing democracy as an overflowing but fleeting moment is Wolin attempting to capture its current limits or its essence, its failure or its zenith?

At times Wolin suggests that democracy need not be merely episodic, and that the democratic practice of politics might continue after the revolutionary moment. Democracy and revolution are not synonymous; revolution is just the negative first stage in the realization of democratic politics. “Revolutions activate the demos and destroys boundaries that bar access to political experience Thus revolutionary transgression is the means by which the demos makes itself political.”¹⁵⁰ Once the barriers to the political have been overturned and the people have assumed their rightful political place, democracy’s initial oppositional “dynamic” is no longer needed and so is less “lost” than superseded by some other democratic mode of politics. In our age of economy, unfortunately, democracy is seduced, overawed, and outspent at the very moment it attempts to organize its energies into political practices. Thus, democracy “*in the late modern world* cannot be a complete political system.”¹⁵¹ It is rendered fugitive, “doomed to succeed only temporarily.”¹⁵²

At other times Wolin suggest that democracy simply is revolution, and so by nature fugitive.¹⁵³ Sounding a Madisonian note, Wolin writes: “the fugitive character of democracy is no mystery.” It is explained by the factional “heterogeneity (that) is *a consequence of liberty and equality*, the two values that since antiquity have been associated solely with democracy.”¹⁵⁴ In its liberty and equality, democracy makes “unequal power” possible, and can “eliminate (it) only by betraying its own values.”¹⁵⁵ Moreover (and here we might recall Alan Keenan’s argument about the tension between inclusion and exclusion - legitimacy and effectiveness - at the center of democratic collective action), insofar as democratic “inclusion is expanded to legitimate new differences common action is rendered more difficult.”¹⁵⁶ Liberty and equality produce unequal power; legitimate democratic agency requires both inclusion and exclusion: in either case democracy is destined to betray itself. Democracy is “doomed to succeed only temporarily” because of its own tragic internal tension.

This tension is resolved within the idea of democratic revolution, wherein the *passion for* rather than the *product of* liberty and equality dominate, and wherein differences are bracketed in the struggle for inclusion. The spirit of democracy and material reality coincide in that singular moment of revolt against anti-democratic norms and forms, in Lefort’s “operation of negativity” or Wolin’s “rational disorganization.” Principle and practice, authority and power, legitimacy and effectiveness, can be made to coincide episodically but not institutionally. Democracy can be kept from being co-opted but also from betraying its own principles by burning itself out. It is doomed to succeed only temporarily, but its temporality preserves its untouched and uncompromised purity. Each new moment is pristine and full of youthful vitality. Democracy remains authentic

on condition that it is not enduring. The practice of democratic politics is thus reconciled with the principle of democratic openness by theorizing democratic politics as revolution. Democracy's momentary nature guarantees its perennially return to a state of openness.

The question then becomes not whether democracy can be made "a complete political system" in the late modern world, but whether democracy and politics are mutually exclusive. The "true question is not whether democracy can govern in the traditional sense, but why it would *want* to. Governing means manning and accommodating to bureaucratized institutions that, *ipso facto*, are hierarchical in structure and elitist, permanent rather than fugitive - in short, anti-democratic."¹⁵⁷ Established democracy is oxymoronic, and at least insofar as politics has something to do with government a schism opens up between democracy and politics. Authentic democracy amounts to the revolt of the people, and economized democracy to the rule of the people.

Robust democracy is therefore an "ephemeral phenomenon," "protean and amorphous," rather than a "settled system" or "institutionalized process."¹⁵⁸ Robust because ephemeral, diminishing democracy's apparent strength makes it more powerful. Protean and amorphous, democracy never falls from openness into materiality; its unquestioned authority is premised on the impermanence of its power. While democracy can no longer be considered a form of government, or a way of life, it is a fleeting, elevating "moment of experience" against which government and society are judged.¹⁵⁹

Democracy and Necessity

Perhaps the most central of Wolin's philosophical presuppositions is that "commonality" is "fugitive and impermanent" - a matter of sharing "in a common *experience* rather than in a common *life*."¹⁶⁰ Commonality is not located in shared historical memory or cultural place; rather, it is something comes into being and passes as quickly as an experience. There are "historical moments" of upheaval "when collective identity is collectively established or reconstituted," but no "pre-existent, continuous entity" of "the people."¹⁶¹ As much descriptive as normative, commonality both cannot and should not be permanent - commonality is and should be uncommon. Since it is momentary, commonality is in accord with the truth and good of openness. It is a formless or informal sort of commonality, neither constitutional nor cultural.

