

1

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF FANATICISM

Paul Katsafanas

Social life is plagued with discord, strife, and division. Groups animated by competing ideals vie with one another for dominance; proponents of competing visions of the good life accuse one another of being reprehensible or deluded; factionalization splinters communities; people with polarized social identities see members of outgroups as enemies to be defeated or overcome. In the worst cases, violence erupts, with proponents of incompatible ethical visions resorting to riots, insurrection, and terrorism. It would be myopic to think that there is a single cause of social discord. But some philosophers have thought that among the welter of causes, we can single out one of great importance: *fanaticism*.

Below, I offer an introduction to the philosophy of fanaticism. Fanaticism is a multivalent concept, with different philosophers offering strikingly varied analyses of its central features. Some philosophers treat fanaticism as an epistemic defect, others as moral defect, and others, still, as a psychological defect. Some philosophers treat all instances of fanaticism as negative or objectionable, whereas others think that there can be positive manifestations of fanaticism. Some see fanaticism as a fringe state, present only in extreme, pathological cases, whereas others see it as more widespread, a feature of large swathes of society. Some see it as essentially religious, whereas others disagree. But what's not in doubt in any of these analyses is that addressing fanaticism puts us in a position to analyze, and perhaps even take some steps to addressing, a perennial source of social discord.

1.1 Fanaticism's Emergence as a Central Philosophical Concern

If we try to picture the fanatic, what's likely to come to mind is the religious extremist, the fervent neo-Nazi, the jihadist, the terrorist. We imagine the fanatic as passionately committed to some cause or identity; as dogmatically, stubbornly resistant to compromising, attenuating, or rethinking that cause or identity; and as carrying out terrible acts of violence to achieve it. The term "fanatic" has functioned in that way since the sixteenth century. Widespread religious dissent and uprisings, often stoked by individuals who claimed uniquely authoritative, divinely sanctioned insights into the putatively correct social order, made this problem especially salient at that time. For these conflicts confronted thinkers with a difficult question: what should we make of these religious dissidents and social reformers,

these people who take themselves to have unmediated and perhaps unquestionable insights into reality, and who thus refuse to bend themselves to established social structures, who thereby threaten civil society?

It was in answer to that kind of question that the term “fanatic” came to prominence.¹ Martin Luther (1483–1546) described the Anabaptists and various Protestant reformers as fanatics; he saw them as disregarding traditional political and religious authorities, claiming that they enjoyed unquestionable justification for acts of violence and revolt. He derided these fanatics as “mad dogs,” who are “devilish,” “poisonous, hurtful,” who all reasonable people must “smite, slay and stab, secretly or openly,” in order to put an end to their horrific violence (Luther 1967/1525). Relatedly, Philip Melancthon (1497–1560) drew a distinction between the fanatic and civil society, presenting the fanatic as the enemy of a society governed by reasonable discourse:

life in the state... does not belong to the gospel, but to the judgment of reason and the counsel of the magistracy... remember that the gospel does not set up any kind of worldly government, but approves the forms of government of all peoples and the laws about civil matters that are in agreement with reason.

(Melancthon 2016/1540)

And the term spread: Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) labeled Catholics as fanatics, for they bestow unquestionable authority on the Pope (see de Warren, this volume). David Hume (1711–1776) lists Anabaptists and Quakers as fanatics, again focusing in part on their tendency to spur social divisions (Hume 1985).

Of course, political and social discord, violence, and conflict are not unique to the early modern period. Human history is replete with stubborn, intolerant people who violently impose their views on others, with people who proclaim themselves authoritative and ignore or suppress dissenting voices. Not just anyone who resorts to violence and incites social turmoil qualifies as fanatical. So, what additional features distinguish the fanatic?

One possibility is that the fanatic is especially cruel and remorseless. In Diderot’s 1756 *Encyclopedia*, Alexandre Deleyre (1726–1797) writes that fanaticism “is blind and passionate zeal born of superstition, causing people to commit ridiculous, unjust, and cruel actions, not only without any shame and remorse, but also with a kind of joy and comfort” (Deleyre 2009). And he characterizes the fanatics as those “despotic doctors who choose the most revolting systems, those ruthless casuists who distress nature and who, after having torn your eye out and cut your hand off, also tell you to love completely the thing that tyrannizes you” (Deleyre 2009). So for Deleyre, the fanatic is remorselessly, joyously cruel. Voltaire (1694–1778), writing two decades later, focuses on similar features. He complains of the “absurd fanaticism which breaks all the bonds of society.” In the entry on Atheism, he tells us that “fanaticism is certainly a thousand times more deadly” than atheism, for the fanatics “deluged England, Scotland, and Ireland with blood”; in the entry on Religion, he speaks of the “abominable monuments to barbarism and fanaticism” and complains that fanaticism has “inspired so many horrible cruelties.” In his entries on Fanaticism and the Fanatic, Voltaire focuses on fanatical violence:

The most detestable example of fanaticism is that of the bourgeois of Paris who hastened in saint Bartholomew's night to assassinate, butcher, throw out of the windows, cut in pieces their fellow citizens who did not go to mass.

(Voltaire 1984: 285)

Here, he is referring to a massacre of French Protestants by French Catholics, carried out on August 24–25, 1572. It began with French Catholics killing Protestants at a royal wedding and quickly spread, with Catholics going from house to house killing Protestants. It left at least 3,000 dead and many more injured. And that was in Paris alone: over the next two months, the attacks spread to other French cities and towns, with historians estimating somewhere between 5,000 and 25,000 Protestant deaths. What distinguishes this fanatical outburst is the way in which it seems to involve a sudden excess of passion or emotion, which leads individuals to break ordinary restraints in a remorseless fashion.

So one feature that distinguishes fanatics might be the way in which they are not just violent, but remorselessly and barbarically violent. But careful attention to Voltaire's discussions reveals another aspect of fanaticism. Notice that in the Saint Bartholomew's massacre, we have a group of formerly placid individuals who are suddenly gripped by a desire for terrible violence: they slaughter neighbors with whom they had formerly enjoyed peaceful relations. And this is not just an isolated incident, but one that spreads, gripping more and more people. Fanaticism seems *contagious*. Shaftesbury (1671–1713) highlights this feature:

Fury flies from face to face, and the disease [enthusiasm or fanaticism] is no sooner seen than caught. They who in a better situation of mind have beheld a multitude under the power of passion, have owned that they saw in the countenance of men something more ghastly and terrible than at other times expressed on the most passionate occasions. Such force has society in ill as well as in good passions, and so much stronger any affection is for being social and communicative.

