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Seth Barrett Tillman



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DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONS

RICHARD ALBERT[†]

In this Article, which will appear in the *Denver Law Review* as the featured piece to which invited scholars will respond, I begin the work of repairing the democratic foundations of revolution theory. My point of departure is an observation: conventional theories of revolution rarely venture beyond the only question that seems to matter in the study of revolution, namely whether the episode occurred suddenly, with violence, and on the strength of a popular movement. This procedural, amoral, and mechanical inquiry frustrates the possibility of cultivating a concept of a democratic revolution precisely because conventional revolution theory invites no judgment about the merits of revolution. Revolution theory, in my view, can do better. To do so, revolution theory must free itself from the shackles of proceduralism—shackles that compel revolution theorists to speak in the same breath of all revolutions as if there were no helpful structural principles to help us distinguish virtuous from vicious ones nor any basis upon which to define a particular episode as a democratic revolution and another as an undemocratic one. There is indeed a way, and articulating it is the task I have given myself in these pages.

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[†] Assistant Professor, Boston College Law School; Yale University (J.D., B.A.); Oxford University (B.C.L.); Harvard University (LL.M.). For helpful comments and conversations at various stages of this project, I am grateful to Bruce Ackerman, Akhil Amar, Nicholas Barber, Aaron Bruhl, Richard Ekins, John Gardner, Dylan Hayre, Allan Hutchinson, Rick Kay, Donald Kommers, K. Adam Kunst, Daryl Levinson, Jason Marisam, Adam Perry, Leah Roffman, Seth Tillman, Mark Tushnet, and Alison Young. I have benefitted immeasurably from faculty workshops at Villanova University, the University of San Diego and the University of California-Davis, from helpful exchanges with fellow panelists and participants at the Annual Meeting of the Law & Society Association, and also from stimulating discussions with the faculty and students at the University of Brescia in Italy, where I was invited to serve as their Visiting Fellow in Constitutional Law. I am equally indebted to the leadership of the *Denver Law Review* for selecting this Article as the centerpiece for their annual themed review, for which critical responses to this Article were solicited from scholars whose work I have long admired.