Distancing his theory from the language of "organization," Wolin describes this fugitive commonality as "spontaneous" - arising as if *ex nihilo*. This spontaneity translates into the notion of association not through deliberation, nor through socialization, but through the experience of necessity - and in particular, material necessity. A phenomenon rather than a regime, democracy is founded/caused not by a law-giver but by crisis - *e pluribus unum* via oppression. As Wolin writes: "Corporate solidarity and self-consciousness are ... responses to oppression," and "resistance brings with it a heightened sense of self-awareness, of distinctive identity."¹⁶² The equality or "sameness" required for collective action follows from "a common condition of oppression, of injustice, which is to say that sameness is created not by democracy when it is installed as a construction, but by a *predemocratic experience*... . Misery creates the basis for a ... conception of the political based on community."¹⁶³

Authentically democratic association is a function not of the abstract congregation of the market, nor of the solid community of settled tradition, but of periodically shared commiseration - a community of misery. The democratic "we" is revolutionary rather

than economic or quasi-religious. Democratic commonality “begins with the demos constructing/collecting itself from scattered experiences and fusing these into a self-consciousness about common powerlessness and its causes. The demos is created from a shared realization (of) powerlessness”¹⁶⁴

This raises two interesting points. First, representing democracy in terms Carl Schmitt would recognize, democratic association and action become contingent upon a common enemy. Far beyond Wolin’s work, the idea that we come together and are roused to action only in response to some common problem or common evil seems fairly ubiquitous today. Inverting Aristotle, it is precisely in an alliance of mutual defense (or in relations of exchange and commerce) rather than in pursuit of some common good that the demotic city identifies itself. The social bond is not a shared conception of justice but the simultaneous experience of injustice, which is partitioned off from questions of justice by being reduced to “objective” harm of one sort or another. The odd conclusion of premising democratic association and action upon the struggle with evil rather than upon the pursuit of good, however, is that as evil and democracy wax and wane in unison. Inherently responsive, democracy loses steam as it advances. Born of deprivation and oppression, the paradoxical prerequisite of democracy is the lack or loss of democracy. The less we are victimized, the less we are capable of democracy. If democracy is “created from a shared realization of powerless,” then powerlessness is the precondition of democracy. Along these lines, we might conclude that today Superpower empowers democracy.

Second, on Wolin’s account fugitive democracy seems largely like a radicalization of liberalism. The occasional quality of the “revolutionary we” mirrors the “electoral we” in both cause and effect. Wolin writes that the fugitive character of democracy is in part related to the fact that “democracy’s politics is the creation of those who must work.” It is the act of “the leisureless,” for whom “participation, as distinguished from voting, is necessarily a sacrifice.”¹⁶⁵ Collective action is the “crystallized response to deeply felt grievances or needs on the part of those whose main preoccupation - demanding of time and energy - is to scratch out a decent existence.”¹⁶⁶ “Given the material conditions of the demos,” then, “the actuality of democracy is necessarily episodic and circumstantial.”¹⁶⁷

Material necessity is both the cause of democracy and the cause of its devitalization. We band together and take the public stage to protest or resist oppression, then we disband and return to our private business. Need explains why we become political beings and why we fail to remain political beings. Wolin thus seems to accept the idea of an ordinarily apolitical and disengaged populace. The assumption that democracy was to be “a form of government in which the people governed” on an ongoing basis was mistaken “in part because it assumed that the authority and power to govern was what a people would aspire to.”¹⁶⁸ The demos, like a liberal citizenry, is “unable to rule yet unwilling to be ruled.”¹⁶⁹

In liberal democratic theory, the solution is an ordinary politics by proxy punctuated every number of years by the people speaking for themselves. Wolin rejects this notion for its failure to “promote participation,” and in turn for its reliance on “the political forays of an occasional citizenry.”¹⁷⁰ Yet, fugitive democracy is itself based on such and occasional, momentary citizenry. The fugitive moment is the radicalization of the electoral moment, which “involves the taking back of one’s power, not just the

revocation of legitimacy.”¹⁷¹ Eventually, though, the people relinquish their power and a new equilibrium sets in. Fugitive democracy amounts to a more forceful throwing of the bums out.

Democracy as Instinct

We have seen how fugitive democracy is limited in duration and power, both by Superpower and by its own internal dynamic. Yet, on Wolin’s account this ineffectiveness belies the ambitions of the fugitive demos. In its passion for revolution, in its striving to transgress all limits, Wolin’s authentic demos (like Tocqueville’s men of ’89) displays a rapacity and audacity of epic proportions. The demos harbors Superpower’s desire (if not its capacity) for (self)-creative/destructive limitlessness.

“The demos exists as striving,” Wolin writes, “but that drive may be directed not at assuring duration to its existence but at *challenging its own finitude*.” In a striking parallel to the metaphor used to characterize Superpower, Wolin describes the demotic return of the repressed at its most basic level as “a barely civilized, almost raw force - the demos as Id and crude Superego...”¹⁷² Where archaism was a means of escape, the demos of fugitive democracy seeks mastery. Where archaic democracy was cast in the language of loss, fugitive democracy is a matter of sublime struggle and suffering. Where archaism tended to domestic memory and place, fugitive democracy is undomesticated savagery. Where once democracy was to preserve a condition reminiscent of Rousseau’s state of nature, the fugitive demos is in accord with Superpower in seeing the world in the terms, if not the extremes of Hobbes’ state of nature. Peace is impossible and power is the only currency.