(Shaftesbury 1999: 10)

In Shaftesbury, we can see a fear that fanaticism is contagious: it is a ghastly condition that spreads from person to person, like a disease. Voltaire agrees, claiming that fanaticism is a "spiritual pestilence," a "malady of the mind, which is taken in the same way as smallpox." Not only that: "once fanaticism has corrupted a mind, the malady is incurable." And this was part of Martin Luther's concern, as well: he saw the "pestilential" mobs of peasants expanding, threatening the social order. Fanaticism demands our attention not only because it is so cruel and remorseless, but because it is so prone to spread.

And there are other dimensions. Fanaticism came to be associated not just with a contagious propensity to engage in violent, socially injurious behaviors, but also with epistemic defects or vices, such as closed-mindedness, failures to be epistemically humble, inattentiveness to acceptable rational standards, superstitiousness, and so on. We have already seen Delyre associate fanaticism with superstition, but consider a few more examples. John Locke (1632–1704) is interested in the fanatic's imperviousness to standard forms of rational argument:

Reason is lost upon [fanatics], they are above it: they see the light infused into their understandings, and cannot be mistaken; it is clear and visible there, like the light of bright sunshine; shows itself, and needs no other proof but its own evidence: they feel the hand of God moving them within, and the impulses of the Spirit, and cannot be mistaken in what they feel.

(Locke 1975: chapter 19)

The fanatic rejects ordinary rational standards and takes himself to be an unquestionable authority; he is unwilling to admit the possibility of error. Hume has a similar view:

The inspired person comes to regard himself as a distinguished favorite of the Divinity; and when this frenzy once takes place, which is the summit of enthusiasm, every whim is consecrated: Human reason, and even morality are rejected as fallacious guides: And the fanatic madman delivers himself over, blindly, and without reserve, to the supposed illapses of the spirit, and to inspiration from above. Hope, pride, presumption, a warm imagination, together with ignorance, are, therefore, the true sources of ENTHUSIASM.

(Hume 1985: “Of Superstition and Enthusiasm”)

As these quotations indicate, fanaticism was often associated with the presumption that one could achieve authoritative epistemic insights through immediate revelation or inspiration, rather than through critical rational inquiry. Violent, revolutionary uprisings, including peasant rebellions and strife during the English Civil War, were traced to this presumption of authority.

So, in the early modern period, we have an image of the fanatic: the person inspired to violent, cruel, intolerant acts through passionate conviction, who manifests this conviction because of some kind of epistemic defect, and who in addition may be a victim of a contagious form of emotional pathology. From there, the term broadens: while earlier thinkers often treated fanaticism as essentially religious, the term begins to be applied to an ever-wider set of characters. In the nineteenth century, both abolitionists and their opponents are derided as fanatical (Colas 1997; Toscano 2010); and, as the essays in this volume make clear, the term is soon extended to philosophers; to those gripped by scientism; to political groups on both the far right and far left; to terrorists; to incels; and the range of characters goes on and on.

1.2 Analyzing Fanaticism

We have a picture of fanaticism—but how do we make that picture more precise? Which features of fanaticism are essential and which are incidental? Which are primary and which derivative? As soon as we consider these kinds of question, complications arise. Consider the heterogeneous groups that are lumped under the label “fanatical”: religious fundamentalists, political activists, abolitionists, members of hate groups, terrorists, incels, philosophers, those who engage in excessive abstraction, those who suffer from emotional pathologies. And consider the range of factors that are historically associated with fanaticism: emotional excesses, epistemic defects, propensities to violence, remorseless cruelty, and so on. Can we really single out a useful concept here?

1.2.1 Is Fanaticism a Single Concern?

The breadth and shifting connotations of the term “fanaticism” invite a question: is fanaticism really a unified phenomenon? Or does it occupy different roles in different theories, sometimes picking out an emotional malady, sometimes an epistemic one, sometimes a substantive moral defect, sometimes a formal or procedural problem, sometimes an essentially religious phenomenon, sometimes a more general one?

One way of addressing this question is by thinking about whether there is a target phenomenon that these diverse accounts are trying to capture. Consider an analogy with other controversial philosophical topics, such as freedom. There are, of course, many different things that philosophers have meant by freedom; there can be no serious doubt that the term’s meaning changes over time; and different philosophers take different aspects as central. But, nonetheless, we can evaluate these competing conceptions of freedom against one another. We can ask whether they are internally consistent; how adequately they capture the phenomenon in which we are interested; how they connect to concerns about moral responsibility, agency, and philosophical psychology; what practical implications they have; and so on.

Just so with fanaticism: we can try to locate the target phenomenon and analyze it. Any such account will require specifying the essential, as opposed to the inessential, features of fanaticism, and treating certain uses of the term as exaggerated or misleading. But once we try to locate the target phenomenon, I think we can straightaway detect three central features. From early modernity onward, most philosophers who discuss fanaticism seem to agree on the following claims: fanaticism drives individuals to especially deep forms of commitment; the fanatic stands in a peculiar epistemic relation to his own commitments, being rigidly committed to them, unwilling to revise them in the way that non-fanatical individuals might; and the fanatic is often violent, intolerant, and coercive. Thus, we can treat the fanatic as distinguished by three features:

- his wholehearted, unwavering commitment;
- his rigid, unbending certainty about these commitments;
- and his willingness to impose costs on himself and others so as to preserve or realize these commitments.

This is why Martin Luther takes people like Thomas Müntzer, a German preacher who participated in the 1524–1525 German Peasants’ War, as paradigmatically fanatical. Müntzer claimed that inner inspiration was the true source of authority, and argued that his own beliefs—purportedly inspired by the Holy Spirit—should override scripture and traditional social authorities. He acted on this, playing a leading role in the Peasants’ War in which around 100,000 peasants were killed. And he died for these beliefs: he was imprisoned in May 1525, tortured, and eventually executed. So here we have absolute, unwavering commitment to an ideal; unbending certainty about the beliefs underwriting that ideal; a willingness to suffer for these beliefs; and a willingness to coerce others and impose tremendous costs on them.

And when we today think about fanatics, what springs to mind? Most likely: the violent white nationalist; the jihadist; the terrorist; the incel; the cult leader. One recent example is Anders Breivik, who was characterized in many newspaper articles as a right-wing fanatic.

