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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Sources and Limits of Political Enthusiasm

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Andrew Poe

Committee in charge:

Professor Tracy Strong, Chair
Professor Fonna Forman-Barzilai
Professor Harvey Goldman
Professor Patchen Markell
Professor Philip Roeder

2010

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2010

DEDICATION

For Alivia,
especially for beginning everything
by mistakenly saying
“I know you!”

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Sources and Limits of Political Enthusiasm

by

Andrew Poe

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor Tracy Strong, Chair

Political affect has historically been viewed as a fundamental impairment to the functioning of democracy. Indeed, democratic politics is often seen as particularly susceptible to dangerous provocation through inflamed sentiments. Yet still, a continuing worry for contemporary democracies is the problem of developing and maintaining political allegiances that encourage civic engagement without those allegiances becoming the basis for political exclusion or the infringement of human rights.

My dissertation investigates democratic allegiances through the lens of political enthusiasm. I argue that political enthusiasm – the feeling, as Kant puts it, that accompanies “the idea of the good,” commingling inspiration and conviction – is a necessary feature in the functioning of salutary allegiances to an open political system.

Due to its historical association with religious and political fanaticism, enthusiasm remains a relatively unexplored analytic concept within democratic theory. Many view the use of political emotions generally – and enthusiasm in particular – as perilous to democracy, preferring instead to encourage the rationalization of interests because of its predictability. Such concern for emotions that motivate political closure seems salient, especially in the context of new and developing democracies, where allegiance formations have proved vulnerable to hyper-nationalism.

But, as my dissertation shows, not all political emotions need motivate closure. I elaborate an analytic and behavioral distinction between enthusiasm (which, I argue, leads to open allegiances) and fanaticism (which results in closure). I illustrate this distinction through a reappraisal of historical developments in late 18th century German thought, where enthusiasm is discussed alternatively as *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus*. Through analysis of the works of diverse German thinkers – from Wieland and Kant, to the “popular philosophy” movement (including Mendelssohn, Gentz, and Garve), and romantics such as Fichte and Novalis, amongst others – I present a developing portrait of this dual conceptualization of enthusiasm.

My analysis discloses these historical efforts to disentangle enthusiasm from fanaticism, ultimately illustrating how contemporary failure to distinguish between the two leaves a void in understating affective motivations in democratic politics. I use the concept of enthusiasm to develop a new framework by which to evaluate successful patterns of democratic allegiances.

Introduction

The Problem of Enthusiasm

Our age is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization, and above all, by the disenchantment of the world. Its resulting fate is that precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have withdrawn from public life. They have retreated, either into the abstract realm of mystical life, or into the fraternal feelings of personal relations between individuals.

– Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf*

This dissertation examines affective motivations for democratic allegiances. Such allegiances, I argue, depend on a functional conception of political enthusiasm – which can be distinguished from fanaticism – for their successful operation on citizen psychologies. Historically, democracies have long struggled with the tensions of maintaining the ideal of openness through political inclusion, while avoiding the practical allure of state preservation through political closure.¹ Motivating allegiances within such polities, either through nationalism or patriotism, has often meant risking the exacerbation of such tensions. Indeed, it seems a perpetual question for

¹ The most recent literature which highlights these complexities in democratic thinking, includes Alan Keenan's *Democracy in Question: Democratic Openness in a Time of Political Closure* (Stanford University Press, 2003); Clarissa Hayward's "Binding Problems, Boundary Problems: The Trouble with 'Democratic Citizenship,'" in Benhabib et al (eds.) *Identities, Affiliations, and Allegiances* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Jan Müller's *Constitutional Patriotism* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

democracies, how to motivate such allegiances, without encouraging fanatical attachments or political messianism.²

Countless examples of inflamed political sentiments employed to disastrous ends make this topic esp. volatile. From Weimar, to Bosnia, Pakistan to Somalia, recent and not so recent history is littered with illustrations of the results of political actions motivated by frenzied political passions. Indeed, each of these historical cases depicts elites manipulating mass populations – entrenching identities and fomenting political passions to their own ends. And, many would argue, identifying and limiting the production of these political feelings may be necessary for preserving democratic politics.³

Yet other important examples illustrate that, what might best be described as political enthusiasm, may be useful or even necessary to the well-functioning of politics. Consider, for example, the case of the Pakistani Lawyer’s Movement.⁴ Organized lawyers, responding to the 2007 illegal removal of Chief Justice Chaudhry, successfully protested the supplanted rule of law, reseating Chaudhry (as well as additional federal justices) to court. Their success was, in no small part due to

² See George Kateb’s “Is Patriotism a Mistake?” esp. pp. 13-15, in *Patriotism and Other Mistakes* (Yale University Press, 2006). On nationalism and messianism, see chapter 5 in Anthony Smith’s *Nationalism and Modernity: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (Routledge, 1998). For the classical articulation of the problems requisite to political messianism, see Jacob Talmon’s *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* (Praeger, 1961).

³ Patchen Markell, “Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On ‘Constitutional Patriotism,’” *Political Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2000). On constitutional efforts to limit such feelings in American political thought, see Jason Frank’s “Publius and Political imagination,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2009.

⁴ For an excellent survey of the history of this movement see “The Pakistani Lawyers’ Movement and the Popular Currency of Judicial Power,” *Harvard Law Review* (1705) May 2010.

enthusiasm for the legal system, in contrast to the ruling party. Sometimes political emotions do prove crucial as a motivating force for combating injustice.

Or consider the limiting example of European integration.⁵ European citizens across disparate economic and social backgrounds continue to voice highly particularist cultural responses to the idea of a European political union, vehemently defending the value of their own unique national identities. Sometimes ignoring the role of emotions in legitimating political transformations lets such projects fall flat.

These examples raise a whole host of questions about the place of affect in the functioning of politics. Is feeling always necessary for motivating political change? When is it useful (and when is it not)? Can (or even should) affect be directed? And what kinds of feelings help or hinder which kinds of politics?

By way of addressing these questions I attempt to recover a conception of political enthusiasm. Developed in debates in late 18th Century Enlightenment discourse, this conception of enthusiasm emerges as an affect that commingles inspiration and conviction, motivated by a conceivable moral goal, yet one that has not yet (but could be) obtained. Such ‘enthusiasm’ operates as the experience of a psychic relocation – a disjunction – from the present to a more optimistic future that one imagines can be achieved. And, as my dissertation shows, this concept of enthusiasm was a central component in late Enlightenment discourses on reason, rhetoric, and

⁵ On the problems of European integration see Glyn Morgan’s *The Idea of a European Superstate: Public Justification and European Integration* (Princeton University Press, 2007); also see John McCormick’s *Weber, Habermas, and Transformations of the European State: Constitutional, Social, and Supranational* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); On the recent theoretical critique of democratic deficits see Jürgen Habermas’ *Europe: The Faltering Project* (Polity, 2009), and again, see Müller’s *Constitutional Patriotism*.

political attachment.⁶

Such an accounting may not sound so contentious, except when applied to democratic contexts. The worry, it would seem, is that political enthusiasm can suffer from all the critiques that might be levied against utopianism.⁷ Indeed enthusiasm, at least within contemporary democratic theory, is not an oft-used analytic concept.⁸ It is usually entirely excluded from analysis of democratic allegiances, in part due to its historical association with – and liberal opposition to – religious fanaticism.⁹ Such confusion is, I argue, gravely mistaken. Unlike the experience of enthusiasm, which acts as a means to help navigate reason, fanaticism suffers from a profound inability to distinguish the identity by which future moral goods could be conceived. In terms of democratic allegiances, this means that motivations for attachment via fanaticism has the pathological consequence of pretending an identity that is itself a fantasy.

Part of this distinction between enthusiasm and fanaticism, at least in the

⁶ Anthony La Vopa, “The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*: On the Career of a German Epithet from Luther to Kant,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 1997; for defenses of political emotions generally, see Michael Walzer, *Politics and Passion* (Yale University Press, 2006); Robert Solomon, “The Politics of Emotion,” in *Bringing the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy*, (UCB Press, 2008); and Victoria Kahn et al, *Politics and the Passions, 1500-1850* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

⁷ On Utopianism and political faith see Judith Shklar’s *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith* (Princeton University Press, 1957).

⁸ Important exceptions are Jason Frank, “Besides Our Selves’: An Essay on Enthusiastic Politics and Civil Subjectivity,” *Public Culture*, 2005; and Jeffrey Lomonaco, “Kant’s Unselfish Partisans as Democratic Citizens,” *Public Culture*, 2005.

⁹ See esp. James Farr, “Political Science and the Enlightenment of Enthusiasm,” *The American Political Science Review*, 1988). On the confusion of enthusiasm with fanaticism or superstition see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 239 (for example).

political context, depends on what I describe as ‘political emotions.’¹⁰ Definitions of emotions according to their functional parameters are always difficult, but the method I aim to employ here is a phenomenology of affect, where the experiences of each emotion help in conceptualizations of these emotive states. A political emotion, by this accounting, appears in a political context and is, in turn, shaped by that phenomenon. But, more than enthusiasm being ‘political’ because it appears in such-and-such a context or has an such-and-such an object that is political, I argue that an emotion is best characterized as political if and when its function is also political. Only when enthusiasm itself can be politicized, distinguished from affective alternatives such as fanaticism, can it function politically. Political enthusiasm, I aim to show, is that affect which helps highlight moral disjunctures, and in so doing, generating a psychological space for the re-formation of allegiances.

My thinking on emotions, and especially enthusiasm here, points to a fundamental puzzle in democratic theory (and one closely linked with the fears many express on the use of emotions in democratic politics): How can democracies motivate allegiances, without those allegiances forming the basis for political exclusion?

Lurking behind this question are several key assumptions. These are worth explaining so as to delineate the stakes and value of addressing this puzzle: 1) The first assumption has to do with democracy, and especially democratic citizenship.

Democracy, it is usually agreed, is formed around the principle of political inclusion.

¹⁰ For further discussion of my own thinking on what might best be termed a ‘phenomenology of emotion’ see, in collaboration with Axel Honneth, “The Place of Aversive Emotions,” in *IYYUN: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly*, forthcoming; for a related account of emotions, see Robert Solomon’s *Not Passion’s Slave: Emotions and Choice* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

That share in ruling and being ruled depends on political equality is foundational to the very structure of democratic politics. The consequence of this ideal is the provocation of the norms that those who are affected by democratic rule should, in some way have a voice in their own politics. Indeed much empirical evidence suggests that democracies may suffer – and become less democratic (as in, less reflective of the foundational ideal of inclusion) – if such a norm of civic engagement is not heeded. The assumption is that it is better to have a say in one's own rule – and that those who have a say can and will voice their opinion to effect politics; 2) The second assumption has to do with political affect. Political affect has historically been viewed as a fundamental impairment to the functioning of democracy. Anger, resentment, fear, disgust, contempt, and even enthusiasm are often seen as interferences in the functioning of democratic politics, creating strong ideational bonds that remain unaffected by reasoned argument, often resulting in exclusions of those who do not feel similarly, or towards whom such feelings are being directed. The assumption here is that a) political affect is incompatible with reasoned interest, and that b) such interests form the basis for a better foundation of democratic allegiance than do emotions.

These assumptions have often resulted in efforts to motivate allegiance with what might be termed 'neutral' objects – from the 'civic nation,' to constitutions, and universal human rights. These approaches have had significant advantages, allowing theorists and policy-makers alike to construct locations for political identities, presenting clear boundaries for regarding who can and will ally themselves together.

Especially important here has been the theory of ‘constitutional patriotism,’ which assumes that national particularism – fueled by romantic political psychologies – encourages attachments that stand in the way of more democratic (even post-national) political configurations.¹¹ Instead, this theory aims to encourage the formation of group identities around shared norms and values rather than the civic or ethnic allegiances of a nation. Accordingly, as Jürgen Habermas has attempted to demonstrate, “On the basis of universalistic norms, no particular entity possessing an identity-forming power (such as the family, the tribe, the city, state, or nation) can set up bounds to demarcate itself from alien groups. If this place is not filled, universalistic morality, in the same way as the ego structures consistent with it, would remain a mere postulate.”¹² Habermas has endeavored to construct a patriotism that would allow for cohesion amongst a collective political body, without basing this cohesion on biological or prepolitical justifications.¹³ His efforts here are directed towards supporting a civic allegiance, without succumbing to the dangers of relativism, thus allowing for a universal, rational morality to determine norms within a republican civic body.

¹¹ Foundational here has been the thinking of Jürgen Habermas, esp. his ideas as collected in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (MIT Press, 1998). For review of this history, see Jan Müller, *Constitutional Patriotism*.

¹² Habermas, “*Können komplexe Gesellschaften eine rationale Identität ausbilden?*” (“Can Complex Societies Form a Rational Identity”) (1974), in *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus* (Suhrkamp, 1976), p. 101. Cf, footnote 11 in Patchen Markell’s “Making Affect Safe for Democracy?” (and this is his translation).

¹³ See (again) Habermas’ *Between Facts and Norms*.

The distinction between ethnic and civic nationalisms rests on differing conceptions of who ‘the people’ are. Ethnic nationalism defines itself according to an *ethnos*, where belonging to the nation, and enjoying the rights of citizenship, comes only from biological ties to an ethnic group that holds majority-rule within the state. As Seyla Benhabib explains, the *ethnos* is “a community bound together by the power of shared fate, memories, solidarity, and belonging. Such a community does not permit free entry and exit.”¹⁴ Civic allegiances, by contrast, afford rights to those who are part of the *demos*, that is, to the body of persons who (at least) tacitly accept the duties of citizenship. The distinction between *ethnos* and *demos* is often held in stark contrast.¹⁵ As Margaret Canovan observes, “Modern critics of nationalism believe that by recovering features of classical republican tradition we can reinterpret what it is to be a people in ways that detach it entirely from ethnic Romanticism.”¹⁶ For Canovan and others, the distinction between the people as Romantic Volk (prepolitical) and the people as republican populous (political) is central for articulating the strengths and limits of ‘political will.’ This ‘will’ proves necessary to maintain collectivity in republics, a mechanism ignored by Romantic political thought, which instead relies on ‘natural’ allegiances to substantiate collectivity (prior to the formulation of any general will).¹⁷

¹⁴ See Seyla Benhabib’s *Another Cosmopolitanism*, (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 65.

¹⁵ See (again) Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism*.

¹⁶ See Margaret Canovan, *The People* (Polity, 2005), page 49.

¹⁷ Again, see Canovan’s *The People*, page 50.

Recently though, some theorists (particularly, here, cosmopolitans) have come to find the notion of ‘political will’ problematic, at least within the context of contemporary politics.¹⁸ Habermas, amongst others, has aimed at overcoming the limitations of affect associated with ethnic nationalism, and the preliminary reflections associated with the uninspired resources liberalism so often employs in its attempts to bind communities together. Still, the binding of community can – according to Habermas – be achieved without requisite recourse to prepolitical attachments, by redefining ‘political will’ in terms of constitutional patriotism. While Habermas’ efforts are important for thinking through who ‘the people’ are, he himself leaves no clear answer for what binds the people together; constitutional patriotism fails to offer coherent affective motivations for allegiances because it ignores the function of political enthusiasm.

My aim here, broadly speaking, is to illustrate tensions in the function of democratic allegiances, as well as the use of a specific emotion – enthusiasm – in alleviating some of these tensions. I argue that if constitutional patriots intend – as they claim – to take seriously a project of realigning allegiances from the objects of the ‘nation’ or ‘people’ to constitutions themselves, they also need to begin developing a rhetoric that aims to produce enthusiasm. (In practical terms, the costs of not doing so risks the success of such projects as the European Union at least as a legitimate democratic polity.)

¹⁸See Habermas’ “Popular Sovereignty as Procedure,” first published in *Forum für Philosophie Bad Hamburg*, ed., *Die Ideen von 1789* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989); reprinted as Appendix I in *Between Facts and Norms*.

This dissertation is not meant as a defense of nationalism as opposed to supernationalism or cosmopolitanism, or any of the affections associated therein. Rather it asks the question of what are the strengths and limits of those affections. What are the attractions that remain for the nation or the nation-state in a globalizing world, and what, conversely, are the attractions for post-nationalism? As a way of reigning and limiting this exploration, this project looks at one particular kind of political psychology, enthusiasm, as a means to demonstrate obscured resources for this question of the affections of allegiance.

The central resources I use to develop this conception of political enthusiasm I defend come from through an unorthodox reading of the late thinking of Immanuel Kant. Kant's understanding of enthusiasm as a feeling of inspiration and conviction that directs reason (even, or precisely when, reason lacks any direction) stands at the center of a historical debate on the sources and limits of political enthusiasm. Transformations in national and state structures, coupled with increasingly educated and political engaged populations, made 18th Century Europe a center for such transformations. Through close textual and contextual analysis I show how Kant continually struggled with the question of enthusiasm and its place in his own critical project and the newly enlightening world. I situate Kant's thinking in the context in which it immersed, illustrating how his ideas compare with other competing interpretations, and the strengths and limits of these in related discourse.¹⁹

¹⁹ Because Kant plays such a crucial role in Habermas' own project, my recovery and defense of Kant's conception of enthusiasm as distinct from fanaticism could, I hope, be employed to refine Habermas' own political projects.

Towards this effort, my argument is structured in the following way. Chapter one – Transformations in the Concept of Enthusiasm – examines significant historical transformations – including religious, medical, and moral reconceptualizations – of enthusiasm. I begin this contextualization with debates initiated by Christoph Martin Wieland's 1775 essay “*Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus*” (“Fanaticism and Enthusiasm”). I show how Wieland, alongside a host of scholars and publishers in the late Enlightenment period, were particularly concerned with the problem of motivation, and especially the motivation of reason. This chapter illustrates how Wieland’s essay sets the terms for debate on reasonable and unreasonable motivations for moral thinking and action in the Berlin Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) and beyond. I use this contextualization to outline the development of two competing notions of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus and Schwärmerei*) from religious experiences to medical conceptions and ultimately moral feelings of internal motivation. The remainder of the chapter explores how *Aufklärung* debates on enthusiasm as a moral concept led to the development of enthusiasm as a political concept, with both motivated adherents and vehement detractors.

The second chapter – Rhetoric and the Work of Enthusiasm: A Kantian Understanding of Allegiance – explores the changing rhetoric on politics and emotion in German thought immediately during and after the French Revolution. Central to this discourse were the moral and political theories of Immanuel Kant. I provide textual and contextual evidence to illustrate Kant's role in the transformation of enthusiasm from a moral concept to a political one. I use Kant’s reading of enthusiasm and

political progress to construct a theory of allegiance as a process, which includes objects of attachment, but which are themselves inscrutable from their presentation and reception. Doing so, I show, allows for a greater awareness of those emotions that might lead to the openness that democracy very much depends on. Here I show how the work enthusiasm does, when employed in political contexts, is to create psychological incentives for political openness.

Chapter three – Translating Enthusiasm: Reading Reflections on the Revolution in France – in Prussia – asks What are the significant objections to political enthusiasm? Edmund Burke offers a cogent and sophisticated defense of the pitfalls of enthusiasm, including the costs of the perpetual reinvention of structures of political authority. His *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was quickly translated into German after its publication in 1793. Friedrich Gentz – Burke’s translator – offers a strong rejection of political enthusiasm in favor of conservatism, extending Burke’s text into German debates on enthusiasm through his translation of *Enthusiasmus and Schwärmerei*. I show how Gentz and his ‘popular philosophy’ movement (including Christian Garve, a prominent Enlightenment philosopher and the translator of Burke’s aesthetic theory, and Moses Mendelssohn, their sometime-mentor) helped defend a conservative theory of neutral politics. This chapter illustrates how neutralization and disgust both play central (and concomitant) roles in this conservative response to enthusiasm. I argue that both processes ultimately work against the well-functioning of democracy, creating incentives for closure.

The fourth chapter – The Nation and the Swarm – focuses on the relationship between nationalism and enthusiasm. Redirecting the preceding discussion on political emotions to the process of nationalism helps make evident the consequences of these theoretical arguments on allegiance formation to lived politics. I examine Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s attempts to justify a Volkish theory of national collectivity, paying particular attention to his efforts to generate enthusiasm through his use of the concept of the ‘German nation.’ I show that, while Fichte attempts to disassociate his theory of the nation from *Schwärmerei*, the result is a trenchant – though inadvertent – defense of the coupling of the two. I show how this brand of nationalism commits similar closures as the politics of disgust described in Chapter Three.

And, while the previous chapters illustrate how many thinkers tried vehemently to distance themselves from either *Schwärmerei* and/or enthusiasm, it still begs the question though, would anyone defend *Schwärmerei*? Can (should?) democracy actually endure *Schwärmerei*, or is it something to be avoided at all costs? In chapter five, The Allure of Fanaticism, I outline Novalis’ defense of *Schwärmerei* as distinct from this dangerous (and itself dogmatic) conception of fanaticism. I show how Novalis makes clear the problems requisite to ignoring the role of *Schwärmerei* in political identification. Developed through readings of Novalis and the ‘Jena Circle’ of early German romantics, I examine the originary romantic notion of imagined communities and political psychology. Here I describe the psychological process of romanticization, the “alteration of highering and lowering”, and the related theory of “being in between” which were so crucial to romantic political thought. I demonstrate

how Novalis and others within the Jena Circle employed *Schwärmerei* to develop a more fluid conception of allegiance than traditional republican notions of civic identity. While this brand of *Schwärmerei* does not (ideally anyway) result in the closure that the politics of disgust or hyper-nationalism might entail, I show how the absence of any fixed object of allegiance is likely to result in the emergence of the other two systems unless some alternative model is provided.

Throughout this dissertation I develop an analytic and behavioral distinction between enthusiasm (which, I argue, leads to open allegiances) and fanaticism (which, I show does result in closure). This distinction gives me leverage on the different use and function of various affects for democratic politics. My hope is that it will become clear how and why enthusiasm can be distinguished from any destruction of societal ethics through invalidated or decontextualized mystical ideas. Doing so, I aim to show, allows for a conceptual rethinking of motivating political allegiances in such way that should be productive for both national and post-national democratic politics. In all of this I elaborate analytic parameters that highlight the need for this distinction, offering a critique of the sources and limits of enthusiasm as a useful political concept for contemporary democratic theory. In the end I hope to show that without distinguishing enthusiasm and fanaticism, such theories remain too ideal, too divorced from the messy practice of lived democratic politics.²⁰

²⁰ See Anna Stilz's *Liberal Loyalty: Freedom, Obligation, and the State* (Princeton University Press, 2009); For the classic view in political science on the division between European conceptions of allegiance, in comparison to liberalism in the United States, see Louis Hartz *The Liberal Tradition in America: An interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1955).

Chapter 1

Transformations in the Concept of Enthusiasm

Fury flies from face to face, and the disease 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, *A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm*

Introduction – Varieties of Enthusiasm

“In everyday speech, it need not always be true that what we *say* a word means and what that word actually *is* should always coincide.”²¹ Indeed, such discrepancy may not matter so much, unless of course we care that we mean what we say. In 1775, Christoph Martin Wieland offered up this very contemporary problematic – that if we

²¹From Christoph Martin Wieland’s “*Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus*,” originally appearing in the 4th issue of the *Der Teutsche Merkur* in 1775 (pp.151-155); both included here in German, with my English translation, as the appendix to this chapter. The *Merkur* was a significant monthly literary and cultural journal for the German *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment), and Wieland served as both publisher and editor. It was his intent that it should serve as the voice of his generation, forming the ground for a sort of public education. Regarding Wieland’s place in classical Weimar culture, and in German ‘high culture’ generally, see W. H. Bruford’s *Culture and Society in Classical Weimar, 1775-1806* (Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 39-48. For a general (though somewhat limited) review of Wieland’s political thought, see Frederick Beiser’s *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790-1800* (Harvard University Press, 1992), esp. chapter 13 “The Political Philosophy of C. M. Wieland.” It is worth noting that Beiser does not mention Wieland’s essay on enthusiasm, nor does he consider Wieland’s obsession with enthusiasm as anything more than a youthful obsession, seeing “his early intellectual career largely as a struggle against enthusiasm” (p. 337).

don't care what we say, then a kind of mental confusion can ensue.²² And nowhere was this mental confusion more obvious, or the stakes higher, than in the conceptual confusion of *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus*, fanaticism and enthusiasm.

The significance of such words, both in-and-of themselves, but also in relationship to each other, may not at first glance reveal what could be harmful in their synonymous employ. Enthusiasm is derived from the Greek *ἔνθουσιασμός*, “the fact of being possessed by a god.” It is defined in common English usage as “Rapturous intensity of feeling in favour of a person, principle, cause, etc.; passionate eagerness in any pursuit, proceeding from an intense conviction of the worthiness of the object.”²³ Also, less commonly, as “Possession by a god, supernatural inspiration, prophetic or poetic frenzy; an occasion or manifestation of these; Poetical fervour, impassioned mood or tone; Fancied inspiration; Ill-regulated or misdirected religious emotion, extravagance of religious speculation.”

Yet the history of enthusiasm goes further than such definitions might superficially reveal.²⁴ Enthusiasm was originally the state Greeks would describe of

²² On the problem of words meaning what we say, see Stanley Cavell, “Must we Mean What We Say?” in *Must We Mean what we Say* (Cambridge University Press, 1976).

²³ From *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, eds. J. A. Simpson and Edmund S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

²⁴ On The Greek conception of *ἔνθουσιασμός* see Walter Burkert's *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche* (1977), translated into English as *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, by John Raffan, (Harvard University Press, 1985). Especially see Burkert's discussions of “*Enthusiasmos*,” “The Art of the Seer,” and “Oracles” on pp. 109-118; For more recent historical elaborations on Burkert's survey, see Pierre Bonnechere's chapter “Divination” in Blackwell's most recent *Companion to Greek*

their priests, and especially of their occupying a heightened place of consciousness during religious practices. It was literally perceived as a God entering inside them, and speaking through their mediated presence to the audience. As Plato describes it, “The best things we have come from madness, when it is a divine gift. The prophetic of Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona are out of their minds when they perform that fine work of their for all of Greece, either for an individual person or for a whole city, but they accomplish little or nothing when they are in control of themselves.”²⁵

Enthusiasm was not a common experience to have felt, but rather something that one witnessed as part of the interaction between the gods and humanity. Because a “divine presence transfigured consciousness” of the priests, their particular kind of religion was made possible.²⁶ And, for the Greeks anyway, this kind of transfiguration was not something that could or should be made available to everyone. Instead mediation by priests and seers was important so as to maintain a boundary between the human and the divine.

Fanaticism, by contrast, is derived from the Latin *‘fanum,’* meaning temple.²⁷

It is defined in English usage as “The condition of being, or supposing oneself to be, possessed;” Also, “The tendency to indulge in wild and extravagant notions, *esp.* in

Religion, ed. by Daniel Ogden (Blackwell, 2010). esp. the section titled “Inspired divination through the mediation of a religious ‘magistrate’” pp. 154-155

²⁵ Plato’s *Phaedrus*, 244b (Hackett, 1997), translation by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff.

²⁶ This is how Burkert describes it, p. 111.

²⁷ For the most recent comprehensive general history of Roman religion, see Valerie M. Warrior’s *Roman Religion* (Cambridge, 2006), esp. chapters 2 “Divination, Prayer, and Sacrifice, and chapter 5, “Religion and War.” Though Warrior does not explicitly discuss fanaticism, she does provide a good accounting of the practices of the temple of Bellona.

religious matters; excessive enthusiasm, frenzy;” And, “In a weaker sense: Eagerness or enthusiasm in any pursuit.”²⁸

Yet here (also) a historical portrait of the original fanatics (those who occupied the temple to which ‘*fanum*’ refers) gets at a more precise rendering of the concept. Lactantius provides the following account: “In honor of Virtus, whom (the Romans) call Bellona, the priests make offerings not with the blood of another victim, but with their own. Cutting their shoulders and thrusting forth drawn swords in each hand, they run towards each other, they are beside themselves, they are frantic.”²⁹ As one contemporary historian explains it, “These priests, who were known as *fanatici*, indulged in armed dances of bloody frenzy. Their hair flying, they pirouetted brandishing their two-edged axes. At the height of the dizziness excited by the beating of timbrels and the sinister wailing of the trumpets, they hacked their arms to sprinkle the idol with red splashes, before predicting the future to the dumbfounded spectators.”³⁰ Adding to this, as Tibullus describes it: “Once set in motion by the action of the Bellona, neither the bite or fire, nor blows from a whip frighten this distracted woman. With her own hands she wounds her arms with an axe, and her flowing blood sprinkles the goddess, yet she feels no pain. Standing, her side pierced by a spear, her bosom torn, she chants the future as told to her by the powerful

²⁸ From *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, eds. J. A. Simpson and Edmund S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

²⁹ From Chapter XXI of *The Divine Institutes*, Book I.

³⁰ See Robert Tucker, *The Cults of the Roman Empire* (Blackwell, 1996), p. 41.

goddess.”³¹ We know such exhibitions were themselves incorporated into roman military practices, having the priests (both men and women) stage these abuses before the soldiers marched into war. Fanaticism takes on an entirely different and more violent meaning in this history. In the original instantiation of the concept, the experience of the priests was meant to evoke and enrapture witnesses, literally transposing their mind towards violence, in preparation for the coming battle. Unlike the Greeks' experience of enthusiasm, these witnesses were themselves supposed to be transfigured, enter into a similar state as those that intuited the frenzied process.

Returning to Wieland's essay, the problem with any conceptual confusion between fanaticism and enthusiasm – at least as Wieland saw it – was that it would leave little space for any positive form of inspiration. For Wieland, enthusiasm might not have to be solely located in a religious context. While it might certainly feel like “God inside us,” enthusiasm might actually be a necessary corollary to the right use of reason (or at least so he and his fellow advocates of enlightenment began to hope). Consequent to this worry was that moral, political, and religious transformations of the world would all – at least without enthusiasm – be left to mold a dull, lifeless, and wholly false world. Thus Wieland posed a question that came to transform debate in late 18th century Prussia, and far beyond: Is there any difference between fanaticism and enthusiasm, and what does it matter if there is?³²

³¹ From his *Elegies*, Book 1, Chapter 6, pp. 45-50. Translation available (again) via Tucker, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, p. 41.

In the chapter that follows I survey transformations in the different varieties of enthusiasm that contribute to Wieland's question, hoping to make clear the intellectual and political significance for distinguishing between fanaticism and enthusiasm.³³ This review will begin with Wieland's own articulation of the problem and his working definitions, as well as the place he saw for enthusiasm in an increasingly rationalized world. Wieland himself considered his essay as a kind of 'gathering' (a way of initiating, rather than precluding, debate), and so much of this chapter will follow his lead in collecting the previous articulations on which his definitions rely. Following on the literature that examines this topic, I divide this concise history of enthusiasm, prior to Wieland's essay, into three categories: religious enthusiasm, enthusiasm as disease, and moral enthusiasm. Whether and how these conceptualizations differ is the end to which this survey is directed. I conclude with a discussion of how this context in

³² While this chapter will survey reactions to enthusiasm and fanaticism prior to Wieland's essay, the remainder of the dissertation examines the political debate that ensued. For the purposes of this dissertation, most of the energy there is focused on Kant's defense of enthusiasm, which I argue to be the most significant response in restructuring enthusiasm as a political concept. My discussion of Kant is followed by (direct and indirect) reactions to his model. While this debate seems to have originated in Prussia, the problems of political enthusiasm quickly became an object of European exploration. As chapter 3 explains, Edmund Burke was very interested in the dangers of enthusiasm. And, while I do not examine her views here, Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* inherits this debate and employs it to France's own political context. For elaborations on her views on enthusiasm, see Bryan Garsten's *The Heart of a Heartless World* (forthcoming).

³³ Comprehensive reviews (though from varying perspectives) of enthusiasm as a concept include R. A. Knox's *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1950); Susie Tucker's *Enthusiasm: a Study of Semantic Change* (Cambridge UP, 1972); and Michael Heyd's *"Be Sober and Reasonable:" The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries* (E.J. Brill, 1995); for a literary perspective on the place of enthusiasm, see John Mee's *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford University Press, 2005). For the most recent historical reevaluation of enthusiasm, esp. for Enlightenment discourse, see *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850*, eds. Lawrence Klein and Anthony La Vopa (Huntington Library Press, 1998), which has proved indispensable for this study.

which Wieland is himself responding sets the stage for the initiation of enthusiasm as a political concept.

Section 1 – *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus*

1.1

Wieland’s “*Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus*” initiates a rethinking of enthusiasm as a divided concept; that instead of enthusiasm being described by two synonymously interposed words, that the words themselves may in fact reflect two distinct experiences of related but unique phenomena. At stake in the possibility of two distinct (and perhaps confusable) experiences was the problem that enlightenment discourse, as Wieland and his compatriots saw it, had begun to devolve into a restricted rationalism. The costs of this devolvement included the deformation of progress, as well as the reservation of enlightenment for a minority elite.³⁴ Human life, by Wieland’s view, depended on the head and the heart.³⁵ As enlightenment rationality moved further and further away from affective experiences of the world, the very

³⁴ For a general elaboration on this point and its context, see Peter Gay’s “The Geography of Hope,” pp. 98-125 in *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, The Science of Freedom* (Norton, 1996, revised ed.).

³⁵ The struggle between reason and affect is a familiar trope of enlightenment discourse. The classic statement of this problematic for political theory is Albert Hirschman’s *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (Princeton University Press, 1997, new edition). The most recent reviews of this problematic include Victoria Kahn, Neil Saccamano, Daniela Coli (eds.), *Politics and the Passions, 1500-1850* (Princeton University Press, 2006); as well as Rebecca Kingston’s (ed.) *Bring the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy* (University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

viability and functionality of reason was itself at risk. How, Wieland wondered, could reason find its way through concepts in the world without emotions to guide it?