Wolin adopts a term from Spinoza - *conatus* - to theorize this overreaching, overflowing demos. The formula, Wolin writes, “of actor-action, with its clear-cut notion of agency, excludes the demos, always a somewhat shadowy, inchoate identity, always in need of the crystallizing energy of a ‘leader.’”¹⁷³ The notion of *conatus* - the striving inherent in any living thing for the power “to persist in its own being (and oppose anything) that would take away its existence” - enables Wolin to envision a purely democratic source of democratic action.¹⁷⁴ The “continuing self-fashioning of the demos” is driven exclusively by its own *conatus*.¹⁷⁵ The idea here is that the demos becomes self-aware and gains a distinctive sense of identity not by means of leadership, but through the crystallizing effect of external events. More specifically, opposition to the event of its own negation imbues the demos with self-awareness. Democratic organization is spontaneous in that it is caused only by the impulse to collective self-preservation. Democratic action becomes instinctive. And this instinct becomes the great equalizer, providing for the many what “wealth, status, education, and tradition” provide for the few.¹⁷⁶ The primal power of a demos is a consequence of its primal fear: backed into a corner, the people “threaten because their existence is continuously threatened.”¹⁷⁷

Wolin explicitly sets out here to use for democratic purposes the resort throughout history to “physical or animalistic imagery to describe the multitude” - the tendency to associate the demos with the passions and “‘things of the body,’” and to identify “the Many with a natural power,” a “raw power,” and an “elemental force.”¹⁷⁸ For Wolin, “the demos represents the existence and vitality of a natural entity.”¹⁷⁹ We should “reconceive democracy as an elemental politics about the needs and the aspirations of the

Many...”¹⁸⁰ And we should think of the demos as “agonistic,” “driven by the needs of its nature to strain at constitutional restraints.”¹⁸¹ Thus the “possibility of a popular sovereignty as a will to power on the part of an actor struggling to be both collective and autonomous” resides precisely with its heteronomous, savage nature.¹⁸²

Not only is the demos driven by its instinctive nature, but its revolutionary actions deliver the many from the constraints of conventional forms back the Lockean state of nature. In Locke’s formulation, Wolin writes, nature “is a condition of commonality and ‘equality ... without Subordination or Subjection.’ We might call Locke’s construct a democracy without form.”¹⁸³ In its “suspension of heterogeneity” it is “a metaphor of lost commonality, an exceptional moment that keeps returning in times of revolutionary crisis when power returns to ‘the Community and agency to ‘the People’”¹⁸⁴ This return to nature is “the truly democratic moment.”¹⁸⁵

Divorcing this conception of agonistic democracy from the post/modern threat to democracy, Wolin writes that ancient Athenian democracy above all exemplified the *conatus* driven character of the demos. “Before its fourth-century institutionalization, Athenian democracy was less a constitution in the Aristotelian sense of a fixed form than a dynamic and developing political culture, a culture not only of participation but of frequent rebellions.”¹⁸⁶ This culture of rebellion took institutional form as rotation in office and selection by lot, the function of which was to “limit the effects of institutionalization.” They are, Wolin writes, “paradoxically institutions that subvert institutionalization” - the institutionalization of rational disorganization. They ensured the continuous “disruption in continuity.”¹⁸⁷ Even as the “elemental, physical quality of democratic power” was “condensed and institutionalized,” then, Athenian democracy did not lose its transgressive character.¹⁸⁸ The “beast,” as Wolin puts it, is institutionalized without being domesticated. “The beast has become the citizen without losing its vitality, truly a *politikon zoion*.”¹⁸⁹

Theorizing democratic action and association in terms of the “vitality” - rooted in passion and instinct - leads Wolin to a notion of democracy that actually mirrors many of the characteristics of the economy of power. Democracy comes to seem both natural and (at least in aspiration) limitless.

First, describing democratic action as an instinct makes it seem given and spontaneous, not unlike capitalism and liberalism in that it is without need of any process of regimentation, socialization, or education. Capitalism is based on the assumption of the competitive and acquisitive individual, and liberalism on the private and self-interested individual. Both are premised upon our supposedly native characteristics. We do not need to learn to be acquisitive or self-interested, but are assumed to be so. For Wolin, democracy is similarly premised upon our native - one might say primitive - characteristics and the assumption of the essentially power-asserting self. We arrive at the democratic moment as already democratic, just as we arrive at the market as acquisitive and at the voting booth as self-interested. Put differently, as a matter of unleashing our animal instincts in the face of fear and desperation, democracy is as natural as fear and misery and suffering. And as long as a democracy rests solely on sentiments that console man in his misery, it can win the affection of the human race.