For example, *The Scotsman* gives a profile of Breivik under the title “Anders Behring Breivik, a fanatic on a crusade against Muslims” (April 17, 2012); the *British Medical Journal* published “Do cases like that of Anders Breivik show that fanaticism is a form of madness?” (July 14, 2012); AP News characterized him as a “far right fanatic” (January 18, 2022); Reuters called him a “Norwegian anti-Islamic fanatic” (April 19, 2012); a New York Times article described him as “the Norwegian fanatic” (July 20, 2012); and so on. Breivik carried out a terrorist attack on July 22, 2011. On that day, he killed eight people at a government building with a van bomb and 69 people in a mass shooting at a youth summer camp on the island of Utøya. Shortly before beginning these attacks, he sent a manifesto entitled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* to over 1,000 email addresses. The 1,518-page document describes years of preparation for the attacks; espouses a political ideology that blames feminism, political correctness, and Islam for various social problems; argues that all Muslims should be deported from Europe; and advocates for restoring a form of patriarchy and hierarchy in Europe. What makes it so tempting to classify Breivik as a fanatic? Again, the answer seems clear enough: he manifests the three features I’ve listed above. He is wholeheartedly committed to his ideals; he is absolutely, rigidly certain about them; and he engages in cruel, violent actions to support them.

Münzter and Breivik are just two examples, widely separated in time and occupying wholly different social contexts. But what these figures have in common is their wholehearted commitment, their rigid certainty, and their willingness to impose costs on others. This is what prompts us to see them as fanatics.

1.2.2 Three Dimensions of Fanaticism

Above, I mentioned that fanatics seem to have three key features: wholehearted, unwavering commitment; rigid, unbending certainty; and willingness to impose costs. Notice that these features are psychological, epistemic, and behavioral, respectively. Most accounts of fanaticism agree that the fanatic displays psychological peculiarities, epistemic vices, and potentially problematic behaviors. But these three factors can be analyzed in a number of different ways.

Let’s start with the **psychological** dimension. Everyone agrees that the fanatic is committed to her ends in a peculiarly robust way. One project in the literature on fanaticism is *explaining the nature of this commitment*. Should we see the fanatic’s commitments as continuous with ordinary forms of commitment? Are they just especially intense or deep commitments? Or are they different in kind from ordinary commitments? I’ve argued that the fanatic is *devoted* to her ends, where devotion is a distinctive kind of commitment (Katsafanas 2022). More on this below.

But in addition to explaining the nature of these commitments, we might wonder whether the commitments are anchored in a distinctive psychological profile. Some authors argue that the fanatic displays a pathological *need for certainty* (Reginster, this volume). Others think the fanatic is in some sense psychologically weak. For example, I argue that the fanatic’s self-conception or practical identity is *fragile*: she can maintain her self-conception only by clinging rigidly to certain values that are treated as sacred, and moreover she fuses her identity with a group that is seen as protecting these values (Katsafanas 2022: Chapter 7). Others, still, think that a particular type of religious *zeal* may be associated with fanaticism (Tietjen 2021, 2023). Or perhaps the fanatic is obsessed with *purity* (Cassam 2022).

So there is a range of proposals about the psychology of the fanatic. It's worth noting that these authors disagree not only about which psychological states might be characteristic of the fanatic, but also about whether these psychological states are *primary* in the explanation of fanaticism. One view is that we can single out a psychological state, or a cluster of psychological states, which is necessary for fanaticism and which perhaps gives rise to the epistemic and behavioral aspects of fanaticism. A different view is that the psychological features are downstream from the epistemic or behavioral aspects. Much work remains to be done on these points.

Analogous questions arise about the **epistemic** dimension. Here, too, we find some characteristic features of the fanatic. Many writers think that fanatics are excessively certain about their ends. John Locke, for example, tells us that the fanatic gives more “credit or authority” to a “proposition than it receives from the principles and proofs it supports itself upon”—in other words, the fanatic is an “untractable zealot” who takes himself to be an unerring authority on matters of religious and practical import (Locke 1975: Sections 1 and 11). Voltaire treats the fanatic as manifesting a form of superstition and then taking that superstition to warrant horrific acts:

Fanaticism is to superstition what delirium is to fever and rage to anger. The man visited by ecstasies and visions, who takes dreams for realities and his fancies for prophecies, is an enthusiast; the man who supports his madness with murder is a fanatic.

(Voltaire, Philosophical Dictionary, entry on Fanaticism)

Kant tells us that fanaticism “believes itself to feel an immediate and extraordinary communion with a higher nature” (Kant 2007: 2:251n), which provides it with a seeming justification for its intransigent certainty.

Or perhaps the fanatic's thinking is excessively rigid. Within psychology, cognitive rigidity is typically defined as “the inability to adapt to novel or changing environments and a difficulty to switch between modes of thinking” (Zmigrod 2020: 35). Rigid thinkers tend to persevere in one way of thinking or behaving, especially in situations where this way of thinking or behaving is less effective than alternative modes. Adorno (1950), Zmigrod, and others have argued that fanatical or intolerant individuals tend to be rigid thinkers. Closed-mindedness is another candidate: if we construe closed-mindedness as the refusal or inability to engage seriously with relevant intellectual options, then Cassam (2022) and I (2022) have argued that fanatics display forms of closed-mindedness. (Though see Heather Battaly (this volume) for a more complicated view: she doubts that fanatics need to be closed-minded, and argues that even if they are, the form of closed-mindedness they manifest needn't be epistemically vicious.) R.M. Hare claims, more generally, that the fanatic is characterized by “the refusal or inability to think critically” (Hare 1981: 172). Or perhaps there's a more complex defect. Joshua DiPaolo (2020) has argued that the fanatic bears a problematic relation to higher-order evidence: fanatics treat disagreement as a *threat to their identity* rather than as a reason to revise their views.

So possibilities abound. There are many questions here, which repay investigations. One set of questions concerns which epistemic problems or vices, if any, are correlated with fanaticism. Another set of questions concerns whether any of these epistemic problems are distinctive of fanaticism. And a final set concerns whether we can account for fanaticism solely in terms of an epistemic problem, or whether we also need to appeal to other factors.