Yet Wieland was worried about more than a mere abstract guide for reason. Also of significance here was the historical inheritance of philosophic thought, and thus Wieland's own place in intellectual history. If the likes of Horace and Petrarch (for example) could both be described interchangeably as enthusiasts or fanatics, than thinkers like them – Wieland worried – might also be susceptible to such confusion.³⁶ If thinkers could be maligned as fanatics, if philosophy could be confused with superstition, than the enlightenment itself might have inadvertently created – even in its ardent defense of rationality – the basis for its own demise into irrationality.³⁷ Without a clear mechanism, for distinguishing between kinds of affective states, and especially enthusiasm and fanaticism, thought itself had no parameters from which to measure its own health and sickness.³⁸

The only means Wieland found for navigating past this dilemma was the employ of reason to distinguish between different concepts in their use. While his excavation of the functional differences between fanaticism and enthusiasm are, even by his own account, merely cursory, it is still worth reviewing them here as his essay stands as the initiation of a debate that drove to the heart of enlightenment discourse,

³⁶ See Appendix 1, “*Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus*,” paragraph C.

³⁷ To my mind, this discourse on enthusiasm directly parallels, and I would argue contributes to, Adorno and Horkheimer's concerns in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford University Press, 2002, reissue).

³⁸ The medical quality of thought was a rhetoric employed throughout the 18th century, and as more than mere analogy. See Section 3 of this chapter “Is Enthusiasm a Disease.” For a complete historical overview of this shift, see (again) Heyd's “Be Sober and Reasonable.”

and revealed a pathology of reason that continues to hold relevance for how motivations (esp. political allegiances) can be normatively justified.³⁹

1.2

The first concept Wieland is concerned to delineate is *Schwärmerei*. Wieland describes this state as ‘a disease of the soul,’ ‘a soul fever.’⁴⁰ It is a kind of infestation of the soul, but one that is not inspired by nature, or beauty, or the good. Instead, so Wieland, argued, the soul becomes deformed, especially in its isolation from nature and its own essential self.

Wieland’s view of *Schwärmerei* as a mental sickness was not uncommon. The Grimm brothers define *Schwärmerei* as the mental state of heresy and a foggy confusion of concepts.⁴¹ And Adelung defines it as something caught in a swarm (a swarming thing); also a fanatic; a dreamer; someone who mistakes confusion for truth;

³⁹ I borrow – and hope extend – the phrase ‘pathologies of reason’ from Axel Honneth’s “A Social Pathology of Reason: On the Intellectual Legacy of Critical Theory,” in his *Pathologies of Reason: On The Legacy of Critical Theory* (Columbia, 2009), trans. James Ingram.

⁴⁰ See Appendix 1, paragraph F.

⁴¹ Excerpted from Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s *Deutsche Wörterbuch*: “*SCHWÄRMEREI*, f. gebahren eines schwärmers – den kirchenglauben betreffend: das jr blinder dünckel.. sich düncken lesst, die schrifft strebe an viel orten wider diesen spruch, aber sie reimet sich viel mehr mit jm und strebt wider jre schwermerey. *LUTHERS* 3, 405b; das jr schwermerey ein lauter lose geschwetz ist. 377a; das die lerer einer ketzerey oder schwermerey solten beheret werden. 377b; widerteuffen und sacramentschender ... brachten viel leut in ihre schwermerey. *HELVETIEN* lundt. 393; des Weigelianismi oder anderer neuen schwärmereien. *SPEICER* pietismus (1710) 23; pietistische schwärmerei schien den grund zum ganzen nachfolgenden nebel gelegt zu haben. sie schürfte sein gewissen, und machte ihn gegen alle gegenstände von tugend und religion äusserst empfindlich, und verwirrte seine begriffe. *SCHILLER* 1, 109; alle orden-stifter und ordens-brüder .. der schwärmerey, der eitelheit, des unsinns etc. zu schuldigen. *GLAUBENS* 8 (1812), 228.”

one who abandons oneself to debauchery.⁴² As Wieland himself worries, *Schwärmerei* often retains a derogatory, slanderous nature. Certainly it is no complement to refer to someone as suffering from *Schwärmerei*.⁴³

Quite literally *Schwärmerei* refers to the experience of being part of a swarm – it reads as swarming-ness, or the capacity to swarm. Originally the term referred to a biological category, referring to those insects and animals that relied on swarms for defense.⁴⁴ Only later (as we will see below) does the phrase enter into common German discourse as a means to describe (and assault) one’s fellows. To describe a person as being a *Schwärmer* was to describe them as incapable of maintaining composure; lost to mental delusions, and confusing them with truth. To be a

⁴² Excerpted from Johann Christoph Adelung’s *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart* from 1811: “*Der Schwärmer – [1717-18] des -s, plur. ut nom. sing. von dem vorigen Zeitworte. 1. Ein schwärmendes Ding, in welchem Verstande es besonders in der Feuerwerkskunst üblich ist, wo ein in Papier gefüllter kleiner Feuerwerksatz, welcher, wenn er angezündet wird, vor dem Zerplatzen nicht nur ein schwärmendes Getöse macht, sondern auch ohne Ordnung hin und her schwärmet, ein Schwärmer genannt wird. Schwärmer werfen. In figurlichem Verstande heißt bey den Jägern ein Leithund, welcher sich leicht durch sinnliche Eindrücke von der Fährte abbringen läßt, ein Schwärmer. 2. Eine schwärmende Person, Femin. die Schwärmerin. 1) In der ersten figurlichen Bedeutung des Zeitwortes, eine Person, welche sich rauschenden Vergnügungen und Ausschweifungen überläßt. Ein Sassenschwärmer, Nachtschwärmer u. s. f. 2) In der dritten und vierten figurlichen Bedeutung, eine Person, welche undeutlich und in noch engerm Verstande, welche verworrene Vorstellungen zum Nachtheile deutlicher und klarer zum Bestimmungsgrunde ihrer Urtheile und Handlungen macht, wo es in allen Ständen, Geschäften und Wissenschaften Schwärmer und Schwärmerinnen gibt, welche Empfindungen und wohl gar Einbildungen für Wahrheit halten. S. das folgende.*”

<http://lexika.digitale-sammlungen.de/adelung/online/angebot>

⁴³ On The slanderous nature of *Schwärmerei*; see Peter Fenves, “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997); and Anthony La Vopa, “The Philosopher and the Schwärmer: On the Career of a German Epithet from Luther to Kant,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997).

⁴⁴ Again, see Johann Christoph Adelung’s *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart* for an elaboration on this context.

Schwärmer meant that that person was caught up in a swarm, unable to calmly deliberate and reason about the world around them.

The phrase draws on our imagination to consider both what it would be like to locate oneself in a swarm, but also what it appears to be in a swarm from outside it. This division of the imagination in the phrase itself is part of its rhetorical force.⁴⁵ Calling someone a *Schwärmer* means that *they* are themselves lost to the swarm, and *you* are not. It means they have somehow given up their humanity. For to be in a swarm means, at first glance, to become like an insect. Yet, as Fenves observes, it also means a kind of divinity imparted on the swarmer:

Schwärmerei points toward something more and less than human – less than human because animals, not human beings, aggregate into swarms; and more than human because the only animals whose multitudes turn into swarms are those that, like the gods, are able to take leave of the earth. A desire to depart from the earth... is implied in every use of the term *Schwärmerei*, just as, *ordine inverso*, the decent of a god to the earth is implied in Socrates' use of the term *entheos*. And “swarmers associate with one another precisely because they desire more than terrestrial society...” By disassociating themselves from civic society, swarmers collect into non-civic (if not uncivil), non-social (if not anti-social), non-natural if not un-natural), and always temporary, multiplicities.⁴⁶

The swarm, even if momentarily, dissolves each member's individuality and humanity, empowering them through their allegiance to the extra-terrestrial collective, yet (from the exterior anyway) weakening them by such dissolving of the human self.

⁴⁵ On the problems of ‘doubling’ for the imagination, see Kateb's discussion in “The Adequacy of the Canon,” in *Patriotism and Other Mistakes* (Yale UP, 2006), esp. pp. 399-401.

⁴⁶ Fenves, “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” pp. 120-121.

For Wieland, what allows for such a state to occur is a disease. It is central that it be seen this way because Wieland believes a *Schwärmer* could not be held responsible for their actions, and can also be cured from this state. Only if both conditions prove true can *Schwärmerei* lose its derogatory function.

1.3

Wieland believed philosophy's course was to identify causes and cures for this disease (both of the individual and the collective). He issued a challenge to the reading public to disentangle the two terms so as to gain clarity on the problem of *Schwärmerei*, as well as the benefits of enthusiasm. The means of curing this disease, so Wieland hoped, was *Enthusiasmus* – a necessary recourse to reason, a kind of moral inspiration.⁴⁷

Enthusiasm, at least as Wieland describes it, is that “state, where our soul is ignited,” it “is itself god-like. It is as though (so many claim) the enthusiast effuses that which they received by contact with God. Such deeply infused love of truth and beauty and goodness is the very real influence of the deity; it is (as Plato says) God within side us.”⁴⁸ Adding, it is “the real *life* of the soul.”⁴⁹ Enthusiasm is the means by which reason receives direction; the feeling of inspiration that accompanies reason.

⁴⁷ It should not go unnoticed that Adelung's definition for *Enthusiasmus* refers the reader to *Schwärmerei*, illustrating Wieland's point of the institutionalization of the confusion. See Johann Christoph Adelung's *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart* entry for “*Enthusiasmus*” for details.

⁴⁸ Appendix 1, paragraph D.

⁴⁹ Appendix 1, paragraph F.

Enthusiasm works on the diseased soul as kind of salve, warming and soothing those mental drives that might agitate persons towards extra-terrestrial encounters. It is, so Wieland hoped, the means by which we *feel* we know what is good in the world. Thus, “to be an enthusiast, well... this is to be the most loved, the noblest, and the best that any human could be.”⁵⁰

Of course, the problem is that Wieland’s essay is almost entirely composed of propositions and assertions. While it is his hope that enthusiasm and fanatics can be distinguished, he is not clear on how to accomplish that task. Indeed, he is more than clear of his own philosophical limits, and thus sees this essay as an initiation of a discourse that is necessary for the continuance of public discourse (and enlightenment) on the subject. (And, given the volatility of the subject, such anonymous encouragement may not have been a self-interested and strategic decision.)

In what follows I offer some contextualization to the debate Wieland hopes to provoke. This means delineating the various aspects of enthusiasm and *Schwärmerei* that contribute to his articulation of the problem, as well as extending some of that context to extrapolate on why the problem of enthusiasm as distinct from *Schwärmerei* is so central to the sustained functioning of enlightenment thought.

Section 2 – Defining Religious Enthusiasm

⁵⁰ Appendix 1, paragraph K.

2.1

As Adelung and Grimm both confirm, the initial use of *Schwärmerei* to (derogatorily) refer to humanity originates in accusations of heresy levied by Martin Luther against his opponents.⁵¹ Luther moves the definition of this term from an articulation of beastly swarms (esp. of bees) to *Schwärmerei* as religious fanatics. Luther worried that there was no means of distinguishing true and false prophets and that, as Christianity was beginning to transform (a process which Luther himself was initiating) there was simultaneously a space for true and false revelations of the new faith. As one historian explains,

When Luther wanted to castigate the mobs that followed Self-appointed field preachers or rampaged through churches smashing statues, the verb *Schwärmeren* was ready to hand. It evoked bees swarming around the hive; a flock of birds zigzagging across a field; a pack of hounds straying off the scent. One could hear an ominous buzzing and flapping (or murmuring) and imagine the erratic movement of an aggregate, a kind of perverse order in frenzied disorder. The epithet derived much of its force from this cluster of metaphors, evoking all sorts of implications about deviance and conformity, selfhood and collectivity, private fantasy and public authority.⁵²

⁵¹ In addition to the definitions of Adelung and Grimm cited above, see La Vopa's recent discussion of Luther's redefinition of *Schwärmerei* in "The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*" pp. 87-89. On Luther's political thought see Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther* (Harvester Press, 1984); Also see Sheldon Wolin's *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Princeton University Press, 2004), esp. chapter 5; and Quentin Skinner's account of the political context of the reformation in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: The Age of Reformation, Volume 2* (Cambridge University Press, 1988). For recent accountings of the religious significance of Luther's religious struggles see Mark Edwards "Luther's Polemical Controversies" in the *Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and in Michael Gillespie's *The Theological Origins of Modernity*, his chapter "Luther and the Storm of Faith," (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁵² See La Vopa's "The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*," p.88.

Luther held his opponents up as those who instigated the crowds, drawing them this way and that. He saw these ‘field preachers’ (here Luther locates his enemies in the rural, uneducated mindset) as instigating such frenzied crowds beyond all reason or religiosity. For Luther, *Schwärmerei* was faith gone horribly awry, the consequence of false prophets employing the authority of true religious leaders.⁵³

Importantly, Luther himself was not immune to accusations (or concerns) that an inner voice had corrupted him. The risk of accusing others of false thoughts or an over heated imagination was that Luther might have to defend himself against similar accusations. This is precisely the problem with religious enthusiasm – in attempting to justify objects of faith, the inner voice (that which only a single individual can hear and justify) often becomes the basis for proclamations on external objects as true or false for the faith. Indeed, Luther may have had his own complicated history with such an inner voice (and its use to legitimate or undermine his authority). As one analyst observes,

Three of young Luther’s contemporaries (none of them a later follower of his) report that sometime during his early or middle twenties, he suddenly fell to the ground in the choir of the monastery at Erfurt, ‘raved’ like one possessed, and roared with the voice of a bull: ‘*Ich bin’s nit! Ich bin’s nit!*’ or ‘*Non sum! Non sum!*... Reporters agree only on the occasion which upset him so deeply: the reading of Christ’s *ejecto a surdo et muto daemonio* – Christ’s cure of a man possessed by a dumb spirit.⁵⁴

⁵³ For Luther’s own accounting of these false prophets, see his *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments*, in Volume 1 of *The Selected Writings of Martin Luther* (Fortress Press, reprint 2007). Also see Edwards’s discussion of true and false prophets, in the *Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, pp. 194-5.

Luther was desperately worried that God was the provocation of his fear, rather than a consolation to his humanity.

Still, Luther did find it helpful to utilize such mechanisms in order to define his opponents in terms of such naturalized language. The image of ‘the swarm’ was terrifying in its dehumanization of the worshipers Luther hoped to distinguish as heretics. Moreover it also gave a vehicle for ‘true believers’ to temper themselves, least they fall under the categorization of ‘*Schwärmer*.’ Such dialectic distinctions – of true and false faith, of good and bad feelings, of well-composed mental faculties and corrupted reason – plagues the discourse that surrounds *Schwärmerei* throughout its history. Indeed, it seems to be part of its categorization as an epithet that it can be used to clearly delineate boundaries between desirable and un-desirable behavior.⁵⁵

2.2

Still, such accusations against deformity in worldview sometimes had the anathema effect of bolstering support for a counter cause. The Anabaptists themselves were the clearest recipients of Luther’s condemnation of promoting ‘swarming’ behavior.⁵⁶ At stake in their struggle with Luther was the center of the reformation

⁵⁴ See Erik Erikson’s *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (Norton, 1993), esp. chapter 2, “Fit in the Choir;” and here p. 23.

⁵⁵ And here I am merely restating La Vopa’s thesis from “The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*.”

⁵⁶ For a history of the Anabaptist movement see Hans Jürgen-Goertz’s *The Anabaptists*, (Routledge, 1996), esp. his discussion of Luther and anticlericalism, pp. 36-43.

movement.⁵⁷ The Anabaptists firmly believed that anyone could serve as a true prophet and thus preach the teachings of the Gospel.⁵⁸ Yet what was so central to their movement was the second baptism, the extreme practices they came to associate as necessary for the profession of true faith. Divine inspiration was made available only to those who suffered through a ‘second baptism;’ and this inspiration could (and did) take any variety of physical, verbal, and psychological form.⁵⁹

Luther saw the authority structure of Anabaptism to be a malformed alternative to his methods, where so much authority rested in their conversion at the second baptism that it created a ‘swarm’ mentality amongst the congregation in favor of more and more radical confessions (and real violence if they were withheld). In some sense Luther’s accusation against the Anabaptists helped further confirm the boundaries of their swarm, and may have encouraged even greater radicalness to their practices. Indeed their struggles with Luther and his followers gave them much identity.

The culmination of this struggle was the Anabaptist rebellion at Münster. There, religious elites of the movement attempted to found a ‘new Jerusalem’ in 1534. This short-lived theocracy relied on public baptisms and readmission of true faith by all citizens. All manner of violence was employed to foster admissions of true faith or heresy, and citizens were encouraged to work collectively to admonish the guilty and

⁵⁷ See Knox, *Enthusiasm*, pp. 126-135.

⁵⁸ See Jürgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, p. 46.

⁵⁹ Knox, *Enthusiasm*, p. 135-136.

sinful at all costs.⁶⁰ The gruesomeness of these attacks, coupled with the public spiritedness of the mobs efforts to force faith through violence left an indelible image on the movement and it remains a palpable example of religious fanaticism. (Indeed it is hard to disassociate the term *Schwärmerei* from Anabaptism, at least in a religious context).

But, even despite the violence, such problems of condemnation of dissent were indeed broadly present within diversifying religious communities of Protestantism generally. The various English protestant sects that emerged in the 17th century suffered a similar condemnation there as religious zealots.⁶¹ With so many voices competing for legitimacy as that of the true faith and light, rhetorical mechanisms of exclusion and condemnation became crucial. Enthusiasm was, because of its vaguery, precisely the best vehicle for accomplishing such divisions. As Pocock rightly observes, in such a pluralist spiritual and intellectual environment, “the mind could intoxicate itself with the phantasmata of these unreal entities, and fancy itself possessed by them.”⁶²

⁶⁰ See Jürgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, pp. 118-131.

⁶¹ On the history of enthusiasm in the British context of religious dissenters, see Lawrence Klein’s “Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm,” in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850 (1997); Jason Frank, “Besides Our Selves’: An Essay on Enthusiastic Politics and Civil Subjectivity,” *Public Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2005); Isabel River’s Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780 (Cambridge University Press, 2000); and esp. John Pocock’s “Enthusiasm: The Anti-Self of the Enlightenment,” in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850 (1997), particularly pp. 10-18.

⁶² Pocock, “Enthusiasm,” p. 16.

Thus religious enthusiasm (as *Schwärmerei*) came to mean the dissolution of true faith at the costs of fantasies created through the mechanisms that the originary faiths seem to rely on. It was quickly becoming impossible, both conceptually and historically to distinguish between true enthusiasm and its malformation.

Section 3 – Is Enthusiasm a Disease?

3.1

Historical transformation consequent to the emerging enlightenment discourse effected enthusiasm in a similar manner as most structures. Where enthusiasm was, primarily in the 17th century, viewed as a wholly religious experience, 18th century European thinkers came to consider it as a scientific object of analysis.⁶³ In particular, enthusiasm came to be viewed as central to the course of burgeoning studies in scientific medicine.⁶⁴ Though this medical outlook on enthusiasm did little to distinguish it from fanaticism, at least initially (here fanaticism came to be considered

⁶³ For the most recent historical portrait that documents precisely this shift in the secularization of concepts see Stephen Gaukroger's *The Emergence of a Scientific Culture: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1210-1685* (Oxford University Press, 2006), esp. his section "The Natural Philosopher versus the Enthusiast," pp. 220-228. For the initiation of this debate, see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton University Press, 1989). As discussed in the introduction, the classic statement of this problem is Weber's 'secularization thesis,' discussed (amongst other places) in *The Vocation Lectures* (Hackett, 2004).

⁶⁴ On the medical critique of enthusiasm and its incorporation as an object of scientific discourse, see (again) Heyd's "*Be Sober and Reasonable*," esp. chapter 7, "The New Medical Discourse and the Theological Critique of Enthusiasm," 191-210. It is worth noting here that Heyd believes the medicalization of enthusiasm begins the politicization of the concept. While it may be that such scientific discourse initiates the process, this is not historically apparent until, I would argue, Wieland's essay (and esp. the reactions to it documented in this dissertation).

as the suffering from enthusiasm), much definition was given to the experience of enthusiasm. It was alternatively described as a disease, an over-heating of the body that confused the mind, or a mania.⁶⁵ The depths of effects consequent to this shift in discourse present themselves in several significant reconsiderations on the functioning of the human mind and its social consequences. Here I briefly discuss in turn three of the most significant voices in that shift (Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hume) to give an overview of the reconsideration of enthusiasm as more than just a religious problem.

3.2

John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, was one of the first to appropriate this medical rhetoric for a revaluation of enthusiasm.⁶⁶ Because enthusiasm was still primarily a religious term during the composition of this essay, Locke had to work hard to conceptually distinguish religious behavior from the medical condition he was interested in describing (and, strangely, also interested in condemning).⁶⁷ As he puts it:

⁶⁵ Again see Heyd's "*Be Sober and Reasonable*" for a review of these particular diagnoses.

⁶⁶ Chapter 19 from John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1698) (The first German translations appeared between 1755-57). For a discussion of Locke here, see Heyd's "*Be Sober and Reasonable*," pp. 177-180; also see (again) Mee's *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation*, pp. 37-39; and Daniel Carey's *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) 142-150. For an overview of the shifts in 18th century discourse that Locke himself was immersed in, see B. W. Young's *Religion and Enlightenment in 18th Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁶⁷ This, anyway, in comparison to Wieland, who believes that if *Schwärmerer* were a medical condition than that would mean it something to be corrected or cured, not something that should be considered 'shameful.'

Immediate revelation being a much easier way for men to establish their opinions and regulate their conduct than the tedious and not always successful labour of strict reasoning, it is no wonder that some have been very apt to pretend to revelation, and to persuade themselves that they are under the peculiar guidance of heaven in their actions and opinions, especially in those of them which they cannot account for by the ordinary methods of knowledge and principles of reason. . . . Whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies is an illumination from the Spirit of God, and presently of divine authority: and whatsoever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven, and must be obeyed: it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it.

For Locke, enthusiasm as a religious experience was a kind of mental laziness, an excuse to not do the hard work of reasoning through the complexities of faith and its objects.

But what causes this laziness, by Locke's account, is not entirely clear. When considered as either a result of divine revelation or of reason, how does laziness disrupt the well-functioning of the mind? Imagining that such an experience could be located in the body (or the brain), Locke argues, "This I take to be properly enthusiasm, which, though founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rising from the conceits of a warmed or overweening brain, works yet, where it once gets footing, more powerfully on the persuasions and actions of men than either of those two, or both together." For Locke, enthusiasm is a physical impairment consequent to over-heating. This results in a real readjustment of behavior, the loosening of 'persuasions' and character. By Locke's view, such delusions of divine presence as were discussed in the previous section was merely the easiest discourse to fit

enthusiasm. In actuality, it is merely a psychical state, and one to be avoided and condemned.

Locke (offering a prior echo of Wieland's concerns) sees the consciousness of enthusiasm as significant for undermining the functionality and mechanisms of reason. As he explains, "Reason is lost upon (enthusiasts), 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." Even the religious experience itself is a kind of delusion set upon by the imaginations inability to (quite literally) cool itself.

3.3

Yet problematic in Locke's understanding seems to be the failure to explain how enthusiasm (in what ever form it takes) spreads between people, and seems to function as a social disorder. This, according to Shaftesbury, was Locke's significant mistake.⁶⁸ While Locke may have been right to shift the discourse away from the religious experience which prejudiced its analysis, his understanding of it as a disease was to fixed in the body and the individual's experience of enthusiasm once active on

⁶⁸ Shaftesbury, *A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1707) (with German translations appearing between 1776-79). For discussions of Shaftesbury conception of Enthusiasm, see (again) Jason Frank's "*Beside Our-Selves*," Michael Heyd's "*Be Sober and Reasonable*," Isabel Rivers' *Reason, Grace and Sentiment*, and esp. Daniel Carey's *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson*, pp 142-150.

the mind. How does enthusiasm begin? How does it spread? Is it an individual or a social phenomena? These were the questions that plagued Shaftesbury in his investigations. As he explains:

One may with good reason call every Passion Panick which is rais'd in a Multitude, and convey'd by Aspect, or as it were by Contact or Sympathy. Thus popular Fury may be call'd Panick, when the Rage of the People, as we have sometimes known, has put them beyond themselves; especially where Religion has had to do. And in this state their very Looks are infectious. The Fury flies from Face to Face: and the Disease is no sooner seen than caught. They who in a better Situation of Mind have beheld a Multitude under the power of this Passion, have own'd that they saw in the Countenances of Men something more ghastly and terrible than at other times is express'd on the most passionate occasion. Such force has Society in ill, as well as in good Passions: and so much stronger any Affection is for being social and communicative.

Here Shaftesbury reveals the affective quality of humane experience. Enthusiasm for him is a 'disease' that effects social orders, and is of consequent to social structures. Such feelings arise because of individuals being immersed in a social world that would make them vulnerable to such feelings.

Importantly, Shaftesbury builds a more detailed and lucid bridge between accounts of enthusiasm as religious experiences and enthusiasm as a medical phenomena. As he continues his accounting, "Religion is itself also Panick - for it is when Enthusiasm of any kind gets up; as oft, on melancholy occasions, it will. For Vapours naturally rise; and in bad times especially, when the Spirits of Men are low, as either in publick Calamitys, or during the Unwholesomeness of Air or Diet, or when Convulsions happen in Nature, Storms, Earthquakes, or other amazing Prodigys:

at this season the Panick must needs run high.” The social phenomenon of panic explains how individuals become susceptible to both the exterior conditions, as well as the internal reactions to those conditions. Enthusiasm is not simply something one feels alone; nor is it entirely social. Rather, like fear of any disaster that might effect a community generally, individuals come to recognize the spreading affection in others, and this ignites a personal experience of the affection. The two experiences (one social, the other personal) are related but distinguishable.

3.4

But Shaftesbury, despite offering a more nuanced view of the experience of enthusiasm, still does not do any work at distinguishing whether enthusiasm might, in certain circumstances, be desirable (or whether there might even be multiple forms or expressions of enthusiasm). In response to this large lacuna in Shaftesbury’s thinking, Hume offers up a distinction between a positive and a negative experiences of competing forms of inspired affection, between enthusiasm and what he labels as its counter, superstition.⁶⁹

For Hume, superstition fills a void created by fears that seem produced from unaccountable causes. He describes it as such:

⁶⁹ David Hume, “Of Superstition and Enthusiasm” (1741), (translated into German in the late 1760’s). On the context of German reactions to Hume’s thesis, see Lothar Kreimendahl’s *Humes Kritik an Aberglaube und Schwärmerie im Kontext der Fragestellungen des englischen Deismus*, “in the special edition *Die Aufklärung und die Schwärmer*,” in *Aufklärung* 3:1 1988 (ed. Norbert Hinske). For a general discussion of Hume’s thesis in the British context, see Mee’s *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation*, pp. 44-49. On Hume’s defense of the use of passions to correct social phenomena, see Sharon Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton University Press, 2008).

The mind of man is subject to certain unaccountable terrors and apprehensions, proceeding either from the unhappy situation of private or public affairs, from ill health, from a gloomy and melancholy disposition, or from the concurrence of all these circumstances. In such a state of mind, infinite unknown evils are dreaded from unknown agents; and where real objects of terror are wanting, the soul, active to its own prejudice, and fostering its predominant inclination, finds imaginary ones, to whose power and malevolence it sets no limits. As these enemies are entirely invisible and unknown, the methods taken to appease them are equally unaccountable, and consist in ceremonies, observances, mortifications, sacrifices, presents, or in any practice, however absurd or frivolous, which either folly or knavery recommends to a blind and terrified credulity. *Weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance, are, therefore, the true sources of SUPERSTITION.*

Hume believes that a collection of subjective affects, themselves conditioned on experiences of social phenomena. Superstition arises because our experiences of all social phenomena may not be good. We may suffer feelings of impotence, or fear, or melancholy, and in that suffering, if we remain ignorant of the causes of these problems, or refuse to investigate and take stock of possible solutions, we risk opening ourselves to the feats of superstition.

Of course, not all experiences need be bad, or need prey on our weaknesses. Though we may not always know why good things are happening to us (and, indeed, we may not want to), we can still find pleasure and inspiration in their occurrence. As Hume explains,

But the mind of man is also subject to an unaccountable elevation and presumption, arising from prosperous success, from luxuriant health, from strong spirits, or from a bold and confident disposition. In such a state of mind, the imagination swells with great but confused conceptions, to which no sublunary beauties or enjoyments can

correspond. Every thing mortal and perishable vanishes as unworthy of attention. And a full range is given to the fancy in the invisible regions or world of spirits, where the soul is at liberty to indulge itself in every imagination, which may best suit its present taste and disposition. Hence arise raptures, transports, and surprising flights of fancy; and confidence and presumption still encreasing, these raptures, being altogether unaccountable, and seeming quite beyond the reach of our ordinary faculties, are attributed to the immediate inspiration of that Divine Being, who is the object of devotion. In a little time, the inspired person comes to regard himself as a distinguished favourite of the Divinity; and when this frenzy once takes place, which is the summit of enthusiasm, every whimsy 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.

Enthusiasm is that feeling that what is going to happen to us, coming from the future (so to speak), is that which has been hoped and desired for. Here our present drags the future towards us, and the feeling we associate with it is what Hume describes as enthusiasm. The transportation is not (as Luther worried) away from earth, but away from time in the present. We cannot explain this feeling of transportation as ordinary or through our ordinary experience of the world, and so ignorance does play a part in how it feels to be enthusiastic. But the feeling is, as yet, so positive, that it would never be wished away. Here Hume gets closer than any other at explaining why enthusiasm might persist, that persons might even enjoy the feeling. This, we will see, becomes a significant building block for Wieland and his fellow advocates of enlightenment, for it looks to serve as the foundation for a useful (and defensible) form of enthusiasm that could, with some adjustments, be compatible with reason.

Conclusions – Hope for a Moral (and thereby Political) Enthusiasm

These discussions of religious and medical interpretations of enthusiasm give way to the moral parameters Wieland (in conjunction with the patters of enlightenment discourse to which he was responding) sought to define.⁷⁰ On the one hand, Wieland seems prepared to locate *Schwärmerei* as a kind of religious fanaticism. Yet he is also aware that such condemnations of religious experiences may not be apt (and that there are all kinds of religious experiences, some of them positive). Moreover, he seems prepared to label *Schwärmerei* as a kind of medical conditions, referring to alternatively as an ‘infestation,’ ‘inflammation,’ and a ‘fever.’ But he sees these as experiences of the soul (not of the body), and thus seems to move away from the Locke inspired discourse that enthusiasm (in whatever form) maybe a corrupt over-heating of the body. By positioning enthusiasm against *Schwärmerei*, and describing the former as a nobility and virtue of being, Wieland relocates this discourse to the moral realm. What is, it seems, at stake in being able to distinguish enthusiasm from *Schwärmerei* is the possibility that morality can be felt (that we can actually feel when something is good or beautiful, and that’s what we call enthusiasm), and also, that it can be used to counter the confusions of a-morality (which is a kind of *Schwärmerei*).

⁷⁰ On Enlightenment and enthusiasm, see esp. Pocock’s “Enthusiasm: The Anti-Self of the Enlightenment;” also important here (beyond what has been discussed already) is George Williamson’s chapter “Theophany and Revolution” esp. pp. 56-71 in his *The Longing For Myth in Germany: Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Wieland's proposition received many reactions (several of which are documented in the following chapters of this dissertation).⁷¹ What is worth considering here as we transition to those is how and whether this debate could make its way to a political conception of enthusiasm and fanaticism.

By Wieland's accounting, the costs of not distinguishing enthusiasm as distinct from fanaticism is to misunderstand of the functioning of reason, as well as the justification for philosophy as a useful social tool. Perhaps surprisingly, it is this second point which speaks to what becomes the political entrance of enthusiasm. Wieland hoped that enthusiasm could be preserved as a means for guiding reason. And yet also, he maintained the belief that reason could – in turn – guide society away from ignorance and towards enlightenment. Indeed, Wieland's employ of a moderated Platonism throughout his essay speaks to this point – that enthusiasm is what the philosopher feels, and offers to those who remain chained in ignorance is what Wieland means when he ask “Who will drag these people towards such warmth?”⁷²

⁷¹ Several of those not discussed here include Herder, Hamann, and Lessing. These are all addressed in significant detail by La Vopa in his “*The Philosopher and the Schwärmer*.” But, moreover, each is concerned with aspects of this debate that keep Wieland's question in the realm of the moral (and especially not the political). Though Herder does offer the important observation that “The human being is bound to the world with a thousand ties' restricted to himself, he finds himself in the narrowest prison. Whoever loosens him from himself, whoever creates a free, lively game for his energies, is his god, his awakener. And he plays on him as on an instrument; if the flute tones, if his inner strung sounds, he feels good; he lets it play. Hence the pleasure of the people to be put in enthusiasm; hence the drive and the joy of enthusiastic spirits to fill other with enthusiasm, to inspire them.” See Johann Gottfried Herder, “*Philosophie und Schwärmerei, zwei Schwestern*” (Herder's *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 9, ed. Bernhard Suphan – Berlin 1877, pp. 497-8) originally published 1776.

⁷² For an account of Neo-Platonism as a kind of enthusiasm, see (again) Pocock's “Enthusiasm: The Anti-self of the Enlightenment.”

