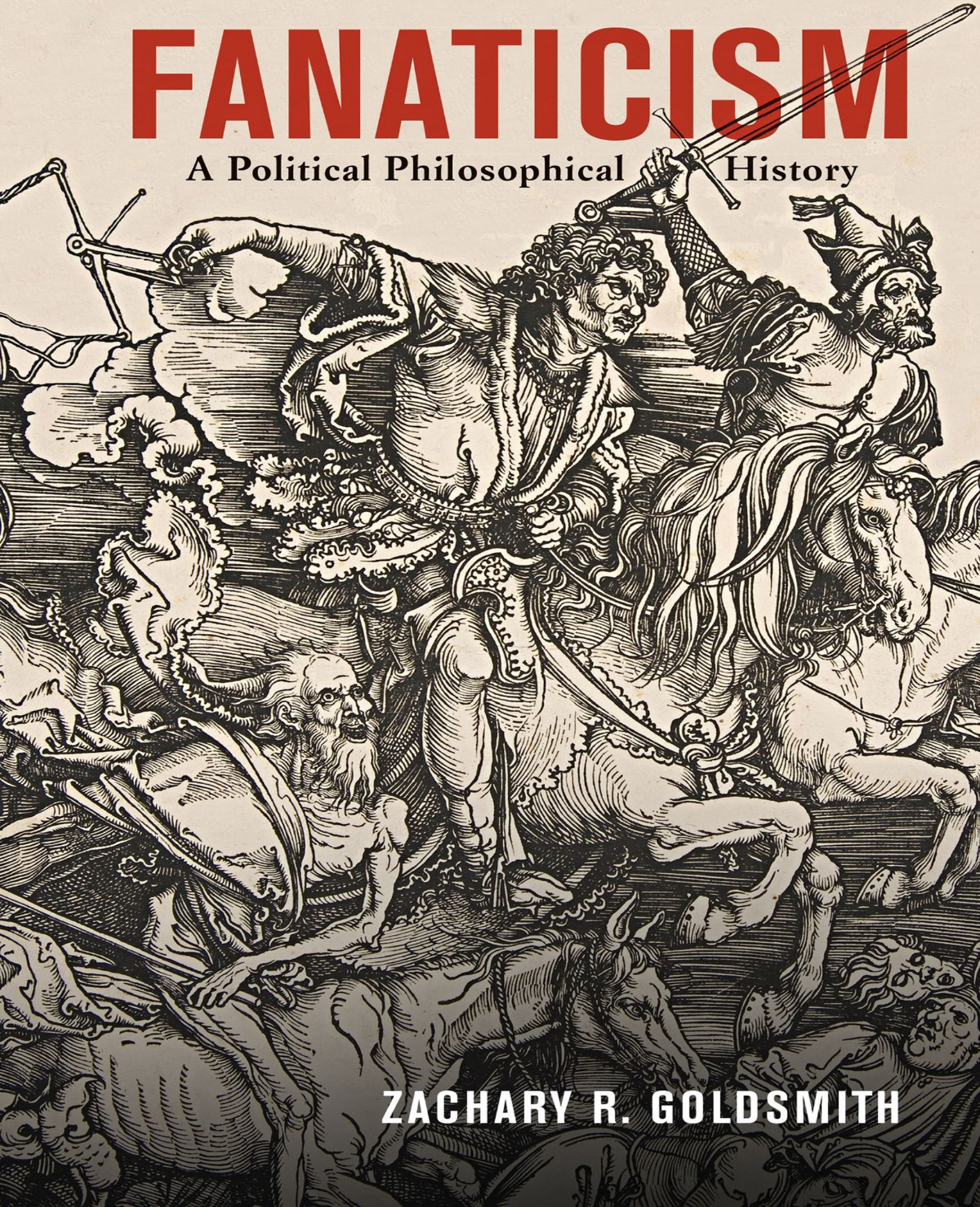
FANATICISM

A Political Philosophical History



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For my parents

Contents

Chapter 1

Answering the Question: What Is Fanaticism?