Second, Wolin readily acknowledges that the outcome of institutionalizing a power that by nature strives to challenge its own finitude is empire. Materially

empowered, the barely civilized democratic Id turns from self-preservation to self-expansion. A “testimony to both the transgressive and aggressive impulses of the Many...” empire is at once the negation of democracy as well as a manifestation of its original nature.¹⁹⁰ The only limits authentic democracy knows are those imposed upon it. At the same time, he attempts to distance this overflowing of all conventional forms and territorial boundaries from its potential for violence. The emphasis shifts from destruction to creation. “Democracy is a rebellious moment that may assume revolutionary, destructive proportions,” yet the “fugitive character of democracy (does not) stand for a pent-up revolutionary fervor waiting for an opportunity to wreak havoc.”¹⁹¹ It is true that nothing “short of a long revolution ... makes much sense today,” but “a campaign of violent insurrection,” while “politically and morally justified by democratic standards of legitimate authority, is neither possible nor prudent ... Revolutions of that nature are plainly pathological under contemporary conditions of interdependency.”¹⁹² While warranted, violent revolution is simply not practical. “Democrats,” in turn, “need a new conception of revolution” - one conceived in terms of “creativity rather than violence.” The right to revolution is not “solely a right to overturn and destroy institutions but to fashion new ones;” it is a “right to create new forms.”¹⁹³

Of course, capitalism too is as creative as it is destructive. Given their shared challenge to finitude and lawfulness, one wonders whether the forms democracy and economy create (only to eventually destroy) will be much different. Superpower strives for the formless forms conducive to globalization; fugitive or agonistic democracy strives for the formless forms conducive to empire. Both employ the rhetoric of oneness, which Wolin himself characterizes as the rhetoric of limitless - whether phrased in terms of economic “power” or democratic “energy.” Granted, the rational systematization of economy is efficient while the wild passion of democracy burns itself out and suffers setbacks, but the spirit seems the same. One wonders if there isn’t a more human mode of politics and society in between the mechanistic artificiality of economy and the animalistic nature of fugitive democracy. One wonders if there isn’t a language of human association in between those of abstraction and authenticity.

Conclusion: Heroism and Cynicism

“Although the desire to acquire the goods of this world is the dominant passion of Americans,” Tocqueville writes, “there are brief intervals when their souls seem suddenly to cast off all material bonds and fly impetuously toward heaven.”¹⁹⁴ The description of American’s “impassioned, almost wild spiritualism” is perfectly analogous to Wolin’s formulation of the fugitive democratic moment or revolution. The dynamic is one wherein ordinary material existence is punctuated by extraordinary events of transcendence. For Wolin, transgression is the mode of transcendence - elevation as breaking out of inhibiting conventional norms and forms. Ordinarily we are wholly unfree, but we are able to transmute oppression and necessity into brief intervals of total freedom. Here again we see the dialectic of idealization and devaluation that seems so characteristic of our democratic way of life.

Wolin’s theory of democracy helps us identify the dialectical counterpart to the cynicism (or so-called “realism”) so prevalent in Wolin’s work and in American society regarding our everyday lives. Extreme heroism - one might say super-heroism - is the solution to extreme cynicism. Wolin equates the fugitive demos with the Nietzschean

aristocrat. The former is the collective version of the “vigorous warrior-type, a man who takes risks, provokes strife, overflows with vitality, in short, a natural transgressor of conventions.” This “figure of primal energy and demonic will ... delights in the images of ‘smashing’ restraints.”¹⁹⁵ And “spectacular types of action” are the product of the “agonistic impulse of heroic actors.”¹⁹⁶ Given the extraordinary degradation of our material existence, this appeal to action movie heroism is the only thing that makes sense. In a world mired in systematic corruption, the appeal to an agonistic demos would be rendered more fully intelligible in terms of “vigilante democracy” rather than fugitive democracy - we need to step outside the systematic corruptions of the world to get things done and set things right.

Wolin adapts the notion of aristocratic actor to democracy not only by rendering it collective, but also by depicting heroism as a function of victimization. Central to Wolin’s theory of fugitive democracy, and I suggest to American thought in general, is the idea of ordinary people forced to rise to the occasion. In the face of crisis or oppression the victim/hero is called to service out of everyday private life. Elevated less by his or her own virtues than by events, the ordinary person proves capable of extraordinary deeds. Coming from and returning to equality, the common man of democracy momentarily becomes an aristocratic actor. As the momentary response to events beyond our control, rather than a product of superior character or virtue, aristocratic action is made safe for democracy. The hero did what any of us would have done under similar circumstances.

The consequences for the practice of democratic politics are two. First, the dialectic of ordinary/extraordinary leads to what we might call a two-tiered notion of citizenship. While the people retain the *authority* to rule at all times, only occasionally do they attain (or need to attain) the *capacity* to rule. In liberal democratic theory, the occasion is routinized as periodic elections. Increasingly, though, the view is that ordinary elections do not sufficiently induce the elevation of the people, who just vote their wallets (if they vote at all). However there are certain extraordinary, epic elections wherein people come together as a demos in revolutionary action. Along these lines we might say that Bruce Ackerman, for instance, offers the liberal version of Wolin’s fugitive democracy - the electoral moment radicalized. The key to both theories is that crisis or necessity does not reduce people to their base and conflictual natures, but rather induces the overcoming of mundane limitations and self-interested preoccupations. But is the political practice of democracy the likely response to necessity and crisis? Or is democracy more likely to be sacrificed in times of trouble?