The political significance of enthusiasm first makes itself apparent in debates over the place of philosophy in public discourse (as well as the organization of the University). While this can be viewed as a historical idiosyncrasy to Prussian politics (and indeed that context does prove significant), such struggles were emblematic of enlightenment discourses generally. The public nature of thought – what it meant to think in and with a public, was itself one of the central tenants of the modern transformation enlightenment thinking provoked. And – as I hope to show – it remains today, even despite similar struggles, a central providence of contemporary democratic discourse.

Appendix to Chapter 1:

C. M. Wieland's "Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus" (1775)

[A] Mit den Worten muss es so genau nicht genommen werden – pflegt man zu sagen und hat sehr Unrecht. Freilich sollten sich gescheite Leute nie zanken, wenn sie nichte wenigstens wissen worüber. Über eben damit dies nicht so häusig geschehe, wäre sehr zu wünschen, dass man sich einmüthiglich entschliessen möchte, allen Wörtern, deren Bedeutung noch schwankend ist, auf immer und allezeit eine festgefetzte und Jedermann klare oder klar zu machende Bedeutung zu geben.

[B] Ich finde, das viele Gelehrte noch immer Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus als gleichbedeutende Wörter gebrauchen und dadurch Begriffe, die mit äusserster Sorgfalt auseinandergeseßt werden sollten, dergestalt verwirren, dass sie immer Gefahr laufen, ihren Lesern halb wahre Sässe für voll zu geben und in ohnehin übel aufgeräumten Köpfen noch mehr Unordnung anzurichten.

[C] Ich nenne... Schwärmerei eine Erhißung der Seele von Gegenständen, die entweder gar nicht in der Natur sind, oder wenigstens das nicht sind, wofür die berauschte Seele sie ansieht. So schwärmt z. B. horaz, wenn ihn Bachus, von dessen Gottheit er voll ist, in ubekannte haine und Felsenhöhlen fortreibt – und Petrarca, wenn es ihm vorkommt, das die Seufzer und Klagen seiner Laura Berge verseßen und Flüsse stehen machen könnten. Dem Worte Schwärmerei, in dieser Bedeutung genommen, entspricht das Wort Fanatismus ziemlich genau; wiewohl dies leßtere durch den Gebrauch einer besondern Gattung von Schwärmerei, nämlich der religiosen, Schwärmerei ist, sondern die Wirkung des zugeeignet worden ist. Über es giebt auch eine Erhißung der Seele, die nicht unmittelbaren Unschauens des Schönen und Guten, Vollkommenen und Göttlichen in der Natur und unsern Innersten, ihrem Spiegel! Eine Erhißung, die der menschlichen Seele, sobald sie mit gefunden, unerschlafften unverstopften, äussern und innern Sinnen sieht, hört und fühlt, was wahrhaft schön und gut ist, ebenso natürlich ist, als dem Eisen, im Feuer glühend zu werden.

[D] Diesem Zustande der Seele weiss ich keinen schicklichern, angemessnern, Namen als Enthusiasmus. Denn das, wovon dann unsre Seele glüht, ist göttlich; ist (menschenweise zu reden) Strahl, Ausfluss, Berührung von Gott; und biese feurige Liebe zum Wahren, Schönen und Guten ist ganz eigentlich Einwirkung der Gottheit, ist (wie Plato sagt) Gott in uns.

[E] Hebet Eure Augen aus und sehet: was sind Menschenseelen, die diesen Enthusiasmus nie erfahren haben? Und was sind die, deren gewöhnlichster, natürlichster Zustand er ist? – Wie frostig, duster, unthätig, wüst und leer jene? Wie heiter und warm, wie voller Leben, Kraft und Muth, wie gefühlvoll und anziehend, fruchtbar und wirksam für Alles, was edel und gut ist diese!

[F] Schwärmerei ist Krankheit der Seele, eigentliches Seelenfieber; Enthusiasmus ist ihr wahres Leben! – Welch ein Unterscheid in wesentlicher Beschaffenheit, Ursach und Wirkung!

[G] Ich vergesse hier gar nicht, das die Grenzen des Enthusiasmus und der Schwärmerei in jedem Menchen schwimmen; das der Enthusiast oft schwärmt; das weder Under noch er selbst allemal mit Gewissheit sagen können, was von Allem, was in ihm vorgeht, der einen oder der andern Ursache zuzuschreiben ist. Über soll uns dies abhalten, den grossen wesentlichen Unterschied und (woran bisher noch so wenig gearbeitet worden ist) diesen Unterschied so genau als möglich zu bestimmen?

[H] Über wie kann dies geschehen, so lange man die Wörter Schwärmerei und Enthusiasmus für gleichbedeutend nimmt?

[I] Beiläufig merk' ich noch an, dass Enthusiasmus – wenigstens niemals, wo man sich ganz bestimmt auszudrücken hat – durch Begeisterung überseßt werden sollte. Dies leßtere Wort hat eine weitere Bedeutung; denn der Geister sind mancherlei. Der Schwärmer ist begeistert wie der Enthusiast; nur das diesen ein Gott begeistert und jenen ein Fetisch.

[J] Endlich solit' ich kaum hinzuseßen dürfen, dass es, was man auch über den wesentlichen Unterschied zwischen Enthusiasmus und Schwärmerei und den verschiedenen Gebrauch dieser Wörter festessen will, immer hohe Zeit wäre, die Namen Enthusiast und Schwärmer nicht länger als Schimpfwörter zu gebrauchen.

[K] Ein Schwärmer sein, ist nicht schimpflicher, als ein heißiges Fieber haben; ein Enthusiast sein, ist das Liebenswürdigste, Edelste und Beste sein, was ein Sterblicher sein kann.

[L] Über freilich, wer wird die frostigen, lichtlosen, öden und leeren Seelen jemals dahin bringen, dies zu fühlen?

[M] Ich besorge also – doch nein! Ich will nichts besorgen. Hilfe, was helfen kann! Wenn wir immer besorgen, immer daran denken wollten, dass wir in die Luft bauen, ins Wasser säen, den Fischen predigen u. s. w., so würden wir zuleßt gar nichts mehr thun; – und das taugte noch weniger!

C. M. WIELAND'S "FANATICISM AND ENTHUSIASM" (1775)

[A] In everyday speech it need not always be true that what we *say* a word means and what that word actually *is* should always coincide. Of course intelligent people should never disagree, especially when they know what is right and what is not. But still – at least so as to mean what we say – it remains highly desirable that we should try to decide unanimously on meanings for all words whose definitions remain unclear. Therein, at least, we may begin a foundation by which to always be sure of our own meaning when we do speak.

[B] As an example, I find that many scholars still use *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus* synonymously. The costs of this particular confusion are especially great, for these scholars remain in perpetual danger of giving their readers the sense of one idea, hoping to relieve mental fantasies, when they really mean the other (which in this case could literally produce them). Thus, the meaning of these terms should be delineated with extreme care.

[C] As I define it... *Schwärmerei* appears as a kind of divine infestation of the soul, which is unnatural to it, but which the intoxicated soul still seeks out. Consider a fanatic such as Horace, and for him it was Bacchus, of whose divinity he always remained full, causing him to range aimlessly amongst groves and caves; or another, such as Petrarch, when he found himself made content by lamentations professed to Laurel mountains and rivers. Here *Schwärmerei* should be understood as roughly equivalent to fanaticism (although up until now this was just a special kind of *Schwärmerei*, namely the religious kind). Yet we can also consider another kind of occupying of one's soul which itself is not *Schwärmerei*, but rather something consequent to the immediate presencing of the beautiful and the good, the perfect and the divine in nature acting as a mirror to our innermost being. That kind of occupying of the soul can be identified by disruptions that yet still allow for both external and internal senses to see, hear, and feel what is truly beautiful and good, and just as naturally as an iron glowing in the fire.

[D] This state of mind is, I believe, reasonably described as *Enthusiasmus*. This state, where our soul is ignited, is itself god-like. It is as though (so many claim) the enthusiast effuses that which they received by contact with God. Such deeply infused love of truth and beauty and goodness is the very real influence of the deity; it is (as Plato says) God within side us.

[E] Lift up your eyes and see: What is the state of the human soul which has never experienced such enthusiasm? What is their natural state? – How frozen, dull, passive, formless and empty are their lives? Could we ever say, ‘How bright and warm (like a life wrapped in wool), powerful and magnanimous, affective and magnetic, fruitful and effective for all, noble and good is this?’

[F] *Schwärmerei* is a disease of the soul – a real ‘soul fever;’ *Enthusiasmus* is the real *life* of the soul. What a difference essential nature in cause and effect can make!

[G] I do not mean to pretend here that such clear boundaries present themselves everywhere *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* swim. The enthusiast really does seem to rave (like a fanatic), and he himself may not be certain what it is that stirs him. But it is precisely because of that mistake that – one way or another – reason is due. We should not be discouraged by such confusion, and instead should take up the task of defining the differences (so little of which have been identified) of these two very disparate states.

[H] Yet how could any such definition be achieved when the same concept continues to find confused expression in the two words *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus*?

[I] Incidentally, I have yet to ever notice where enthusiasm – at least where that word is employed correctly – could be replaced by the word delusion. Obviously this latter word has more particular meanings, for there are many kinds of ghosts in this world. Indeed, the *Schwärmer* is as excited as the enthusiast, yet the one (enthusiasm) is inspired by god, while the other (*Schwärmerei*) is a fetish.

[J] At last I am beginning to find hope that there is a means of distinguishing the substantial difference between enthusiasm and *Schwärmerei* – that we can, over time, begin to mean different things with these two words, and yet also that neither of the names enthusiast or *Schwärmer* will continue to hold derogatory connotations.

[K] To be a *Schwärmer* need not be shameful, for it is the result of an illness; and to be an enthusiast, well... this is to be the most loved, the noblest, and the best that any human could be.

[L] So who now will drag those frigid, unenlightened, dreary, and empty souls towards such warmth?

[M] Is it me? Have I resolved this confusion? – of course not! I have resolved nothing. Help! What can help here? If we always try to resolve everything, always try to recollect, than we are building things in air, sowing seeds in the water, preaching to the fish, etc. Here, now, we have done nothing more than gather – though perhaps that is good for even less!

CHAPTER 2

Rhetoric and the Work of Enthusiasm: A Kantian Understanding of Allegiance

There is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of the historical sense, which is harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing, whether this living thing be a man or a people or a culture. To determine this degree, and therewith the boundary at which the past has to be forgotten if it is not to become the gravedigger of the present, one would have to know exactly how great the plastic power of man, a people, a culture is: I mean by plastic power the capacity to develop out of oneself in one's own way, to transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken molds.

–Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*

To me, at least, it does not seem possible that a mute and voiceless wisdom could have turned men suddenly from their habits and introduced them to different patterns of life.

–Cicero, *De Inventione*

Introduction – Rhetoric and Enthusiasm

On September 20th, 1792 – on a humid, foggy, and otherwise dismal morning – an ill-composed band of volunteer French soldiers prepared for battle against the superiorly armed and manned Prussian force outside the French hamlet of

Valmy.⁷³ The ground on which this battle took place was muddied from the previous days' rains. Enough so, that cannon-shots would sink into the earth, and cavalry horses found unstable footing wherever they rode. This proved more problematic for the French troops, who that morning – as the fog was beginning to clear – found themselves surrounded in this mud on three sides by the advancing Prussians. As battle commenced, the French commander – François Christophe de Kellermann – attempted a strategic charge, only to find his horse impaired by this muddied terrain. Trapped in the open field, he proved an easy target for Prussian snipers, who quickly succeeded in killing the commander's horse, wounding Kellermann in the process. Both sides witnessed the fall of the French commanding officer with awe: the French, filled with a growing dismay; the Prussians, made ebullient by their own advantage.

But, just as medics were attempting to carry the dazed Kellermann off the field, he fought free of their guard and, grabbing an idle bayonet, charged alone by foot to face the advancing Prussian cavalry. As he did so, the battalions that stood behind him – perhaps impressed with their commander's nerve – began to chant “*Vive la Nation!*” This cry echoed throughout the valley, as more and more French troops joined their voices to the chorus. Struck by the unity this phrase evoked, the French joined their commander's attack, while the Prussians – equally impressed with the power of this call – began a retreat. At the end of the day's battle – which had been

⁷³ For a discussion of the battle at Valmy as symbolic of the genesis of nationalist ideology, see Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1-4, esp. footnote 1. For an historical accounting of the battle at Valmy and its significance for the French Revolution generally, see François Furet and Denis Richet, *La Révolution française* (Paris: Hachette, 1965), p. 185.

decisively won by the far weaker French force – the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who had witnessed the day's events, exclaimed to the defeated Prussians, “From this place and from this day forth commences a new era in the world's history, and you can all say that you were present at its birth.”⁷⁴ The new era Goethe believed he was witnessing, we now know, was modern nationalism – the use of the concept of ‘the nation’ to motivate political attachment and action.⁷⁵

This narration of the battle of Valmy belies an important prejudice regarding political allegiance: that the object of allegiance is central to how allegiances function. It is generally believed that political allegiance requires the following parameters: 1) an object towards which to direct allegiance; 2) a mode of directing allegiance towards the object; and 3) justifications for the validity of that object as normatively significant.⁷⁶ But, while each of these parameters proves crucial, most theories center

⁷⁴ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe recounts the events of the battle at Valmy in his *Campaign in France in the Year 1792*, trans. Robert Farie (London: Oxford University Press, 1849), p. 77-85.

⁷⁵ Regarding the concept of the nation and its development, see E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); David Miller, *On Nationality*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). For a recent diagnosis of the relationship between the concept of ‘the people’ and ‘the nation,’ see Margaret Canovan, *The People* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005). It is of central importance to theorists of nationalism that the patriotism evinced in the battle at Valmy occasions an alignment between militaristic duty and political attachment. For a critique of this alignment, and the sustained enmity in instances of political attachment generally, see Margaret Canovan, “Patriotism is Not Enough,” *British Journal of Political Science*, #30 (2000), p. 437. For the central positions regarding the moral dangers involved in patriotism, see George Kateb, “Is Patriotism a Mistake?,” *Social Research*, #67 (Winter 2000); and Alasdair MacIntyre, *Is Patriotism a Virtue?* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), esp. p. 15.

around the object itself – be it the people, the nation, or (recently) the constitution – as the structure of allegiance.⁷⁷ This concentration on objects of allegiance has had significant advantages, allowing theorists and policy-makers alike to construct locations for political identities, with clear boundaries regarding who can and will ally themselves together.⁷⁸

Yet such privileging of the objects of allegiance, over and above experiences of allegiance, has often meant neglecting the psychological mechanisms of its functioning. This focusing on ‘the what’ of allegiance, rather than on ‘the how,’ encourages the problematic and paradoxical exaltation and neutralization of such objects.⁷⁹ Thus, nationalists celebrate ‘the nation,’ patriots ‘the people,’ and

⁷⁶ As Jan Müller puts it, “Every theory (of allegiance) should provide an account of... the object of attachment, the mode of attachment, and the reasons for attachment.” *Constitutional Patriotism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 47. The divided in contemporary debate on the question of motivating allegiances falls on whether a national (or supranational) culture is necessary to ground such allegiances, or whether morally justifiable political institutions are enough reason for their legitimation. Pivotal here is whether the normative significance of such legitimate institutions can be accounted for as objects of attachment absent cultural parameters. Defenders of the first (liberal nationalist) thesis, include David Miller and Yael Tamir. Advocates of the second argument include Habermas, Müller, and Ciaran Cronin. For a recent overview of this debate, see Anna Stilz, *Liberal Loyalty: Freedom, Obligation, and the State*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2009), pp. 137-172.

⁷⁷ Regarding differences between the people or the nation as the object of allegiance, see Margaret Canovan, *The People*, pp. 3-5. Regarding the constitution as an object of attachment, see Müller, *Constitutional Patriotism*, pp. 3, and 48-49.

⁷⁸ Regarding the political uses of constructed ‘identities,’ see Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity,’” *Theory and Society*, #29 (2000), pp. 6-9.

⁷⁹ Jürgen Habermas seems aware of this paradox (though perhaps he is less bothered by it than I am). See his “Popular Sovereignty as Procedure,” first published in *Forum für Philosophie Bad Hamburg*, ed., *Die Ideen von 1789* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989); reprinted as Appendix I in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 490. For an account of this process of neutralization, see Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 70.

constitutional patriots the constitution, such that these objects become concrete structures, limiting individual agency in the process of identification.⁸⁰

In response, I propose a modest shift in terms. Rather than focusing exclusively on the object of allegiance, this chapter offers an examination of the interaction between the presentation of the object and emotive reactions to the object as it is presented. I argue that much of the confusion evident in debates over allegiance originates in the disassociation of the object of allegiance from the rhetoric of its construction and the reception of that rhetoric. By focusing (almost exclusively) on the objects of allegiance, theories of nationalism, patriotism, and constitutional patriotism all share the common problem of producing objects with tendencies towards reification, thus generating incentives for emotional strategies of closure (such as disgust and fear). The shift I propose here is towards reading allegiance as a process, which includes objects of attachment, but that are themselves inscrutable from their presentation and reception. Doing so, I show, allows for a greater awareness of those emotions that might instead lead to the openness that democracy very much depends on.⁸¹

Much of this shift requires taking rhetoric seriously as an important tool in the public construction of objects of allegiance. Rhetoric – read here as the voice of persuasion – is often criticized as public manipulation, the tricking of listeners into

⁸⁰ See Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘identity,’” pp. 14-17, for an accounting of the process of identification.

⁸¹ For recent exploration of the dynamics of openness and closure, see Alan Keenan, *Democracy in Question: Democratic Openness in a Time of Political Closure* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2003).

believing something false by making them feel that it is true.⁸² Such an accounting of rhetoric emerges from an established bi-polarity between reasoned deliberation and coercive, impassioned sentiment.⁸³ Critics of particularistic attachment see rhetoric as instantiating exclusive sentiments, especially problematic for democratic ideals of toleration and inclusion.⁸⁴ But respondents to such concerns argue that “what is needed to motivate democratic citizens and thus secure social integration is held to be a motivational efficacious appeal to an allegedly ‘concrete object’ that can anchor the passions,” (e.g. the rhetoric of ‘the nation’ etc.).⁸⁵

⁸² See Simone Chambers’ account of “What is wrong with rhetoric?” in “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere: Has Deliberative Democracy Abandoned Mass Democracy?” *Political Theory*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (2009), p. 3. Other recent revaluations of rhetoric include Arash Abizadeh, “On the Philosophy/Rhetoric Binaries: Or, is Habermasian Discourse Motivationally Impotent?” *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2007); Bernard Yack, “Rhetoric and Public Reasoning: An Aristotelian Understanding of Public Deliberation,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 34 (2006); and Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). For classical conceptions of rhetoric, on which these arguments depend, see Plato’s *Gorgias*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton, Huntington Cairns, trans. Lane Cooper (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 2, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); and Cicero, *De Inventione/ On Invention*, trans. H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1949). For a recent review of deliberations and passions (esp. in the context of Enlightenment concerns over engagement), see Sharon Krause, *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 111-113.

⁸³ For an extended account of this critique, see Abizadeh, “On the Philosophy/Rhetoric Binaries,” p. 447. Critical overviews of the debates on democratic deliberation and its limits include Seyla Benhabib (ed.), *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); James Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996); and Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

⁸⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, trans./ed. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), see chapters 4-5.

⁸⁵ From Abizadeh, “On the Philosophy/Rhetoric Binaries,” p. 449. Limiting the progress of this debate is the seemingly insurmountable obstacle of the place of feeling in political psychologies. Public feeling is read by one side as a danger to the functioning of democracy, while being upheld by others as necessary to democracy’s stability and self-definition. The intractability of both positions in this debate, to my mind, originates in ill-defined parameters between feeling and thinking within the experience of allegiance. Thus, rhetoric is seen as either a problem or a solution, depending on whether the object of allegiance finds legitimation in feeling or in thinking. But, as this chapter should show, such a

Especially important here in this process-oriented analysis of the experience of allegiance will be a detailed understanding of the emotive reactions to rhetoric.

Shifting the focus away from the object of attachment in exclusion means taking seriously the parties involved in the legitimation of the object and their emotional response. Essential to this process – as this dissertation and especially this chapter should show – is the experience of enthusiasm.⁸⁶

Enthusiasm is – as Immanuel Kant puts it – the feeling that accompanies “the idea of the good,” and in so doing, acts as “a straining of our forces by ideas that impart the mind a momentum whose effects are mightier and more permanent than are

dichotomy is misleading; rhetoric need not be counterposed to thinking and deliberation. For the most recent reappraisal of this notable lacuna of feeling in contemporary theory debates, see Rebecca Kingston and Leonard Ferry (eds.), *Bringing the Passions Back in: The Emotions in Political Philosophy* (Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press, 2008). As James Farr aptly notes, keeping deep division between conceptions of the use of thinking and feeling, especially within debates on political attachment seems to have been exactly the intent of many enlightenment thinkers’ projects. See his “Political Science and the Enlightenment of Enthusiasm,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (March, 1988), esp. pp. 57-62. For the classic restatement of the distinction between self-interest and passion (as well as their interaction), see Albert Hirschman’s *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977). Also see Stephen Holmes, *Passions and Constraints: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For a subtle argument against this destabilizing dichotomy in liberal thought, see Cheryl Hall, “Passions and Constraint’: The Marginalization of Passion in Liberal Political Theory,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, #28 (2002). While I follow Hall’s argument a certain distance, I also think it crucial to distinguish between passion and emotion (see section 3 of this chapter). Also notable for my purposes here is the parallel dichotomy upheld in the nationalist literature through the distinction between a prepolitical (and unthinking) ‘ethnos’ and a civic (and consequently political) ‘demos.’ For explications on this point, see Brubaker, *Citizenship in France and Germany*; and Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. pp. 202-208.

⁸⁶ As noted in the previous chapter, enthusiasm is derived from the Greek *ἐνθουσιασμός*, “the fact of being possessed by a god,” defined in common English usage as “Rapturous intensity of feeling in favour of a person, principle, cause, etc.; passionate eagerness in any pursuit, proceeding from an intense conviction of the worthiness of the object.” Also, less commonly, as “Possession by a god, supernatural inspiration, prophetic or poetic frenzy; an occasion or manifestation of these; Poetical fervour, impassioned mood or tone; Fancied inspiration; Ill-regulated or misdirected religious emotion, extravagance of religious speculation.” From *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, eds. J. A. Simpson and Edmund S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

those of an impulse produced by the presentations of sense.”⁸⁷ It is the feeling that commingles inspiration and conviction, giving the sense that what one will do (for enthusiasm is always future-oriented) is also what one should do. While a diverse constellation of emotions and passions certainly play a part in the functioning of allegiance (for good or for ill), I show here how enthusiasm offers a central focal point for understanding the affective functioning of political attachments. And, reading rhetoric and enthusiasm together as components in the experience of affective allegiances, I also explain how distinguishing between kinds of rhetoric and enthusiasm will allow for a critical engagement with the question of the validity of those attachments.⁸⁸

Enthusiasm, at least within contemporary democratic theory, is not an oft-used analytic concept. Indeed, it is usually entirely excluded from analysis of democratic allegiances, in part due to its historical association with – and liberal opposition to – religious and/or political fanaticism.⁸⁹ But the concept was a central component to Enlightenment discourses on reason, rhetoric, and (as I show here) political attachment.⁹⁰ In the previous chapter I outlined the intellectual history of the concept

⁸⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment (Kritik der Urteilskraft)*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), from Ak. 5:272 (p. 132 in the English edition).

⁸⁸ For an overview of political affects and their perceived dangers, see Hall “Passion and Constraint,” pp. 731-738.

⁸⁹ For an historical exploration of this critique of enthusiasm, again see James Farr, “Political Science and the Enlightenment of Enthusiasm,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (March, 1988), esp. pp. 57-62.

⁹⁰ For historical overviews of the changing conception of enthusiasm in German thought, see George Williamson, “The Restoration Revolt against Enthusiasm,” *Seventeenth-Century Contexts* (London,

of enthusiasm, taken in the context of German thought from its emergence as a purely religious concept (*Schwärmerei*) – and especially its use as a derisive label during early debates in the Protestant Reformation – to its appearance as a moral concept (*Enthusiasmus*) in *Aufklärung* discourse on motivations for reason.⁹¹ In the remainder of this dissertation, beginning with this chapter, I will examine the shift in thinking about these two types of enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus*) from religious and moral concepts to their use as political concepts.

1960); Peter Fenves, “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997); Norbert Hinske, “Zur Verwendung der Wörter ‘schwärmen,’ ‘Schwärmer,’ ‘Schwärmerei,’ ‘schwärmerisch’ im Kontext von Kants Anthropologiekolleg,” from *Die Aufklärung und die Schwärmer* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1988), pp. 3-81; and Anthony La Vopa, “The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*: On the Career of a German Epithet from Luther to Kant,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997). For some attempts to return the concept to contemporary democratic theory debates, see Jason Frank, “Besides Our Selves’: An Essay on Enthusiastic Politics and Civil Subjectivity,” *Public Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2005), esp. p. 372; also Jeffrey Lomonaco, “Kant’s Unselfish Partisans as Democratic Citizens,” *Public Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2005); Bonnie Honig, “Between Decision and Deliberation: Political Paradox in Democratic Theory,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 101, No. 1, (February 2007); Laura Hengehold, *The Body Problematic: Political Imagination in Kant and Foucault* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007) pp. 80-89; and Mika LaVaque-Manty, *Arguments and Fists: Political Agency and Justification in Liberal Theory* (London: Routledge 2002), pp.145-153.

⁹¹ There is some debate as to whether Kant actively distinguishes between different aspects of enthusiasm, or instead reads the concept of enthusiasm as distinct from the concept of *Schwärmerei*. Following Peter Fenves, I see much historical evidence for the first thesis. See Fenves’ excellent *A Peculiar Fate: Metaphysics and World History in Kant* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991), esp. chapter 3 “Enthusiasm, Anamnesis: Freedom and Renewal in the ‘Renewed Question.’” Other work on Kant’s conception of history and the role of enthusiasm in that critique include Yirmiahu Yovel’s *Kant and the Philosophy of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980); Jean-Francois Lyotard’s *Enthusiasm: The Kantian Critique of History* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), trans. George Van Den Abbeele; and (esp. important for my own thinking on this topic) Axel Honneth’s “The Irreducibility of Progress: Kant’s Account of the Relationship Between Morality and History,” included in *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009) trans. By Robert Sinnerbrink and Jean-Philippe Deranty. For the best articulation of the counter-argument to my reading here, see Robert Clewis, *The Kantian Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 169-183.

Crucial to the original instantiation of this shift in thinking about enthusiasm was Kant's political thought.⁹² Kant's political ideas (when taken seriously) are most often linked to his epistemology, were scholars read his efforts to develop a science of the limits of human reason as an extension of his republican belief in the primacy of morals over metaphysics.⁹³ As I aim to show here, Kant's thinking on enthusiasm as an extension of moral feeling (related to, yet distinct from, respect) adds a further dimension to this politics. The individual is not merely subject to the authority of the moral law (as Kant's writings on the categorical imperative might suggest), but experiences personal emotive structures that help determine the parameters of moral goods.

My analysis of Kant's initiation of the concept of political enthusiasm will take shape on two levels. Historically, enthusiasm was used as an analytic concept by late 18th century thinkers to critique and defend political behavior.⁹⁴ The emergence and transformation of the public sphere during this period occasioned opportunities for reflection on motivations for group behavior and mass action.⁹⁵ Enthusiasm became a

⁹² For efforts that pay particularly close attention to Kant's political thought and enthusiasm, again see Peter Fenves, "The Scale of Enthusiasm," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997); and Jeffrey Lomonaco, "Kant's Unselfish Partisans as Democratic Citizens," *Public Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2005).

⁹³ For the clearest expostulation of this reading of Kant's political theory, see Frederick Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992), pp. 27-38. For the most recent reappraisal of Kant's political theory, see Elisabeth Ellis, *Kant's Politics: Provisional Theory for an Uncertain World* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2005), pp. 112-154.

⁹⁴ As was documented in the previous chapter.

⁹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Darmstadt und Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962), esp. pp. 102-117. Important critical engagements with Habermas' argument include

useful tool in these debates to describe what some saw as dangerous, impassioned (and, relatedly, unreasoned) political fervor, and yet what others defended as a necessary condition to motivate political change. I read Kant's categorization of enthusiasm as a descriptive processes employed to harness social and political arguments to normative constructs.⁹⁶ Thus, a theoretical defense of enthusiasm depends, by this view, on understanding how enthusiasm might be used to uphold certain behavior as morally right. Such use of enthusiasm as a category is best evidenced in the derisive use of the term *Schwärmerei* to refer to Jacobin revolutionaries in France (and sometimes even their supporters in Prussia).⁹⁷ To label the behavior of the French Jacobins as '*Schwärmer*' was to make a claim on the conditions of their behavior, as well as evoking a normative judgment on the validity of this behavior (as the previous chapter illustrates, *Schwärmerei* was never used as a compliment). Similar to contemporary uses of the term 'fanatic' – or perhaps more

Habermas and the Public Sphere, ed. Craig Calhoun, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); and Anthony La Vopa, "Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe," *Journal of Modern History*, #64 (1992).

⁹⁶ See Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, trans./ eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), volume 1, footnote 43. For an excellent (and more recent) discussion on the productive use of Weberian categories in this way, see Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). As Brubaker argues it, categories "invite us to focus on processes and relations, rather than substances... to specify how people and organizations do things with... categories, and how such categories, in turn, channel social interactions and organize commonsense knowledge and judgments... to analyze the organization and discursive careers of categories – the processes through which they become institutionalized and entrenched in administrative routines and embedded in culturally powerful and symbolically resonant myths, memories, and narratives," pp. 11-12.

⁹⁷ Regarding the use of "*Schwärmer*" as a derisive concept, see La Vopa, "The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*." Regarding the employment of the concept to attack other philosophers in late 18th century German debates, see Fenves "The Scale of Enthusiasm."

aptly ‘terrorist’ – ‘*Schwärmerei*’ was highly charged with emotive and normative content.

Yet enthusiasm (as both *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus*) was also used by Kant analytically to describe an emotion felt while political actions were being evinced. In this way, a Jacobin sympathizer – perhaps like Kant – might describe themselves as feeling ‘enthusiastic’ about the French Revolution, and by this would merely be describing the feeling they associated with their own experiences (and would not, explicitly anyway, be employing the analytic or philosophical concept). It will be important to distinguish between these two uses of enthusiasm so as to disentangle Kant’s various employments of the term, especially as their use and meaning transformed from placement in religious and moral contexts to political ones.

In the first section of this chapter, I begin this exploration of rhetoric and enthusiasm through an examination of Jürgen Habermas’ defense of constitutional patriotism.⁹⁸ Constitutional patriotism is the theory of allegiance that focuses on the constitution (and the norms articulated therein) as the object of allegiance. In developing my argument from this starting point, I aim to show the comparative advantages of Habermas’ defense of constitutional patriotism, as well as the weakness left open by his own lack of attunement to the role of rhetoric in motivating public allegiances. In the second section, I offer a reconstruction of Kant’s critique of enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*) as a means to highlight the similarities of concern shared

⁹⁸ For a historical overview of constitutional patriotism, see Müller, *Constitutional Patriotism*, pp. 15-45; also see Justine Lacroix, “For a European Constitutional Patriotism,” *Political Studies*, #50 (2002).

by Habermas and Kant regarding the misuse of rhetoric. This linking should open the path towards employing Kant's later thinking on enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) to reformulating Habermas' notion of allegiance. Section three offers an examination of Kant's understating of emotions compared with passions, and how certain emotions interact with (as opposed to against) reason. For Kant, thinking depends on these emotions for legitimation and motivation. Building off this classification, the fourth section illustrates how enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) stands as a central emotive strategy in Kant's political theory. Explicating the logic of Kant's essay "An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?" I show how Kant's reflections on the changing structures of the German public sphere, in part provoked by the ideas of the French Revolution, offer us insights into the political use of enthusiasm.⁹⁹ This conception of a political enthusiasm allows us to reconceptualize Kant's own reliance on moral structures as motivating tools, and the problem of reading Kant as limited by a 'command morality.'¹⁰⁰ I conclude with a discussion of how Kant's positive understanding of enthusiasm can work as a motivational force in Habermas' theory of constitutional patriotism.

Section 1 – Motivating *Verfassungspatriotismus*

1.1

⁹⁹ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties/ Der Streit der Fakultäten*, trans. Mary Gregor (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979) pp. 141-171.

¹⁰⁰ I borrow this phrase from Jason Frank's "Besides Our Selves," p. 372.

Using Habermas' reflections on popular sovereignty and constitutional patriotism as a starting point, I aim to show the costs and limits of ignoring the role of enthusiasm as a motivational force for constitutional patriotism. Drawing connections between the concept of enthusiasm and the function of popular sovereignty is not unproblematic. When taken seriously as a motivational force, enthusiasm is often seen as dangerously chaotic and violent.¹⁰¹ Indeed, much of Enlightenment thought and the contemporary inheritance of it depends on a rejection of enthusiasm.¹⁰² I offer a reading that complicates this view. As discussed in the previous chapter, many German enlightenment thinkers, including Wieland, Lessing, and Mendelssohn, thought it both prudent and necessary to distinguish between useful (*Enthusiasmus*) and dangerous (*Schwärmerei*) forms of enthusiasm as motivations for the right use of reason. Here, I argue that Habermas' theory of constitutional patriotism will benefit from the application of this distinction.

