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Semantic Originalism

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION: ORIGINALISM, MEANING, AND THE LAW ................................................................. 1
   A. What is Semantic Originalism? ....................................................................................................... 2
   B. What's in a Name, Take One: Is it "Originalism"? ................................................................. 10
   C. Readings .................................................................................................................................. 12
II. AN OPINIONATED HISTORY OF CONSTITUTIONAL ORIGINALISM ........................................ 13
   A. Original Intentions of the Framers ......................................................................................... 13
   B. The Misconceived Quest & the Original Understanding of Original Intentions ................. 14
   C. Original Understanding of the Ratifiers ................................................................................. 15
   D. We the People ....................................................................................................................... 16
   E. Original Public Meaning and the New Originalism ............................................................. 18
   F. Original Applications and Original Methods ......................................................................... 19
   G. New Critics of the New Originalism ..................................................................................... 22
   H. Situating Semantic Originalism in the Historical Narrative ........................................... 24
III. SEMANTIC ORIGINALISM: A THEORY OF CONSTITUTIONAL MEANING ............................... 27
   A. Semantics and Normativity ................................................................................................... 28
   B. Five Ideas about Semantics .................................................................................................... 31
   C. Framers Meaning and Clause Meaning ............................................................................... 38
   D. What's in a Name, Take Two: The Sense in Which Clause Meaning is Original Meaning . 38
   E. The Case for the Fixation Thesis Revisited ......................................................................... 59
   F. Interpretation and Construction ............................................................................................ 67
   G. Essentially Contested Concepts and Natural Kinds ............................................................. 89
   H. Objections to Pure Semantic Originalism ............................................................................ 96
   I. What's in a Name, Take Three: Strong Originalism and Moral Originalism ................. 120
   J. Triviality, Take One: The Hard Wired Constitution ............................................................. 124
   K. Monsters and Apparitions, Take One: Herein of Ink Blots ................................................ 126
IV. THE NORMATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF SEMANTIC ORIGINALISM ............................................. 126
   A. The Possible Relationships between Semantic and Normative Originalism .................... 127
   B. The Standard Normative Arguments for Originalism ......................................................... 128
   C. The Contribution Thesis Revisited ....................................................................................... 134
   D. The Fidelity Thesis Revisited ............................................................................................... 149
   E. Triviality, Take Two: Normative Argument and Constitutional Practice ....................... 160
   F. What's in a Name, Take Four: The Family of Normative Originalisms ......................... 161
   G. Monsters and Apparitions, Take Two: The Constitutional Big Bang ............................... 162
V. CONCLUSION: SEMANTIC ORIGINALISM AND LIVING CONSTITUTIONALISM .................. 164
   A. Is Originalism Compatible with Living Constitutionalism? ................................................ 164
   B. What's in a Name, Take Five: The Topography of Constitutional Theory ...................... 167
   C. Triviality Take Three, Truth as the Telos of Legal Scholarship ......................................... 168
   D. Monsters and Apparitions, Take Three: The Colonization of Law by Philosophy .......... 169
   E. Overcoming the Hermeneutics of Suspicion ....................................................................... 170
   F. Evaluating the Argument: Demonstration or Reflective Equilibrium? ........................... 171
   G. The Second Restatement of Semantic Originalism ............................................................ 172

I. INTRODUCTION: ORIGINALISM, MEANING, AND THE LAW

What does the Constitution mean? The United States Supreme Court has recently suggested that interpretations of the constitutional text are “guided by the principle that ‘[t]he Constitution was written to be understood by the voters; its words and phrases were used in their normal and ordinary as distinguished from technical meaning.’” The approach to constitutional