Finally, consider the **behavioral** dimensions of fanaticism. There are several morally problematic features that are correlated with fanaticism. The most obvious one is *intolerance*: the fanatic is typically presented as someone who is willing to coerce, overrule, oppress, persecute, or more generally behave violently toward those with dissenting views. Some accounts go farther, accusing the fanatic of misanthropy (see Thomason, this volume). Or perhaps fanaticism involves a pathological, collectivized form of hatred (Salmela and Scheve 2018; Szanto 2020). Or it could involve the unjustifiable assertion of oneself as an authority, not subject to civil or social restraints (Colas 1997). Or resentment (see Katsafanas 2022). And there are other possibilities: Cassam (2022) treats the fanatic as necessarily oriented toward morally perverse ideals.

Just as with the psychological and epistemic dimensions, we could take these behavioral dimensions to be necessary features of fanaticism or merely correlated with fanaticism. We could take them to be central to the explanation of fanaticism; or we could see them as explained by more fundamental features.

1.2.3 *An Account of Fanaticism*

So far, I've suggested that fanaticism involves psychological, epistemic, and behavioral dimensions. Each of these dimensions can be analyzed in different ways, and they can be prioritized in different orders. By way of illustration, I will present my own account of fanaticism, which provides one possible way of analyzing these features and thinking about the priority relations between them.

Above, I pointed out that since the 1500s, “fanaticism” is a term used for those who combine a certain way of approaching their values with a tendency toward violent intolerance. Let's start with this first point. The fanatic is absolutely certain about his goals and values: he does not permit critical reasoning to undermine them. This does not mean that the fanatic refuses to reason: indeed, we know that some fanatics are all too willing to produce fantastically lengthy, articulate defenses of their positions. Thus, ISIS published lengthy critical discussions on topics such as the permissibility of raping adolescents and enslaving members of other religions²; and Anders Breivik emailed a 1,500-page manuscript to hundreds of journalists before slaughtering 77 people in his terrorist attacks. So fanatics certainly can reason about their values. But there's a way in which this reasoning stops at a certain point: fanatics don't allow their critical reasoning to undermine their most basic commitments. Their basic commitments are secure, unaffected by thoughts about justification. They are invulnerable to the effects of critical reasoning. In Katsafanas (2022), I offered a more detailed characterization of this aspect, calling it *dialectical invulnerability*. A commitment is dialectically invulnerable when there is no argument, distinction, clarification, or other dialectical move that would dislodge it or cause it to dissipate. Showing the commitment to be irrational, inconsistent with other commitments, in conflict with moral principles, lacking adequate justification, and so forth has no effect.

I argue that the fanatic treats his core commitment as dialectically invulnerable. And not just that. In addition, the fanatic treats his core commitment as inviolable: there are no circumstances in which he sees it as permissibly sacrificed for the sake of competing values. He also sees it as incontestable: reflecting on the possibility of sacrificing his commitment for the sake of some competing commitment is anathema. To put this into the language of social psychology, the fanatic embraces one or more *sacred values*. I've argued that sacred values should be characterized in the following way:

(Sacred value) Let V1 be a value. Then V1 counts as sacred iff it meets the following conditions:

- 1 Inviolable: If V2 is an ordinary value, then it is prohibited to sacrifice V1 for V2, regardless of the quantities of V1 and V2.
- 2 Incontestable: It is prohibited to contemplate trading or sacrificing V1 for most or all other values.
- 3 Dialectically Invulnerable: The agent insulates her commitment to V1 from the effects of justificatory reasoning. That is, while the agent may think about V1's justification, consider objections to V1, consider alternatives to V1, engage in thought experiments with respect to V1, and so on, the agent does not stake her commitment to V1 on the outcome of this justificatory reasoning. There is no dialectical move that would disrupt the agent's commitment to V1.

So the fanatic has at least one sacred value. But merely having a sacred value is not enough to qualify as fanatical. Psychological and sociological studies reveal that sacred values are pervasive features of human life, far more pervasive than fanaticism, showing up in many religious, political, ethical, and personal contexts. I've argued that this is no accident: valuable features of ethical and social life depend on treating some values as sacred (Katsafanas 2022).

But we can hold sacred values in different ways. Suppose you treat a value as inviolable, incontestable, and dialectically invulnerable. Of course, you might treat a value as dialectically invulnerable because you think there are no good objections to it: you're completely convinced anyone who rejects the value is irrational. Some of our beliefs are like this. I am completely convinced that the world is round, flat-earthers notwithstanding. I can't envision anything that would cause me to give up that belief; it just seems so obvious that it's correct.

Fanatics are different: their certainty is tied to a form of *fragility*. The fanatic isn't just someone who happens to treat his values as dialectically invulnerable; rather, he's someone who *needs* to do this. Dialectical invulnerability operates as a self-protective mechanism. Just as the spouse might need to believe that his partner is faithful despite all the evidence to the contrary, the fanatic needs to preserve his core commitment. The fanatic's conception of himself depends on taking the value as fixed; because his identity is partly constituted by his unwavering commitment to the value, he can't let it go. If the value were lost, he would lose his sense of who he is.

So the fanatic is brittle, fragile: he is damaged. The fragility comes in two forms. First, his very *identity* is fragile: the fanatic needs to treat some value or goal as invulnerable in order to maintain his sense of who he is. Most of us have goals or values that we cherish. But the fanatic is different: he clings to these goals and refuses to let critical reasoning affect them *because* giving them up would involve a loss of his sense of self.

Second, the fanatic sees his *value* as fragile. He sees it as under threat; he sees public failure to accept this value as problematic. The value is thought to be endangered when it is not widely accepted. So, whereas a non-fanatic might cherish some value while remaining indifferent to how other people feel about it, the fanatic can't do this; the fanatic sees disagreement and indifference as threatening what he holds dear.

Fanaticism thus combines dogmatic resistance to reasoning with deep-seated fragility. That's what makes it pathological: the dogmatism is rooted in a fragile sense of self and value. So, I claim, the fanatic is characterized by three features:

- Fragility of self: the agent needs to treat a value as sacred in order to preserve her identity.
- Fragility of value: the value's status is taken to be threatened when it is not widely accepted.
- Group identity: the fanatic identifies herself with a group, where this group is defined by shared commitment to a sacred value.

To the extent that these three features are present, the individual qualifies as fanatical (see Katsafanas 2022 for a full explanation and defense of this view).

But there's another notable aspect of fanaticism: it seems to be contagious. As I mentioned above, this has been recognized for a long time: even Voltaire, writing three centuries ago, said that fanaticism is a "spiritual pestilence," a "malady of the mind, which is taken in the same way as smallpox."