In December 1988, Habermas delivered a lecture on the interactive effects between democratic procedures and popular sovereignty.¹⁰³ Habermas was there concerned with the possible availability of the ideas of the French Revolution for a normative (rather than historical) project. His aim was to establish the principles by which a project of constitutional democracy, set between the seemingly incompatible

¹⁰¹ For an argument representative of this concern, see Albert Hirschman's account "From *Gemeinschaftsschwärmerei* to *Verfassungspatriotismus*," (pp. 203-204) in "Social Conflicts as Pillars of Democratic Market Society," *Political Theory*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1994)

¹⁰² Again, see Farr, "Political Science and the Enlightenment of Enthusiasm."

¹⁰³ Habermas, "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure."

poles of liberalism and radical democracy, could be continually reconstituted through the *Ideen von 1789*. The relevance of the French Revolution, Habermas argued, was still available (and only available in) “the ideas that inspired constitutional democracy.”¹⁰⁴

According to Habermas’ argument, the ideas of the French Revolution find basis in two political traditions: 1) from the liberal tradition comes the idea of basic human rights as articulated in a constitution; and 2) from the republican tradition, the value of popular sovereignty as a legitimating force and as an expression of the common good. Both traditions, Habermas hoped, could be unified to form the basis of what – following Dolf Sternberger – he called ‘constitutional patriotism’ (*Verfassungspatriotismus*).¹⁰⁵ Habermas’ claim was that in a post-metaphysical age, liberal constitutionalism and republican civic virtue need no longer stand in conflict with each other. And that – indeed because of – the ‘post-conventional’ identity made stable by the ‘European peace’ of the Second World War, there emerged a chance for a new form of allegiance, one that combined the universal tenants of the liberal tradition with the orientation towards the common good expressed in republicanism. Rather than directing patriotic sentiment toward the nation or the state, such attachments could now realistically be directed toward universal principles outlined in

¹⁰⁴ “Popular Sovereignty as Procedure,” p. 465. Importantly, Habermas rejects the normative validity of three tenants usually associated with the continuing relevance of the French Revolution: A) the ‘production-centered capitalist project’; B) the modern state apparatus and the instrumental rationality requisite to it; and C) the idea of the nation-state as the source for universal conscription of citizens of the state.

¹⁰⁵ Dolf Sternberger, “*Verfassungspatriotismus*,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 23, 1979.

a constitution and expressed through the procedures that further developed and upheld those principles (e.g. the law and institutions that allow the ‘project’ of democracy to continue to refine itself). As Jan Müller articulates it, constitutional patriotism, by Habermas’ model, would be a developed “sense of critical attachment... formed both to the character of the society that emerges from collective learning processes, and to the very procedures and concretely situated practices which make such processes possible in the first place.”¹⁰⁶ Constitutional patriotism would, by this view, escape the paralyzing paradoxes latent in liberal nationalism and republican patriotism.¹⁰⁷

This “sense of critical attachment,” on which Habermas’ theory of constitutional patriotism depends, only emerges in a post-traditional society where individuals are (perhaps, historically, for the first time) capable of reflecting on the traditions that shape their culture and society, and the identities constructed therein.¹⁰⁸ Such criticality results from transformations in our awareness of “the intersubjective constitution of freedom,” whereby “the possessive-individualist illusion of autonomy as self-ownership disintegrates.”¹⁰⁹ The post-conventional self, in order to develop a sense of critical attachment, must acknowledge the intersubjective construction of values. Habermas argues that particularist claims to traditional values can neither be

¹⁰⁶ Müller, *Constitutional Patriotism*, pp. 29-31.

¹⁰⁷ For a scathing critique of this assumption, again see Canovan’s “Patriotism is Not Enough.”

¹⁰⁸ This is the process of the formation of the what Habermas calls ‘the post-conventional self’ see his essay “Historical Consciousness and Post-Traditional Identity,” in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians’ Debate*, trans. Shierry Weber Nichol森 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), esp. pp 256-259.

¹⁰⁹ Habermas “Popular Sovereignty as Procedure,” p. 490.

legitimately upheld nor entirely disregarded as invaluable to the constitution of ‘mature’ selves. Such selves are neither banal nor empty of affective allegiances, but remain critically engaged with their world, whereby “the trivial and the everyday (remain) open to the shock of what is absolutely strange, cryptic, or uncanny” and, “though these no longer provide a cover for privileges, they refuse to be assimilated by pre-given categories.”¹¹⁰ The post-conventional self remains caught in-between inherited traditions and their progressive transformations.

The political instantiation of this contemporary dilemma plays out in how citizens relate to their professed attachments, and especially in their experience of political allegiance. Constitutional patriotism enters into this logic as a means to allow citizens a space for the evocation of norms consistent with their experiences of their post-conventional identities.¹¹¹ And such a process of norm-evocation is consequent to the interaction of both public and private autonomy. As Habermas argues,

Both (private autonomy and public autonomy) are as much a means for each other as they are ends in themselves. The demand to orient oneself to the common good, which is connected to political (e.g. public) autonomy, is also a rational expectation insofar as only the democratic process guarantees that private individuals will achieve an equal enjoyment of their equal individual liberties. Conversely, only when the private autonomy of individuals is secure are citizens in a position to

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 490.

¹¹¹ Central here are Habermas’ efforts to rethink the validity of the concept of law, where modern “law consists of norms that are produced by a lawgiver, are sanctioned by the state, and are meant to guarantee individual liberties. According to the liberal view, the democratic self-determination of citizens can be realized only through the medium of such law, the structural properties of which ensure liberty. Consequently the idea of a ‘rule of law’, which in the past was expressed in the idea of human rights, comes on the scene alongside – and together with – that of popular sovereignty as a second source of legitimation.” From “Constitutional Democracy: A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?,” *Political Theory*, Vol. 29, No. 6 (2001), p. 766.

make correct use of their political autonomy... each side is fed by resources it has from the other.¹¹²

The being 'in-between' of the post-conventional self is expressed both substantively and politically. The objects of affective allegiance that can bind such an identity, according to Habermas, are the very constitutive ideals that allow the post-conventional self to maintain its own status between public and private autonomies. Constitutional patriotism is the form this allegiance takes, allowing the post-conventional self to sustain itself through reaffirmation of the principles that generate and legitimate its political station. Mitigating between liberal and republican conceptions of basic political norms, constitutional patriotism stands as an attempt to validate the necessary functioning of basic human rights (those rights which preserve the post-conventional self) through the democratic process which depends on popular sovereignty.

1.2

But Habermas' efforts here to overcome the tension between the universalism of liberal constitutionalism and the particularism of republican civic virtue has the anathematic effect of weakening both structures as they stand in themselves, loosening the concerns of both liberals and republicans from the advantages constitutionalism

¹¹² Habermas, "Constitutional Democracy," p. 780.

and patriotism respectively.¹¹³ These impotencies are consequent to two underlying motivations in Habermas' project:

1) *Discourse Ethics and Constitutional Patriotism*

For Habermas, the promise of discourse ethics presents itself in the political project of constitutional patriotism.¹¹⁴ As a theory, discourse ethics attempts to justify a public rationality that is composed, not of transcendent abstract universal norms, but instead of norms composed by the lived practices and daily concerns of all those who can and do engage in discourse for some public good.¹¹⁵ This model of communicative action results in the coordinated effect that "despite the fact that their (the interlocutors') ideal content can only ever be approximately realized, (it) must as a matter of fact be made by all participants every time they assert or dispute the truth of a statement and undertake to justify this validity-claim in argumentation."¹¹⁶ Constitutional patriotism, as a political project, is reworked by Habermas as a practical

¹¹³ For similar criticisms, see Craig Calhoun, "Imagining Solidarity: Cosmopolitanism, Constitutional Patriotism, and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture*, Vol. 14 No. 1 (2002); for an important response to Calhoun's criticisms, see Ciaran Cronin, "Democracy and Collective Identity: In Defense of Constitutional Patriotism," *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2003).

¹¹⁴ For a related reading of the interaction between constitutional patriotism and discursive rationality, see Abizadeh, "On the Philosophy/Rhetoric Binaries."

¹¹⁵ For Habermas' account of discursive rationality, see *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), esp. pp. 285-6; also *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. trans./ed. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), p. 58.

¹¹⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), p. 53.

manifestation of this discourse, in an effort to direct loyalty towards norms as they are composed and recomposed in the constitution of democratic states.¹¹⁷ Problematic, though, are Habermas' attempts to outline what precisely would motivate democratic citizens to attach allegiances to the expression of such universalized norms (abstract or otherwise) beyond the practice of reason described above as requisite to post-conventional identities. Which is to say, much of the validity of Habermas' project for discourse ethics and constitutional patriotism depends on whether or not we can accept his theory of the post-conventional identity as at all commensurate with lived experiences.

The direct problematic here, most critics observe, is the relationship between the universalist core of Habermas' theory of constitutional patriotism, and the political infrastructure necessary to sustain such a center.¹¹⁸ This may be the necessary consequence of a universalism that can produce civic affect. As one critic puts it, "The project of making affect safe for liberal democracy ... founders on the troubling fact that even the reproduction of civic affect proceeds by tying citizens to historical institutions and concrete cultures that never are quite equivalent to the universal principles they purport to embody."¹¹⁹ Indeed, in order for a state (supranational or

¹¹⁷ For comparison between Sternberger's original project of constitutional patriotism, and Habermas' rethinking of the project, see Müller's *Constitutional Patriotism*, p. 31.

¹¹⁸ For these concerns, see Markell, "Making Affect Safe for Democracy," p. 39; Canovan, "Patriotism is not Enough," p. 422; and Calhoun, "Imagining Solidarity," p. 152.

¹¹⁹ See Markell, "Making Affect Safe for Democracy," p. 39.

otherwise) to successfully maintain a center of universalist values would it seems already depend on an infrastructure that would be understood by citizens as already ‘ours,’ and thus limited by the particularity of that allegiance.¹²⁰ This is often viewed as requisite to the problem of democratic states needing a clear articulation of the concept of ‘the people.’ As another scholar notes it, “Democratic states... require a form and level of ‘peopleness’ that is not required in other forms of government. They offer a level of inclusion that is unprecedented – the government of all the people – but they place a new pressure on the constitution of this people in sociocultural and political practice.”¹²¹ This problem of the people (of whose state this state is) lurks behind Habermas’ motivations for constitutional patriotism. In political practice, cosmopolitan ideals are still always limited by the location of the producers that effect them. Constitutional patriotism, after all, emerged as a solution to real political problems, in places with historical objections to the anathematic problems of allegiance itself – first in the reconstitution of Germany, and then in the constitution of a united Europe¹²² – and it is still a people (*the* Germans, *the* Europeans) that are being asked to bind themselves to the constitution, and this, by its very cause, cannot be perfectly universal.

¹²⁰ Canovan, “Patriotism is not Enough,” p. 422.

¹²¹ Calhoun, “Imagining Solidarity,” p. 153.

¹²² See Habermas, “Why Europe Needs a Constitution” in *The New Left Review*, Vo. 11 (September/October 2001); also, J. H. H. Weiler, “*Fin-de-siècle* Europe: Do the New Clothes have an Emperor?” (pp. 238-263) in *The Constitution of Europe: “Do the New Clothes have and Emperor?” and Other Essays on European Integration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

The second host of problems raised by critics here is directly tied to the discursive theory of democracy that underlies constitutional patriotism.¹²³ Here the problem is that the discourse itself that supposedly produces these universalistic parameters for human rights lack the very universalistic parameters described.¹²⁴ This is because, critics claim, discourse itself always involves rhetoric and persuasion, and cannot be separated from the particularistic emotional reactions connected to the real functioning of discourse.¹²⁵ As one critic articulates the problem, “Deliberative rhetoric deals with political questions having to do with choosing a collective course of action... [It] creates a dynamic relationship between speaker and hearer. Hearers must be engaged by the speech. It ought to spark active reasoning and thoughtfulness rather than unreflective triggers or gut reactions.”¹²⁶ By this account, deliberative discourse, spurred by rhetoric, is rooted in affects stimulated by speech itself (rather than pure, calculated rational action). Only by appealing to emotion through rhetoric can any kind of discourse like Habermas envisions actually occur in public. Constitutional patriotism, by this account, would depend on understanding the emotive motivations of agents involved in the discourse on each particular constitution, and would appeal to those agents on the basis of the norms by which they could be persuaded to consent.

¹²³ See Chambers, “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere,” p. 11; also I. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 64; and B. Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*, p. 192.

¹²⁴ See Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 70.

¹²⁵ Again, Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*, p. 192.

¹²⁶ Chambers, “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere,” p. 13.

2) *The Work of Patriotism*

Related to the underlying complications produced by Habermas' reliance on discourse ethics is the emphasis placed on the interaction between the work of 'the constitution' in constitutional patriotism, when compared to the work of 'patriotism.' While it is clear what the constitution does – serving as the object of affection as well as the articulation of the bounds of what is being affected (namely the rights of those under the allegiant sphere), what patriotism is that it would be directed towards such an object lacks any clear explication from Habermas. This is especially problematic for the theory of constitutional patriotism when examined in comparison to competing theories of allegiance (such as liberal or nonliberal nationalisms, as well as traditional republican forms of patriotism).¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Strangely, Habermas is almost entirely silent on this matter. While it is clear that his concerns are with the dangers produced by ethno-nationalism, what is less clear is how Habermas distinguishes between nationalism and patriotism on the one hand, and between these theories of allegiance and constitutional patriotism on the other. Part of this confusion can be attributed to the original context in which Habermas introduces this theme – 'the Historians' Debate' of the 1980's – where the question of German national identity was under dispute as educational reformists sought to think through how precisely to represent German history to new generations of Germans (importantly, without producing guilt on the one hand, or muting the events of the 20th-century on the other). But, as Habermas has continued to defend constitutional patriotism – even past the unification of Germany, as a mode of allegiance around which Europe should now come to restructure itself – the question of competing theories remains an important cause for concern. For analysis on the effects of 'the Historians' Debate' on Habermas' theory of constitutional patriotism, see Markell's "Making Affect Safe for Democracy?": On 'Constitutional Patriotism,'" *Political Theory*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2000); also see Charles Maier's *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

While it appears that Habermas intends the function of patriotisms to act as the grounding of loyalty, such an understanding of patriotism seems contradictory, especially when viewed in light of that towards which constitutional patriotism would be employed.¹²⁸ The motivations for political constitution (e.g. foundation) seem unique from the motivations for continual allegiance (e.g. loyalty). While there is certainly an interaction between these two experiences, Habermas, without being precise about what patriotism is doing, leaves himself open to critique on the ‘thinness’ of his theory of patriotism when directed towards the constitution.¹²⁹ While he argues that the constitution is the articulation of ideas that can be spoken about together (in the same language, so to speak) of competing groups, and in this way form the moral consciousness of those who pledge allegiance to the constitution, such pursuits may be weakened by the actual emotive and psychological function of allegiance itself.

Thus Habermas, while engaged in an important project of thinking through a way of mitigating the strengths and weaknesses of virtue and interest in a political project, problematically ignores the emotional content that underlies political motivations.¹³⁰ In so doing, the ‘patriotism’ in his theory of constitutional patriotism becomes empty – merely ‘flat affect’ – offering no clear articulation of why such a

¹²⁸ For a comparison of the use of constitutional patriotism in German debates compared with a European constitutional patriotism, see Müller, *Constitutional Patriotism*, pp. 93-97.

¹²⁹ See Dora Kostakapoulou, “Thick, Thin and Thinner Patriotisms: Is this all there is?” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2006).

¹³⁰ Abizadeh makes a related version of this critique, and the remainder of this chapter is very much influenced by his claims. See “On the Philosophy/Rhetoric Binaries,” pp. 462-463.

theory of political allegiance would or could be satisfying to citizens seeking legitimating and energizing forces.¹³¹

Defenders of Habermas' constitutional patriotism have made some attempts to mitigate these concerns. Müller, in his critical reworking of Habermas' project, argues that constitutional patriotism need not be seen as purely 'rationalistic' and indeed does depend on some affective attachments: "It's a mistake not to recognize that cognition and emotion are intimately related (here) – emotions (or at least the ones of concern in political life) are, after all, based on beliefs."¹³² For Müller, emotions ranging from "shame, righteous indignation (or what Habermas has at one point called 'democratic indignation'), spiritedness, anger, and guilt" may all play some role in affective allegiances towards shared ideals. Müller's claim, though, is that such emotions still do depend on rational 'antecedents' – commitments to the ideas that generate such emotions – and that these antecedents are themselves governed by a discursive rationality.

As I will explicate below, a more complex understanding of emotions should show how not all affects work with these rational 'antecedents' in the same way.¹³³ Still necessary (and notably absent from Müller's accounting) is a detailed explication of the functional relationship of these antecedents to these positive emotive responses.

¹³¹ Indeed, as Markell notes, this problem is not entirely unique to Habermas. "Making Affect Safe for Democracy," p. 54.

¹³² Müller, *Constitutional Patriotism*, p. 63.

¹³³ In what follows I will use 'affect' to denote the broadest category of emotive conditions, where 'emotions,' 'passions,' 'moods,' and 'feelings' will each be treated as specific sub-categories therein.

The work in the remainder of this chapter aims at answering what emotions could serve as motivating factors for constitutional patriotism,¹³⁴ especially taking enthusiasm as the central functioning emotion in the expression of allegiance.¹³⁵

Section 2 – Raving with Reason: Does Rhetoric Dehumanize?

2.1

As a resource for untangling these problems of political motivation, I turn to Kant's thinking on enthusiasm. Such a turn might, at first glance, appear problematic.¹³⁶ Within debates on the public use of reason compared with public feeling, Kant's ideas are most often employed as tools to uphold the impartiality of public reason by its defenders, or pointed at by critics as emblematic of the Enlightenment's failing point to take seriously the place of emotion in the public sphere.¹³⁷ Both parties here see Kant as critical of public rhetoric, viewing it as an

¹³⁴ On the failures of liberal theory to take emotions seriously, see Hall's "Passions and Constraint." On different kinds of emotions within patriotism, see Simon Keller's "Patriotism as Bad Faith," *Ethics*, Vol. 115 (April, 2005), pp. 567-568.

¹³⁵ This goes directly against the traditional understanding of popular sovereignty as loyalty, as described (for instance), by Bernard Yack, "Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism," *Political Theory*, Vol. 29 (2001), p. 518.

¹³⁶ Though, it should be noted, there is a growing literature that is attempting to reread Kant as a valuable resource for relating emotions and political motivations. For an overview of this recovery, see Pauline Kleingeld, "Kantian Patriotism," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 20 (2000). Also important are Philip Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Howard Caygill, "Kant and the Relegation of Passions," in Victoria Kahn, Neil Saccamano, and Daniela Coli, *Politics and the Passions, 1500-1850*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); and Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origins of the Social Contract* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 1995).

instigation of dangerous emotions that interfere with the ‘right’ use of reason and the production of just political outcomes. Central to this reading have been two oft repeated passages; one from Kant’s essay “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?”, (1784) the other from the *Critique of Judgment* (1790):

1) Nothing is required for this (mass) enlightenment, however, except freedom; and the freedom in question is the least harmful of all, namely, the freedom to use reason publicly in all matters.¹³⁸

2) (R)eading the best speech of a roman public orator, or a contemporary parliamentary speaker or preacher, has always been mingled with the disagreeable feeling of disapproval of an insidious art, an art that knows how, in important matters, to move people like machines to a judgment that must lose all its weight with them when they meditate about it calmly.¹³⁹

With these two passages, defenders and critics alike find grounds for their claims.

Defenders of Kant (or at least of his accounting of the public use of reason) see the initiating of a defense of free persons, capable of making rational choices unmanipulated by rhetorical illusions. Critics – equally enthused – see Kant as misreading the subtleties of rhetoric and persuasion and their value in both

¹³⁷ For the traditional view in this debate, see Habermas’ “Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel’s Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics?” (1983), both reprinted in *Kant and Political Philosophy: The Contemporary Legacy*, eds. Ronald Beiner and William J. Booth (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993). For an overview of Habermas’ inheritance (and perhaps misappropriation of Kant’s thought), see Thomas McCarthy, “Kantian Constructivism and Reconstructivism” *Ethics* 105 (October 1994): 44-63; and Rainer Forst, *Kontexte der Gerechtigkeit: Politische Philosophie jenseits von Liberalismus und Kommunitarismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994). For a critical account of Habermas’ misunderstanding of Kant, again see Strong and Sposito, “Habermas’ Significant Other.” Recent critical appraisals of Kant on rhetoric include Chambers, “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere,” p.3; and Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*, p. 86.

¹³⁸ From Kant’s “*Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?*” first published in the *Berlinischen Monatsschrift*, (December 1783), 37.

¹³⁹ From Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, footnote 63 Ak 5:328, (p. 198).

constituting allegiances and furthering practical political projects. As Bryan Garsten puts it,

Regardless of where Kant received his notion that rhetoric sought to ‘move men like machines,’ he clearly worried not so much about its political effects as about its pernicious influence on habits of mind. Even when an orator aimed at praiseworthy ends, his involvement ‘spoiled’ the maxims and dispositions of his listeners by discouraging them from thinking independently. Kant’s argument was that rhetoric prevented individuals from thinking for themselves in the way that enlightenment demanded.¹⁴⁰

Garsten is certainly right that Kant’s thinking belies this prejudice. But where Kant received this notion of the dangers requisite to ‘moving people like machines,’ is centrally revealing. Understanding the source of Kant’s rejection of the orators, and his defense of public reason – taken in context – reveal a more subtle and helpful portrait of the kinds of political motivations that should be of use to contemporary democratic projects.

As historians have noted, transformations in the politics of Europe occasioned Kant to restructure (and, as Habermas complains, ‘entangle’) the objects of- and motivations for- his critical project.¹⁴¹ Nowhere is this transformation more evident

¹⁴⁰ Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*, p. 88.

¹⁴¹ This reference comes from Habermas’ reflections in what he sees as a perplexing shift in Foucault’s thinking on Kant, as discussed in his “Foucault’s Lecture on Kant” published in *Thesis Eleven*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1986), trans. Sigrid Brauner and Robert Brown. Habermas also notes, “It is true, of course, that in the Conflict of the Faculties, Kant went beyond the systematic boundaries of this (e.g. critical) philosophy and raised the French Revolution to the level of ‘historical sign’ for the possibility of a moral progress of humanity. But in the theory itself (e.g. of historical progression) we find no trace of the constitutional assemblies of Philadelphia and Paris – at least not the reasonable trace of a great, dual historical event that we can now see in retrospect as an entirely new beginning” (p.768), from “Constitutional Democracy: A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?”. As the remaining sections of this chapter show, Habermas misunderstands Kant’s project as a continuation of outlining the moral parameters of practical reason, rather than (as I argue) an excavation of the concept of enthusiasm for political ends.

than in the shift in Kant's thinking on the concept of enthusiasm. While many of Kant's early moral writings were directed at the problem of moral *Schwärmerei* (often translated as moral fanaticism or dogmatism)¹⁴², after 1786, Kant begins to develop and defend a notion of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) that he thought central to the act of political judgment.¹⁴³ Kant's reflections on enthusiasm eventually coalesce around his understanding of the role of history in a progressive political theory, grounded in reflections on contemporaneous historical transformations and their effects (both present and future) for a new kind of politics. These transformations were requisite to Kant's repeated attempt to answer what he thought of as a central question regarding human existence: Of what can we hope?¹⁴⁴ The (political) good that could be hoped for, according to Kant, depends on the feeling of enthusiasm.

¹⁴² For a discussion of translation issues regarding the concept of enthusiasm, see Peter Fenves, *A Peculiar Fate: Metaphysics and World-History in Kant* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 241-243; also see Fenves' *Raising the tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique* by Jacques Derrida (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1993). For discussions of Kant's understanding of moral *Schwärmerei*, see Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 155. Regarding Habermas' misunderstanding of Kant and the relationship between value skepticism and enthusiasm, see Tracy B. Strong and Frank Andreas Sposito, "Habermas's Significant Other," in *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, ed. Stephen K. White (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 277-282.

¹⁴³ For a discussion of the complexity of these philosophical shifts in Kant's thought, see Richard Velkley, *Freedom and the End of Reason: On the Moral Foundation of Kant's Critical Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1989).

¹⁴⁴ As Kant explains it, "The Field of philosophy in (the) cosmopolitan sense can be brought down to the following questions:

1. What can I Know?
2. What ought I to do?
3. What may I hope?
4. What is man?

For Kant, rhetoric and enthusiasm are intimately linked. Turning persons “into machines” means dissolving the individual will. Kant associated rhetoricians who manipulated crowds – subjugating personal wills under the collective – with mystics, politicians, and religious leaders.¹⁴⁵ The kind of rhetoric Kant believed turned persons into machines was for him requisite to the concept of *Schwärmerei*. Translations of this term are not especially easy, despite its common placement in 18th-century discourse.¹⁴⁶ Meaning something like fanaticism, *Schwärmer* were (often, though not always) described as crowds of devoted religious followers, swooped up into a ‘swarm’ by the impassioned preaching displayed. The term, for Kant, diagnosed both a state of being as well as an emotion. *Schwärmerei* could be observed as developing in reaction to mystical displays of supersensible phenomena, but the feelings of being in the swarm would also be described using the same word. As Peter Fenves puts it, “Members of a swarm are not only impossible to distinguish from one another but are also, for this reason, not even members of the swarm: instead of belonging to a stable

“Metaphysics answers the first question, morals the second, religion the third, and anthropology the fourth. Fundamentally, however, we could reckon all of this as anthropology, because the first three questions relate to the last one.” From the *Lectures on Logic*, trans. J. Michael Young, ed. Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 538 (25 in *The Jäsche Logic*).

¹⁴⁵ Kant’s worry of a rhetoric that turns persons into machines presages the use of a similar rhetoric employed for mobilization in the wake of the Weimar Republic – see Jeffrey Herf’s discussion in *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), esp. his accounting of the rhetoric of “*stahlernde Romantik*” pp. 195-197.

¹⁴⁶ Again, for a discussion of translation issues regarding the concept of enthusiasm, see Fenves, *A Peculiar Fate*, pp. 241-243; and *Raising the Tone of Philosophy*. Fenves advocates for ‘exaltation’ as the most accurate English translation of *Schwärmerei*, though – as I discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, I prefer fanaticism, in part because of the direct practical comparison to enthusiasm in the types of public festivals associated with the Greek and Latin origins of these two words.

collective according to which they would be recognized and named, each one is a temporary participant in an act of ‘swarming.’¹⁴⁷

The link between the ‘machine’ and the *Schwärm* is that in both the conscious self is absolved of thought and the responsibility for thinking. This occurs through the extension of the imagination past the sensible (and the categories through which the sensible is made apparent), to the supersensible.¹⁴⁸ Thus, Kant describes *Schwärmerei* as “overstepping the bounds of human reason”¹⁴⁹; ‘the delusion of wanting to see something beyond the bounds of sensibility i.e., of dreaming according to principles (raving with reason);’ “comparable to mania;” “a deep seated and brooding passion;” “it is ruleless.”¹⁵⁰ To be caught in a swarm was, for Kant, a sickness. That one would be susceptible to fanatical inspiration (that is, that one could be susceptible to seeing beyond the senses) was a weakness that certain individuals suffered from, and should not be taken as a universal condition. “Madness,” as Kant put it, “is a passing accident that presumably strikes even the soundest understanding on occasion; mania (fanaticism) is a disease that deranges it.”¹⁵¹ Orators – who preyed on such

¹⁴⁷ Peter Fenves, “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” p. 120.

¹⁴⁸ For further discussions on this point, see Jane Kneller, “The Failure of Kant’s Imagination,” in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 456-460; also from Kneller, *Kant and the Power of Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. chapter 5; and G. F. Munzel, *Kant’s Conception of Moral Character: The Critical Link of Morality, Anthropology, and Reflective Judgment* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999).

¹⁴⁹ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Ak. 5:85-6, (p. 73).

¹⁵⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak. 5:275, (p. 135-6).

weaknesses – fueled the delusions of the sick, rather than engaging the reasonable with sustained arguments.¹⁵² For Kant, orations do not allow thinking – instead, they attempt the subjugation of the will, the dissolving of the individual’s autonomy.¹⁵³ And for Kant, the active subjugation of another’s will was the greatest moral and political transgression.

2.2

One such famous ‘*Schwärmer*’ who instigated Kant’s fears of fanaticism was Emanuel Swedenborg.¹⁵⁴ An actively engaged natural scientist and mystical theologian, Swedenborg’s studies on the relationship between the soul and the brain led him to his own spiritual ‘awakening’ whereby he claimed to have been called by

¹⁵¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak. 5:275, (p. 135-6). As I illustrate in the previous chapter, for all the disagreement amongst Kant and the popular philosophers, there was much in common regarding their condemnation of *Schwärmerei*. For a similar accounting, see A. La Vopa’s “The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*,” p. 86.

¹⁵² See Susan Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 106-132. On the relationship between philosophy and mysticism in 18th century Germany, La Vopa notes, “*Schwärmerei* became the handy foil in philosophy’s efforts to establish itself as the public use of reason.” See “The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*,” p.86. Also, for an accounting that relates the concept of genius, imagination, and enthusiasm, in Kant’s aesthetic theory, see John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), esp. pp 33-44.

¹⁵³ For the most recent appraisal of Kantian autonomy, see Susan Shell, *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2009), especially pp. 122-162. Also see Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy: Problems in the Appropriation of the Critical Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2000); and Henry Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom* (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1990).

¹⁵⁴ For Kant’s critical accounting of Swedenborg, see *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, in *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755-1770*, trans./ed. David Walford, Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). For a critical discussion of Kant’s early failure to adequately engage with Swedenborg’s ideas, see Hartmut Böhme and Gernot Böhme, “The Battle of Reason with the Imagination,” trans. Jane Kneller, in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 444-449; originally published as chapter 4 in *Das Andere der Vernunft: Zur Entwicklung von Rationalitätsstrukturen am Beispiel Kants* (Frankfurt, 1983).

god to develop a new church on earth.¹⁵⁵ Swedenborg claimed that his awakening attuned him to the spirit world in a way never before possible – that the union of the modern scientific mind with prophetic experience allowed for an entirely new revealed vision of the divine and a realizable plan for peace on earth.¹⁵⁶ Kant viewed Swedenborg’s awakening as dangerous, both to Swedenborg, but also to audiences who came to value his testimony.¹⁵⁷ As Kant explains,

The deception of reason could to a large extent be prevented by subjecting the powers of the mind to control the will, and be exercising rather more restraint over an idle inquisitiveness. The deception of the sense, on the other hand, concerns the ultimate foundation of all our judgments, and if that foundation were defective, there is little that the rules of logic could do to remedy the situation!¹⁵⁸

By Kant’s account, the exclamations Swedenborg professed were meant to deceive the senses, articulating parameters of supersensible phenomena that could not be known (e.g. logically deduced), but could be experienced (through imitation). For Kant, these

¹⁵⁵ Swedenborg’s most important mystical text was *Arcana Cælestia: or Heavenly Mysteries Contained in the Sacred Scriptures, or Word of the Lord, Manifested and Laid Open*, trans. John Clowes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1816).

¹⁵⁶ As Kant reports it, Swedenborg was apparently able to describe, with accurate detail, future and current events anywhere in the world. He exhibited this power one night at a party, describing the path of the great Stockholm fire 1759, and the near destruction of his own house, while seated in Gothenburg eating-house during the actual occurrence of the event. See Kant’s *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, section 2.

¹⁵⁷ As Walford notes, Kant, in a letter to Charlotte von Knobloch (10th of August, 1763), seems initially rather taken with Swedenborg’s accounts of the spirit world. As Kant saw it, the event of Swedenborg’s predictions regarding the Stockholm fire “seems to me to have the greatest evidential force; it really does deprive every doubt (of Swedenborg’s powers) of any justification’ (Ak 10:46/ *Theoretical Philosophy*, p.453). Why Kant shifted his view from positive to pejorative has not been accounted for (though Kant’s growing preoccupation with judgment may point the way to his logic that, in the end, Swedenborg – even if correct in his assessment of the spirit world – presents his visions in a way that undermined the very act of judgment).

¹⁵⁸ From *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, (Ak 2:361) p. 347, excerpted from a section entitled “Ecstatic Journey of an Enthusiast (*Schwärmer*) through the Spirit-World.”

fantastic revelations called into question the very basis of judgment, offering opportunities for judgment itself to lose balance.

The problem with oratory that produces *Schwärmerei* (as opposed to rhetoric, that induces *Enthusiasmus*) is the relocation of the authority of judgment from audience to speaker. The human ‘machines’ Kant describes are marked by their incapacity for making judgments, passively absorbing the ideas that are allocated to them external their consciousness. Their autonomy is wrested from them by the very act of oratory itself. This problem is made evident in Kant’s distinction between the public and private use of reason. By his account, “the public use of one’s reason (is) the use that anyone as a scholar makes of reason before the entire literate world.”¹⁵⁹ Private reason, by contrast, is described as “that which a person may make in a civic post or office that has been entrusted to him.”¹⁶⁰ Accordingly, orators, priests, politicians, and mystics alike deliver ideas conditioned by their private use of reason, and consequently set the terms of engagement with these ideas via private reason (even if delivered in a public sphere). The power of engagement, and the means by which such knowledge would be delivered, is mitigated by the roles in which the speaker serves.

2.3

¹⁵⁹ From Kant’s “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?”, *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History and Morals*, trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis: Hackett 1983), p. 42.

¹⁶⁰ Kant’s “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?”, p. 42.