> For the errours of Definitions multiply themselves, according as the reckoning proceeds; and lead men into absurdities, which at last they see, but cannot avoyd, without reckoning anew from the beginning; in which lyes the foundation of their errours.
>
> —Thomas Hobbes (1985 [1651]: 105)

Passion, Michael Walzer (2004) claims, "is a hidden issue at the heart" of many of today's most pressing political problems (110). Excessive passion in the political arena can impel a turn to irrationalism and engender an unbending conviction in the exclusive truth of one's own belief. Often, this can further mean a refusal to compromise or admit any doubt and, all too often, the pursuit of violent means to realize one's political aspirations. To put it too bluntly—fanaticism. But, as Walzer is quick to point out, a politics totally devoid of passion is also undesirable. Like Max Weber before him, Walzer argues that politics, in its best expression, comprises "conviction energized by passion and passion restrained by conviction" (120), an unstable combination redolent of what Weber (2004) famously called an "ethics of conviction" and an "ethics of responsibility" (83).[1]

Historians of political thought have long wrestled with this central problem of passion in politics, engaging with changing concepts and attendant terminology to understand and grapple with this central problem of social existence.[2] John Passmore (2003) notes that, during the Enlightenment, when the forces of reason were arrayed in battle against those of passion, "two words entered the English language at almost the same time" to describe this struggle: *enthusiasm* and *fanaticism* (211). As we will see in this work, these two different terms—and the closely related concepts they are meant to denote—have undergone a long process of evolution as they have been used to understand certain types of social engagement, beginning with their earliest invocation in the ancient world, followed by their transformation into religious concepts, and, by the time of the Enlightenment, their ultimate refashioning as primarily political concepts.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "fanaticism" as "the condition of being, or supposing oneself to be, possessed," or, "the tendency to indulge in wild and extravagant notions, *esp*. in religious matters; excessive enthusiasm, frenzy; an instance, a particular form of this," as well as, "in a weaker sense: Eagerness or enthusiasm in any pursuit." While the dictionary notes the first instance of the word (or a variant) in English as dating from 1652, Dominique Colas (1997) notes a usage more than a full century earlier in a 1525 version of the celebrated story of Robin Hood (14). Emerging in vernacular languages around the turn of the seventeenth century, "enthusiasm" is defined similarly by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which offers a few related definitions, all variations on "possession by a god, supernatural inspiration, prophetic or poetic frenzy; an occasion or manifestation of these."

More recent attempts to define fanaticism focus on particular attributes of this concept. For example, H. J. Perkinson (2002) claims that the key attribute of fanaticism is a "flight from fallibility." Such a rejection of fallibility, Perkinson argues, leads one to become "fanatical," as well as "dogmatic," "obscurantist," and "authoritarian" (172). The psychologist Stanley Milgram (1977) reduced fanaticism to mere extremism, writing, "A fanatic is someone who goes to extremes in beliefs, feelings, and actions" (58). The philosopher A. P. Martinich (2000) identifies an obsession with transcendence as the crux of fanaticism, writing, "A fanatic is a person who purports to place all (or virtually all) value in things of some transcendent realm. This entails that either no or only derivative value is attached to this world" (419). Passmore (2003) extends these analyses, arguing that "hard-core fanaticism" has three major attributes: "some objective of such consequences that all other ends must be subordinated to it even when this entails acting in ways which would normally be regarded as immoral," as well as a belief that "it is possible to know by having access to some peculiarly authoritative source of knowledge what this objective is and why such means are possible," and the further belief that "those who have this knowledge are entitled to suppress those who raise any questions about it, who oppose in a way its realization or, more generally, who do not show in their behaviour that they wholeheartedly accept it" (221).

While these attempts at definition are no doubt helpful, they only tell us so much. Indeed, as many political philosophers and intellectual historians have pointed out, the central concepts of political life are difficult, if not

impossible, to neatly define. As Nietzsche (1996) argues, such concepts exist "completely beyond definition"; they "no longer possess[] a single meaning, but a whole synthesis of 'meanings'" (60). The influential German intellectual historian Reinhart Koselleck (2016) arrives at a similar view regarding such "foundational concepts" (*Grundbegriffe*), writing, "Concepts are thus concentrations of many semantic contents" (46). Accordingly, while the meaning of the *words* we use to denote certain concepts may be more or less clear, the concepts themselves can only ever be "interpreted." This is no less the case with a concept like fanaticism.