But how could something like fanaticism be contagious? Well, suppose you wanted to design a mechanism to produce fanatics. You would need to make people experience their own identities as fragile: you would need to get them to think that their identity hinges on total devotion to some value; and you would need them to think that this value is threatened. Then the people would be strongly motivated to maintain and protect this value; and they would see those who don't accept the value as enemies, as an out-group that needs to be struggled against. And the stronger you can make these tendencies, the better you would be at creating fanatics.

So, suppose you put forth a story like this: a certain group—let's just call them the *believers*—are identifiable by their devotion to *The Value*. Outsiders threaten The Value. Moreover, the fact that these outsiders threaten The Value explains all of the faults that the believers are experiencing. If The Value could be maintained—if the out-group's suppression of it could be stopped—then the believers would be untroubled.

This kind of story stokes *group resentment*. You think that there's some group responsible for all of your failings. You see a clear path to recovery: simply struggle against that group and valiantly defend your value. Insofar as that out-group is responsible for all of your failings, it makes sense to demonize them, to hate them, even in the extreme case to destroy them.

This kind of narrative generates a feedback loop. The resentment narrative tends to become all-encompassing, treating the central failings of one's life as traceable to some singular root cause. Your identity is seen as fundamentally damaged or wounded by some other. The injury, damage, or wound is not just some past causal factor which is eventually overcome; it provides a central, continual focal point for your life. So the resentment narrative *fixates* you on some out-group. The out-group is seen as threatening. Your identity becomes bound up with opposition to that group; you define yourself in opposition to it.

And this tends to stick. If your identity is dependent on characterizing some out-group as wounding you, then revaluing this belief, reinterpreting the status of the out-group, and so on will be very costly. To the extent that your perspective on the world is in this way all-encompassing and fixated, breaking out of it requires not just local adjustments but abandoning classifications, labels, and distinctions that create larger upheavals in the perspective.

That is what is dangerous about resentment narratives. They prey on weakness: they are attractive to individuals who see themselves as oppressed, wounded, humiliated, or otherwise rejected. And they magnify that feeling: they treat the resentful individual as having good reason for these feelings, and shift the locus of responsibility outward to some

opposed group. So they give the resentful individual a new sense of group identity, absolving him of responsibility for his weaknesses, while at the same time giving him something to attack.

And that is why they spread. A disease, once introduced in a population, can find new hosts. A resentment narrative, once introduced into a population, can find wounded individuals; amplify and entrench their sense of fragility; and thereby turn them into fanatics. On my account, this is why fanaticism is so dangerous: it spreads through a population when individuals experience themselves as suffering and are attracted to a narrative that redirects the suffering into a form of resentful hatred (see Katsafanas 2022).

1.2.4 *Is Fanaticism Always a Vice? And, If So, Why?*

So far, I've highlighted three central features of fanaticism and explained my account of individual and group fanaticism. Throughout, I've given examples of fanatics who direct themselves toward reprehensible ends, such as racial supremacy. But notice that the three central features of fanaticism that I've discussed above can be manifest in people who pursue morally admirable ends.

Consider an example. A central figure in the debates about fanaticism, discussed by authors including Toscano, Cassam, and Battaly, is the abolitionist. Abolitionists were often derided as fanatical and some took this label upon themselves (see Colas 1997; Toscano 2010). Take John Brown (1800–1859), who viewed it as his obligation to abolish slavery and famously claimed that he was willing to die—and kill—for this cause. Together with his sons, in 1856 he killed five supporters of slavery, dragging them from their houses, interrogating them on their support for slavery, and then hacking them to death with swords. In 1859, he led a raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry, hoping to begin a violent uprising that would spread, overthrow the US government, and ultimately liberate slaves. By some measures, Brown was a fanatic: he was absolutely unwavering in his conviction that slavery was a great evil; he was willing to kill people and stoke violent uprisings in order to overthrow the US government; and his passion for his cause is unquestionable. But, of course, his cause was just: he correctly saw that slavery was an atrocity and turned to violence only because he saw it as a necessary means for ending slavery.

What John Brown illustrates is that we can have people who are absolutely certain about their own moral convictions; who are willing to impose costs on others so as to realize these convictions; who suffer, and in some cases die, in order to remain true to these convictions; who act with passionate intensity; but whose goals are laudable.

Here, we come to an important question: is fanaticism necessarily directed at reprehensible ends? Or can a person be directed at laudable ends while still qualifying as fanatical? There is scholarly disagreement on this point. Cassam argues for an account of fanaticism that entails that all fanatics are directed toward “perverted ideals” (Cassam 2022: 133). By contrast, my account of fanaticism is content-neutral. I think John Brown was a fanatic. Calling him a fanatic picks out a set of facts about the way in which he relates to his ideals, but it does not disparage those ideals. Consider a simpler case: *stubbornness* is typically regarded as content-neutral. It picks out a way in which we relate to our goals or our beliefs, rather than anything about the content of those goals or beliefs. You can be stubborn with respect to admirable goals and beliefs; or you can be stubborn with respect to pernicious ones. Just so, I think, with fanaticism.

So one way of thinking about fanaticism—the way that I endorse—is by claiming that fanaticism as such is a vice, but that vices can sometimes have good results. In one sense, it's bad that John Brown was fanatical, but in a broader sense, when we take account of the good that he achieved by being fanatical, we can say that the vice is outweighed by the goodness of the end. Just as stubbornness or pugnaciousness or cowardice or other seemingly vicious states can, in non-ideal circumstances, have morally praiseworthy effects, so too with fanaticism. (Of course, a full defense of this point would require more argumentation.)

1.2.5 *Why Fanaticism Is a Fertile Philosophical Topic*

A final question is why we should think that fanaticism is a *philosophical* topic. We can give psychological profiles of fanatics; sociological explanations of why fanaticism might arise; historical accounts of particular instances of fanaticism. What does philosophy have to add?

I hope the previous sections have answered that question. Fanaticism is a paradigmatically philosophical issue. It raises epistemological questions about the way in which ideals, goals, and relationships might be justified. It raises political questions about tolerance, forbearance, and interaction with violent opponents. It raises questions in philosophical psychology concerning the way in which we form and sustain commitments, practical identities, and ideals.

Precisely because analyzing fanaticism requires integrating epistemic, moral, and agential or psychological concerns, it promises to shed new light not just on fanaticism itself, and not just on the cluster of related states (extremism, zealotry, enthusiasm, dogmatism), but on broader issues in philosophy. To name just a few: the nature of commitment and devotion; the status of ideals; tolerance and intolerance; practical identity or self-conception and its relation to groups and ideals; political psychology; moral agency and responsibility; social pathology.