This distinction between public reason and private reason – between the production of knowledge by scholars who engage with and are critiqued by a reading public, and the production of information through (esp. state-sponsored) private roles – maps onto an important debate in late 18th-century Prussia regarding freedom of speech and the capacity to present views in written versus oral form.¹⁶¹ With the ascension of Fredrick Wilhelm II, and under the conservative religious auspices of the *Oberhauptdirektor* Johann Christof Wöllner, strict restrictions emerged in Prussia on scholars' use of free speech.¹⁶² These censorship laws magnified the division between theologians and philosophers, already a hotly contested struggle in a public discourse influenced by Enlightenment thought.¹⁶³ When and how rhetoric, in its many forms, is viewed depends very much on the legal parameters by which free speech is allowed. When speech is completely open, the parameters of rhetoric become less clear (and incentives to justify one's speech as 'neutral' – as opposed to rhetorical – become more palpable).¹⁶⁴ These were, however, not the conditions in which Kant was writing.

Kant took careful measures to distinguish between rhetoric and oratory. As he puts it, "Rhetorical power and excellence of speech (which together constitute

¹⁶¹ See Michael J. Sauter, "Preaching, a Ponytail, and an Enthusiast: Rethinking the Public Sphere's Subversiveness in Eighteenth-century Prussia," *Central European History*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (2004).

¹⁶² James Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 292.

¹⁶³ See Mary Gregor's introduction to Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties/ Der Streit der Fakultäten*, trans./introduction Mary Gregor (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. X. Also see Sauter, "Preaching, a Ponytail, and an Enthusiast," p. 547.

¹⁶⁴ Again, see Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, p. 70.

rhetoric) belong to fine art; but oratory (*ars oratoria*), the art of using people's weaknesses for one's own aims (no matter how good these may be in intention or even in fact), is unworthy of any respect whatsoever."¹⁶⁵ Rhetoric depends on a critical audience able to cast judgments. Oratory, by contrast, relies on the hope that judgments will be reserved or (even) subsumed under the authority of the speaker. Rhetoricians attempt to persuade their audience; orators hope to control them. For Kant, the audiences' ability to remain critical very much depends on their security within a political framework. As he argues it, "[B]oth in Athens and in Rome, it (oratory) came to its peak only at a time when the state was hastened to its ruin, and any true patriotic way of thinking was extinct."¹⁶⁶ Declining states create real and psychological fissures, allowing orators to prey on the insecurities of citizens made unstable by the transforming power. Men as machines – as swarms – are more likely to arise at unique moments in history, when power-structures are declining.¹⁶⁷

The case of Johann Heinrich Schulz – and Kant's reaction to it – confirms the problem of *Schwäremerei* for the public use of reason.¹⁶⁸ Schulz became the center of a

¹⁶⁵ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak. 5:328, footnote 63 (p. 198).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ As section 4 of this chapter illustrates, declining power-structures also allow for revolutions in thinking.

¹⁶⁸ See Kant's "Review of Schulz's Attempt at an Introduction to a Doctrine of Morals for All Human Beings Regardless of Different Religions," in *Practical Philosophy*, trans./ed. Mary Gregor and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Ak 8:10-14. For a detailed discussion of Schulz's import to these debates in Prussia, see "Preaching, a Ponytail, and an Enthusiast," p. 550-560. For an historical overview of the parameters of the debate over public and private uses of religion in late 18th-century Prussia, see Ian Hunter, "Kant's Religion and Prussian Religious Policy," *Modern Intellectual History*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2005).

public scandal on the problem of preaching enthusiasm.¹⁶⁹ For the Prussian state's part, the concern was that Schulz was undermining political authority, preaching god's word above the authority of the state. During this period of Prussian history, religion was guaranteed protection only insofar as the legitimate authority of the state was upheld. For Kant, the problem was equally problematic for the right use of reason. He feared that Schulz's preaching could result in the collapse of all authorities besides the *Schwärmer's* relationship to god. As Kant explains, "general fatalism... is the most prominent principle in (Schulz's) work and the most powerful one, affecting all morality, (thus turning) all human conduct into a mere puppet show... (U)nless we think of our will as having free imperative... (all that) is left us is only to await and observe... but not what we can and ought to do of ourselves as authors."¹⁷⁰

The oral tradition Kant is critiquing relies on this passivity – this 'wait and observe' mentality – that prevents the very human capacity of authorship. Kant argued that some rhetoric allowed for a 'thinking through' of problems, while oratory (esp. religious oratory) did not. A rhetoric that allows an audience to think through ideas – a truly public rhetoric, in Kant's terms – could affect a positive kind of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) for the ideas generated. How Kant makes this distinction between different types of enthusiasm (esp. when considered with emotive feelings generally) forms the content of the next section of this chapter.

¹⁶⁹ Though Kant was friendly with Schulz, he also worried that the principles outlined in his sermons went too far to dismantle the authority of both state and reason. See Kant's "Review of Schulz," Ak 8:13.

¹⁷⁰ Again, see Kant's "Review of Schulz," Ak 8:13.

Section 3 – Understanding Affect

3.1

Understanding Kant’s general categorization of emotions should help contextualize the shifting perspective Kant had on enthusiasm, explicating the relationship he saw between kinds of rhetoric and the requisite enthusiasms produced.¹⁷¹

To begin, according to Kant the most general inference the human mind has with regards to the presence of an emotion is predicated on our experience of desire: “Desire (*Begierden*) is the self-definition of the power of a subject to imagine something in the future as an effect of such imagination.”¹⁷² Over time, this predilection for things in the future becomes habitualized. As Kant explains it, “Habitual sensuous desire is called inclination. Desiring without emphasis on the

¹⁷¹ For a general review of the “emotional turn” in Kantian philosophy, see Kelly D. Sorensen, “Kant’s Taxonomy of the Emotions,” *Kantian Review*, Volume 6 (2002); also see Nancy Sherman, *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Allen Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). In political theory, the “emotional” rethinking of Kant was very much inspired by Hannah Arendt’s *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982); for relevant accounts in political theory, see Jeffrey Lomonaco “Kant’s Unselfish Partisans as Democratic Citizens;” also Linda Zerilli, “We Feel Our Freedom: Imagination and Judgment in the Thought of Hannah Arendt” *Political Theory*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2005); Laura Hengehold, *The Body Problematic: Political Imagination in Kant and Foucault* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007); and Anthony J. Cascardi’s “Communication and Transformation: Aesthetics and Politics in Kant and Arendt,” from *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, eds. Craig J. Calhoun and John McGowan (Minneapolis, MI: Minnesota University Press, 1997).

¹⁷² Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978), §75, p. 158. For a contextual elaboration on the development of Kant’s thinking here, see John Zammito, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

production of the object is wish.”¹⁷³ Such habitual imaginings are indeed problematic, often creating conditions for individuals to convince themselves of the certainty and predictability (e.g. the conditionality) of the future.

That human subjectivity, by Kant’s view, is conditioned by habit fits well with his broader view of reason (as discussed above). But such habituality, when linked with desire, creates a pathway for unexplained preferences that cannot be conditioned by reason alone. These pathways are experienced as passions, and prove problematically uncontrolled, in part due to their seeming ‘naturalness’ with regards to persons’ repeated experiences of them. Thus, as Kant defines it, “The inclination which can hardly, or not at all, be controlled by reason is passion (*Leidenschaften*).”¹⁷⁴ What Kant means by ‘control’ pertains to the experience of the passion, as though the feeling comes expectedly and is yet unmitigated by what we would want to feel. (It is, for Kant, as though someone decided the feeling was necessary, and we acquiesced – though, of course, that someone else was our past self.) Certain feelings (*Affekten*/ emotions) are mitigated and therefore controlled – at least *a posteriori* – by reason, while others (*Leidenschaften*/ passions) remain unconditioned by our subjective rationality: “Inclination, which hinders the use of reason to compare, at a particular moment of choice, a specific inclination against the sum of all inclinations, is passion.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §72, p. 155.

¹⁷⁴ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §73, p. 155.

¹⁷⁵ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §80, p. 172.

Persons' capacities to distinguish between feelings that are unexpected, and yet can be 'controlled' (in the manner Kant describes), and feelings that are expected, are dependent on the predilection of moral interest. By way of explaining this predilection, Kant directs us to his notion of taste: "Taste makes, as it were, the transition from the charm of sense to habitual moral interest possible."¹⁷⁶ Our experience of taste is conditioned and directed by *Affekten*; emotions set the terms by which persons engage with their moral interest. Regarding such interest, Kant claims, "Interest is what we call the liking we connect with the presentation of an object's existence. Hence such a liking always refers at once to our power of desire, either as the basis that determines it, or at any rate as necessarily connected with determining that bias."¹⁷⁷ Thus, interest is the subjective 'taking-in' of the world – in observing the world, one is drawn to some aspects more than others. Persons experience these feelings of interest as inclinations, the conditional habituation of being in the world. When we are capable of reflecting on our feeling of interest, we know we are experiencing emotion; when we are incapable of such reflection, we experience passion.

3.2

Much of what determines inclination for Kant comes from how we retrospectively categorize the pleasure of the feeling. Passions arise before the feeling

¹⁷⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak 5:354 (p. 229).

¹⁷⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak 5:204-5 (p. 45).

of interest and beyond the mitigation of reason. Emotions, by contrast, arise with the feeling of the experience, and – while this feeling is a ‘surprise’ – that we can determine this feeling as unexpected gives a foothold to mitigate the feeling through reason. Emotion gives the opportunity for reflection, *a posteriori*: “Emotion is surprise through sensation, whereby the composure of mind is suspended,” and then resumed. This is not the case for passion: “Passion, however violently it may present itself (as a frame of mind belonging to the faculty of desire), takes its time, and is deliberative in order to achieve its purpose. Emotion works like water that breaks through a dam; passion works like a river digging itself deeper and deeper into its bed.”¹⁷⁸ Kant describes both emotion and passion in terms of a subject’s temporal experience of these feelings. But emotion, which originates and dissolves within a recognizable moment of time, creates conditions for rethinking experiences related to the emotion. Passion, by contrast, develops as a consequence of habit and our experiences contained within those habits, thus becoming unrecognizable to reason as a feeling that has – *post facto* – recognizable determinations.

This distinction of the temporal experience of emotion compared with passion is, for Kant, central to the experience of freedom as conditioned by reason. Emotion, by its appearance and disappearance in time, is an experience which reminds persons of the efficacy and impotency of reason. Subjective consciousness can, in the experience of emotion, be forced by such strangeness to recognize the limits of reason to determine one’s own experiences of the world. Passion, by contrast, allows no such

¹⁷⁸ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §74, p. 156.

feeling (as passion continues to linger, preventing any remembrance of reason or cause). As Kant describes it, “Emotion produces a momentary loss of freedom and self-control. Passion surrenders both, and finds pleasure and satisfaction in a servile disposition.”¹⁷⁹ Again, Kant returns to control and our experience of control as a predicate to freedom. But this is not to suggest that he intends to eliminate or mitigate these experiences. Rather, “To have an emotion so much under control that one can cold-bloodedly deliberate whether or not one ought to be angry (for example) appears to be something paradoxical. Passion, on the other hand, no man wishes for himself. Who wants to have himself put in chains when he can be free?”¹⁸⁰ To have an emotion is indeterminable, but how we engage with emotions after we have experienced them – that is, how critically we engage with them – can determine the possibility of the development and securing of a ground for moral inclinations. Without such critical engagement, habits that lead to passions may (and are likely) to occur, thus destabilizing reason and creating conditions for unfreedom.

3.3

Such unfreedom is precisely the problem which we saw in Kant’s criticism of rhetoric (as oratory). The *Schwärm* produced by oratory occurs because of passion; it arises out of unknown sources and is directed to objects out of the audience’s control. This is because for Kant *Schwärmerei* is ‘overstepping the bounds of human reason’ –

¹⁷⁹ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §81, p. 174.

¹⁸⁰ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §74, p. 157.

in the experience of the *Schwärm*, it is no longer clear where the ‘I’ locates itself to condition experiences through reason. Such a “delusion of wanting to SEE something beyond all bounds of sensibility, i.e., of dreaming according to principles (raving with reason),”¹⁸¹ means that the individual is no longer secure in what the bounds of reason are (e.g., why reason, all of a sudden, cannot be directed towards concepts or objects).

Kant draws this distinction out in his accounting of the practice of judgments, and how we respond to the experience of those judgments over (and in) time. As is well known, Kant’s critique of judgments depends on the distinction between determinative and reflective judgments.¹⁸² Determinative judgments subsume the objects of such judgments under an already known and determined category (experienced as universal). Reflective judgments, by contrast, are the product of having been confronted with undeterminable events that must then have categories constructed for them. Determinative judgments are, by this distinction, stabilizing;

¹⁸¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak 5:275 (p. 135).

¹⁸² Kant explains, “Determinative judgment, which operates under universal transcendental laws given by the understating, is only subsumptive. The law is marked out for it a priori, and hence it does not need to devise a law of its own so that it can subsume the particularity in nature under the universal.” In contrast, reflective judgments are those judgments where the particulars are given, and a possible (e.g. imagined) universal must be sought out, *reflected* through the world. As Kant describes it, “Reflective judgment, which is obliged to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal, requires a principle, which it cannot borrow from experience, precisely because it is to be the basis for the unity of all empirical principles under higher though still empirical principles, and hence is to be the basis that makes it possible to subordinate empirical principles to one another in a systematic way.” See Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, Ak 5:179-180 (p. 19 in the English edition). As Ronald Beiner notes, political judgment is the “mental faculty by which we situate ourselves in the political world without relying upon explicit rules and methods;” adding that “in respect of this faculty, the dignity of the common citizen suffers no degradation. Here the expert can claim no special privileges. If the faculty of judging is a general aptitude that is shared by all citizens, and if the exercise of this faculty is a sufficient qualification for active participation in political life, we have a basis for reclaiming the privilege of responsibility that has been pried from us on grounds of specialized competence,” from *Political Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1983), p. 3. For an historical overview of the development of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, see John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment*.

they confirm the world as that which was already known. Reflective judgments, by contrast, are constructive, admitting new experiences that could not have been imagined before.

Rhetorical speech interacts with the production of these judgments in two distinct ways. Rhetoric, as oratory, mollifies the causes of reflective judgments, attempting to persuade audiences that what has been said was already known and believed as necessary. Rhetoric that is not oratory is performed with the tacit assumption that the audience will (and should) engage in reflective judgments regarding the ideas presented.

But Kant does not (as is often thought) reject public feeling outright; he is aptly more concerned with public feeling that prevents judgment and free-thinking:

Emotion taken by itself alone is always imprudent; it makes itself incapable of pursuing its own purpose, and it is therefore unwise to allow it to arise intentionally. However, in projecting the morally good, reason can produce the enlivening of our will by combining its ideas with illustrations which have been attributed to the ideas (e.g. through emotion); consequently it is enlivening, not as effect, but as the cause of an emotion with respect to the good, wherein reason still holds the reins, creating an enthusiasm of good intentions, which, however, must be attributed to the faculty of desire and not to the emotion as a stronger sensuous feeling.¹⁸³

It is not emotion as such that is the problem, but rather when emotion and reason are kept from interacting.

Kant goes further, eliciting the point that some emotions depend on interacting with reason (and that neither reason, nor these particular emotions, can function in

¹⁸³ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, §75, p. 158.

solitude).¹⁸⁴ These dependent *Affekten* – courage, wonder, and enthusiasm – condition the very idea of the good. Courage is the feeling that reason fosters in defense of the good, giving “the determined man strength that nature sometimes denies him.”¹⁸⁵

Wonder (*Bewunderung*) is astonishment from the recognition of the moral, “a kind of holy thrill at seeing the abyss of the super-sensible opening at our feet.”¹⁸⁶ But Kant calls the feeling of the good, enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*):

If the idea of the good is accompanied by affect (as its effect), this affect is called enthusiasm. This mental state seems to be sublime, so much so that it is commonly alleged that nothing great can be accomplished without it. But in fact any affect is blind, either in the selection of its purpose, or if that were to have been given by reason, in the manner of achieving it. For an affect is an agitation of the mind that makes it unable to engage in free deliberation about principles with the aim of determining itself according to them. Hence there is no way it can deserve to be liked by reason. Yet enthusiasm is sublime aesthetically, because it is a straining of our forces by ideas that impart to the mind a momentum whose effects are mightier and more permanent than are those of an impulse produced by presentations of sense.¹⁸⁷

While enthusiasm can be directed towards any object, it is blind as to what the meaning of those objects are without reason. Such objects appear attractive, e.g. morally good, because we are motivated towards them.

¹⁸⁴ For explication of Kant’s thinking on emotions, see (again) Sorensen, “Kant’s Taxonomy of the Emotions.”

¹⁸⁵ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Ak 7: 256-7.

¹⁸⁶ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, Ak 7: 261.

¹⁸⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak 5:272 (p. 132)

Kant seems especially concerned here with explicating that there is no normative content in the feeling of enthusiasm itself. But, connected back to his discussion of *Schwärmerei*, it does certainly appear that there is at least a normative condition set by reason that does function to identify the conceptual object by which *Enthusiasmus* is felt. (While *Enthusiasmus* may be blind, reason is not, and the two work together to help guide individuals to what counts as morally good). This is the central structuring experience of enthusiasm. Like respect (*Achtung*), enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) is the feeling of the moral – the feeling each individual associates with the idea of the good as it is being experienced.¹⁸⁸ But the two do not function together. Respect is felt in recognition of another who obeys the moral law; enthusiasm appears “in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in this game themselves).”¹⁸⁹ Respect is itself predicated on the experience of recognition of sameness – it confirms the autonomy of another individual; Enthusiasm is recognition of more than sameness – it confirms the individual’s autonomy through the representation of a felt moral good

¹⁸⁸ Again, for this specific view of *Enthusiasmus*, see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak 5:272 (p. 132). For Kant’s accounting of *Achtung*, see *Metaphysik der Sitten (The Metaphysics of Morals)*, trans./ed. Mary Gregor, Cambridge, UK; Cambridge UP 1996), Ak 6:468 (p. 213): “I am not bound to revere others (regarded merely as human beings), that is, to show them positive high esteem. The only *Achtung* (respect) to which I am bound by nature is reverence for law as such; and to revere the law, but not to revere other human beings in general, or to perform some acts of reverence for them, is a human being’s universal and unconditional duty towards others, which each of them can require as the respect originally owed others.” For the best overview of Kant’s conception of respect, see Dieter Henrich, “The Concept of Moral insight and Kant’s Doctrine of the Fact of Reason,” trans. Manfred Kuehn, in *The Unity of Reason*, ed. Richard Velkley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1994), pp. 49-69.

¹⁸⁹ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 153.

in the world.¹⁹⁰ This is the kernel of Kant's development of the concept of political enthusiasm.

Section 4 – Political Enthusiasm

4.1

In his essay “An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing,” Kant articulates a clear distinction between the political ramifications of *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei*. According to his view, the Jacobins in France can readily be viewed, not just as *Schwärmer*, but as political *Schwärmer*. Caught up in the fervor of the times, these crowds acted as a swarm, adhering this way and that to the sway of public opinion as dictated by elites.¹⁹¹ Kant makes a clear distinction between these swarms of Frenchmen, and their motivations for political revolution, from those of the onlookers who witnessed the Revolution as a world-historical event: the witnesses of the Revolution feel *Enthusiasmus*. As he puts it, “the attitude of the onlookers as it reveals itself in public while the drama of great political change is

¹⁹⁰ For a related discussion of respect and recognition, see Axel Honneth, “*Zwischen Aristoteles und Kant: Skizze einer Moral der Anerkennung*,” trans. John Farrell as “Between Aristotle and Kant: Recognition and Moral Obligation,” in *Social Research* 62/1 (Spring 1997): 16-34.

¹⁹¹ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p.143. And, it should be noted, while no definite date can be given for Kant's reflections on the revolution, we do know that his ideas predate October 1794 by ‘some time’ – and given no direct reference to the Terror, can reasonably be thought to have been penned sometime before news of those events reached Germany in 1793. Interestingly, by the time of publication, Kant makes no effort to mitigate his view, despite public knowledge of the increasingly violent events in France. Again, see Gregor's introductory essay to Kant's *The Conflict of the Faculties*; also, for what has become the traditional reading on Kant regarding these matters, see Lewis White Beck, “Kant and the Right of Revolution,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 32 (1971).

taking place... openly express universal yet disinterested sympathy for one set of protagonists against their adversaries, even at the risk that their partiality could be of great disadvantage to themselves.”¹⁹² By this account, spectators play a role in the constitution of events as events, and their reactions are important to the experience of the events. Just as *Schwärmerei* in part depends on the anti-*Schwärmer* for diagnosis, here too – on historical ground – political *Schwärmerei* requires acknowledgment by non-*Schwärmer* in order to have articulation of the frenzied condition.

This conditionality of the *Schwärmer* leads Kant to articulate the experience of political enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*). For Kant the Revolution is itself a sign of a future history that he aligns with normative predictions regarding the transformation of the age (and in this way, it is as much a revolution for Kant as it is for the French). As he argues it,

The Revolution which we have seen taking place in our own times in a nation of gifted people may succeed, or it may fail. It may be so filled with misery and atrocities that no right-thinking man would ever decide to make the same experiment again at such a price, even if he could hope to carry it out successfully at the second attempt. But I maintain that this revolution has aroused in the hearts and desires of all spectators who are not themselves caught up in it a sympathy which borders almost on enthusiasm, although the very utterance of this sympathy was fraught with danger.¹⁹³

Kant, it seems, is made anxious by this claim that itself is ‘fraught with danger’ (which should signal to readers the highly-charged political content of his argument).

¹⁹² Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 182.

¹⁹³ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p.182.

Of utmost importance here for understanding the distinction (and yet dependence) between the *Schwärmer* and the moral interest of the spectator-enthusiasts is Kant's notion of detachment.¹⁹⁴ For Kant, an individual's detachment from the world places one in the position of spectator. The spectator is aware of events and experiences, but – importantly – lacks originary concepts from which to measure them. That is, the events present themselves to the spectator as unique events. What confronts the individual-as-spectator are not general categories, nor categories grounded in interest, but rather the 'this' of a particular happening. This is what makes the spectator necessary for the experience of an 'event' as such, and not simply common daily happenings. If one feels oneself to be a spectator, in Kant's sense of that word, than one has already found oneself in a unique experience; 'thisness' is always contingent on the subjective experience of someone viewing it as an event. It is *the particularity* of the event that inspires Kant. The 'surprise' Kant associates with emotions (*Affekten*) is only possible in the experience of the particularity of an event, allowing individuals access to a conception of the good, via *Enthusiasmus*, that transcends familiar experiences.

This is not to say the experience of enthusiasm is somehow unmitigated. Rather, its mitigation is precipitated by our conception and experience of the moral. As Kant explains, "True enthusiasm is always directed exclusively towards the ideal, particularly towards that which is purely moral (such as the concept of right), and it

¹⁹⁴ See Guyer's account of the "dialectic of disinterestedness," in *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, p. 48. For a detailed accounting of Kant's inheritance of the Smithian discourse on disinterestedness and the philosophical context of Kant's thinking here, see Samuel Fleischacker's *A Third Concept of Liberty: Judgment and Freedom in Kant and Adam Smith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1999).

cannot be coupled with selfish interests.”¹⁹⁵ Kant sees reason and enthusiasm interacting through the mediation of the moral good, unencumbered by the totalizing and stultifying effects of self-interest. The spectator experiences enthusiasm at that moment which, above all others, makes clear the conception of the good, both as a feeling of that which is good, and by that which can be reasoned as good. The interrelation between feeling and thought confirms the experience of enthusiasm, but as that which is always already partial (the spectator experiences the world differently from the actor). Thus, Kant argues, “Of course, man can see, but not foresee with certitude (for the divine eye there is no distinction in this matter); because, in the final analysis, man requires coherency according to natural laws, but with respect to his future free actions he must dispense with this guidance or direction.”¹⁹⁶

4.2

The experience of political enthusiasm depends on both a partiality with non-enthusiasts, as well as differentiation from *Schwärmer*. This offers an important inroad to the connection of enthusiasm and rhetoric. As one theorist notes, “Deliberative rhetoric deals with political questions having to do with choosing a collective course of action. It is future and action oriented... (and) the ‘deliberative’ of deliberative rhetoric also refers to the process of thinking through one’s options of future action as

¹⁹⁵ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 183.

¹⁹⁶ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 151.

opposed to impulsively charging ahead.”¹⁹⁷ This ‘thinking through’ as opposed to charging ahead is taken literally by Kant as a condition for the dialogistic difference between enthusiasts and *Schwärmer*. The *Schwärmer* have already charged ahead, without access to the rhetoric that would allow a ‘thinking through;’ enthusiasts – as spectators – witnesses the charge, and can – from a distance, so to speak – also see the ideal object that has motivated such a swarm. This witnessing can provoke the feeling of enthusiasm. And, in political contexts, the outcome is a partiality that finds itself wanting the universal (that is, wanting to persuade others).

Kant articulates this wanting, this feeling of being partial (insofar as the partial does not hope to remain partial, but to move closer towards the universal, collapsing in on the space between), as consequent to the ideal moral cause. This ideal moral cause finds expression in empirical political realities (the constitution of the Rights of Man):

It may be said of such enthusiasm for asserting the rights of man: *postquam ad arma Vulcania ventum est – mortalis mucro glacies ceu futilis ictu dissiluit* – Why has no ruler ever dared to say openly that he does not recognize any rights of the people against himself? Or that the people owe their happiness only to the beneficence of a government which confers it upon them, and that any pretensions on the part of the subject that he has rights against the government are absurd or even punishable, since they imply that resistance to authority is permissible? The reason is that any such public declaration would rouse up all the subjects against the ruler, even although they had been like docile sheep, well fed, powerfully protected and led by a kind and understanding master, and had no lack of welfare to complain of. For beings endowed with freedom cannot be content merely to enjoy the comforts of existence, which may well be provided by others (in this case, by the government); it all depends on the principle which governs the provision of such comforts.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Chambers, “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere,” p. 13.

¹⁹⁸ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p.183.

‘Freedom’ here is a coming forth of the moral future into the present. To feel freedom, beyond ‘the comforts of existence,’ means to feel the moral cause of ideals. Here Kant allows us to expand on Habermas’ intuition (discussed in section 1) that it is only the ideals of constitutional democracy that remain from the French Revolution: The ideas that remain are moral causes that have persisted since the beginning of the Revolution, making the time (our time) of the past condense into the present, and offer us hope for the future. This, for Kant, is the feeling of political enthusiasm.

4.3

Kant explicates his notion of political enthusiasm with a politicized reading of two constitutive moments in religious history. In two of the most significant passages of Kant’s discussion of *Enthusiasmus* compared to *Schwärmerei* he provides the example of the Jewish prophets (at the constitution – example 1, and at the dissolution – example 2, of the Jewish state)¹⁹⁹ to illustrate his claims.

1) The first appears in the *Critique of Judgment*, immediately following Kant’s discussion of the grounds for feeling in the evocation reflective judgment:

Perhaps the most sublime passage in the Jewish law is the commandment: Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven or on earth, or under the earth, etc. This commandment alone can explain the enthusiasm

¹⁹⁹ This is not to ignore Kant’s complicated relationship with Jewish thought and Jewish people generally. For a recent exploration of these topics, see Susan Shell, “Kant’s Jewish Problem,” in *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy*, pp. 306-334.

(*Enthusiasmus*) that the Jewish people in its civilized era felt for its religion when it compared itself with other peoples, or can explain the pride that Islam inspires. The same holds also for our presentation of the moral law, and for the predisposing within us for morality. It is indeed a mistake to worry that depriving this presentation of whatever could commend it to the senses will result in this carrying with it no more than a cold and lifeless approval without any moving force or emotion. It is exactly the other way round. For once the senses no longer see anything before them, while yet the unmistakable and indelible idea of morality remains, one would sooner need to temper the momentum of an unbounded imagination so as to keep it from rising to the level of enthusiasm, than to seek to support these ideas with images and childish devices for fear that they would otherwise be powerless. That is why governments have gladly permitted religion to be amply rushed with such accessories: they were trying to relive every subject of the trouble, yet also of the ability, to expand the soul's forces beyond the barriers that one can choose to set for him so as to reduce him to mere passivity and so make him more pliable.²⁰⁰

This reference to 'the most sublime passage in Jewish law' evokes the story of Moses' descent from Mt. Sinai.²⁰¹ The Moses story in question is the story of the presentation of the Ten Commandments. Readers will remember that, according to this story, when Moses comes down from Sinai he finds a portion of the exiled Hebrews worshipping an ancient Egyptian god in the form of a golden calf. Moses responds by asking for acknowledgment of the new law he carries with him (and the rejection of the false idol). Moses makes it clear that those who continue to practice false beliefs will face war from those who choose to accept the new law. This results in a civil war between the progressives who uphold the Ten Commandments, and the conservatives

²⁰⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Ak 5:274 (p.135). For a counter reading of this passage, see Clewis, *The Kantian Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom*, pp. 172-173.

²⁰¹ Moses' decent is described in *Exodus* 32. For an excellent recent rendering of this text in English, with commentary, see Robert Alter's *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: Norton, 2004).

who uphold the past traditions of Egyptian religion (and by transference, slavery and Egyptian law).²⁰²

The commandment regarding false idols is so crucial to Kant because it marks a revolutionary break with an amoral past. When Moses says, “This is the moment when you must decide between the old law and the new,” he is declaring the foundation of the experience of law as a moral cause, rather than mere prejudice or tradition. He is asserting that this people, by accepting the new law, will thereby find their own identity in a freedom conditioned by the future; or by rejecting this new law, find their identity in a slavery of the past.

Kant finds basis for contemporaneous political problems in this moment. Just as the ‘Laws of Moses’ bring a new moral identity of the future (defined by freedom, rather than slavery), the ideals of the French Revolution carry an articulation of activity and freedom, and a rejection of the authoritarian regime structure of the past (in France, as well as in Prussia). France’s past political structure had failed to uphold the moral law, and it is because of this that a new instantiation of the moral law arrives as a sign in the French Revolution.

2) The second reference to Jewish law appears in Kant’s essay “An Old Question Raised Again.” There Kant extends the discussion beyond Moses and the foundational

²⁰² Lurking beneath the surface of this story is yet another illustration of the conflict and interrelation between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei*. The progressive sect that accepts the new moral law must, in order to break with those who uphold past traditions, find some feeling of the moral good that grounds their partiality in a possible future (e.g. *Enthusiasmus*). *Schwärmerei*, by contrast, would be necessary to motivate the conservatives in their defense of their position, at least from Kant’s view.

moment of Jewish law, to the prophets that inherit Moses' constitution. As Kant explains,

As a divinatory historical narrative of things imminent in future time, consequently as a possible representation *a priori* of events which are supposed to happen then, (we can know the human race is constantly progressing). But how is a history *a priori* possible? Answer: if the diviner himself creates and contrives the events which he announces in advance. (As an example,) it was all very well for the Jewish prophets to prophesy that sooner or later not simply decadence but complete dissolution awaited their state, for they themselves were the authors of this fate... So far as their influence extends, our politicians do precisely the same thing and are just as lucky in their prophecies. We must, they say, take men as they are, not as pedants ignorant of the world or good-natured visionaries fancy they ought to be. But in place of that "as they are" it would be better to say what they "have made" them – stubborn and inclined to revolt – through unjust constraint, through perfidious plots placed in the hands of the government; obviously then, if the government allows the reins to relax a little, sad consequences ensue which verify the prophecy of those supposedly sagacious statesmen.²⁰³

Here, Kant's reference to Jewish law is not directed at the law itself, but at those who uphold the law and use it to make claims on the future. If the Moses example shows Kant's accounting of the relationship between enthusiasm and the instantiation of the moral law in the constitution of a state, this reference illustrates the conditions in which the rhetoric for a renewal of the moral law (e.g. the declining state) occurs.

Kant's evocations of Jewish rhetoric (at the beginning and the end of a state) finds basis in the rhetoric of the French Revolution itself. The moment of Moses at Mt. Sinai was a central rhetorical symbol, employed as an evocation of the transcendence of the past throughout the Revolution.²⁰⁴ Hauke Brunkhorst makes the

²⁰³ Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, pp. 142-143.

compelling case that much of this rhetoric linking the modern republican state with the Hebrew Revolution was inherited from Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Indeed, as Rousseau exclaimed,

It is an amazing and truly unique spectacle to see an expatriate people, without either location or land for nearly two thousands years; a people that has been modified, oppressed, and mingled with foreigners for even longer;... and yet preserving its customs, its laws, its morals, its patriotic love, and its initial social union when all its links appear broken. The Jews give us this amazing spectacle.²⁰⁵

Here Rousseau notes the palpableness of a revolutionary moment in history, where acquiesce to a moral law disattenuates an enduring allegiance into the future beyond all social and political conflicts (it is a constitutional patriotism, of sorts). Kant's evocation of the moment at Mt. Sinai as a moment of enthusiasm builds from this Rousseauian position. The spectacle of Sinai, like the spectacle in France, points to the power of the allegiances motivated by enthusiasm to shape politics.

Conclusion – The Work of Enthusiasm

Kant came to see enthusiasm as necessary in the motivation of political practices, from constitution to revolution. This is his optimism. He could not concede

²⁰⁴ For an accounting of the role of Moses in the rhetoric of the French Revolution, see Michel Vovelle, *Die Französische Revolution: Sozial Bewegung und Umbruch der Mentalitäten* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1985) pp. 130-131; also see Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*, trans. Jeffrey Flynn (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 61-64.

²⁰⁵ From Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Political Fragments," in *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, Vol. 4, ed. R. D. Masters and C. Kelly (Hanover, NH: University of New England Press, 1994), pp. 33-34 (cited by Brunkhorst, *Solidarity*, p. 62).

in the nihilistic frame that truth claims and historical consciousness depended on retrograded logic. To make a philosophy of the future, as Kant intended to do, was to uphold freedom as the answer to the fundamental question “what can be hoped for?”