Combining insights from the field of "concept history" (*Begriffsgeschichte*), as well as related approaches including the Cambridge School of intellectual history, and the more recent methodological innovations of the philosopher Berys Gaut (2000, 2005), this work demonstrates the complexity and myriad transformations of the concept of fanaticism. Therefore, instead of proffering one simple and neat definition of fanaticism, I will provide a "cluster account" of the concept of fanaticism.[3] Accordingly, after studying the history of the concept of fanaticism, especially its more modern political manifestation through analyses of the thought of Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke, and Fyodor Dostoevsky, I will posit ten primary attributes of the concept of fanaticism that, in various permutations, hang together and create what we can recognize as fanaticism in its fullest sense. These core attributes are messianism, an inappropriate relationship to reason, an embrace of abstraction, a desire for novelty, the pursuit of perfection, an opposition to limits, an embrace of violence, absolute certitude, excessive passion, and an attractiveness to intellectuals.

While throughout its history fanaticism has almost always held a normatively negative connotation, it has long existed alongside its more normatively ambiguous (or even normatively positive) twin, enthusiasm. Accordingly, to hope to understand the concept of fanaticism, its twin concept, enthusiasm, must also be explored. The history of these two concepts can be likened to two concurrent lines, sometimes intersecting and converging, where the terms *enthusiasm* and *fanaticism* could be understood as synonyms, and sometimes diverging, where the terms no longer denote quite the same referent. I will show that these lexical transformations reflect deeper changes within the concept of fanaticism, changes that correspond to the way the phenomenon of fanaticism has

changed throughout the course of human history. Indeed, as we will see in the next chapter, the concept of fanaticism has existed in three relatively stable forms throughout its history. Referring in ancient times to a particular type of cultic practice, the concept was later understood primarily to denote a deviant type of religious belief and habitus with the rise of Christianity until the Enlightenment. Finally, around the time of the French Revolution, fanaticism became refashioned as a political concept, now referring to a type of political belief and behavior that, in many ways, replicated in political terms what its earlier religious mode denoted.

Further complicating our efforts to uncover the history of this complicated concept is the fact that fanaticism, and its cousin enthusiasm, have both most often been understood—and used—in a pejorative context. Cartographers of these elusive concepts are no strangers to this complication. As the psychologists and analysts of fanaticism André Haynal, Miklos Molnar, and Gérard de Puymège (1983) note, "The concept of fanaticism enables us not only to place a value judgement on those who oppose our ideals, but also to condemn out of hand their mode of behavior, without delving deeper, simply by saying: 'They are fanatics'" (4). Indeed, the appellation "fanatic" has often been used as a political smear to banish and condemn political views and actors with whom one disagrees. In the American context, to take one example, this rhetorical maneuver was commonplace in nineteenth-century debates over slavery and abolition. John C. Calhoun, for example, a longtime South Carolina politician who rose to the station of vice president under John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, often denounced abolitionists as fanatics in his efforts to defend slavery. In one of his most famous speeches to Congress "On the Reception of Abolition Petitions" in 1837, Calhoun (1992) defended slavery as "a positive good," denouncing those who opposed it as "fanatics" (474–475). While some in the broad American abolitionist movement may indeed have been fanatics—John Brown comes to mind—most did not possess the unique combination of attributes needed to merit this label. As we will see, fanaticism, properly understood, means more than just devotion to a cause—more, indeed, than even extreme devotion to a cause. Rather, a fanatic assumes a unique way of being in the world, one that brings with it a host of characteristics that go beyond mere political engagement or even political extremism. Fanaticism, to truly merit the description, must possess some combination of messianism, an inappropriate relationship to reason, an