1.3 Overview of the Volume's Contents

The volume is divided into four parts, which deal with fanaticism in antiquity, early modernity, late modernity, and the contemporary world. **Part 1** contains three essays that explore the way in which fanaticism and related topics are discussed in ancient Greece, India, and China.

Fanaticism is a term that comes to prominence with early modern writers such as Martin Luther and Voltaire, and many philosophers treat the phenomenon of fanaticism as distinctively modern. **Mor Segev** disagrees. Segev uses an analysis of the fifth-century BCE heresy trials to examine religious toleration in ancient Greek society. Focusing on Aristotle's claim that religious fear can play a useful political role, Segev argues that religious fear can devolve into a compulsive, unreflective form that threatens political and individual order. Segev sees excessive religious fear as analogous to modern manifestations of extremism and fanaticism. And not only that—he sees excessive religious fear as emerging from the causes that also prompt fanaticism, such as the instability produced by war. So the problems that early modern thinkers diagnose in terms of fanaticism are also present, and are also recognized as threats, in the ancient world.

Nathan McGovern notes that although there is no exact conceptual or linguistic equivalent for the term “fanaticism” in ancient Indian thought, debates about closely related topics played a central role. Specifically, McGovern argues that due to the potential tension between the ideals of world-affirming practices and world-renouncing ascetic practices, thinkers were concerned with specifying what would count as “extremes” of renunciation. The basic thought is that we can go wrong by pursuing renunciatory practices to an excessive degree. But just what this means and what counts as “excessive” is a complex matter, and McGovern argues that we can see three major religions—Brahmanical Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism—as charting different paths on this topic.

Just as ancient Indian philosophical discourse lacks a term for fanaticism but addresses closely related issues, so too **Eirik Lang Harris** argues that early Chinese philosophy doesn’t address fanaticism as such but does analyze the problems that emerge from excessive *certainty* about moral and political views. Focusing on the 770–221 BCE period, Harris notes that certain thinkers seem absolutely certain about the correctness of their views and are willing to demand extreme, coercive, and violent approaches to those who disagree. While Harris argues that the philosophical thinkers he addresses are not themselves fanatical, he suggests that the philosophical views developed by these thinkers can be put to fanatical uses and can legitimate unchecked political authority.

Notably, each of these three traditions—Greek, Indian, and Chinese—are concerned with *excessive* or *extreme* phenomena. But they are different: Segev focuses on the Greek concern with excessive *fear of the divine*, McGovern on excessive *renunciatory practices*, Harris on excessive *certainty*. We will see these concerns emerging in other thinkers as well, for each of these aspects—patterns of emotion, action, and thought—play a key role in later accounts of fanaticism.

I note that this volume’s examination of fanaticism in the ancient world is incomplete. While I had planned to include discussions of fanaticism in ancient Arabic philosophy and African philosophy, two contributors withdrew their essays as the publication deadline approached. What we are left with here is just a partial glimpse into three rich areas; this analysis could be broadened by examinations of analogous phenomena in other parts of the ancient world.

But no single volume could contain a compressive analysis of the world history of a concept such as fanaticism, so the next section of the volume leaps ahead to early modern European discussions of fanaticism. This is where the term “fanatic” or “enthusiast” first came into widespread employment and acquired its modern connotations. The essays in **Part 2** touch on a few key moments in this history.

Justin Steinberg asks whether we should view fanatics as intolerant or hostile to civil society. Steinberg argues that in the early modern period it was not the fanatics, but their opponents, who were intolerant. The superstitious and dogmatic clergy imposed their views on the populace, in part by encouraging forms of anxiety, dependence, and senses of humiliation that would redound to the clergy’s advantage. The clergy’s opponents, who were labeled enthusiastic or fanatical, sought to undermine this putative spiritual authority in favor of a more moderated form of political authority. So the anticlerical tendencies of the fanatics ultimately encouraged toleration rather than undermining it. Steinberg argues that while Hobbes, Hume, and Spinoza are critical of certain aspects of the fanatic, their political and social views actually align with certain aspects of the fanatics. He finds support for this reading in Hobbes’s critiques of clerical authority; Spinoza’s discussions of false religions, superstition, and prophecy; and Hume’s opposition to the manipulative clergy.

Douglas Casson turns to Locke. Locke makes it clear that he sees enthusiasm as a threat both to individuals and to civil society. The fanatic treats himself as an authority on religious matters, refusing to recognize any mediating role for priests, religious institutions, or civil authorities. Locke is interested in diagnosing the origins of this tendency. He offers two distinct accounts. First, fanaticism might result from intellectual malfeasance: fanatics are capable of regulating their beliefs correctly, but decline to do so. They have all the epistemic resources necessary for regulating their beliefs, but refuse to exercise them. Second, fanatics might suffer from a psychopathological malady that renders them incapable of dissociating subjective experiences of certainty from claims about objective justification: their intransigence and unwillingness to question their experiences is not a result of choice, but of mental illness.

Vickie Sullivan points out that although Montesquieu was proclaimed by Voltaire and others to be an important opponent of fanaticism, he uses the words *fanatiques* and *enthousiasmé* very infrequently. He does, however, devote a chapter of *The Spirit of the Laws* to the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitors, who many view as fanatical. By examining this complex chapter, we can understand Montesquieu's objections to fanaticism. He points to errors that arise from thinking that we are compelled to avenge the threats to the honor of divinities and discusses the civil discord that results from religious zeal. He suggests that religious infractions should carry only religious, rather than civil or criminal, penalties.

Rachel Zuckert examines an intriguing proposal from Shaftesbury: that enthusiasm is best addressed by humor rather than by arguments or political penalties. But how can this be? If enthusiasm involves epistemically or socially problematic epistemic commitments, how could humor be relevant? Zuckert explains that Shaftesbury treats enthusiasm as essentially involving certain emotional/aesthetic attitudes, which foster the problematic epistemic states. As she puts it, enthusiasm is a "disease of emotion," and it is an infectious disease: it tends to spread from one individual to another. In addition, these states can be considered aesthetically mistaken—they rest on wrongly taking something to have grandeur. In particular, enthusiasm involves a pathological form of imagination, in which passion is misdirected toward something identified as grand: the enthusiast's false but imaginatively associated ideas about God and world.

The essays in **Part 3** turn to the Late Modern period, beginning with Immanuel Kant and continuing through the early twentieth-century phenomenologist Jorge Portilla.