In this chapter I have tried to show how paying serious attention to Kant’s rethinking of the use and abuse of enthusiasm speaks to deficiencies in contemporary discourse on motivations for allegiance, especially the theory of constitutional patriotism. As has frequently been cited by his critics, Habermas’ theory of constitutional patriotism depends on a flattening of affect that ignores practical motivations for political allegiances.²⁰⁶ These critics rightly show the dangers in following Habermas’ notion that affect need be mitigated or ‘made safe’ seriously conflicts with the actual desires of many real citizens. The structural failing of constitutional patriotism, by this view, arises from the dichotomy between rational discourse and rhetoric on which Habermas’ theory seems to depend. But much of the criticism directed at Habermas’ over-reliance on discursive rationality to the sacrifice of rhetoric, loses Habermas’ own important critique of the dangers of rhetoric that often lead to unthinking social and political integration. Here Habermas and his critics are both crippled by the contrasting struggle of reason and emotion.

By way of navigating past this struggle, I turned to Kant and his accounting of the interaction of reason and emotion, especially as such interactions appear in the experience of enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*). Kant was, along with many Enlightenment thinkers, greatly troubled by the effects of rhetoric on public self-perceptions. But, he

²⁰⁶ Again, see Margaret Canovan, “Patriotism is Not Enough;” and Patchen Markell, “Making Affect Safe for Democracy?”

also saw the opportunity to use rhetoric for stimulating public discourse. This division between kinds of rhetoric maps on to the two kinds of enthusiasm Kant witnessed in open discourse; *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus* each arise out of specific rhetorical conditions – the first being untenable with rational engagement, the later stimulating reflective postures. My ultimate claim in this chapter is that a further understanding of these types of enthusiasm helps in delineating these different types of rhetoric, opening new possibilities for the parameters of constitutional patriotism.

Enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) becomes such a useful concept in Kant's political theory because of his reliance on its capacity to engender and permit a rational management of one's reaction to the supersensible as an energizing force.²⁰⁷ As opposed to passions, which – at least according to Kant's reading – depend so very much on persons not understanding their source or limits, enthusiasm – as a manageable affection – requires thinking to set the limits of itself. Because enthusiasm depends on thinking as a guiding force in our experience of it, persons are able to critically engage with both the process of enthusiasm but also the object to which enthusiasm is directed.

This engagement with the feeling and the object is central to Kant's account of allegiance (at least as he describes the allegiance to norms he professes in the essay "An Old Question Raised Again"). While the object of allegiance for the French

²⁰⁷ Such a rational management later came to be labeled in psychoanalytic theory as 'emotional work.' For an insightful exploration into this process, see A. R. Hochschild's "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 85, No. 3 (1979).

whom Kant was witnessing may have been the ‘nation,’ the object of his attachment were the norms inherent to the ‘Rights of Man.’ This allegiance, Kant admits, makes him partial, and therefore separates him from both the French *Schwärmer* as well as the conservative Prussians. But Kant believes such partiality may be necessary in order to defend a conception of the moral good that has not yet instantiated itself in contemporary minds and institutions. The feeling of enthusiasm, of stretching the imagination beyond the sensible, may be necessary to articulate new norms (esp. when old systems risk their moral structure for political stability and increase of power).

Still, none of this is to suggest that Kant does not take seriously the dangers requisite to the employment of rhetoric and the risks of advocating for enthusiasm. It does not seem coincidental that every historical instance Kant employs to depict enthusiasm seems to require the decline of one state and the ascension of another. But it is also precisely in these moments of decline and revolution that the question of allegiance (both its motivation and its object) become so central. Only when the direction of identification becomes confused, when the structuring of identity loses itself, does allegiance even become a real question.

This opening that the question of allegiance provokes of course also means that individuals are susceptible to *Schwärmerei* – for thinking is, perhaps, most difficult precisely in moments of absolute social, political, and cultural decline. That leads to a further question: Does *Enthusiasmus* need *Schwärmerei* in order to distinguish itself? At least in Kant’s system, it seems the two are necessarily linked (perhaps not in experience, but certainly in the moments when they are likely to arise). Attempts to

evoke *Enthusiasmus* necessarily run the risk of promoting *Schwärmerei* instead, for in the presentation of any information – esp. for the purpose of motivating allegiances – one never knows the complete psychology of one’s audience. This is for Kant I think, a necessary risk consequent to political uncertainty. But ignoring any conceptual apparatus of enthusiasm may also create clear incentives for fueling *Schwärmerei*. If thinking and feeling are held in contradistinction with regards to good and bad types of allegiance, the partiality of agonistic struggles for power will create incentives for the evocation of unthinking and purely sentimental attachments.

Habermas rightly shares many of these worries. But, as I hope the above discussion illustrates, the costs are too high for constitutional patriots to advocate for allegiance without enthusiasm. Indeed, the security and political stability they require as a basis for post-national politics seem very much to depend on a functioning of allegiance they have yet to take seriously. The current structuring of allegiances around conceptions of the ‘nation’ or the ‘people’ have their own logics of enthusiasm and histories of deepening attachments. This has led to much ethnic and national violence. But refinements in institutional arrangements have also advanced some progressive agendas, allowing for realignments of allegiances along less volatile boundaries. Sacrificing this structure may mean sacrificing the relative democratic peace it has secured. If constitutional patriots intend to take seriously a project of realigning allegiances from the objects of the ‘nation’ or ‘people’ to constitutions themselves, they also need to begin developing a rhetoric that aims, not to repress, but to produce enthusiasm.

Chapter 3

Translating Enthusiasm: Reading *Reflections on the Revolution in France* – in Prussia

Viros velut mente captâ, cum jactatione fanaticâ corporis vaticinari.

– Livy

Introduction – The Danger of Enthusiasm

Precisely what makes Kant's articulation of enthusiasm so attractive – that the experience itself can be recognized and distinguished by its more dangerous counter in fanaticism – reveals an important problematic. In dividing this subjective experience according to the possibility of apprehending moral cause in political action, Kant is left vulnerable to the challenge that an enthusiast may himself be a fanatic or conversely, that a fanatic may really be an enthusiast.²⁰⁸ Thus, who has the actual feeling of moral right – if there even is one – and who has pretended it, needs further specification, or this conceptual apparatus will be subject to a relativism that itself

²⁰⁸ Anthony La Vopa develops the argument that it was not simply the experience of competing emotions that was at stake here, but also the authority of the philosopher as anything more than a mystic. For his elaboration on this topic, see "The Philosopher and the *Schwärmer*: On the Career of a German Epithet from Luther to Kant," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997). For an accounting of a similar problematic within religious debates on the place of enthusiasm, see R. A. Knox's *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion*, (Oxford University Press: 1950), esp. p. 8.

would prevent the kind of moral structure Kant defends. While Kant may adequately demonstrate a clear theoretical division between true and false apprehensions of moral cause, he may also be vulnerable to the attack that distinguishing between the two – in any clear way – in practice remains impossible.

By way of gaining ground on this vagueness in Kant's understanding of enthusiasm, I want to turn attention here to an alternative model of political enthusiasm; one that attempts to attack any appearance of secularized enthusiasm as a significant danger to well-functioning politics. Edmund Burke, and especially his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), has recently been read as the best resource to mount this assault.²⁰⁹ This rehabilitation of Burke reads his *Reflections* in particular should be read an important admonition of the place of enthusiasm in a stable politics. Burke's critique of the Jacobin celebrations of liberty, the institution of a paper constitution and paper monies, and the alignment of French revolutionary activities with the spirit of revolt in the English civil war stand as the three main branches by which Burke lays his critique against the revolution and its English defenders.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ This argument was first put forth by John Pocock, and has since been employed (somewhat uncritically) by Stephen White and Daniel O'Neill. See Pocock's "Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm: The Context as Counter-Revolution," in *The Transformation of Political Culture, 1789-1848*, vol. iii of Francois Furet and Mona Ozouf (eds.), *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1989); also White's *Edmund Burke: Modernity, Politics, and Aesthetics* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), esp. p. 60; and Dan O'Neill's *The Burke-Wollstonecraft Debate: Savagery, Civilization, and Democracy* (Penn-State Press, 2007), esp. pp. 196-202. For the purposes of this dissertation, all citations to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* come from *The Select Works of Edmund Burke*. A new imprint of the Payne Edition (Liberty Fund, 1999), vol. 2.

The basis for Burke's critique on the dangers of a secularized enthusiasm is his understanding of modern societal structure, and by association a well-function politics to manage that structure. Burke was less concerned for the place of passions in the function of a social world than he was in the decontextualization of human experience.²¹¹ Such a view may perhaps not sound so surprising; Burke's famous reliance on inheritance of property as a foundation for his conservative politics fits with this model, whereby context continues to refine itself through materiality that connects people to the world. But Burke's great concern was that the revolution provided multifaceted pathways for the destruction of societal ethics through the invalidated decontextualized celebration of the mystical authority of ideas. What I aim to call attention to here is the place enthusiasm plays – by Burke's accounting – in the process by which ideas began to take precedence over materiality: Burke envisioned a new formation of enthusiasm that was proving politically debilitating to contemporary politics.

In the chapter below, I aim to illustrate how Burke's concern for the emergence of this new form of enthusiasm is grounded in his aesthetic conception of human subjectivity, and especially his conceptualization of the effects of the sublime

²¹⁰ For a further elaboration on the transformations of these aspects of French politics and society and their reception in Britain, see John Pocock's "Burke and the Ancient Constitution: A Problem in the History of Ideas," in *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (University of Chicago Press, 1989).

²¹¹ In this way, anyway, Burke aligns himself with Hume's notion of reason refined by passion. For the most recent investigation into the political implications of Hume's thesis on passion, see Sharon Krause's *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation* (Princeton University Press, 2008), esp. chapter 3, "Moral Sentiment and the Politics of Judgment in Hume." Stephen White also makes note of the similarity in view between Burke and Hume in his *Edmund Burke*, p. 42.

on the experience of such subjectivity.²¹² At root for Burke, the sublime is that experience which allows individuals to recognize their own limitedness. Grounded in human desires for self-preservation, protection, and isolation, the sublime is that basic human experience that motivates individuals to behave politically; only in recollecting our own individuated finitude through the terror of our destruction can persons find cause to circumnavigate pure self-interestedness and egoism. Through reflections on human interactions in their personal and social worlds, between men and women, between the powerless and the powerful, Burke develops a complex system of aesthetics that undergirds all human behavior; for Burke, such an aesthetics always provides a context for human motivations, thus making enthusiasm a dangerous exteriority to the pathways where humans have happily and healthily come to engage with each other.

My central claim is that Burke, by relying on the experience of the sublime to structure human psychology, faces the peculiar problem of having to divide the sublime itself into true and false conceptualizations in order to explain the emergence of the exteriority he finds in secularized enthusiasm.²¹³ I argue that his division of the sublime is directly consequent to his unified theory of enthusiasm. Having a single conception of enthusiasm forces a division in the objects that motivate that emotion.

²¹² Burke's Aesthetics appear in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the beautiful and the Sublime* (1757). The best recent accounting of this text, esp. as regards Burke's politics, is Stephen White's Edmund Burke. Also extremely useful for my purposes here has been Dixon Wecter's "Burke's Theory Concerning Words, Images, and Emotion," *PMLA*, 55 (1940); and Aris Sarafianos' "Pain, Labor, and the Sublime: Medical Gymnastics and Burke's Aesthetics" in *Representations* (2005).

²¹³ Here I critically expand on White's thesis that Burke's politics is structured by his conception of a true and false sublime. See White, *Edmund Burke*, pp. 74-79.

This division (as opposed to Kant's division of the experience of enthusiasm itself) creates incentives – both structural and psychological – for purging what appear as 'polluted' or 'corrupted' objects from our world, so as to preserve the 'true sublime.' These incentive structures in turn motivate a politics of disgust.²¹⁴ And, while such politics could perhaps prove attractive in cases of extreme destabilization, a lack of attunement to the institutional costs of motivating politics on this rejection of enthusiasm – and the requisite closure this politics entails – should not go overlooked.

The best comparative evidence I've found for addressing Burke's conceptualization of enthusiasm in conjunction with Kant's defense of enthusiasm as related to, though opposed by, *Schwärmerei*, presents itself in the works of Burke's German allies in the 'popularphilosophen.'²¹⁵ I offer here a reconstruction that reveals how Moses Mendelssohn, Friedrich Gentz, and Christian Garve (amongst others) serve as central actors in the employ of this Burkeian critique of Kant's defense of enthusiasm.²¹⁶ Both through their own thesis within the popular philosophy

²¹⁴ For the most recent discussions of disgust and politics, see Martha Nussbaum's *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton University Press, 2004); also helpful is Bill Miller's *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Harvard University Press, 1998); on the phenomenology of emotions, esp. 'aversive' emotions such as disgust see my recent collaborative translation with Axel Honneth, "The Place of Aversive Emotions" (forthcoming in *IYYUN: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly*).

²¹⁵ On the history of *popularphilosophen*, see Klaus Epstein's *The Genesis of German Conservatism* (Princeton University Press, 1975); George Gooch's classic *Germany and the French Revolution* (Longmans and Green Press, 1920); esp. 91-103; for more recent discussions see Frederick Beiser's *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte*, (Harvard University Press, 1993), esp. pp 165-180; Manfred Kuehn's *Scottish Common Sense in Germany, 1763-1800: A Contribution to the History of critical Philosophy* (McGill-Queen's Press, 1987); Fania Oz-Salzberger's *Translating the Enlightenment: Scottish Civic Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1995); and most recently Bryan Garsten's *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (Harvard University Press, 2006), esp. pp. 93-104.

movement, but also through their translations of Burke's central texts – Garve's was the first translation of Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1773) and Gentz's (1793) was the first of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* – these thinkers provide unique textual and contextual evidence by which I construct the consequences of this importation of Burke into the German debate on enthusiasm. The 'popularphilosophen' attack on Kant via Burke presents a clear comparative to Kant's concerns regarding enthusiasm as a political emotion, as well as the place of educational and public rhetoric in the experience of motivating enthusiasm.

This reading of Burke and his German allies sits between two central debates in current Burke scholarship. The first position I aim to counter is Pocock's conceptualization that Burke is responsible for the redefinition of enthusiasm as political.²¹⁷ My reading will illustrate that Burke's views on enthusiasm remain consistent throughout his thinking, and that enthusiasm fits squarely with his view of the place of emotion as a guide to reason (and its failure), independent of his shifting views on politics and France. While Burke offers us important considerations of

²¹⁶ On Mendelssohn's political thought see Dahlstrom's introduction to his *Philosophic Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); also see Dahlstrom's essay (which appears as chapter 4) on Kant and Jacobi in *Philosophical Legacies: Essays on the Thought of Kant, Hegel, and their Contemporaries* (CUA Press, 2008); also see chapter 2 "Emergence," in Bonnie Honig's recent on *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2009); On Gentz's political thought, see Paul Sweet's *Friedrich von Gentz, Defender of the Old Order* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1941), as well as Golo Mann's *Secretary of Europe* (Yale University Press, 1946); on Garve's thought (in addition to the sources listed in the above footnote), see Peter Fenves, "The Scale of Enthusiasm," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997), and Anthony La Vopa, "The Philosopher and the Schwärmer: On the Career of a German Epithet from Luther to Kant," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997).

²¹⁷ See (again) Pocock's "Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm."

enthusiasm and its dangers, Pocock pushes Burke's thinking on the concept too far into the realm of politics at the sacrifice of Burke's own conceptualization of human experience broadly speaking.

The second concern I have pertains to the intersection of aesthetics and politics: I aim to show that Burke's understanding of enthusiasm and its relations to the sublime as opposed to the beautiful helps further contextualize his political theory (and its possible dangers to democracy). Indeed, much has been made in recent work of Burke's distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, and the mapping of that distinction onto his critique of the French revolutionaries. Linda Zerilli and Daniel O'Neill both offer related readings of Burke through a lens that remains conscious of gender, seeing his articulation of the beautiful and the sublime as gendered articulations of the masculine and the feminine.²¹⁸ Both these critiques align and/or expand on Stephen White's rereading of two competing notions of the sublime undergirding Burke's thesis.²¹⁹ White argues that this division in the concept of the sublime reveals Burke's critique of the revolutionaries' politics. I hope to show that White's reading, while useful, still proves unsatisfactory without a more robust understanding of Burke's conception of enthusiasm as the root experience of the sublime.

²¹⁸ For recent discussions on this point, see Linda Zerilli's *Signifying Women: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke, and Mill* (Cornell University Press, 1994), esp. pp. 60-94; also see (again) Dan O'Neill's *The Burke-Wollstonecraft Debate*, esp. pp. 195-202.

²¹⁹ See (again) Stephen White's *Edmund Burke*.

This chapter develops this critique in the following way: Section 1 examines Burke's critique of Enthusiasm. I am especially interested in following Pocock's historicized understand of Burke's position, both because I think it a compelling reweaving, but also because of Pocock having ignored much Burke's early reflections on enthusiasm, including the place of his aesthetics in shaping his politics; Section 2 draws these connections close through a new excavation of Burke's aesthetics as foundational to his politics, and especially his understanding of enthusiasm. Here I especially elaborate the costs and limits of Burke's understanding of the relationship between enthusiasm and the sublime, and the distinction between his understanding and Kant's; Section 3 then draws Burke's reflections on enthusiasm to debates in Prussia on the distinction between enthusiasm and *Schwärmerei*, tracing the *popularphilosophen* employ of Burke's thinking to their critique of Kant (here tracing the strengths and limits we can draw from that critique).

Distinguishing between enthusiasm and *Schwärmerei* may not be – and was not historically – the only way of parsing the problem of motivating political change. Yet, as I advocate for the Kantian position on the place of enthusiasm in motivating political action, I also want to highlight the limits of that thesis and, the strengths of competing models – even if they ultimately fall short. The work in this chapter serves as the initiating of that self-critique.

Section 1 – Burke's Political Critique of Enthusiasm

1.1

Though this chapter is fundamentally directed at the problem of the sublime in politics, and the possibility of competing reactions to the sublime, it is impossible to consider Burke's view on such matters without first (even if anachronistically) investigating his critique of the revolution in France.²²⁰ My claim in this first part of this chapter is that a clear understanding of Burke's position on the revolution – that it creates a political space, defined by enthusiasm, for the invention of political authority without limit – is itself useful to keep the political stakes of this investigation in sight. While Burke is usually read as critiquing the Revolution as a 'philosophic' project gone horribly wrong, due to its ideal detachment from context – situating this critique within the context of the experience of enthusiasm should deepen the significance of Burke's concern, and help to begin explain the reason for his remedies.²²¹

²²⁰ For a general review of the revolution in England, see Arthur Cobban's *The Debate on the French Revolution, 1789–1800* (Kaye's of London, 1950). On Patriotism and the English Nation during Burke's era, see J. Mori, 'Languages of loyalism: patriotism, nationhood and the state in the 1790s', *English Historical Review*, 118 (2003). For the best historical summation of Burke's engagement with the French Revolution, see Connor Cruise O'Brien's *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke*, (University of Chicago Press, 1994), esp. pp. 394-457. On the political problem of the ancient constitution for Burke, see J.G.A. Pocock's "Burke and the Ancient Constitution: A Problem in the History of Ideas," in *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Athenaeum, 1973), pp. 202-232; On tradition and prejudice as the basis for Burke's complicated political conservatism, see Don Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton 1998). Much of the recent literature on Burke has been directed at his place in a critique of empire: this literature makes some mention of the development of Burke's thinking, though from side-long angles to the argument developed in this chapter. The best of this work is Uday Mehta's *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (University of Chicago Press, 1999); and Jennifer Pitts' *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton University Press, 2005). As I mention above, I fall closest (and therefore am also forced to be most critical of) Steven White's position on the place of the sublime in Burke's political thought. See esp. White's "Confronting the French Revolution," pp. 60-79, in his *Edmund Burke*.

²²¹ Burke *Reflections*, pp. 237; 284.

As is well known, Burke's *Reflections* appear in the form of a letter, originally intended for Charles Jean-Francois Depont, and standing as critique of Richard Price's address to the London Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain, titled *For Love of Country*.²²² Burke's letter was primarily directed, not at the French and their political problems, but at the costs those problems could entail for the British, especially if Price and his fellow revolutionary sympathizers were to be successful in their efforts to rethink political institutions at home and abroad. As Burke explains, "I looked on (Price's) sermon as the public declaration of a man much connected with literary caballers, and intriguing philosophers; with political theologians, and theological politicians, both at home and abroad... they set him up as a sort of oracle ... he naturally philippizes, and chaunts his prophetic song in exact unison with their designs."²²³ Inherent here is Burke's concern for the spread of revolution, especially consequent to the enthusiasm of spectators. (And here, though the consequences of it will be addressed in detail below, we see in the very purpose of his letter, a direct opposition to Kant.)

Burke develops his critique of Price's position along two lines (and the letter is roughly divided according to these tracts). The first critique has to do with the France's failed perception that liberty – above and beyond fraternity, loyalty, equality, or any of the other basic value structures used to motivate and justify political action –

²²² The published print version appeared as Richard Price's *A discourse on the love of our country, delivered on November 4, 1789, to the society for commemorating the revolution in great Britain*. London, 1789.

²²³ *Reflections*, p. 12.

had become wildly misbalanced as the basis for all politics. With liberty as the basis for all right action, the French had mistakenly dislodged their nation from any legitimate form of sovereign government. This confusion of populist will for sovereignty that such views on liberty evoked had the anathema effect of producing a fundamental transformation in political and human existence, leaving – by Burke’s account – no ground on which any action could be justified beyond relativistic terms:

What is that cause of liberty, and what are those exertions in its favor, to which the example of France is so singularly auspicious? Is our monarchy to be annihilated, with all the laws, all the tribunals, and all the antient corporations of the kingdom? Is every land-mark of the country to be done away in favour of a geometrical and arithmetical constitution? Is the house of lords to be voted useless? Is episcopacy to be abolished? Are the church lands to be sold to Jews and jobbers; or given to bribe new-invented municipal republics into a participation in sacrilege? Are all the taxes to be voted grievances, and the revenue reduced to a patriotic contribution, or patriotic presents? Are Silver shoe-buckles to be substituted in the place of the land tax and the mal tax, for the support of the naval strength of this kingdom? Are all orders, rank, and distinctions, to be confounded, that out of universal anarchy, joined to national bankruptcy, three or four thousand democracies should be formed into eighty-three, and that they may all, by some sort of unknown attractive power, be organized into one? For this great end, is the army to be seduced from its discipline and its fidelity, first by every kind of debauchery, and then by the terrible precedent of a donative in the encrease of pay? Are the curates to be seduced from their bishops, by holding out to them the delusive hope of a dole out of the spoils of their own order? Are the citizens of London to be drawn from their allegiance, by feeding them at the expence of their fellow-subjects? Is a compulsory paper currency to be substituted in the place of the legal coin of this kingdom? Is what remains of the plundered stock of public revenue to be employed in the wild project of maintaining two armies to watch over and to fight with each other? If these are the ends and means of the Revolutionary Society, I admit they are well assorted; and France may furnish them for both with precedents in point.²²⁴

²²⁴ *Reflections*, pp. 64-65.

Here, by Burke's view, everything – so long as it found basis in the populist eye (or was ignored by it) – was permitted. Such licentiousness resulted in the collapse of social and then political institutions. This was, so Burke thought, tantamount to the complete reversal of the trajectory of progress which had come to mark human history; a progress away from nature and the determination of human discourse from our initial animalist instincts and the drives of the natural world. Burke believed such a reversal might create space for upheavals in the social fabric of human existence – for 'the age of chivalry' was gone – forcing political tactics that were more savage than civilized.²²⁵ Rather than political order finding moral basis in reasoned ideals confirmed by civilized passions, the basis for order would have to exist unloosed from any stable or knowable authority structure.

Price and the Revolutionary Societies' political theology was the political doctrine of disassociating and decontextualizing moral right from its place in the path of historical development. The costs of such a removal was equally disastrous to society and politics alike. As Burke explains,

This doctrine, as applied to the prince now on the British throne, either is nonsense, and therefore neither true nor false, or it affirms a most unfounded, dangerous, illegal, and unconstitutional position. According to this spiritual doctor of politics, if his majesty does not owe his crown to the choice of his people, he is no lawful king. Now nothing can be more untrue than that the crown of this kingdom is so held by his majesty. Therefore if you follow their rule, the king of Great Britain, who most certainly does not owe his high office to any form of popular election, is in no respect better than the rest of the gang of usurpers,

²²⁵ O'Brien's *The Great Melody*, p. 407

who reign, or rather rob, all over the face of this our miserable world, without any sort of right or title to the allegiance of their people. The policy of this general doctrine, so qualified, is evident enough. The propagators of this political gospel are in hopes their abstract principle (their principle that a popular choice is necessary to the legal existence of the sovereign magistracy) would be overlooked whilst the king of Great Britain was not affected by it. In the mean time the ears of their congregations would be gradually habituated to it, as if it were a first principle admitted without dispute. For the present it would only operate as a theory, pickled in the preserving juices of pulpit eloquence, and laid by for future use. *Condo et compono quae mox depromere possim*. By this policy, whilst our government is soothed with a reservation in its favour, to which it has no claim, the security, which it has in common with all governments, so far as opinion is security, is taken away.²²⁶

The only means capable of retaining order under these conditions would be abject (and unmitigated) force. These were, according to Burke, the costs of the revolution, as both the rule of law and its moral authority derived from the historical progression of a social order had been unset. How this decontextualization came about, and how to avoid it, was Burke's central political project.

1.2

It is worth pausing here to establish the three parameters – constitution, paper money, and religious enthusiasm – of Burke's critique of the Revolution, for it is my contention – here following on Pocock – that each can and should be subsumed under Burke's critique of enthusiasm.²²⁷

²²⁶ *Reflections*, p. 16.

²²⁷ While I follow Pocock that these three components form the basis of Burke's critique, I reject Pocock's thesis that such concern was directly tied to the revolution, and was not consistent with

The first of these measures has to do with the basis of legitimate political authority, and specifically whether such basis comes from popular will or in some ancient constitution grounded in an alternative authority.²²⁸ This question is not immediately obvious as available from the French context alone, especially given the historical development of the failures of a legitimate state government under Louis XVI.²²⁹ But Burke saw the problem more clearly because his eye was attuned to Price's efforts to link up France's Revolution with the English Revolution of 1688. At stake in the alignment of the two was the basis for the sovereign government of England. Price's position, so Burke argued, was that the English Revolution entailed a dissolution of government that was reinstated through parliament and thus provisional. The radicalness of Price's claim here was that the sovereign authority of England depended not on any ancient constitution or historical precedent, but – via parliament – on the English 'people' themselves.²³⁰ Burke worried that, if this claim were believed true, the result would be a clear disjuncture in English civil law, legitimating the political – and revolutionary – founding of a new state whose sovereignty rested in and was derived entirely from the people's will. Price's hope was, via the French

Burke's prior thinking. The consequence of this difference is that Pocock finds Burke's rethinking of enthusiasm as political enthusiasm within his *Reflections* and in his reactions to the events in France broadly speaking; I, by contrast, see Burke's reactions as fitting with his claims in earlier reflections on aesthetics and human emotion, and believe there is much evidence to suggest Burke is worried with enthusiasm' effects on all aspects of human existence, not merely political restructuring (even though that is certainly one of paramount importance). See Pocock's "Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm," pp. 23; 28. Again, also see White, *Edmund Burke*, p. 60.

²²⁸ Pocock, "Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm," p. 23. Also see O'Brien's *The Great Melody*, pp. 394-400.

²²⁹ Francois Furet, *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880* (Blackwell, 1995), esp. pp.27-30.

²³⁰ Pocock "Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm," p. 23.

model, to reread English history as its predecessor, thus laying the foundation for democratic sovereignty in England.²³¹ Burke's critique was that such political upheaval, in France or in England, inadvertently dislodged real human populations from any authority structure by which governance based on moral authority (which must always be derived through historical precedent) could persist. As Burke explains the point,

The Revolutionary Society has discovered that the English nation is not free. They are convinced that the inequality in our representation is a "defect in our constitution so gross and palpable, as to make it excellent chiefly in form and theory." That a representation in the legislature of a kingdom is not only the basis of all constitutional liberty in it, but of "all legitimate government; that without it a government is nothing but an usurpation"; that "when the representation is partial, the kingdom possesses liberty only partially; and if extremely partial it gives only a semblance; and if not only extremely partial, but corruptly chooses, it becomes a nuisance." Dr. Price considers this inadequacy of representation as our fundamental grievance.²³²

By Price's —and the Revolutionary Society's— view, this problem of failed representation finds basis as a legitimate political grievance so long as it can be related back to the originary instantiation of the current political authority in the popular will as represented by parliament in the reinstatement of the government in 1688. In the end, Burke saw any attempt to link the two revolutions as tantamount to denying the very basis for legitimate political authority anywhere. As Pocock rightly observes, "1688 is... the source of Burke's insistence on the primacy of history: on the affirmation that every act is performance in a context of previously given facts and

²³¹ Herzog, *Lower Orders*, pp.15-16.

²³² *Reflections*, p. 65.

norms, over which it does not possess absolute or revolutionary power.”²³³ It is especially this idea of interpreting the fact and value of a political action ‘in context’ that matters so much to Burke’s critique of Price and the revolution in France. If there is no context by which a political action can be considered, than the cost of enduring that action, both directly to those effected by its immediate aftermath, as was the population of France, but also indirectly in the social and political landscape that must endure the existence of such kinds of action (in this case the whole of Europe), means a loosening of all moral cause in political affairs (and subsequently the return to force and the state of nature – though without being fully aware of the transportation and relocation).

The second cause of concern that Burke highlights regards the restructuring of authority had to do with transitions from property as landed to an economy driven by national debt and paper money.²³⁴ Burke’s fundamental claim was that shifting economies structures away from inheritable property (such as land) and towards paper currency (which was, by its fungible existence, always reprintable and thus – by Burke’s view – essentially meaningless) that the wealth that upholds political states was made imaginary. His concern here is both for the basis of legitimate political

²³³ Pocock “Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm,” p. 23

²³⁴ Pocock “Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm,” p. 28; also see his “Modes of Political and historical time in early eighteenth century England” in *Studies in 18th Century Culture*, vol. 5, ed. Rosbottom (University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), esp. pp. 96-99 on a ‘speculative’ society. For an overview of the context for Burke’s political economics see D. Winch, *Riches and Poverty* (Cambridge, 1996) esp. pp. 179-185 (which draws the theoretical connections between Smith’s political economy and Burke’s). Also helpful is James Conniff’s *The Useful Cobbler: Edmund Burke and the politics of Progress* (SUNY Press, 1994), esp. pp. 113-123.

authority, but also for the effects of this imaginary restructuring of the world according to a model of wealth that – because it could always be created if necessary by simply reprinting it – was now limitless. Property that is landed and thus inheritable establishes rank and power that form the hereditary basis of contemporary authority. Restructuring an economy on imagined wealth (paper money) or future stability (the impetus for, and legitimating of, a national debt) both worked, according to Burke, to destabilize the psychology of political actors from the very ground of a well-function politics:

The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself. It makes our weakness subservient to our virtue; it grafts benevolence even upon avarice. The possessors of family wealth, and of the distinction which attends hereditary possession (as most concerned in it) are the natural securities for this transmission. With us, the house of peers is formed upon this principle. It is wholly composed of hereditary property and hereditary distinction... For though hereditary wealth, and the rank which goes with it, are too much idolized by creeping sycophants, and the blind abject admires of power, they are too rashly slighted in shallow speculations of the petulant, assuming, short-sighted coxcombs of philosophy. Some decent regulated pre-eminence, some preference (not exclusive appropriation) given to birth, is neither unnatural, nor unjust, nor impolitic.²³⁵

Inheritance is that practice whereby society maintains itself, and proves a central vehicle for allowing virtue to persist in an otherwise violent and avarice-filled culture. Such French ‘philosophy’, with its political aims of dismantling inheritance of wealth and the rank that accompanies it, misunderstands – because of too short a view – the role that inheritance plays in securing the modern world.

²³⁵ *Reflections*, pp. 60-61.

Such philosophies are, by Burke's view, engendering an 'arithmetic' rationalization of society that, as a result, has undermined all means of legitimacy. As he puts it,

It is said, that twenty-four millions ought to prevail over two hundred thousand. True; if the constitution of a kingdom be a problem of arithmetic. This sort of discourse does well enough with the lam-post for its second: to men who may reason calmly, it is ridiculous. The will of the many, and their interest, must very often differ; and great will be the differed when they make an evil choice. A government of five hundred country attorneys and obscure curates is not good for twenty-four millions of men, though it were chosen by eight and forty millions; nor is it the better for being guided by a dozen patrons of quality, who have betrayed their trust in order to obtain that power. At present, you seem in everything to have strayed out of the high road of nature. The property of France does not govern it. Of course property is destroyed, and rational liberty has no existence. All you have got for the present is a paper circulation, and a stock-jobbing constitution" and as to the future, do you seriously think that the territory of France, under the republican system of eighty-three independent municipally, (to say nothing of the arts that compose them) can ever be governed as one body, or can ever be set in motion by the impulse of one mind?²³⁶

It is not only the case that the reorientation of economies from land to paper money destabilizes the basis for and means of political legitimacy directly, for it is also the case that there lies an insidious undercurrent by which this instability in property effects an unacknowledged but apparent instability in authority: When economies are seen as imagined and uncontrolled (as Burke thought paper monies and national debts allowed), the very concept of legitimate authority becomes loosed from its bearings. As Pocock aptly observes, "Debt generates paper credit; paper subverts the reality of land and the significance of coinage; where property loses meaning, ideas flourish

²³⁶ *Reflections*, p. 61

unchecked and become fantasies; enthusiasts combine and become factions capable of seizing the power of states. Fanaticism – and the fanaticism of anti-fanaticism which corrupts the moderate in power – becomes politically where formerly it was religiously, important.”²³⁷ That loosing of meaning from physical property to the property of ideas allows for fantasies to reign, exhibiting itself in social and political violence of the kind Burke saw purveying in France, and very much worried would spread beyond.