embrace of abstraction, a desire for novelty, the pursuit of perfection, an opposition to limits, an embrace of violence, absolute certitude, excessive passion, as well as some intellectual pretension. While it is not necessary to possess every last one of the foregoing qualities—and certainly not each in equal measure—this analysis aims to show that the complex concept of fanaticism emerges from various and varying combinations of these noxious ingredients. Despite this complexity, however, Calhoun aims the pejorative fanatic at any opponent of slavery, adopting an indiscriminate and political usage of the term to describe anyone who sought to "raise the negroes to a social and political equality with the whites" (475). Yet, even though the terms *fanatic* and *enthusiast can* indeed be used as a political or religious cudgel, this does not mean that these terms cannot also be used to refer to real existing concepts which can be identified, studied, and tracked over time. By paying close attention to context, a careful historian will be able to disentangle the concept of fanaticism from political, social, and religious machinations, when the latter apply. The often-fraught nature of such value-laden concepts makes the job of the historian more difficult, to be sure, but not impossible. She must simply acknowledge this added complexity when seeking out the thread of fanaticism running through history and approach her task with even more humility than the treatment of other, less contentious concepts might require.

While understood as synonymous for much of their history, as "fanaticism" came to be understood as a political vice by the eighteenth century, many thinkers looked to "enthusiasm" as they sought to salvage a more emotional or affective form of political engagement that avoided the excesses of fanaticism. Enthusiasm presented itself as a third way between fanaticism, on the one hand, and a bloodless rationalistic politics, on the other. The intellectual historian Dominique Colas (1997) notes, "'fanaticism' once designated religious fervor and zealotry, [but] was later distinguished from 'enthusiasm,' and thus came to encompass nihilistic or millenarian political violence" (9). As we will see in subsequent chapters, perhaps no thinker has done more to differentiate the concepts of enthusiasm and fanaticism and refashion the former into something like a political virtue than Immanuel Kant. While, for Kant, the fanatic is a "deranged person with presumed immediate inspiration and a great familiarity with the powers of the heavens" (2:267), enthusiasm represents "good with affect," the "power of the mind to soar above certain obstacles

of sensibility by means of moral principles" (5:272, 271). Kant held enthusiasm as a good mix of affect and politics, while fanaticism denoted a mixture that lacked proper balance. By the early nineteenth century, Germaine de Staël (1813) would argue in a similar vein, "Many people are prejudiced against Enthusiasm; they confound it with fanaticism, which is a great mistake" (388). Similarly to Kant before her, Staël maintains, "Fanaticism is an exclusive passion, the object of which is an opinion; enthusiasm is connected with the harmony of the universe: it is the love of the beautiful, elevation of the soul" (360). Clearly, if one wishes to understand fanaticism, it is necessary to study its fraught historical relationship with the related concept of enthusiasm.

Why Study Fanaticism?

Given the great variety in meaning and uses associated with the term *fanaticism*, it is reasonable to ask *how* one could hope to get at the meaning of this concept; indeed, is there any there there at all? As well, one might ask the related question: Why bother? Why is a project seeking to "get at" the meaning of such a "stretched" and overworked concept like fanaticism important? A further potential criticism of this project could include the claim that, indeed, there is really no there there and that *fanaticism* is little more than a slur used to silence critics of the status quo (see Toscano [2010]). As we will see, while fanaticism *is* most often understood in a negative light, this does not mean that the concept is without positive content or analytic leverage. The concept of fanaticism, rather, even despite successive changes throughout human history, has maintained enough coherence and consistency that it can be tracked and understood in various historical contexts.