Krista Thomason focuses on the way in which Kant associated fanaticism with misanthropy. After reviewing Kant's use of the terms enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) and fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*), which Thomason argues are treated inconsistently across Kant's works, she examines the role that enthusiasm plays in his corpus. She argues that Kant sees enthusiasts as favoring "inner illuminations" over "slow and ponderous reason," believing that they can discern things that are in fact beyond the bounds of possible experience. Unlike some earlier thinkers, Kant doesn't see enthusiasm as directly opposed to reason: rather, he believes that enthusiasm can arise from the same source as rational thinking, namely our drive to understand and contemplate metaphysical truths. But how does enthusiasm connect to misanthropy? Two of Kant's examples of enthusiasts are Rousseau and Pascal, both of whom he also claims are misanthropic. Their misanthropy consists in arguing that refinements of reason and detections of limits to rational inquiry lead either to corruption or to abdication of reason's authority. Kant treats this as a result of enthusiasm: rather the seeing that the detection of reason's limitations is compatible with optimism, these thinkers take it to mandate a form of pessimism.

Kristin Gjesdal examines Germaine de Staël's analysis of fanaticism. Staël focuses on political cases of fanaticism, claiming that political fanaticism is responsible for destructive impacts on politics, culture, and the self. She treats fanaticism as a particular type of passion, which inclines us to seek an "imaginary" and ultimately unattainable end. It is an unusual passion: whereas most passions are manifest in the same way independently of when and where they occur, fanaticism emerges only in certain social conditions and takes different forms at different times. Socially, fanaticism typically emerges from a mix of helplessness, inability to participate in the political, fear, ennui, and so on. Fanaticism involves a tendency to perceive everything through a single abstract idea; a tolerance of self-contradiction; a fear of compromise; and a loss of the capacity to imagine alternatives and to empathize with others. Fanatics form bonds of "shared animosity," in which they bond with others not in the service of some positive goal but only so as to jointly attack opponents. In order to break free of fanaticism, we need to cultivate our potential for self-governance by establishing meaningful bonds with others.

Dean Moyar investigates Hegel's claim that fanaticism arises from excessive abstraction. According to Hegel, the fanatic abstracts from every determinate characterization, seeing himself as free only if he gains independence from every possible limitation. Because any concrete characterization will involve limitations, the fanatic opposes every actual social condition: even if his own goal or ideals were to be realized, the fanatic would come to see these as limitations and consequently would oppose them. What, then, is the solution to fanaticism? Moyar argues that the *Philosophy of Right* attempts to show how we might sustain particularity without objectionable forms of limitation, by situating it within the state.

Bernard Reginster distinguishes between the Enlightenment and Existentialist views of fanaticism. The Enlightenment view treats fanaticism as a form of epistemic overconfidence that inspires emotional excess. The Existentialist view treats the emotional problem as primary: the fanatic suffers from an emotional disorder, and the epistemic problems are downstream from this. Focusing on Nietzsche, Reginster argues that the fanatic is intransigent on certain commitments because these commitments have emotional significance: critiquing them would disrupt the agent's certainty, and this certainty is, in the fanatic, a pathological need. The fanatic yearns for a form of naïve certainty, in which her convictions appear self-evident and hence can be clung to with confidence. In an attempt to restore this naïve certainty, the fanatic surrenders herself unconditionally to a conviction, treating it as unshakeable.

Nietzsche and William James share an opposition to scientism, despite disagreeing on so many other ethical topics. **Rachel Cristy** analyzes scientism as an uncritical acceptance of the assumptions and conclusions of science, and thus as a potential case of fanaticism. Nietzsche and James both treat fanaticism as involving an exclusive attachment to a single point of view, coupled with an inability to entertain other points of view. James sees this as an intellectual inability, whereas Nietzsche traces it to a willful inability that arises from the need for certainty. In both cases, though, fanaticism involves a narrowness of interests and perspectives. We find this in scientism. Additionally, scientism involves an uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of the overriding value of truth. This valuation of truth can be seen as an expression of the need for certainty. Scientism can thus be seen as a paradigmatic form of fanaticism.

Carlos Sánchez examines the Mexican phenomenologist Jorge Portilla's analysis of two personality types: the *relajiento* and the *apretado*. Portilla treats these two types as affecting the community in different ways: the *relajiento* undermines the values of seriousness,

whereas the *apretado* can be understood as a value fanatic who bears a zealous relation to values. Portilla describes *apretados* as “afflicted with the spirit of seriousness,” in that they bear an extreme or excessively serious relationship to what they value. The *apretado* treats certain values as non-negotiable and beyond question. They characteristically exhibit four features: excessiveness, possessiveness, exclusiveness, and abstractness.

Part 4 turns to contemporary explorations of fanaticism. The essays in this section explore the psychology, epistemology, and sociology of fanaticism.

Nicolas de Warren offers a wide-ranging study of the ways in which the concept of fanaticism comes to have social, cultural, and psychological manifestations. Beginning with a discussion of Voltaire and other Enlightenment thinkers, de Warren turns to the way in which certain narratives promote fanaticism; the role that charismatic agitators play in stoking fanaticism; and the importance of resentment. He takes *The Last Summer of Reason* and *Moby Dick* as powerful, insightful portrayals of fanaticism: both give us images of the fanatic as devoted to values or ideals that are treated as sacred and inviolable. De Warren presents Lambert Bolterauer, Joseph Goebbels, and Michael Flynn, among others, as proliferating narratives and claims that stoke fanaticism by encouraging grievances and group identification. The fanatical narratives are invitations to group identity, a group identity shaped around opposition and grievance. And he turns briefly to Nietzsche’s reflections on the role of resentment in stoking fanaticism, by giving weak or powerless individuals a way to excuse and even falsify their own powerlessness.

Mark Alfano and **Paul-Mikhail Catapang Podosky** examine a social movement that seems rife with fanaticism: the anglophone manosphere, which includes incels, men’s rights activists, and a group known as men-going-their-own-way. Alfano and Podosky adopt my view of fanaticism, according to which fanatics hold sacred values that they adopt in order to preserve their own psychic unity, and who feel that these values are threatened when others do not regard them as sacred. Alfano and Podosky show that groups in the manosphere fixate on putative social hierarchies and claim that they must secure their position at the top of these hierarchies. They coin new terms and concepts (such as “black pill,” “femanazi,” “cuck,” and so on) in order to influence behavior and aim-adoption. They are engaged in a form of conceptual engineering that produces degenerative, damaging effects.