This two-tiered notion of democracy and citizenship is so appealing, I suggest, because it allows us to combine into one coherent picture both sides of democracy’s dualism discussed in the first chapter. Ordinary degradation and materialism is punctuated by intervals of extraordinary elevation and freedom. For long stretches democratic society is characterized by banal neediness and bourgeois mediocrity, but it is never without revolutionary possibilities. Literary events burst forth from commercial society, and under the right circumstances the man of business might become the artist - a fugitive creator. If only for a moment, the prosaic gives way to the epic poetry of democracy.

Second, democratic association and action come to be represented as unity and energy in response to crisis, which is to say in executive rather than legislative or judicial

terms. Deliberation and impartial judgment fall by the wayside as political agency is reduced to a Lockean sense of prerogative - democratic “vitality” as emergency power, whether of the elected leader or the demos itself. Indeed, in relation to heroic executive action the demand for deliberation and impartiality might well seem absurd and obstructive (or impossible, given fundamental difference; or dangerous, given our power-driven world). In any case, argument stands in opposition to decision and action.

Wolin writes that despite the almost complete “evisceration of democracy” today, there “appears to be no widespread public recognition of crisis.”¹⁹⁷ All of the “elements for radical protest appear to be present,” and yet “there has been no general mobilization of outrage... (only an) astonishing passivity.”¹⁹⁸ I suggest that thinking of democracy along the lines Wolin lays out actually contributes to this astonishing passivity. Wolin celebrates the radical democratic potential for disorganizing the liberal democratic constitution of government. But as we have seen, this spirit of disorganization subverts the culture of grassroots organization. Both in principle and in practice, the fugitive democratic moment cannot be institutionalized at the level of ordinary local politics. Interestingly, James Miller’s great historical work *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* can be read as charting precisely this self-radicalizing and so self-subverting course of participatory democracy in America: from the archaic radicalism that underlay the 1962 Port Huron Statement; to the late 1960’s embrace of revolutionary transgression of middle-class conventionality as such; to the disengagement and quietism of that took hold in the 1970’s.¹⁹⁹

Further, Wolin’s agonistic democracy seems like a radically potent and robust, if inherently short-lived, notion of popular power. But precisely in its idealized rhetoric of the extraordinary it subverts the ordinary practice of democracy - arguing and acting in association with equal others. Democracy is not something we learn to do, but something that erupts. And as such it is not something we undertake, but something for which we wait to happen. We wait for the hero of the revolutionary moment. The everyday world is taken to be corrupt, and so the everyday practice of democracy is taken to be corrupt. The world in which we live cannot be reformed from within, and so transcendence and revolution are the only solution. And so we bide our time until the “tipping point.”

Tocqueville famously argued that great revolutions will become rare as democracy matures. Following on the critique of Wolin presented here, I suggest that perhaps the case is less that the democratic passion for revolution subsides into middle-class caution and conservatism than that revolution is deprived of a political venue. The devaluation of and contempt for ordinary politics means that political change, whether great or small, must somehow come from without. Revolution seems like the only solution but we cannot see any possible way to politically constitute the revolution.

NOTES

¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Trans. Arthur Gold Hammer (New York: Library of America, 2004), 342.

² Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 343.

³ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 342.

⁴ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 343-345 (my emphasis).

⁵ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 345.

⁶ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 342.

⁷ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 70.

⁸ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, expanded edition (hereafter *PV*) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 601-02.

⁹ Sheldon S. Wolin, *Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution* (hereafter *PP*) (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 31.

¹⁰ Sheldon S. Wolin, "Norm and Form: The Constitutionalizing of Democracy," in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy*, eds. J. Peter Euben, John R. Wallach, and Josiah Ober (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 39.

¹¹ Wolin, *PV*, 601.

¹² Wolin, *PP*, 41-42, 143.

¹³ Wolin, *PV*, 566, 578.

¹⁴ Wolin, *PP*, 42.

¹⁵ Wolin, *PP*, 147.

¹⁶ Wolin, *PV*, 565.

¹⁷ Economic production, Wolin concludes, is what political citizenship was to Aristotle. Wolin, *PP*, 148.

¹⁸ Wolin, *PP*, 173. Wolin writes that this Weberian cage of modern life is orchestrated by the logic of bureaucracy. "The universality of bureaucracy, which exist more as an ideal than as an actuality, signifies nonetheless the determination to reduce the play of contingency and variability. By reducing the world to procedures, bureaucracy hopes to render it calculable... By means of bureaucratic institutions, rationality proceeds to set the categories for defining what is officially in the world." Within the "rigidified structures" of its "scientific" and "technical knowledge," the bureaucracy reconstructs reality as utterly predictable and so masterable.

¹⁹ Wolin, *PV*, 587.

²⁰ Wolin, *PP*, 183-4.

²¹ Wolin, "From Progress to Modernization," 16.

²² Wolin, "From Progress to Modernization," 16-17.

²³ Wolin, *PP*, 109, 118.

²⁴ Wolin, *PV*, 559.

²⁵ Wolin, *PV*, 559.

²⁶ Wolin, *PV*, 563.