Despite these potential objections, a work of this type is important for several reasons. While much scholarship has been devoted to the detailed study of enthusiasm and the history of the debates surrounding this concept,[4] relatively little scholarship has focused on the concept of fanaticism, and even less from political theorists. Not only is the contemporary literature on fanaticism underdeveloped but hardly any attention has been paid to its *political* variant. As Joel Olson (2009), one of

the few political theorists to study political fanaticism, notes, "Fanaticism presents one of the most important political problems since September 11, 2001. Curiously, however, this subject has largely evaded scrutiny by political theorists" (82). Psychoanalysis, and later psychology more broadly, was first brought to bear on this concept, primarily between the 1960s and 1990s (Rudin 1969; Haynal, Molnar, and Puymège 1983; M. Taylor 1991). While much was gained by this approach in terms of analytic rigor, these studies tended to treat fanaticism in a decontextualized manner, as an ahistorical phenomenon. Thus, fanaticism was treated, in many respects, as an immutable a priori concept impervious to the effects of vastly different times and places in which it makes an appearance. While the next wave of scholarship, now intellectual-historical in method (Colas 1997), was much improved in this regard—paying close attention to the context and intellectual milieu in which instances of fanaticism emerged—this literature, perhaps precisely because of its detailed approach, tended to obscure the unique *political* modality of this concept and the context of its emergence, which, as we will see, occurred around the time of, and largely in reaction to, the French Revolution. A study of fanaticism that takes square aim at the concept—and especially its political modality—is thus sorely needed.

Recognizing both the continuity and change in a complex concept like fanaticism (or enthusiasm) means that, to fully understand these real phenomena in political life, we must unearth their long and tangled histories. Works like this one—which aims to uncover the hidden history of fanaticism and illuminate its reemergence as a modern political concept—are in good company in this endeavor. In studying the concept of fanaticism—with special attention to its understudied political modality—I join a conversation with other scholars whose recent work in political theory examines closely related concepts and thus aims to help flesh out the rich "conceptual web" of concepts that populate our political world today. These related concepts include extremism, cruelty, messianism, passion, as well as opposing concepts like moderation, compromise, prudence, civility, humility, and toleration.[5] This work, therefore, is part of a much broader current in contemporary political theory that aims to more deeply understand the political world we inhabit by more clearly understanding the concepts which constitute it. I maintain that this is a necessary project if we are to engage in politics in a meaningful way. For this reason, the political

theorist James Farr argues, "the study of political concepts now becomes an essential not an incidental task of the study of politics" (Ball, Farr, and Hanson 1989: 29).

Indeed, some important work *has* been done to lay the groundwork for a history of the concept of fanaticism. The French intellectual historian Dominique Colas's magisterial 1997 work *Civil Society and Fanaticism: Conjoined Histories* is perhaps the best example. Providing an exhaustive compendium of the history of the idea of fanaticism, it pays special attention to its developmental tension with the oppositional concept of "civil society." While the exclusively political variant of fanaticism is largely lost in this work—and thus composes the focus of the current volume—Colas provides a valuable defense of this way of doing the history of concepts. Arguing against those who might reasonably ask what ancient understandings of fanaticism have to tell us about modern and contemporary manifestations of this concept, Colas (1997) defends the utility of analyzing what he calls "thought systems" and "the long cycles in the history of political thought" (xvii, xv). Colas maintains that "such a study, both genealogical and structural, of the denotations and connotations [of these concepts] seems to me indispensable if we are to understand the widespread, even inflationist use of the term[s] today" (xv). Koselleck (2016) offers a similar methodological view, claiming that fundamental "basic concepts have remained in use since they were first coined in classical antiquity" and that studying their history of continuity and transformation can give us insight into "historical structures and major complexes of events" (31–32). Indeed, the school of *Begriffsgeschichte*, founded by Koselleck, has itself produced important histories of the concept of fanaticism, both in the German (Conze and Reinhart 1975) and French (Sleich 1986) contexts. While all of these works reveal important distinctions in their particular methodological approaches, all maintain that central "foundational concepts" inhere in the history of human social and political existence, with histories that can be unearthed, traced, and interpreted. This work aims to build on this foundation, examining in particular the *political* transformation of this concept around the time of the French Revolution while also providing a critique of those today who try to reclaim this concept as a political virtue.