Of course, this kind of loosening of the social fabric that resulted in political factions was itself not foreign to English political history. The crisis of the English Revolutions, and the agitations of dissenting Protestant groups such as the Ranters, the Levellers, and the Diggers – amongst others – formed the basis for Burke’s critique of the dangers of spiritual enthusiasm for political action.²³⁸ For Burke, while flexibility is necessary, commingling religious enthusiasm with politics – as these dissenters did – he perceived as disastrous:

It is far from impossible to reconcile, if we do not suffer ourselves to be entangled in the mazes of metaphysical sophistry, the use of both a fixed rule and an occasional deviation; the sacredness of an hereditary principle of succession in our government, with a power of chafe in its applications in cases of extreme emergency. Even in that extremity (if we take the measure of our rights by our exercise of them at the revolution) the change is to be confined to the present part only: to the part which produced the necessary deviation; and even then it is to be effected without a decomposition of the whole civil and political mass,

²³⁷ Pocock, “Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm,” pp. 30-31.

²³⁸ See (again) Jason Frank, “Besides Our Selves’: An Essay on Enthusiastic Politics and Civil Subjectivity,” *Public Culture*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2005), esp. p. 375. Also note Christopher Hill’s *The World Turned Upside-Down* (Penguin, 1972).

for the purpose of originating a new civil order based on the first elements of society.²³⁹

Associating these religious enthusiasts with precisely the abortion of substantive authority for sovereignty in the people's will, Burke saw Price and his alignment of the French and English revolutions as an inheritor and prognosticator of the precisely the kind of religious enthusiasms that served for motivating this flawed political position of sovereignty based in democratic assertion.

For Burke the link here lies in the independence of church and state. The danger the dissenting enthusiasts posed had to do with the authority of the church. It was Burke's thinking that, if the church was no longer a resource for moral grounding – if instead anyone could, with a modicum of will, invent moral authority (as the dissenters were often accused of doing), than the loosening of the last fabric of social order would be completed. The result, according to Burke, would be humanities descent into chaos:

It is no wonder therefore, that with these ideas of every thing in their constitution and government at home, either in church or state, as illegitimate and usurped, or, at best as a vain mockery, they look abroad with an eager and passionate enthusiasm. Whilst they are possessed by these notions, it is vain to talk to them of the practice of their ancestors, the fundamental laws of their country, the fixed form of a constitution, whose merits are confirmed by the solid test of long experience, and an increasing public strength and national prosperity. They despise experience as the wisdom of unlettered men; and as for the rest, they have wrought under-ground a mine that will blow up at one grand explosion all examples of antiquity, all precedents, charters, and acts of parliament. They have "the rights of men." Against these there can be no prescription; against these no agreement is binding: these admit no

²³⁹ *Reflections*, pp. 24-25

temperament, and no compromise: any thing withheld from their full demand is so much of fraud and injustice. Against these their rights of men let no government look for security in the length of its continuance, or in the justice and lenity of its administration. The objections of these speculatists, if its forms do not quadrate with their theories, are as valid against such an old and beneficent government as against the most violent tyranny, or the greenest usurpation. They are always at issue with governments, not on a question of abuse, but a question of competency, and a question of title. I have nothing to say to the clumsy subtilty of their political metaphysics. Let them be their amusement in the schools. “*Illa se jactet in aula—Aeolus, et clauso ventorum carcere regnet.*” But let them not break prison to burst like a Levanter, to sweep the earth with their hurricane, and to break up the fountains of the great deep to overwhelm us.²⁴⁰

The enthusiasm of the church was quickly being displaced by the enthusiasm for the ‘rights of man.’ This was not, however, a formation of political enthusiasm, but a malformation of the religious form – the object had shifted, and with that shift (from God to Man), a fundamental challenge to the very structure of society was presented: Religious metaphysics was replaced by a political metaphysics, with the result that church and state were becoming the same institution.

At stake here for Burke is the location of authority in real historical time and actual physical space. The problem with the Revolution and Price’s defense of it has to do with these three structural discontinuities, each of which works in concert with the others to destroy the social fabric itself. That the constitution (political authority), paper money (economic authority), and spiritual enthusiasm (religious/moral authority) all come unhinged is a consequence of this fundamental restructuring that the revolution instantiates. Burke’s critique is that these three structures hold society

²⁴⁰ *Reflections*, pp. 68-69

together and allow for its progression, so that without them, there will be a kind of retrogradation of humanity back to the animal world. The violence in France is but a small attunement to that relocation to savagery and barbarism.²⁴¹

1.3

Such destabilizations raised an important psychological question for Burke: How do we know what we know – are our ideas embodied or not? Burke believed these revolutionaries' politicized ideals, because of their being divorced from context, could only find justification in a vanguard that *felt* their truth. Burke, along with his German contemporaries, worried whereby new ideas could be validated without any material context to substantiate them.²⁴² (At risk in this debate, amongst other concerns, was the possibility of progress and whether it could always be justified as

²⁴¹ This assumes that Burke's understanding of history fits within the confines of Scottish historiography. On whether Burke might have been susceptible to this logic, see Pocock's account "Varieties of early Modern historiography" in *Barbarism and Religion*, Volume 2, (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 7-28; also see Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, pp. 166-185.

²⁴² For popular conceptions of the revolution in the German press as events were developing see esp. August Willhelm Rehberg's *Untersuchungen über die französische Revolution*, 2 volumes (Hanover, 1793). As La Vopa notes, Rehberg's thinking was esp. important for bringing Burke's thought on the Revolution to Germany prior to Gentz's translation of the Reflections; see La Vopa's excellent *Fichte: The Self and the Calling of Philosophy, 1762-1799* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), esp. p. 101. It is worth noting here that ambiguity in Burke's own thinking on this point resulted in deep divisions between in his defenders; on the one hand, popular philosophers such as Gentz and Garve found Burke to be a valuable resources for their empiricism; other more conservative proponents of Burke, such as Adam Müller, aimed to accomplish what they saw as Burke's conservative political goals through the establishment of a state imbued with spirit (rather than based on reason). If Müller sounds far afield from the portrait of Burke painted here, refer to my discussion in section three of this chapter, on the kinds of ambiguities Gentz introduced into Burke's ideas, and how those ambiguities were magnified in late eighteenth century German discourse. For historical reflections on Müller's conservatism, see Epstein's *Genesis of German Conservatism*, for a recently published philosophical expropriation and critique of his and similarly conservative 'romantic' ideas, see Isaiah Berlin's *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton University Press, 1999), esp. p. 124.

teleologically just.) If new political ideas required decontextualization, how could such ideals be measured according to past traditions? How compatible might they be with given institutions? Secularized enthusiasm, we will see, proves dangerous by Burke's view as the affective motivation for such decontextualization, whereby any political action could be justified.²⁴³

While Kant read enthusiasm as influenced by and requiring sympathy (as opposed to *Schwärmerei*, which does not maintain such strict structural requirements), Burke seems to read enthusiasm as grounded in and influenced by disgust.²⁴⁴ For Burke, enthusiasts want to remove themselves from their world, reconstituting it according to unmitigated principles they 'feel' to be just and new institutions that would uphold this new and accidental world. Consider Burke claim (made as early as 1750 in one of series of notebook published posthumously) in on "Religion of No Efficacy, Considered as a State Engine;"

Nothing can operate but from its own principles. The principles of religion are that God attends to our actions to reward and punish them. This principle has an independent operation, and influences our actions much to the benefit of civil society. But then the influence on civil

²⁴³ It is worth noting that what allows for this decontextualization is still under much debate. Pocock, in his "Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm," makes the strong assertion that such decontextualization presents itself first in a revolution of manners, and this has taken root in a variety of forms in recent years as the most compelling location to begin such an inquiry. On the Scottish view of the progression of society as being away from the animal's natural world, see Winch's *Riches and Poverty*, p. 176.

²⁴⁴ Refer here to Daniel Fouke's discussion of religious dissent as political enthusiasm in England in his *The Enthusiastical Concerns of Dr. Henry More: Religious Meaning and the Psychology of Delusion* (Brill, 1997). Also see Garsten's discussion in note 37 of p. 231 in *Saving Persuasion*; For contemporary discussions of disgust as a political emotion, see (again) Nussbaum's *Hiding from Humanity*, as well as Bill Miller's *Anatomy of Disgust*.

society is only an oblique influence. The direct influence is the civil law itself, its won principles and its own sanctions.²⁴⁵

By denying spheres of such ‘principles,’ these enthusiasts are, by Burke’s accounting, susceptible to a political instability requisite to their rejection of the world as it is already, and the moral basis that instantiates itself in existing intuitions and norms. (And it should not go unnoticed here that Burke’s accusations against enthusiasts as themselves motivated by disgust for the world seems itself to be premised on its own distaste for such actions.)

How this rejection comes to be accomplished is, by Burke’s thinking, resultant from a disjuncture in how prejudice and superstition came to be employed in political reform.²⁴⁶ By Burke’s view, prejudices are those beliefs which we inherit – which have withstood criticism over time; superstitions come into being from nowhere, outside of any context. This is why Burke needs to be so precise about his critique; for, as he doesn’t want his assault on the French rationalists (and their British defenders) to fail, he needs to be clear what he is distinguishing his defense of prejudice against. Again, as Burke asserted above, “It is no wonder therefore, that with these ideas of everything in their constitution and government at home, either in church or state as illegitimate and usurped, or, at best vain mockery, they look aboard

²⁴⁵ *A Note-Book of Edmund Burke: Poems, Characters, Essays and other Sketches in the Hands of Edmund and William Burke Now Printed for the First Time in Their Entirety* (ed.) H.V.F. Somerset (Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 67. Regarding the authenticity of these ideas as Edmund (rather than William) Burke’s, see Somerset’s pronouncement on p. 8. Also, as per Somerset’s footnote, see (again) Cobban’s *Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century*.

²⁴⁶ For a related accounting of prejudice, see White, *Edmund Burke*, pp. 61-62; for a comparison of Burke and the Scots on prejudice, see Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, p. 171.

with an eager and passionate enthusiasm.”²⁴⁷ When long-standing prejudices grounded in tradition and tested by history have been quickly usurped, mistakenly or otherwise, and superstition comes to take their place, societal faces a fundamental challenge to its stability.

At issue here, then, becomes how the mind works (and how it is conditioned by – or itself conditions – political society?). For Burke, emotions instruct reason.²⁴⁸ He believed that, despite the power of emotions to drive unthinking action, that at least some emotions remain valuable as instructors for reason which was viewed as impotent without them.²⁴⁹ Emotions are accordingly more accurate in determining action in the world – than, say, reason – for emotions are predicated on prejudice. Just as we inherit prejudice, tested through history, what we call emotions are in the end those subjective means by which we continue to test those prejudices. Reason, according to such logic, is too removed from history to be able to fully understand that which it pretends. Thus, contra Price, Burke argues,

We are so made as to be affected at such spectacles with melancholy sentiments upon the unstable condition of mortal prosperity, and the tremendous uncertainty of human greatness; because in those natural feelings we learn great lessons; because in events like these our passions instruct our reason; because when kings are hurled from their thrones by the Supreme Director of this great drama, and because the

²⁴⁷ *Reflections*, p. 68.

²⁴⁸ The danger of sympathy, by this view, is that it may well lead to imitation. See Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*, p. 95. (for the purposes of this dissertation I have used *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of the Sublime and the Beautiful: And Other Pre-Revolutionary Writings from Penguin Classics*, 1999 edition).

²⁴⁹ Again, for a detailed discussion on this connection between Burke and the Scots, see Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, pp. 170-171.

objects of insult to the base, and of pity to the good, we behold such disasters in the moral, as we should behold a miracle in the physical order of things. We are alarmed into reflection; our minds (as it has long been observed) are purified by terror and pity; our weak unthinking pride is humbled under the dispensations of a mysterious wisdom.²⁵⁰

Condensed in this single reflection is the core of Burke's politics, support by both an aesthetic and an epistemological claim. While Burke rejects the revolutionaries as themselves enthusiasts, he himself seems to express a similar kind of experience consequent to great political drama. Such a 'miracle' that can alarm us 'into reflection' seems to fit well with Kant's conceptualization of an enthusiasm that could be countered to (yet triggered by) *Schwärmerei*. But Burke does not use the language of enthusiasm. Instead, as we will see further described in the next section of this chapter, he employs the rhetoric of the sublime. To speak of minds 'purified by terror' is, we know for Burke, to speak of individuals confronting the sublime.²⁵¹

Yet Burke's central point throughout his *Reflections* has always been to critique enthusiasm, not as an emotion, but as, what one critic describes as, an "abstract, metaphysical mentality."²⁵² While one danger of enthusiasm is that only the vanguard may be susceptible to it, the related danger is that precisely those vanguard, who themselves aim to condition their world according to rational predicates, have themselves turned this mentality into an emotion, thus confusing the very structure

²⁵⁰ *Reflections*, pp. 94-95.

²⁵¹ Burke's Aristotelianism should not go overlooked here, for his accounting of the experience of the sublime sounds remarkably similar to Aristotle's account of catharsis.

²⁵² Winch, *Riches and Poverty*, p. 171.

whereby prejudice in conjunction with emotion helpfully instruct individuals in confirming or denying the validity of moral and political judgments (thus the confusion of prejudice and superstition).

This opens the question of how enthusiasm operates such that it can be so destabilizing to society. By way of addressing this, we will turn, in the next section, to Burke's aesthetics. This is, contra Pocock, necessary so as to delineate clearly the distinctions between the experience of enthusiasm and of the sublime.²⁵³ Without doing so, the stakes and costs of following Burke's rejection of enthusiasm continue to remain unclear.

Section 2 – The Aesthetics of Burke's Politics

2.1

Locating the destabilization Burke finds in the experience of enthusiasm requires situating that experience within the array of subjective reactions Burke believes the human passions to be. Burke's characterization of human passions fits well within 18th century discourse on affect, and is especially influenced by Locke and Berkeley.²⁵⁴ Burke divides the experience of the passions into two substantive

²⁵³ As White and O'Neill both partially observe, Pocock's isolation of enthusiasm within political structures alone leaves unexplained why enthusiasm is so destabilizing, by Burke's view, to the development of society.

²⁵⁴ For an overview that places Burke's thinking in the context of late 17th early 18th century debates on aesthetics and the theory of the mind, see Dixon Wecter's "Burke's Theory Concerning words, Images, and Emotions" esp. pp. 169-177. White adds to Wecter's account, tracing Burke's engagement with the sublime to the debates spared by the recent translation of Longinus' *Peri Hypsous* (on the Sublime) was

categories; human passions are provoked by our subjective experiences of pleasure and pain.²⁵⁵ Pleasurable experiences are always, in some way, directed towards commonality with others and the perseverance of human relations. Friendship, family, and community are the various social locations where we find opportunities for pleasure. When we seek out these opportunities, we do so under the auspices of seeking pleasure. Society is, by Burke's accounting, meant for pleasure. This is contrasted directly with our experience of pain, which we always feel when we are forced to preserve ourselves from danger. When we are removed from the social world we are (also) experiencing pain.

Important for Burke's theory is its bodily location of these subjective experiences.²⁵⁶ While society is itself the very structure through which we escape pain, and find pleasure (and Burke is very concerned with its perseverations and the norms that continue to uphold it as a location of those relations that bring pleasure), the location of these reactions is centrally situated within the human body and persons' perceptions therein.²⁵⁷ In what follows below, I delineate Burke's theory of aesthetics

translated in 1698 (see White, *Edmund Burke*, pp. 23-24, for an account of this debate). As White helpfully observes, the relative calm of British political and religious zealotry during the 18th century in comparison to previous upheavals, may have created conditions for such detached debates on the role of aesthetics in human experience. For Locke's view, see "Understanding Superstition," as well as my discussion of Locke's limited view of enthusiasm as a medical condition in chapter 1 of this dissertation. For Berkeley's views on the passions, see his, "On the Principles of Human Knowledge."

²⁵⁵ On pain and pleasure generally, see Burke's *Enquiry*, p. 80. For Burke's accounting of pleasure as the feeling of delight, see p. 83. For his account of pain as the source of the more powerful passions, see p. 85.

²⁵⁶ For further elaboration on Burke and the body, see Aris Sarafianos' "Pain, labor, and the Sublime: Medical Gymnastics and Burke's Aesthetics," esp. pp. 62-67 on the use of pain.

²⁵⁷ Burke also notes a state of indifference which is, by his accounting, that state that is most common. Again, see *Enquiry*, p. 80.

and its relation to his politics, keeping focus on the bodily location of these experiences for Burke's account.²⁵⁸

The vehicles that allow individual persons to experience pain and pleasure are located in together aesthetic reactions to the world, in what Burke labels as the beautiful and the sublime.²⁵⁹ Beauty, for Burke, is a social quality, one that attracts persons together. But the attraction is not general, but towards particulars. What one finds beautiful, the object of beauty, is particular to them – it is what they are attracted to. This experience is, at its base, related to generation. While generation alone can be motivated simply by lust, but that there is a preference that one can establish for directing desire, for generating with that particular object, is the experience finding something beautiful. Burke's accounting here is inherently naturalized and sexualized: "I call beauty a social quality: for where women and men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them, (and there are many that do so) they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons."²⁶⁰ By Burke's accounting, we recognize the experience of the beautiful by its products, which are these deep feelings of tenderness directed at (yet produced by) the object of beauty. Such tenderness is self-propagating – feeling it makes us want into feel more of it; that beauty is so comparable is the reason Burke selects it as

²⁵⁸ It is worth reminding the reader here that what is at stake in delineating the costs and consequences of Burke's account of enthusiasm from Kant's is the way each understood and critiqued the empirical and transcendental experiences of the world.

²⁵⁹ For recent and helpful work on Burke's aesthetics, see White, *Edmund Burke* 27-33, O'Neill's *The Burke-Wollstonecraft Debate*, pp. 197-201; and Conniff's *The Useful Cobbler*, pp. 25-31.

²⁶⁰ *Enquiry*, p. 89.

the candidate for the basis of society (it being that which brings people together and keeps them together).

Those feelings which keep people apart, which in some way are asocial or antisocial in character, and work to isolate individuals in themselves and away from others, are related to persons' experiences of pain. Pain, by Burke's view, has the capacity to pull person's minds away from the world and towards themselves. What allows pain to accomplish this pulling is its accompaniment with terror. That terror finds its way into our experience of pain is, according to Burke, consequent to our mortality; our feeling of pain can quickly become a reminder of the possibility of our deaths: "What generally makes pain itself, if I may say so, more painful, is, that it is considered as an emissary of this king of terrors."²⁶¹ Pain is always psychological related to the fear of our possibility of dying. That pain is unique form death, though triggers the image of death in the mind, is the space by which Burke finds for the possibility of what he describes as the sublime. As Burke explains, "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."²⁶²

The mind's reaction to the body's pain is a remembrance of its own limitedness. This act of remembering, which has pulled it away from its pleasure (or at

²⁶¹ *Enquiry*, p. 86.

²⁶² *Enquiry*, p. 86.

least the possibility of pleasure) and thus also society, aligns the mind with the object of pain itself. This isolation of the mind is the beginning of the experience of the sublime, and what Burke calls astonishment. Here “all (the mind’s) motions are suspended... (and) the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it.”²⁶³ This experience itself sounds so absolute that it may leave one wondering how it would be possible to escape the experience of the terror of the sublime once one found an object which produced it. For Burke it is the case that even though there is so much power in the experience of pain, there is yet still some delight, and thus pleasure, in our feeling of the sublime. Astonishment and terror lead individuals to the sublime, but their experience there is distinct, as kind of transformation takes place. The sublime allows for this transformation because, unlike terror, which itself has a direct object of danger; the sublime escapes from that direct object. In its escape, what once felt like terror is replaced with delight.

The process of terror becoming delight is only possible if one recognizes the object of danger as benign. Burke explains this difficult process through analogy. Just as physical labor is, in a way, producing a kind of pain for the body, the exercise of that labor, because it is done under the auspicious of some cause that must be accomplished, and thus is controlled by the individual who sets out to engage in enduring such pain (e.g. because the mind already knows that the pain is limited, and is freely choosing it as a result of its limitedness) the danger that would usually be

²⁶³ *Enquiry*, p. 101.

associated with pain is removed: “If the pain is not carried to violence, and the terror is not conversant about the present destruction of the person... (the person’s emotions) are capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquility tinged with terror; which as it belongs to self-preservation is one of the strongest passions Its object is the sublime.”²⁶⁴

Central here for Burke is the experience of the limitlessness inherent to our apprehension of the sublime, compared to our own understanding of mortal finitude.²⁶⁵ Beauty in some way, at least by its apparent connection to ‘generation’ and ‘propagation,’ has the consequence of motivating and confirming pathways to overcoming our own mortality. But what then, is the purpose of the sublime? According to Burke, the sublime is necessary for a happy and healthy life in that it reminds individuals of the limits of their individual powers and their place in the world. Our experience of the sublime reminds us – palpably – of our own powerlessness.

2.2

All of this begs the question though, of how Burke might conceive of healthy and unhealthy social interactions? If individuals can be so destabilized by their

²⁶⁴ *Enquiry*, p. 165.

²⁶⁵ On Limits and Limitlessness (and the basis for each), see White discussion on finitude and God p.30; and on limitless, p. 75, in his *Edmund Burke*, Pocock also makes mention of the problem of humanity as the basis for limitlessness, in his “Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm,” p. 26.

experience of the sublime, a terrified delight in recognizing their own powerlessness, what – by Burke’s view – motivates individuals to consider others?

Important here is Burke’s understanding of sympathy. By his accounting we have concern for others via our experience of sympathy.²⁶⁶ This feeling is not indifference or impartiality, but instead marked by an ideational attachment. As Burke puts it, in sympathy “we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost anything which men can do or suffer.”²⁶⁷ That spectatorship is active and involved marks Burke’s model of sympathy as unique.²⁶⁸ Burke explains, “Sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put in the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected.” This substitution is, for Burke, a consequence to the very physicality of our experience of pain and pleasure, and of our ability to imagine those experiences as another experiences them (precisely because of the shared experience of the body).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ For the most recent (and detailed) accounting of this view of sympathy, esp. prior to Burke, see Fonna Forman-Barzilai’s *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy: Cosmopolitanism and Moral Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

²⁶⁷ *Enquiry*, p. 91.

²⁶⁸ See Ranciere for an elaboration on a similar model of active spectatorship in Jacques Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator* (Verso, 2009), p. 17. NB: I compare Ranciere’s thinking here to Arendt’s in the conclusion of this dissertation.

²⁶⁹ The critique of this physically form one of the central competent of Kant’s response to Garve in his essay “On the common saying: ‘this may be true in theory, but it does not Apply in Practice’” was a direct response to Christian Garve’s “*Versuche über verschiedene Gegenstände aus der Moral and Literatur*,” published in 1765, and based on the 5th edition of Burke’s text (the 1st being from 1757). On the reception of Burke’s aesthetics in Germany see G. Canderea *Der Begriff des Erhabenen bei Burke und Kant* (Strassburg, 1894) cf. 3 p. vi in Manfred Kuehn’s introduction to *Philosophische Untersuchungen Über den Ursprung Unserer Begriffe Vom Erhabenen Und Schönen, Edmund Burke*, Translated by Christian Gave (Thoemmes Press, 2001).

This imagining is not consequent to any detachment, but instead requisite to our involvement in another's experience of the world. Burke is primarily concerned here with relaying that, while our experience of the sublime may remove us from the world, it also creates pathways for our return. The sublime is a mental state that actively removes us from one context (the societal) and relocates us to another (the personal), only to reconfirm the possibility of return. Enthusiasm, by contrast, is that state which exemplifies detachment, employing ideas purposefully removed from context as a means for disrupting the usual course of events.²⁷⁰

Though, to be sure, Burke has a more complicated relationship with enthusiasm than this account might superficially make it appear. Burke certainly was aware, at least prior to the French revolution, of the complexities of enthusiasm.²⁷¹ As he explains the point,

Men never gain anything, by forcing Nature to conform to their Politicks. I know the Clergy shamed and frightened at the imputation of enthusiasm, endeavor to cover Religion under the Shield o Reason, which will have some force with heir adversaries. But god has been pleased to give Mankind an Enthusiasm to supply the want of Reason; and truly, Enthusiasm comes nearer the great and comprehensive reason in its effects, though not in the manner of reparation, than the common reason does; which works on confined, narrow, common, and therefore plausible, topics. The former is the lot of very few. The latter is common; and fit enough; but is utterly unfit to meddle with Politics, Divinity and Philosophy. But Enthusiasm is a sort of instinct, in those

²⁷⁰ Gibbons offers some important considerations regarding the political applications of (and context) of Burke's critique of the detached spectator. See Luke Gibbons, *Edmund Burke and Ireland: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Colonial Sublime* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. pp. 101-111 for his accounting of Irish and Indian colonial occupation as the political instantiation for Burke's critique.

²⁷¹ On comparing burke and Kant on the sublime, see Vanessa Ryan "The physiological sublime: Burke's critique of reason," in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2001; also see Robert Clewis's very fine *The Kantian Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 224-5.

who possess it, that operates, like all instincts, better than a mean
Species of reason.²⁷²

That enthusiasm could be a sort of instinct means for Burke, that it could conceivable work with prejudice, at least with religious objects, to confirm traditions. This, I think, belies the problem which Pocock (and those who continue to employ his analysis) have ignored: what is so dangerous about enthusiasm for Burke is when it works in conjunction with politics to replace the sublime. Burke explains it this way, “It is true indeed that enthusiasm often misleads us. The sublime does reason too. Such is the condition of our nature; and we can’t help it. But I believe that we act most when we act with all the Powers of our Soul; when we use our enthusiasm to elevate and expand our reasoning; and our reasoning to check the roving of our Enthusiasm.”²⁷³ What was so problematic about the ‘political theologians’ Burke was criticizing seems to have been how enthusiasm and reason interacted; if enthusiasm does not check reason, and reason does not check enthusiasm (that is, if the two work to magnify the delusions of the other, rather than working on concert), than fantasy and reality become indistinguishable. In the political realm, such metaphysical confusion was, by Burke’s view, cataclysmic.

The costs of reason and enthusiasm acting in ignorance of the other are perhaps best evidenced in a closer examination of Burke’s reflections on public perception – as

²⁷² *Notebooks*, p. 68.

²⁷³ *Notebooks*, pp. 68-69.

spectators – of dramatic historical change (where he thought enthusiasm was on display).²⁷⁴

Plots, massacres, assassinations, seem to some people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodless reformation, a guiltless liberty, appear flat and vapid to their taste. There must be a great change of scene; there must be a magnificent stage effect; there must be a grand spectacle to rouse the imagination, grown torpid with the lazy enjoyment of sixty years security, and the still unanimating repose of public prosperity. The preacher (Price) found them all in the French revolution. This inspires juvenile warmth through his whole frame. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances; and when he arrives at his peroration, it is in full blaze. Then viewing, from the Pispah of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird-eye landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into the following rapture: “What an eventful period is this! I am thankful that you have lived to it; could almost say Lord, now latest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. –I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. –I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever; and nations panting for liberty which seemed to have lost the idea of it. –I have lived to see thirty Millions of People indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice. Their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.”²⁷⁵

The danger of enthusiasm for Burke (following on Shaftesbury),²⁷⁶ has to do with its capacity to spread, overpowering reason and prejudice alike. When it works well, it helps motivate reason. When it works poorly, it destroys prejudice, creating conditions for decontextualization. Burke sees enthusiasm as representing false conditions for the

²⁷⁴ For a parallel discussion using Hobbes see Tracy Strong’s “How to write Scripture: Words, Authority, and Politics in Thomas Hobbes” *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Autumn 1993), esp. pp. 148-151. For an overview of the history of aesthetics in relation to rhetoric in 18th century British discourse, see Samuel Monk, “The Sublime: A study of critical theories in XVIII-century England,” *MLA* general series (1935).

²⁷⁵ *Reflections* pp. 76-77

²⁷⁶ Shaftesbury, “A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm” – see the epigraph for this chapter.

body ('inspiring a juvenile warmth'), which in turn create false conditions for the mind (seeing, in the mind, 'the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious sate of France').

2.3

Yet, while the operation of enthusiasm here seems merely to accompany the false perceptions, there is some evidence to suggest that it is not their cause. Remember that for Burke the experience of the sublime was one of terrible delight, the feeling of which reminded persons of the very limitedness of their being (thus creating conditions for them to devote themselves to society). While Price may be evidencing a kind of enthusiasm as he displays his ideas to the audience, what Burke seems more concerned with is the aesthetic construction of France that he presents. By contrasting a 'glorious' France with a 'misconstrued' Britain, Price creates conditions for the feeling of the sublime with regards to the theatre of France. What I want to suggest here is that enthusiasm, in conjunction with the sublime, transforms the appearance and function of both. Consider again the following passage:

God has been pleased to give Mankind an Enthusiasm to supply the want of Reason; and truly, Enthusiasm comes nearer the great and comprehensive reason in its effects, though not in the manner of operation, than the common reason does; which works on confined, narrow, common, and therefore plausible, topics. The former is the lot of very few. The latter is common; and fit enough; but is utterly unfit to meddle with Politics, Divinity and Philosophy. But Enthusiasm is a sort of instinct, in those who possess it, that operates, like all instincts, better than a mean Species of reason.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ *Reflections*, p. 68.

The danger of enthusiasm is Price's, but it is dangerous because of its effects, less than its cause. Price's enthusiasm has the capacity to appear better than reason in its construction of aesthetic portraits of the events in France.

How is it such that enthusiasm becomes a danger to persons' experience of the sublime? If the sublime reminds us of our limitedness, than enthusiasm – which appears as in wide, uncommon, and incredible circumstances, reminding us of our unlimitedness – seems to disrupt this structure. Yet this is not Burke's argument. It is not that the commingling of the sublime and enthusiasm produces such clear confusion (as, say, the feeling of enthusiasm for the sublime, as this model would suggest), rather it malforms the experience of the sublime itself. This is what some scholars have referred to as the generation of a 'false sublime.'²⁷⁸

The 'false sublime' is the unlimiting of that limitedness which marks the experience. Price's enthusiasm, and the effect Burke worries it will have on spectators of the revolution, is false belief in the limitless capacity of the human will. What was once a relatively limited set of experiences that could produce the sublime (God and fear of death being the central objects of this experience), the French revolutionaries and sympathizers like Price have added human actions. This 'false sublime' is what some call the 'humanization' of the sublime – making humanity itself capable of producing the effects of sublimity (which runs counter to Burke's structuring). Such

²⁷⁸ White, *Edmund Burke*, p. 72-79; also Hampshire-Monk, "Rhetoric and Opinion in the Politics of Edmund Burke," *History of Political Thought*, 1988, pp. 482-83.

transformations in the object of sublimity become the source of Burke's concern because of the structure of his aesthetics and his epistemology. By locating transformations of subjective experience in the physical experience of the body, Burke was forced to locate the problems of such experience of enthusiasm in the object that produced such a mental state and persons' experience of that object.

Enthusiasm, we have seen for Burke, can be directed at any object; the sublime, by contrast, was the special reserve for the human experience of divinity. While this was often mitigated by enthusiasm, it is not enthusiasm as such that Burke was concerned with, but the transformation of the sublime. The greatest catastrophe consequent to the French revolution was that humanity, and not divinity, became the new object of the sublime.

Here we can see further how Burke's conception of enthusiasm is conditioned by his disgust. Burke has a limited expression of enthusiasm but not of the sublime. The consequence of this is that the authority of the human and the divine are held permanently apart. What is human, produced by humanity, valued by humanity, these are all conditioned by their being limited. The divine is thus defined by its very limitlessness. All that which receives divine dispensation (such as the constitution) is also limitless in its authority. By locating his critique in the object of the sublime, doubling the sublime into the divine and the human, rather than in the experience of the sublime (enthusiasm), Burke conditions his politics in incredibly harsh terms. As he (famously) reminds us,

A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation. Without such means it might even risk the loss of that part of the constitution which is wished the most religiously to preserve. The two principles of conservation and correction operated strongly at the two critical periods of the restoration and Revolution, when England found itself without a thing. At both those periods the nation had lost the bond of union in their ancient edifice; they did not, however, dissolve the whole fabric. On the contrary, in both cases they regenerated the deficient part of the old constitution through the parts which were not impaired. They kept these old parts exactly as they were, that the part recovered might be suited to them. They acted but the ancient organized states in the shape of their old organization, and not by the organic molecule of a disbanded people. At no time, perhaps did the sovereign legislature manifest a more tender regard to their fundamental principle of British constitutional policy, than at the time of the Revolution, when it deviated from the direct line of hereditary succession. The crown was carried somewhat out of line in which it had before evolved; but the new line was derived from the same stock. It was still a line of hereditary descent; still an hereditary descent in the same blood, through an hereditary descent qualified with Protestantism. When the legislator altered direction, but kept principle, they showed that they held it inviolable.²⁷⁹

Hereditariness, descent, continuity all become central structuring points for the legitimacy of these states, not because of their own validity, but because of the conditions of human subjectivity Burke describes. The multiplication of the experience of the sublime that presents itself in his *Reflections* becomes necessary to convey the dangers of revolution. What remains arbitrary is Burke's focus on the sublime, as opposed to the human experience of it (as he once testified was his purpose).