²⁷ Wolin, *PV*, 588. Wolin writes that the postmodern celebration of play in a reality rendered virtual only reinforces capitalism's hold. The "ideology of the market, with its idealized picture of an intricate dispersed system in which countless independent actors respond to 'laws' of supply and demand that no external authority decrees, complements postmodernist antipathies to 'centered discourse' and centered power... A system that cannot conceive of stopping and dreads slowdown has developed its cultural complement in a postmodern sensibility that adores novelty, dreads boredom, and far from operating as a 'fetter' on capitalism, encourages its rhythms." Wolin, *PV*, 566-67.

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- ²⁸ Postmodern power “envisions endless expansion but its imperialism tends to be nonterritorial, degrounded, projecting its influence throughout the world, while militarizing the emptiness of space.” Wolin, *PP*, 155.
- ²⁹ Wolin, *PV*, 594-95.
- ³⁰ Wolin, *PV*, 595, xvi-xvii.
- ³¹ In a suggestive metaphor Wolin writes, “Superpower might be described in Freudian terms as ego driven by id (basic power drive) with only mild remonstrances from a weak superego (norms or conscience).” Wolin, *PV*, 591.
- ³² Wolin, *PP*, 182.
- ³³ Wolin, *PV*, xxi; Wolin, *PP*, 27.
- ³⁴ Wolin, *PV*, xvii-xviii.
- ³⁵ Wolin, *PP*, 178-79.
- ³⁶ Wolin, “Higher Education and the Politics of Knowledge,” 50.
- ³⁷ Wolin, *PV*, 394. Wolin writes that “a despot will, by nature, be indifferent to difference... By eliminating class difference, diverse bodies of law, regional variations, and all other significant exceptions to uniformity, despotism simplifies space and time: space is unoccupied by anything other than his will, time is simply his present whim. ‘Despotism is sufficient unto itself; around it there is only emptiness.’” Wolin, *PP*, 109.
- ³⁸ Sheldon S. Wolin, “Democracy, Difference, and Re-cognition,” *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (1993), 473. While postmodern in its fully realized form, Wolin identifies Superpower’s logic of limitlessness as far back as the Old Testament story of the Tower of Babel. It is “precisely because the men of Shinar have one language and a highly unified social organization and thus have suppressed their differences that they are able to mobilize the power necessary to erect a tower whose rising pinnacle signifies a challenge to the heavens. Yahweh dissolves the threat by the simple device of introducing a multiplicity of languages. Disunion and scattered power result.”³⁸ Superpower, with its monopolistic ambitions, learned well the lessons of monotheism: “oneness” is above all a “metaphor for power.” Wolin, *PP*, 122.
- ³⁹ Wolin, *PV*, 400.
- ⁴⁰ Wolin, “From Progress to Modernization,” 24.
- ⁴¹ Wolin, *PV*, 397.
- ⁴² Wolin, *PP*, 29.
- ⁴³ Wolin, *PP*, 27.
- ⁴⁴ Wolin, *PV*, 593, 591.
- ⁴⁵ Wolin, *PV*, 579.
- ⁴⁶ Wolin, *PV*, 580, 592.
- ⁴⁷ Sheldon S. Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” in *Demokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*, eds. Josiah Ober and Charles Hedrick (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 86.
- ⁴⁸ Wolin, *PV*, 585.
- ⁴⁹ Sheldon S. Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy,” in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 42.
- ⁵⁰ Stephen Holmes, *Passions and Constraint: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), xi.
- ⁵¹ Wolin, *PP*, 8.

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- ⁵² Holmes, *Passions and Constraint*, xi.
- ⁵³ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 35.
- ⁵⁴ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 39 (my emphasis). "Institutionalization brings not only settled practices regarding such matters as authority, jurisdiction, accountability, procedures, and processes but routinization, professionalization, and the loss of spontaneity... (It) depends on the ritualization of the behavior of both rulers and ruled to enable the formal functions of the state - coercion, revenue collection, policy, mobilization of the population for war, law making, punishment, and enforcement of the laws - to be continued on a regular basis." Wolin, "Norm and Form," 36.
- ⁵⁵ Wolin, *PV*, 602.
- ⁵⁶ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 54-55; Wolin, *PV*, 602.
- ⁵⁷ Wolin, *PV*, 602; Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 63 (my emphasis).
- ⁵⁸ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 36-37.
- ⁵⁹ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 33.
- ⁶⁰ Wolin, *PP*, 190. "Its politics" as Wolin puts it "is based not, as its defenders allege, upon 'representative democracy' but on various representations of democracy." Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 34.
- ⁶¹ Wolin, *PP*, 193.
- ⁶² Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 31 (my emphasis).
- ⁶³ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 31, (my emphasis).
- ⁶⁴ Wolin, *PP*, 139 (my emphasis).
- ⁶⁵ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 54.
- ⁶⁶ Wolin, *PV*, 602.
- ⁶⁷ Wolin, *PP*, 149.
- ⁶⁸ Sheldon S. Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide: On Rawls' *Political Liberalism*," *Political Theory* 24, no. 1 (1996), 98-99.
- ⁶⁹ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 98-99. As Wolin writes: "For Rawls, values such as 'stability,' 'social unity,' and 'cooperation' are central and are served by his emphasis on preserving intact the 'structures of government,' because 'frequent controversy' over it 'raises the stakes of politics and may lead to distrust and turmoil that undermines constitutional government.'"
- ⁷⁰ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 98.
- ⁷¹ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 102. Sanitized and orderly, Wolin argues, deliberative democracy similarly seems less like a political practice than a "a graduate philosophy seminar." Wolin, *PV*, xx.
- ⁷² Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 115.
- ⁷³ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 46-47.
- ⁷⁴ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 46-47.
- ⁷⁵ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 110.
- ⁷⁶ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 110-111.
- ⁷⁷ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 110-111.
- ⁷⁸ Wolin, "What Revolutionary Action Means Today," 26.
- ⁷⁹ Wolin, "What Revolutionary Action Means Today," 18-19. Wolin argues that a "political being" cannot be merely "an abstract, disconnected bearer of rights, privileges, and immunities" but is instead "a person whose existence is located in a particular place