A study of fanaticism is also pressing given the times in which we live. Far from merely a matter of historical concern, there are, today, movements

all over the world that seek to unite the City of God and the City of Man, movements of men and women who know the Truth and seek to instantiate it, by violence if necessary, come what may. The collapse of fascism and communism in the twentieth century hardly betokened a liberal end of history, as some predicted. Rather, fanatics of all stripes have reemerged as a global political force under various banners. Indeed, fanatical approaches to politics abound today: resurgent neo-Nazism, populism, small left-wing extremist groups, as well as the continued threat of global Islamist movements all threaten the freedoms and rights at the center of liberal-democratic societies. Partisans of the extreme Left and extreme Right are increasingly turning to a politics of fanaticism, and liberalism as a political idea is increasingly under assault in word and deed from all sides.

In the American context, one need look no further to see the potency of fanaticism today than the hitherto unthinkable riot that engulfed the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Drunk on a steady stream of grievances (both real and fictitious), a "blood-dimmed tide"[6] stormed the Capitol in a brazen paroxysm of rage and violence with little precedent in American history. But this act, as shocking as it was, should not have come as a total surprise if one was attuned to the intellectual ferment taking place on the extreme Right. Indeed, intellectuals coalescing around Donald Trump had long been laying the groundwork for just such an outpouring of fanaticism. In perhaps the most infamous, and among the earliest, pro-Trump political texts, Michael Anton (2016), writing under the pseudonym Publius Decius Mus, eschews all nuance and measure in his estimation of contemporary America, invoking 9/11 as a fitting analogue to the 2016 presidential election and the prospect of a Hillary Clinton presidency. In "The Flight 93 Election"—a reference to the hijacked plane that crash-landed when passengers overpowered the hijackers in control of the aircraft—Anton (2016) claimed in all seriousness that voters in the 2016 election must either "charge the cockpit," that is, vote for Trump, "or die." As we will see, this kind of thinking, which views the political world in absolutes and political disagreements as existential threats—bears all the hallmarks of fanaticism. Politics, in this estimation, is no longer an ordered contestation over competing definitions of the common good; it is, rather, a passion play, an apocalyptic battle between Good and Evil where enemies are to be exterminated and to be lukewarm in the endeavor is to merit damnation. What is more, we cannot just dismiss this type of thinking as unserious

scribbling from the margins. In our increasingly interconnected and digital world, the space between word and deed is constantly shrinking and voices that earlier would have remained marginal and irrelevant now frequently don a mantle of respectability and are echoed and championed by multitudes. Indeed, it is no stretch to say that one can draw a direct line from this fanaticism in thought to the fanaticism in deed witnessed on January 6, 2021.

Increasing fanaticism, however, is far from just an American phenomenon. Michael D. Weinman and Boris Vormann (2021) state the obvious when they note, "Liberal democracy is in crisis" and "illiberal forces [are] quickly seek[ing] to fill the ideological vacuum left by a hollowed out liberal idealism" (3–4). All throughout the Western world, once-settled debates regarding the disjuncture between a reason- and rules-based public sphere and excessive passion in politics are again being reopened, a reality noted by many political theorists (Lomonaco 2005; Frank 2005; Poe 2010). To describe and understand such a fraught political scene, the term *fanaticism* has come back in vogue, being invoked in a variety of sociopolitical spheres with varying degrees of precision. The journalist David Brooks (2017), for example, has used the term to refer to unreasonable Trump supporters, while the political scientist Carol Joffe (2009) employed the term to refer to violent antiabortion activists, while also engaging in a lengthy explanation of her understanding of the term as well as why it accurately reflects her subjects. The political commentator Paul Berman (2016) has identified fanaticism as a unifying thread connecting the ideology of Mao Tse-tung to that of Sayyid Qutb—arguably the father of contemporary Islamism—contending that both movements epitomize "virulent contagions of political fanaticism" (cf. Berman 2004, 2010). Even poets have engaged the term to describe recent political events. A few months after the terrorist attack against the French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, Frederick Seidel (2015) compared the rise of Islamism in France to the Nazi invasion more than half a century earlier, writing, "My oh my. How times have changed. / But the fanatics have gotten even more deranged."