Terrorists are often portrayed as fanatical, and many stock examples of fanaticism are drawn from cases of terrorism. But what, exactly, is the relationship between terrorism and fanaticism? **Quassim Cassam** argues that they are more loosely connected than is traditionally assumed. The so-called “new terrorism,” which is taken to be descriptive of organizations like Al Qaeda and Hezbollah, is often defined in ways that generate conceptual connections to fanaticism. However, Cassam argues that this approach improperly pathologizes both terrorism and fanaticism, which obstructs both the understanding of terrorism and the proper approach to counterterrorism. He argues for a reorientation that addresses the root causes of terrorism.

The typical examples of fanatics are men. But **Tracy Llanera** explores the neglected topic of women who actively participate in terror and hate groups, some of whom seem even more fanatical than their male peers. Llanera points out that fanatical women are often members of highly patriarchal groups, which raises difficult questions about how they can exercise political agency. Drawing on my account of fanaticism, Llanera argues that fanatical women can be understood as inspired by resentment-fostering narratives; that the groups to which they belong license them to defy gender norms in order to secure political or social goals; and that hate and terror groups call on women to perform actions that bring

them prestige specifically as women, rather than merely as members of the group. Securing empowerment and social recognition through these exercises of fanaticism, women who participate in hate groups have powerful incentives toward fanaticism.

Fanatics are often closed-minded, but **Heather Battaly** argues that philosophers including Cassam and myself have been too quick to assume both that *all* fanatics are closed-minded and that closed-mindedness is always vicious. If we conceive of closed-mindedness as an unwillingness or inability to engage seriously with relevant intellectual options, or an unwillingness or inability to revise one's beliefs, fanatics need not be closed-minded. In fact, they can even be open-minded. Moreover, Battaly points out that certain Garrisonian Abolitionists were closed-minded fanatics, but their closed-mindedness was epistemically virtuous. Their belief in the badness of slavery, which in certain cases was held in a closed-minded, dogmatic fashion, nevertheless had morally beneficial effects; and the closed-minded, dogmatic nature of this belief allowed it to be maintained even in the face of pervasive social disagreement.

Finally, **Sophie Grace Chappell** examines the connection between political fanaticism and epistemic shamelessness. Chappell treats shame and honor as basic ethical concepts, not explicable in terms of anything more fundamental. Shame (and honor) are suited for second-personal address: shame is something that one person addresses to another, for example by asking "How could you?," and it involves communicating that the addressee has done a disgraceful act. This implicitly assumes that the addressee could have done better. And shaming can be involved in epistemic assessment: epistemic agency is subject to appraisal, and some of that appraisal takes the form of appeals to shame (and honor). Chappell examines the way in which political discourse is rife with epistemic shamelessness and considers how we might counteract this.

~ ~ ~

No single volume can address the vast range of epistemic, moral, psychological, sociological, and historical dimensions of fanaticism. But the twenty essays in this volume provide a path into this terrain, charting some of the most important historical philosophical discussions of fanaticism and opening new questions in the contemporary literature. My hope is that this volume will lay the groundwork for further discussions of fanaticism.

Notes

- 1 The terms "fanatic" and "enthusiast" were both common, and often used interchangeably, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Passmore (2003), La Vopa (1997), Klein and La Vopa (1998), Steinberg (this volume), and Thomason (this volume).
- 2 These discussions were published in ISIS's online magazine *Dabiq*, which is often blocked or restricted as part of antiradicalization efforts. Portions of these websites are available in Stern and Berger (2015).

References

- Adorno, Theodor W., Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford (1950), *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Cassam, Quassim (2022), *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Colas, Dominique (1997), *Civil Society and Fanaticism: Conjoined Histories*, trans. Amy Jacobs. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Deleyre, Alexandre (2009), *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. by Stephen J. Gendzier. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing. <<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0001.305>>. Trans. of *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 6. Paris, 1756.
- DiPaolo, Joshua (2020), “The Fragile Epistemology of Fanaticism,” in *Higher-Order Evidence and Moral Epistemology*, ed. Michael Klenk. New York: Routledge, 217–235.
- Hare, R. M. (1981), *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method and Point*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hume, David (1985), *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*. New York: Liberty Fund.
- Kant, Immanuel (2007), “Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime,” in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, eds. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 23–64.
- Katsafanas, Paul (2022), *Philosophy of Devotion: The Longing for Invulnerable Ideals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klein, Lawrence E. and Anthony J. La Vopa (1998), *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe 1650–1850*. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library.
- La Vopa, Anthony J. (1997), “The Philosopher and the Schwärmer: On the Career of a German Epithet from Luther to Kant,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60: 85–115.
- Locke, John (1975), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Luther, Martin (1967/1525), “Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants,” in *Luther’s Works*, Volume 46, eds. Helmut T. Lehmann, Robert C Schultz, and Joel W. Lundeen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 47–55.
- Melanchthon, Philip (2016/1540), “Commentary on Romans 9–16,” in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture, New Testament Volume VIII, Romans 9–16*, eds. Philip D.W. Krey and Peter D.S. Krey. Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Passmore, John Arthur (2003), “Fanaticism, Toleration, and Philosophy,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11(2): 211–22.
- Salmela, Mikko, and Christian von Scheve (2018), “Emotional Dynamics of Right- and Left-wing Political Populism,” *Humanity & Society* 42(4): 434–454.
- Shaftesbury, Third Earl of (1999), “A letter concerning enthusiasm to my Lord ****,” in *Characteristics of Men, Opinions, and Manners*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 4–28.
- Stern, Jessica, and John M. Berger (2015), *ISIS: The State of Terror*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Szanto, Thomas (2020), “In Hate We Trust. The Collectivization and Habitualization of Hatred,” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 19: 453–480. <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-018-9604-9>>.
- Tietjen, Ruth Rebecca (2021), “Religious Zeal as an Affective Phenomenon,” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 20(1): 75–91.
- Tietjen, Ruth Rebecca (2023), “Religious Zeal, Affective Fragility, and the Tragedy of Human Existence,” *Humanistic Studies* 46: 1–19.
- Toscano, Alberto (2010), *Fanaticism: On the Uses of an Idea*. New York: Verso.
- Voltaire (1984), *Philosophical Dictionary*. New York: Penguin.
- Zmigrod, Leor (2020), “The Role of Cognitive Rigidity in Political Ideologies: Theory, Evidence, and Future Directions,” *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* 34: 34–39.