and draws its sustenance from circumscribed relationships: family, friends, church, neighborhood, workplace, community, town, city. These relationships are the sources from which political beings draw power ... and that enable them to act together.” Wolin, “What Revolutionary Action Means Today,” 27.

⁸⁰ Wolin, “The Liberal/Democratic Divide,” 98.

⁸¹ Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 87.

⁸² Wolin, *PP*, 146.

⁸³ Wolin, *PP*, 31.

⁸⁴ Wolin, *PP*, 190; Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 87.

⁸⁵ Wolin, “The People’s Two Bodies,” 19.

⁸⁶ Wolin, “From Progress to Modernization,” 21.

⁸⁷ Wolin, *PV*, 590; Wolin, “The People’s Two Bodies,” 19.

⁸⁸ Wolin, “Democracy: Electoral and Athenian,” 475, 477; Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 86.

⁸⁹ Wolin, *PP*, 149-50.

⁹⁰ Wolin, *PP*, 83.

⁹¹ Wolin, *PP*, 107.

⁹² Wolin, *PP*, 77, 81.

⁹³ Wolin, *PV*, 606 (my emphasis).

⁹⁴ Wolin, “Why democracy?,” 4-5.

⁹⁵ Wolin, *PP*, 107.

⁹⁶ Wolin, *PP*, 102-03.

⁹⁷ Wolin, *PP*, 104.

⁹⁸ Wolin, *PP*, 104, 73.

⁹⁹ Wolin, *PP*, 104-106.

¹⁰⁰ Wolin, *PV*, 394.

¹⁰¹ Wolin, *PP*, 36-37.

¹⁰² Wolin, *PP*, 36-7.

¹⁰³ Wolin, *PP*, 38-9, 142.

¹⁰⁴ Wolin, *PP*, 75.

¹⁰⁵ Wolin, *PP*, 43.

¹⁰⁶ Wolin, *PP*, 119.

¹⁰⁷ Wolin, *PP*, 84 (my emphasis).

¹⁰⁸ Wolin, *PP*, 94.

¹⁰⁹ Wolin, *PP*, 129-30.

¹¹⁰ Wolin, *PP*, 128.

¹¹¹ Wolin, *PP*, 92.

¹¹² Wolin, *PP*, 112.

¹¹³ Wolin, *PP*, 95.

¹¹⁴ Wolin, *PP*, 135, 124. Hamiltonian political science, premised on the “biblical belief that order was a function of power, would “lend an aura of authority” and even “necessity” to a strong state. *The Federalist*, starting from a rhetoric of deliberation, of “establishing good government from reflection and choice,” ended up representing the debate over the Constitution as between unity, power, and order on one hand, and difference, weakness, and anarchy on the other. Wolin, *PP*, 110-111.

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- ¹¹⁵ Wolin, *PP*, 86-87.
- ¹¹⁶ Wolin, *PP*, 126-127.
- ¹¹⁷ Wolin, "Democracy, Difference, and Re-cognition," 464-65, 470.
- ¹¹⁸ Wolin, *PP*, 10.
- ¹¹⁹ Wolin, *PP*, 88.
- ¹²⁰ Wolin, *PP*, 75.
- ¹²¹ Wolin, *PP*, 88-90.
- ¹²² Wolin, *PP*, 130-31.
- ¹²³ "Montesquieu adopted the idea that inherited rights and aristocratic institutions formed a natural barrier to absolutism, but he expanded it to include a complex array of local institutions and local bodies of law and custom... In his hands feudalism became a term to designate an alternative to the centralized state" and the "royal absolutism" of Louis XIV. Wolin, *PP*, 130-31.
- ¹²⁴ Wolin, *PP*, 88-90.
- ¹²⁵ Wolin, *PP*, 129.
- ¹²⁶ Wolin writes that despite its considerable benefits, the welfare state breeds dependence and empowers the state and so is "not a complement to democracy but a threat." Wolin, *PP*, 80.
- ¹²⁷ Wolin, "From Progress to Modernization," 18-19.
- ¹²⁸ Wolin, *PV*, 604.
- ¹²⁹ Wolin, *PP*, 80.
- ¹³⁰ Wolin, *PV*, 604.
- ¹³¹ Wolin, *PV*, 604.
- ¹³² Wolin, "America's Civil Religion," 15.
- ¹³³ Wolin, "What Revolutionary Action Means Today," 23.
- ¹³⁴ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 44.
- ¹³⁵ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 29.
- ¹³⁶ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 37.
- ¹³⁷ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 64.
- ¹³⁸ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 64, Wolin, "Norm and Form," 48 (my emphasis).
- ¹³⁹ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 39.
- ¹⁴⁰ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 48.
- ¹⁴¹ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 48.
- ¹⁴² Wolin, "Democracy: Electoral and Athenian," 476. Along these lines Wolin writes that Rawls "seems to look forward to the elimination of the passions generated by oppression and neglect ... (without pausing) over the possibility that 'strong feelings' and 'zealous aspirations' might be directly related to frustration on the part of those social classes and groups for whom the rhetoric and processes of 'reasonable pluralism' have been least responsive." Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 107.
- ¹⁴³ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 107.
- ¹⁴⁴ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 37.
- ¹⁴⁵ Wolin, "The People's Two Bodies," 12.
- ¹⁴⁶ Wolin, *PP*, 2.