Whatever the proximal source, fanaticism poses a serious threat to liberal values and as such requires serious attention. In order to understand the danger fanaticism continues to pose to liberal democracy, it must be taken seriously as a political force in the modern world. We would not only be

intellectually mistaken to treat these movements with simplistic and convenient labels or prejudices but we would also do so at our own peril. Understanding the nature of these ideas can help us not only to understand our own dangerous and fraught political moment better but can also point the way toward strategies to overcome these troubling clashes of ideas and values. Indeed, two of the authors closely examined in this work—Kant and Burke—each offer a unique antidote to the problem of political fanaticism. While Dostoevsky proves his worth as a uniquely insightful analyst of fanaticism, Kant and Burke go further, each proposing a way of engaging in politics that avoids the ruinous temptation of fanaticism. For Kant, this takes the form of "reflecting judgements," which allow one to make strong and meaningful political claims without succumbing to fanaticism. Burke, on the other hand, champions moderation in his political thought (if not always in his political life) as a supreme political virtue that can shield those who cherish it from the siren song of fanaticism.

Finally, despite the horror of fanaticism unleashed all too frequently in acts of violence around the globe, there are those in academe who see in fanaticism a noble idea. Two scholars from the left are at the forefront of this attempted revaluation of fanaticism: Alberto Toscano and Joel Olson. Toscano's 2010 book *Fanaticism: On the Uses of an Idea* provides the most comprehensive and robust account of this position. In short, insofar as Toscano understands the term *fanaticism* to have any positive content at all (that is, insofar as he thinks there actually is such a phenomenon and not just a hollow pejorative smear deployed by liberals), he desires to liberate this phenomenon from the opprobrium of ages and discover in it a radical political program for what he calls "egalitarianism" and "emancipation." Toscano (2010) writes that his "purpose is to mine a set of theoretical debates and controversies around fanaticism" so as "to reconstruct a theory of political abstraction not so easily dismissed as mere fanaticism" (xxvi). In so doing, he seeks to champion what he calls "a radically transformative and unequivocally antagonistic stance against existing society" (26). This transvaluation of fanaticism—and the related attributes of passion, abstraction, intransigence, and violence—is troubling and dangerous.

In a series of published articles, the political theorist Joel Olson has also set out to reimagine fanaticism as a political virtue. Rejecting liberalism as the "'official' framework of political engagement," Olson (2009) turns to fanaticism as "an approach to politics that seeks to establish hegemony"

(82). Drawing largely on American abolitionists for case studies—while curiously yoking them to theories advanced by the Nazi legal theorist (or simply a "conservative legal scholar," to use Olson's language [84]) Carl Schmitt—Olson (2007) contends that we ought to seek out a new "ethico-political framework" beyond liberalism, and that fanaticism is the tool to get us there. He thus argues for what he calls a "democratic form of fanaticism" (685). However, as we will see in the Conclusion, fanaticism is antithetical to democracy as well as liberalism (the latter a point Olson would surely agree with), and it is, at base, fundamentally opposed even to politics itself. By claiming an exclusive dispensation of Truth, by rejecting compromise, and by seeking merely to instantiate the one true model of sociopolitical existence and to thus short-circuit the give-and-take process of politics, fanaticism is a way of doing politics that is, in fact, antipolitical. Indeed, because fanaticism entails these necessary misunderstandings of the political process—including a messianic bent and a total, passionate conviction in the exclusive validity of one's view—it is also never necessary, even in times of crisis. For one can be a committed political actor, even an extremist political actor, without adopting these unnecessary, irrational attributes of the fanatic.

The arguments in favor of fanaticism presented by Toscano and Olson represent a frontal assault on liberalism, democracy, and politics itself. As will be seen, this is because any group with exclusive access to the Truth has no need for debate, an exchange of views and reason-giving, with democratic fellows who may disagree. The Truth is known to the fanatic and merely waits to be implemented. Despite the fundamental attack on liberal democracy these arguments pose, they have not been met with rebuttal in academe. This work aims to fill this gap, presenting original arguments which show that fanaticism is fundamentally antidemocratic, antiliberal, antipolitical, and never necessary.

Looking Ahead

Having outlined the basic ideas guiding this project, the rest of the work will unfold as follows: Chapter 2 will provide a basic overview of the major contours of the history of the concept of fanaticism. It will be seen that

there are essentially three more-or-less distinct modes of it: the ancient understanding of cultic practice, the early modern Christian understanding of fanaticism as mistaken religious belief, and the late modern understanding, following the events of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, of political fanaticism—that is, fanaticism now put toward political pursuits. The next set of chapters will explore more deeply this modern political turn in the concept of fanaticism, looking at three of the most thoughtful commentators on political fanaticism: Immanuel Kant (Chapter 3); Edmund Burke (Chapter 4); and Fyodor Dostoevsky, focusing on his novel *The Possessed* (Chapter 5). Each of these three thinkers was chosen to provide as comprehensive a view as possible of the many facets of the complex concept of fanaticism. Selecting such a diverse group of thinkers—diverse in their backgrounds, both temporal and national, as well as their philosophical views—provides a more nuanced and conceptually rich account of the concept of fanaticism.

Each of them writing after the emergence of fanaticism as a political concept, these three authors bring to bear their own unique contexts and foci, revealing unique facets of fanaticism, all of which combine to form a more robust, and more insightful, composite. Immanuel Kant (Chapter 3), writing from the German context on the avant-garde of a new Enlightenment philosophy, focuses his investigation of fanaticism on its relationship to reason and seeks to differentiate it from its cousin, enthusiasm. Also, in a rather unlikely place—his writing about aesthetics and beauty—Kant envisions a type of judgment ripe for transplantation into the realm of politics, so-called reflecting judgments that allow for universally valid judgments in contexts, like politics and aesthetics, that are subjective and admitting of no catechisms or rule books. This form of political judgment, it seems, allows for a robust political arena, avoiding both a politics of fanaticism, on the one hand, and total relativism on the other. Thus, our analysis of Kant will also include one potential antidote to a politics of fanaticism.

While Immanuel Kant can be understood as an "ideal" theorist, Edmund Burke (Chapter 4), although an august political thinker in his own right, was also a political participant, being involved in parliamentary politics in England for the majority of his adult life. Furthermore, Burke's reflections on the concept of fanaticism crystallize around his observations of the French Revolution, an event that—in a way very dissimilar from Kant—

evinced only horror and disgust in him. Thus, Burke's philosophy can be understood within the "realist" camp, based on his experience of "shipwreck," to use a metaphor from José Ortega y Gasset (1985), a view of France being plunged into terror and violence. Burke's experience in politics—and his horror at the French Revolution—led to a dissection of fanaticism as based on abstract philosophizing and a philosophy without limits, which cares nothing for context or consequence. As well, like Kant, Burke also points the way toward a type of political engagement that avoids fanaticism—moderation. With this invocation of moderation, Burke will provide the second potential antidote to a politics of fanaticism.

Finally, also within the "realist" camp, is a figure who is most often not given his full due as a serious political thinker, the novelist-cum-political actor-cum-philosopher Fyodor Dostoevsky (Chapter 5). Writing much later and, it is also true, in a vastly different context than either Kant or Burke, Dostoevsky nonetheless wrestles with the very same concept of political fanaticism, indeed, self-consciously in the long shadow of the French Revolution (Morillas 2007). While taking inspiration from the political crises embroiling Russia, including his own brief stint in radical politics, the immediate impetus for Dostoevsky's most sustained engagement with fanaticism, his novel *Demons*, resulted from his shock following the political murder of the student Ivan Ivanov at the hands of a little-known radical Sergei Nechaev and his ragtag band of followers. This event provided the context for Dostoevsky's thorough examination of fanaticism, through the lenses of philosophical abstraction, ideology, as well as passion and a thirst for novelty and violence.

After having examined the concept of fanaticism through these various lenses, I will conclude by summing up what has been learned about political fanaticism by offering a "cluster account" of fanaticism—that is, ten distinctive features that combine, in various permutations, to make up fanaticism—as well as arguing against those who wish to "reclaim" fanaticism as a positive political program toward some sort of "egalitarian" political ideal, and finally providing a handful of reasons why fanaticism ought always to be rejected as a way of doing politics.