¹⁴⁷ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 30. Wolin's other modern example of democratic revolt is the radicalism of the 1960's and early 1970's. "This resistance originated and remained outside the conventional political institutions. For the most part its forms were local, spontaneous, and improvised. It had started with the civil rights demonstrations of the early '60s, gathered momentum in the campus rebellions of the mid-'60s, and become ominous in the revolts that occurred in the urban ghettos of major cities." Ultimately, the movement was rejected by "the overwhelming majority of middle-and lower-middle-class Americans," those leading advocates of materialism and conventionalism. Wolin, "The People's Two Bodies," 20.

¹⁴⁸ Wolin, *PV*, 402.

¹⁴⁹ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 31.

¹⁵⁰ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 38.

¹⁵¹ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 54 (my emphasis).

¹⁵² Wolin, *PV*, 603.

¹⁵³ As we shall see, perhaps the clearest indication that democracy for Wolin is fugitive by nature (rather than as a byproduct of Superpower) is his argument that ancient Athenian democracy was the exemplary occurrence of the fugitive phenomenon.

¹⁵⁴ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 41.

¹⁵⁵ Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 44; Wolin, "Norm and Form," 58.

¹⁵⁶ Wolin, "Democracy, Difference, and Re-cognition," 477.

¹⁵⁷ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 54; Wolin, *PV*, 603 (my emphasis).

¹⁵⁸ Wolin, *PV*, 602-603.

¹⁵⁹ Wolin, *PV*, 603.

¹⁶⁰ Wolin, "Democracy, Difference, and Re-cognition," 472 (my emphasis).

¹⁶¹ Wolin, *PP*, 140; Wolin, *PV*, 602.

¹⁶² Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 76, 74.

¹⁶³ Wolin, "Democracy, Difference, and Re-cognition," 476 (my emphasis).

¹⁶⁴ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 64.

¹⁶⁵ Wolin, *PV*, 602.

¹⁶⁶ Wolin, *PV*, 603.

¹⁶⁷ Wolin, *PV*, 603-4.

¹⁶⁸ Wolin, *PV*, 602.

¹⁶⁹ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 50.

¹⁷⁰ Wolin, "The Liberal/Democratic Divide," 111.

¹⁷¹ Wolin, "Norm and Form," 56.

¹⁷² Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 77.

¹⁷³ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 67.

¹⁷⁴ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 73.

¹⁷⁵ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 73.

¹⁷⁶ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 85.

¹⁷⁷ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 74.

¹⁷⁸ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 74-75.

¹⁷⁹ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 74.

¹⁸⁰ Wolin, *PV*, 603.

¹⁸¹ Wolin, "Transgression, Equality, and Voice," 64.

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- ¹⁸² Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 86.
- ¹⁸³ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy,” 39.
- ¹⁸⁴ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy,” 41.
- ¹⁸⁵ Wolin, “Norm and Form,” 57.
- ¹⁸⁶ Wolin, “Norm and Form,” 42-43.
- ¹⁸⁷ Wolin, “Norm and Form,” 42-43.
- ¹⁸⁸ Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 76, 74.
- ¹⁸⁹ Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 77.
- ¹⁹⁰ Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 77, 82. To portray an Athenian demos striving for empire - driven by an “extraordinary release of energy that was sublimated into the political” - Wolin quotes from Thucydides: ““The Athenians are addicted to innovation ... [T]hey are adventurous beyond their power, and daring beyond their judgment, and in danger they are sanguine.... [T]hey are never at home ... for they hope by their absence to extend their acquisitions.”” Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 78.
- ¹⁹¹ Wolin, “Fugitive Democracy,” 43; Wolin, *PV*, 603.
- ¹⁹² Wolin, “The People’s Two Bodies, 24; Wolin, “What Revolutionary Action Means Today,” 25.
- ¹⁹³ Wolin, “What Revolutionary Action Means Today,” 25.
- ¹⁹⁴ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 623.
- ¹⁹⁵ Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 75.
- ¹⁹⁶ Wolin, “Transgression, Equality, and Voice,” 64.
- ¹⁹⁷ Wolin, *PV*, 596, 598.
- ¹⁹⁸ Wolin, “What Revolutionary Action Means Today,” 25.
- ¹⁹⁹ James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1987).