²⁷⁹ *Reflections*, p. 25.

Section 3 – Translating Burke’s Critique of Enthusiasm

In the previous section I aimed to show how Burke’s doubling of the sublime into true and false expressions of the experience of ‘delightful terror’ foreclosed the possibility (or at least stand as an obstacle to) reconceptualizing a doubling of enthusiasm. That Burke does allow for multiple, even if false, conceptions of the sublime but not of enthusiasm I related to his empiricism and especially his centering his aesthetics in the reactions of the body (as opposed to the mind). While we can critique Burke within his own context – as, for instance, pointing that his model of human relations, even his idea of sympathy, depend on and allow entrance for disgust in ways that seem to prejudice his politics – such critique takes on more substantial form against Burke’s German –speaking allies.²⁸⁰ Known loosely as the ‘popularphilosophen,’ these thinkers employed Burke, and his critique of Enthusiasm, as a counter to both Kantian philosophy and the parallel politics they saw developing in late eighteenth century Germany.²⁸¹ My claim here is that leaving the content of the

²⁸⁰ My strategy here is greatly indebted to Oz-Salzberger’s *Translating Enlightenment*, which, though she herself does not address Burke directly, sets the stage well for this kind of critique through her own evaluation of Germans expropriation of Scottish political thought. Also important for this kind of project is Manfred Kuehn magisterial *Scottish Common Sense in Germany*; For his – albeit brief, yet potent – discussions on Christian Garve’s translation of Burke’s *Enquiry*, see pp. 46-50.

²⁸¹ Kant himself hoped that such a turn away from his project, especially by Mendelssohn and Garve – two central figures in the *popularphilosophen* movement – would not be the case. His correspondence shows he desperately sought their approval, and was deeply hurt by their rejection. See Kant’s *Correspondence* ed. Arnulf Zweig (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 96-107. On Garve’s review of Kant’s *Critique* and Kant’s disappointment at the reaction (as well as the apparently complicated circumstances of its evaluation by Garve’s then editor), see Beiser’s *The Fate of Reason* pp. 172-180 on the ‘Garve Affair.’

experience of the sublime vague – e.g. that operating in Burke’s thinking was a doubled conception of the sublime, but not a doubled understanding of enthusiasm as, I show in chapter 1, was becoming a central debate in Prussia – allowed these popular philosophers to employ Burke as a resource for the condemnation of the Kantian position. My central aim here is to illustrate the costs of preserving the ambiguity of enthusiasm and *Schwärmerei*.

3.1

Popular philosophy as an academic movement is inseparable from its course as a political movement. As discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation, transformation in the German public sphere, including debates on the recurring of the University, were intimately connected. At issue in late 18th century German culture was the place of university in the education of the public. On the one side, academic philosophers from Leibniz to Wolff, advocated for a reconstituted public academy that might rejuvenate a war-torn Prussian State. Fredrick the Great became the benefactor of just such a project in 1744.²⁸² This initiated a cultural transformation in Berlin. Coupled with the rise of the academy, with its very French influences, came a growing group of thinkers attracted to Berlin as a cultural center, though these journalists, poets, and ‘philosophers’ were financially and politically divorced from the coffers and authority of the Academy. While Berlin academic philosophers debated matters of metaphysical

²⁸² On the history of the Berlin Academy for the development of German Philosophy, see Lewis Beck’s, *Early German Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 1969), esp. his accounting of “Philosophers on the Spree,” p. 315.

dispute, these ‘popular philosophers’ considered themselves more concerned with the social and political problems of ordinary human life.²⁸³

Central to this movement were the idea of Moses Mendelssohn, a figure that united the Aufklärung movement with popular philosophy.²⁸⁴ He served as editor of the *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend*, which itself united enlightenment thought with the popularphilosophen aim of bringing ideas out of the academy and into the public eye.²⁸⁵ Mendelssohn played a central role on legitimating such ‘popular’ ideals, winning the Berlin Academy essay prize in 1763 for his moral philosophy (defeating Kant who competed that same year); as well s through the publication of his text *Phaedo*, which helped further the burgeoning neo-Hellenic in Prussia at this time – and consequently earning Mendelssohn the title of the new ‘German Socrates.’²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Again, for an overview of this period, see Beck, *Early German Philosophy*, p. 319. As he notes, the two central journals for the founding of the Berlin popular philosophy movement were *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, ed. by Friedrich Nicolai, and the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, edited by Johann Erich Biester. Later the *Neue deutsche Monatsschrift*, edited by Friedrich Gentz, would take up the mantle of this popular project.

²⁸⁴ For an overview of Mendelssohn’s philosophic project, see Dahlstrom’s introductions to *Philosophical Writings*. Mendelssohn’s central text with grades to his critique of religion is *Jerusalem: Or on Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. Allen Arkush, (Brandeis University Press, 1983). For some recent accounts of Mendelssohn’s place on the boarder between the main of the Berlin Enlightenment and the popular philosophers see David Sorkin’s *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (University of California Press, 1996). James Schmidt, "The Question of Enlightenment: Kant, Mendelssohn, and the Mittwochsgesellschaft." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50(2): 269-91 (1989); Michael Morgan, "Mendelssohn's Defense of Reason in Jerusalem." *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 38 (4): 449-59 (1989); and Allan Arkush, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment*, (SUNY Press, 1999). The classic view is still Lewis Beck’s *Early German Philosophy*, pp. 323-4.

²⁸⁵ Again, see Beck, *Early German Philosophy*, p. 324.

²⁸⁶ On the difficulty of Mendelssohn’s position, see Williamson, *Longing for Myth in Germany*, p. 28. Again, see Beck, *Early German Philosophy*, p. 324, for details on Mendelssohn’s place in Berlin Intellectual culture during this period.

Mendelssohn's popularity and success did not go unchallenged. Part of Mendelssohn's political project became the promotion of toleration and the secularization of religious ideals, collimating in his work *Jerusalem*. Such a project was met with much critique. For our purposes here, the most important consequence of Mendelssohn's position on the boundary between enlightenment and popular discourse, but also his rational secularism, is what became known as the pantheism debate. Pantheism is the belief in the unity of all physical and metaphysical objects (thus allowing for their interaction). It is the claim that God resides in everything, and therefore is not personal. Within the emerging Berlin Enlightenment, the pantheist position was both a critique of Protestantism, but was also viewed as a mode of atheism that could convivially lead to moral chaos.

The Pantheism debate was, briefly, a public upheaval of these metaphysical realities. It should be considered the histrionically struggle to isolate 'Schwärmerei' as a concept and to find its mantel in the inheritance of Spinoza.²⁸⁷ The debate was initiated by the death of G. F. Lessing, a dear friend of Mendelssohn's, and a central figure to the Berlin enlightenment. Lessing's' last published work, the play *Nathan the Wise*, engaged a similar tact as Mendelssohn's rational approach to religious ideals, with the inherent message of religious tolerance on the basis of a shared rationality amongst competing religious expressions. Such declarations were, in the charged religious atmosphere of mid-18th century Prussia, dangerous, both personally and

²⁸⁷ For source documents to this debate see, *The Spinoza Conversations between Lessing and Jacobi*, ed. with introduction by Gerard Vallee (University press of America, 1988). For an overview of the Jacobi and Mendelssohn's positions, see Beiser's *The Fate of Reason*, pp. 44-108.

intellectually, and Lessing drew much criticism from Pietist critics of Enlightenment rationality, and especially its secularism.

Mendelssohn took up the defense of Lessing against Friedrich Jacobi, who argued that Lessing had – before his death – upheld the principles of a Spinoza’s pantheism. The significance of this accusation was that Lessing –and by proxy, the Berlin Enlightenment generally – was confused with a rationalist dismantling of religion itself. Jacobi argued that if metaphysics and religion must be fended by reason, than Spinoza is the best resource. Except the costs of this defense was the undermining of religion as such – the removal of the divinity form the religious experience. If morality and divinity were to be defended from reason, so Jacobi argued, a leap of faith as necessary. Mendelssohn tried to counter Jacobi through a dismantling of Spinoza’s thinking, especially on thinking, and Spinoza’s inadequate defense of the movement and development of thinking. Mendelssohn argued that Spinoza never convincingly accounted for the form of the spiritual world, merely interactions on which it must depend via thinking, and that Lessing’s projects endeavored to describe what Spinoza could not. These descriptions were, by Mendelssohn’s accounting, no threat to religion, in that they addressed the matter of the world not its expression in spirit. This defense was, on the whole, not entirely successful.

At issue here was whether or how “The philosophy of reason limits itself to relations that are immanent in consciousness.”²⁸⁸ Holding true to belief, whether it

itself is true or not, is the basis for fanaticism. By Mendelssohn's accounting, a preservation of doubt was the only means of continually off standing the dangers of acquiesce (false or otherwise) that fanaticism encouraged.²⁸⁹

3.2

The Pantheism debate drew much public criticism, and many sought to engage this furtive ground. Kant was no exception. I raise this historical point here as an important entrance into both Kant's rethinking of enthusiasm, but also the thinking of the *popularphilosophen*, eager to defend Lessing, taking opportunity aim at Kant as more representative of the failure Pietists conceived. Kant's position in this debate becomes, we will see, the central target of the second wave of the *popularphilosophen* (such as Gentz and Garve). While Mendelssohn and Lessing defend a Burkeian model of aesthetics, it is the combination of his aesthetics with his politics that, as we have started to see already, stands as the counter to Kant's position. Pausing to hear Kant's argument on the matter will help further the position outlined in Chapter 2, as well as its place here in debate with Burke's defenders.

Kant was fundamentally concerned with the question of how to orient one's thinking, especially given rational paradoxes or unknown information.²⁹⁰ To this end,

²⁸⁸ Leo Strauss's Dissertation, *The Problem of Knowledge in the Philosophical Doctrine of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi*, (1921), Taken from the section "The Doctrine of Being: Knowledge and Life" p. 56 in Michael Zank's translation in *Leo Strauss, The Early Writings, 1921-1932* (SUNY Press, 2002).

²⁸⁹ See Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, p. 98).

²⁹⁰ Readers familiar with Kant will recognize this as his inventive argument on philosophic antinomies in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (St. Martin's Press, 1929), here esp. 396

he employed his essay “What is Orientation in thinking?” to simultaneously combat the *Schwärmer* thinking as he saw evidencing itself in both Mendelssohn and Jacobi’s positions, thus ‘defending the maxims of healthy reason against the sophistical attacks of speculative person itself.’²⁹¹ Kant, in a sophisticated move, mimics Burke’s empiricist account of feeling, but then draws out this account to psychological extremes. As he argues the point,

To orient oneself, in the proper sense of the word, means to use a given direction (when we divide the horizon into four of them) in order to find the others – literally, to find the sunrise. If I see the sun in the sky and know that it is now midday, I know how to in find south, west, north, and east. For this purpose, however, I must necessarily be able to feel difference within my own subject, namely that between my right and left hands. I call this a feeling, because these two sides outwardly display no perceivable difference as far as external intuition is concerned.²⁹²

Orientation is something, even in thinking, that we first must feel. As we become accustomed to the feeling of being orientated, we become eventually only recognize when we are not feeling a proper orientation to something (in thought or in matter).

That this orientation pertains to experiences of the sensory as well as the supersensible realm is crucial, for how else—so Kant argued – could reason investigate that which it did not already know. The problem with a Burkeian

(A426/B454) – 422 (A462/B490), which stands, from Kant’s view, as his critique of the limits of metaphysics. For the best overview of the content of the antinomies and their place in the context of Kant’s philosophic project broadly speaking, see Henry Allison’s *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, revised and expanded version (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) esp. pp. 357-395.

²⁹¹ From Kant’s essay “What is Orientation in Thinking?” in Hans Reiss’ edition of *Kant: Political Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 238

²⁹² “What is Orientation in Thinking?” p. 238.

conception of the world (which Mendelssohn is emblematic of), by Kant's view, is that new knowledge of concepts becomes impossible. As Kant explains,

The concept in itself tells us nothing as far as the extinct of (such and such an) object and its real connection with the world (as the embodiment of all objects of possible experience) are concerned. It is at this point, however, that the right of the need of reason supervenes as a subjective ground for presupposing and accepting something which reason cannot presume to know on objective grounds, and hence for orienting ourselves in thought – i.e. in the immeasurable space of the supersensory realm which we see as full of utter darkness – prelate by means of the need of reason itself.²⁹³

Orientating thinking towards the end of reason, e.g.. the feeling that accompanies reason that can guide it according to moral cause (what we, with Kant, defined as enthusiasm), is the means to distinguish thinking from fantasy. Kant does not need faith (as Jacobi did) to accomplish such orientation. Instead, what is necessary is that reason 'feel' the need to investigate the world from a particular standpoint. This 'feeling' which drives reason is what Kant will eventually define as enthusiasm.²⁹⁴

Such a theory nears treacherous philosophic ground, esp. in an academic and political environment where the charge of atheism could easily malign one's career and, which hanging edicts on free speech, could result in imprisonment. As Kant subtly warns in a footnote, "We must simply refrain from claiming that hat is only a necessary presupposition (the feeling of enthusiasm, the need of reason) is in fact a free insight, so as not to show our adversary in dogmatism needless weaknesses which

²⁹³ "What is Orientation in Thinking?", pp. 240-241.

²⁹⁴ I'm referring here to Kant's essay in the *Conflict of the Faculties*; see my analysis in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

he can exploit to our disadvantage.” Kant generously continues (though clearly here distinguishing himself from Mendelssohn and as we shall see, from the popular philosophy movement generally, “It probably did not occur to Mendelssohn that dogmatizing in the supra-sensory sphere with the help of pure reason leads straight to philosophical zealotry (*Schwärmerei*), and that only a critique of this same faculty of reason can thoroughly cure this evil.”²⁹⁵ What Kant intends is a critique of reason that allows for the grounding of this experience of enthusiasm so as to distinguish it from *Schwärmerei*.

While Kant further develops his thinking not his point, the claim here is that opinion must admonish ‘rational beliefs’ so as to allow reason to function beyond that which it already knows in the world (this will form the basis for Kant’s theory of intuitions, which themselves allow sensory experience and supersensory experience both to be categorized). Kant wants to be clear that ‘a pronouncement of healthy reason’ is neither judgments based on ‘rational insight’ nor on ‘rational inspiration’, but instead on rational belief. He argues the point as such;

Rational belief is one which is based on no other data than those which are inherent to pure reason. Now all belief is a conviction of truth which is subjectively adequate but considered as objectively inadequate, it is therefore treated as consciously the opposite of knowledge...this need of reason to be used in a theoretical way which itself finds satisfactory would be nothing other than a purely rational hypothesis, i.e. an opinion which is adequate on subjective grounds as a basis for considering something to be true simply because one cannot ever expect to find grounds other than these on which to explain the effects in question, although reason needs to have a means of explaining them.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ “What is Orientation in Thinking?” p. 242.

Kant aims here to draw a strong distinction between his own epistemology and Spinoza's (thus aiming to end the debate pantheisms debate). Kant thus asserts that his

Critique of Pure reason

Shows that in order to assert the possibility of being which is itself the object of thought it is not nearly enough that its concept should be free from contradiction (although it remains permissible to assume the possibility at a later stage if the need arises). Spinozism, however, claims to have perceived the impossibility of a being the idea of which consist sole of pure concepts of the understating which have simply been detached from all conditions of sense-experience, and in which it is therefore impossible ever to discover a contradiction; yet it is unable to adduce any evidence whatsoever in support of this extravagant assumption. This is precisely why Spinoza leads directly to zealotry (*Schwärmerei*).²⁹⁷

The path of *Schwärmerei* looks a lot like Burke's critique of enthusiasm, though Kant himself consequently distinguishes between an enthusiasm that avoids these pitfalls from the kind that does not.

The genius is at first delighted with its daring flights, having cast aside the thread by which reason formerly guided it. It soon captivates others in turn with its authoritative pronouncements and great expectations, and now appears to have set itself up on a throne on which slow and ponderous reason looked so out of pace; nevertheless m it still continues to use the language of reason. It then dots the maxim that the supreme legislation of reason is invalid, a maxim which we ordinary morals describe as zealotry (*Schwärmerei*), but which those favorites of benevolent nature despite as illumination. Meanwhile, a confusion of tongues must soon arise among them, for while reason alone can issue institutions which are valid for everyone, each individual now follows his own inspiration. The ultimate consequence of all this is that inner inspirations are inevitably transformed into facts confirmed by external

²⁹⁶ "What is Orientation in Thinking?" pp. 244-245.

²⁹⁷ See Kant's own footnote to page 246 in "What is Orientation in Thinking?"

evidence, which, though they were originally freely chosen, eventually become binding documents.²⁹⁸

This becomes the avenue which Garve and Gentz will direct their critique, for they see Kant as susceptible to the claim of himself being a Schwärmer. What I aim to show here, though, is that by reducing enthusiasm to a single form of zealotry, Burke and his German sympathizers, Mendelssohn included, are subscribed to the aggrandizement of superstition and the revival of a more powerful Schwärmerei.

3.3

Nowhere is this critique more clear than in the Friedrich Gentz' translation of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.²⁹⁹ Gentz was a young and upcoming member of the *popularphilosophen*, and one especially well suited to use Burke for a critique of Kant. Indeed, While Gentz was finishing his studies under Kant, the

²⁹⁸ "What is Orientation in Thinking?" p. 248.

²⁹⁹ On Gentz's intellectual development, see Sweet's Friedrich von Gentz. Also, see Arendt's review of Sweet, "A Believer in European Unity," in the *Review of Politics*, 1942, 4:245-247. For Gentz's place in the historical transformation of German politics, esp. regarding the French revolution, see Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*, pp. 91-103. Regarding his role in the development of conservatism, see Epstein, the *Genesis of German Conservatism*, pp. 655-660. Gentz's views were central to both the German critique of the French Revolution, but also early American republican conceptions of Enthusiasm, per John Adam's, who translated Gentz's own reflections on the French and American revolutions in comparison. See Gentz' "The Origins and principles of the American Revolution compared with the Origins and principles of the French Revolution" (Philadelphia: H. Maxwell Printer, Columbia House, 1800). By Adam's account, Gentz manages to rescue the principles of the American Revolution 'from the disgraceful imputation of having proceeded from the same principles as that of France' p. 3. Importantly, Gentz was not always positioned against Kant. While he first entered intellectual circles through Moses Mendelssohn's introduction, Kant also took favor to him, including employing him as the first proofreader to his Critique of Judgment. For further details on Gentz's place in late 18th century German philosophic life, see John's Whiton's "Friedrich Gentz and the Reception of Edmund Burke in Post-Revolutionary Germany," *German Life and Letters*, 1993 (for these points esp. p. 313).

revolution began to break out. And, while initially influenced by and admitting of the republican basis of the revolution, Gentz quickly became repulsed by the unheeded violence he saw ensuing. Gentz was convinced that the events in France were not, as many argued, the historical and philosophical culmination of eighteenth century discourse, but instead (here aligning well with Burke) the destruction of the very basis of social order that had come to persist as the success of that century.

As many have noted, Gentz transformation away from his youthful defense of republican principles (and relatedly Kant) mirrored the growing influence that Christian Garve was beginning to play in his intellectual and personal life.³⁰⁰ Garve, a leading figure for the *popularphilosophen*, esp. with his ‘*Lebensphilosophie*,’ was also the first translator of Burke’s inquiry into German (as noted above). Garve was well known for his emphasis on the place of common sense in society and politics, and the need for philosophy to address the ordinary and practical elements of human life. Gentz began to employ Garve’s thinking, as a critique of Kant. Such influence was employed to important political ends in Gentz’s translation of Burke’s *Reflections*.

As I aim to show in my analysis here, Gentz attempted to employ Burke in the debate over the dangers of enthusiasm, even while obfuscating Burke’s singular conception of enthusiasm as a mental state. At stake here is that the German reading audience, encountering Burke for the first time through Gentz’s translation, was being led to believe that enthusiasm and Schwärmerei interacted as a multiplied conception of enthusiasm in Burke’s own thinking. While Burke himself held a singular view,

³⁰⁰ Again, see Whiton, “Friedrich Gentz and the Reception of Edmund Burke in Post-Revolutionary Germany,” p. 313-4

chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation have illustrated that this was not the case for many involved in German public discourse. By obfuscating this distinction, Gentz plays on the fears of the German public regarding the revolution, and puts Burke's reflections to his own political aims.

Gentz's preface to his translation begins with what he perceives as the fundamental problematic that exemplifies modernity: "The present times are beset by confusion produced through *Schwärmerei*..." (*In Zeiten, wie die gegenwärtigen, wo Verwirrung in den Grundsätzen und Schwärmerey in den Empfindungen, ein politisches System ausbrüten, welches die Ruhe und Sicherheit aller Nationen bedroht...*).³⁰¹ That such confusion, culminating in political upheaval in France (and for Gentz, France was just the beginning), is consequent to *Schwärmerei* and not *Enthusiasmus* is more than a little significant. Gentz asserts that a kind of political fanaticism had emerged which was disrupting historical structures – and for a German audience, such fanaticism would be aligned (again, as we saw in the first two chapters of this dissertation) with mystical and metaphysical delusions. While Burke himself admits of France suffering at the hands of political theologians engaging in practical metaphysics, Gentz's translation pushes Burke's critique into new directions, coaching it in this specific German discourse, and allowing for the obfuscations of Burke's singular view.

³⁰¹ From Gentz's *Betrachtungen über die französische Revolution* (from now on *Betrachtungen*); his translation of the *Reflections* (Berlin, 1793), p. v. NB: This is the opening passage of Gentz's work.

The significance of Gentz's use of *Schwärmerei* as opposed to enthusiasm presents itself in the particular examples Gentz employs the distinction. As I argued in section 2 of this chapter, Burke is best read as having multiple conceptions of the sublime, and a singular conception of enthusiasm. The stakes for this are that the revolution, by Burke's view, is allowing for confusion of the human and the divine. Having multiple conceptions of enthusiasm might, we can reasonable speculate, have allowed Burke an avenue for motivating attention away from what he perceived as the false conception of the sublime (for as it stands now, his theory lacks any real way for individuals distinguishing the two experiences, merely the two objects).

Thus, it is all the more surprising, given these structural parameters of Burke's political theory in his reflections, that Gentz employs competing notions of enthusiasm to specifically mask multiple conceptions of the sublime. Consider, for example, Burke's critique of the revolutionary psychology,

This distemper of remedy, grown habitual, relaxes and wears out, by a vulgar and prostituted use, the spring of that spirit which is to be exerted on great occasions. It was in the most patient period of Roman servitude that themes of tyrannicide made the ordinary exercise of boys at school—*cum perimit saevos classis numerosa tyrannos*. In the ordinary state of things, it produces in a country like ours the worst effects, even on the cause of that liberty which it abuses with the dissoluteness of an extravagant speculation. Almost all the high-bred republicans of my time have, after a short space, become the most decided, thorough-paced courtiers; they soon left the business of a tedious, moderate, but practical resistance, to those of us whom, in the pride and intoxication of their theories, they have slighted, as not much better than tories. Hypocrisy, of course, delights in the most sublime speculations; for, never intending to go beyond speculation, it costs nothing to have it magnificent. But even in cases where rather levity than fraud was to be suspected in these ranting speculations, the issue

has been much the same. These professors, finding their extreme principles not applicable to cases which call only for a qualified, or, as I may say, civil and legal resistance, in such cases employ no resistance at all. It is with them a war or a revolution, or it is nothing. Finding their schemes of politics not adapted to the state of the world in which they live, they often come to think lightly of all public principle; and are ready, on their part, to abandon for a very trivial interest what they find of very trivial value. Some indeed are of more steady and persevering natures; but these are eager politicians out of parliament, who have little to tempt them to abandon their favourite projects. They have some change in the church or state, or both, constantly in their view. When that is the case, they are always bad citizens, and perfectly unsure connexions. For, considering their speculative designs as of infinite value, and the actual arrangement of the state as of no estimation, they are at best indifferent about it. They see no merit in the good, and no fault in the vicious management of public affairs; they rather rejoice in the latter, as more propitious to revolution. They see no merit or demerit in any man, or any action, or any political principle, any further than as they may forward or retard their design of change: they therefore take up, one day, the most violent and stretched prerogative, and another time the wildest democratic ideas of freedom, and pass from the one to the other without any sort of regard to cause, to person, or to party.³⁰²

Here, what Burke describes as republicans' 'sublime speculations,' Gentz translates as 'Schwärmerey.'³⁰³ Within this context it should be clear that the alignment of what burke viewed as republican hypocrisy, with what Gentz's audience would understand an untempered and unmitigated fanaticism, moves Burke's critique in a unique direction. That 'sublime' and 'ranting' speculations are both translated as 'Schwärmerey,' extends the point further, that Gentz structures his translation of Burke along the dangers of 'Schwärmerey' along with enthusiasm, rather than – as

³⁰² *Reflections*, pp. 74-75

³⁰³ Gentz's *Betrachtungen*, p. 97

Burke himself would – with a double conception of authentic and false notions of the sublime itself.

Further analysis should make this point evident. For Gentz reveals, in other uses of the term ‘*Schwärmerey*,’ his consciousness of the general associations should a phrase evokes. Consider Burke’s accounting of a frenzied mob,

In England... we are generous enemies: we are faithful allies. We spurn from us with disgust and indignation the slanders of those who bring us their anecdotes with the attestation of the flower-de-luce on their shoulder. We have Lord George Gordon fast in Newgate; and neither his being a public proselyte to Judaism, nor his having, in his zeal against Catholic priests and all sort of ecclesiastics, raised a mob (excuse the term, it is still in use here) which pulled down all our prisons, have preserved to him a liberty, of which he did not render himself worthy by a virtuous use of it.³⁰⁴

Gentz appropriately equates ‘mob’ with ‘*Schwärm*.’³⁰⁵ As German readers would expect, a group of religiously motivated zealots would best be described – even prior to the French Revolution – as a *Schwärm*.

We note a similar use of *Schwärmerei* in Gentz’s translation of Burke’s accounting of that paramount historical illustration of enthusiasm, the revolt of the Anabaptists.

When the Anabaptists of Münster, in the sixteenth century, had filled Germany with confusion by their system of levelling and their wild opinions concerning property, to what country in Europe did not the progress of their fury furnish just cause of alarm? Of all things, wisdom is the most terrified with epidemical fanaticism, because of all enemies

³⁰⁴ *Reflections*, pp. 98-99.

³⁰⁵ *Reflections*, p. 132. For further discussions on the idea of the mob, see Jason Frank’s *Constituent Moments* (Duke 2010), as well as Elias Canetti’s classic *Crowds and Power* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1960).

it is that against which she is the least able to furnish any kind of resource. We cannot be ignorant of the spirit of atheistical fanaticism, that is inspired by a multitude of writings, dispersed with incredible assiduity and expence, and by sermons delivered in all the streets and places of public resort in Paris. These writings and sermons have filled the populace with a black and savage atrocity of mind, which supersedes in them the common feelings of nature, as well as all sentiments of morality and religion; insomuch that these wretches are induced to bear with a sullen patience the intolerable distresses brought upon them by the violent convulsions and permutations that have been made in property. The spirit of proselytism attends this spirit of fanaticism. They have societies to cabal and correspond at home and abroad for the propagation of their tenets. The republic of Berne, one of the happiest, the most prosperous, and the best governed countries upon earth, is one of the great objects, at the destruction of which they aim. I am told they have in some measure succeeded in sowing there the seeds of discontent. They are busy throughout Germany. Spain and Italy have not been untried. England is not left out of the comprehensive scheme of their malignant charity; and in England we find those who stretch out their arms to them, who recommend their examples from more than one pulpit, and who choose, in more than one periodical meeting, publicly to correspond with them, to applaud them, and to hold them up as objects for imitation; who receive from them tokens of confraternity, and standards consecrated amidst their rites and mysteries; who suggest to them leagues of perpetual amity, at the very time when the power, to which our constitution has exclusively delegated the federative capacity of this kingdom, may find it expedient to make war upon them.³⁰⁶

Here both Gentz and Burke, drawing from similar histories, refer to the Anabaptists as fanatics. That Gentz follows Burke along this thinking, and continues to use this rhetoric would, it is reasonable to assume, reinforce for German readers the connection between fanaticism and enthusiasm in Burke's text. Gentz has no problem earlier describing members of the 5th Monarchy group as religious *Schwärmer*,³⁰⁷ and

³⁰⁶ *Reflections*, pp. 180-182. Gentz describes the Anabaptists (following on Burke) as fanatics Gentz's *Betrachtungen*, p. 242. For further discussion of the Anabaptist movement, see chapter 1.

³⁰⁷ Gentz's *Betrachtungen*, p. 113 On the fifth monarchy see Hill's *The World Turned Upside-Down*, also Knox's *Enthusiasm*, and Frank's "Beside Our Selves."

in so doing, illustrates that he is operating under the assumption that religious fanaticism and enthusiasm align together in history and in Burke's text.³⁰⁸

Yet Gentz's manipulation of Burke runs counter his own purposes. By continuing to highlight the dangers of *Schwärmerei*,

I have to remark, that Dr. Price seems rather to over-value the great acquisitions of light which he has obtained and diffused in this age. The last century appears to me to have been quite as much enlightened. It had, though in a different place, a triumph as memorable as that of Dr. Price; and some of the great preachers of that period partook of it as eagerly as he has done in the triumph of France. On the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters for high treason, it was deposed, that when King Charles was brought to London for his trial, the Apostle of Liberty in that day conducted the triumph. "I saw," says the witness, "his majesty in the coach with six horses, and Peters riding before the king triumphing." Dr. Price, when he talks as if he had made a discovery, only follows a precedent; for, after the commencement of the king's trial, this precursor, the same Dr. Peters, concluding a long prayer at the royal chapel at Whitehall, (he had very triumphantly chosen his place) said, "I have prayed and preached these twenty years; and now I may say with old Simeon, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Peters had not the fruits of his prayer; for he neither departed so soon as he wished, nor in peace. He became (what I heartily hope none of his followers may be in this country) himself a sacrifice to the triumph which he led as Pontiff. They dealt at the Restoration, perhaps, too hardly with this poor good man. But we owe it to his memory and his sufferings, that he had as much illumination, and as much zeal, and had as effectually undermined all the superstition and error which might impede the great business he was engaged in, as any who follow and repeat after him, in this age, which would assume to itself an exclusive title to the knowledge of the rights of men, and all the glorious consequences of that knowledge.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ Again, see Hill's *The World Turned Upside-Down*, also Knox's *Enthusiasm*, and Frank's "Beside Our Selves."

³⁰⁹ *Reflections*, pp. 77-78.

Here superstition and error become Schwärmerei.³¹⁰ The costs of this shift are that Burke's rhetoric of enthusiasm suffers from its division in German into enthusiasm and Schwärmerei. Consequently, Burke's critique of the false sublime, and his defense of prejudice both become maligned.

Gentz's popular philosophy critique of the revolutionaries as both enthusiasts and Schwärmeren stands starkly here against Kant's views, especially on thinking, but also on the individual place in society and as a political subject. As discussed above, the conflict between the Burkeians and Kant and his allies had already begun to play itself out in the debate over theory and practice.³¹¹ While Gentz and Garve argued for historical tradition as the basis for judging political reform, Kant argued that such basis could be weakened by malformed theory. If the past had already been corrupted, there was little that would keep that continuing basis of reform free from such corruption. Kant, instead, hoped to use moral reasoning as a ground for new reforms. If corrupted theory led to corrupted practice, than purified theory could be used to alternative means.

How to locate such a theory, and how to justify it, was precisely what was at stake in the debate over the moral parameters for the revolution as well as the place and danger of 'Schwärmerei' in such basis. What Kant saw as misapplied prejudice to justify self-interested political reform, Burke's German supporters saw as common traditional belief used to uphold historically stable institutions. Each saw in the other a

³¹⁰ Gentz's *Betrachtungen*, p. 101.

³¹¹ For further elaborations on this point, see Louis Hunt's "Principle and Prejudice: Burke, Kant, and Habermas on the Conditions of Practical reason," in *History of Political Thought*, 23.1 2002, p. 129.

fanatical drive to defend unsupported thesis (the one historical, the other transcendental). Kant was certainly aware of the dangers of philosophy to succumb to the unreasoning of the ‘*Schwärm.*’ In that same essay he asserts, “(Such) a theory which concerns objects of perception is quite different from one in which such objects are represented only through concepts, as with objects of mathematics and of philosophy (and politics). The latter objects can perhaps quite legitimately be thought of by reason, yet it may be impossible for them to be given. They may merely exist as empty ideas which either cannot be used at all in practice or only with some practical disadvantages.”³¹²

That reason can go astray is not, however, justification enough for its abandonment to pure prejudice. Indeed, while moral judgment should be distinguished from political judgment, pretending that moral structures don’t have import for evaluating reformist politics seems to go against the very possibility of historical change. What Burke and his German supporters aimed at was the dangers in losing sight of the conditions in which practical reasoning and moral judgment developed. This lesson, despite their defense of prejudice, seems valuable – though perhaps more so in a world where multiple forms of enthusiasm persist.

Conclusions – The Costs of a Unified Conception of Enthusiasm

³¹² From Kant’s “On the relationship of Theory to Practice in Morality in General,” from *Kant: Political Writings* p. 62.

In this chapter I have tried to show both the dangers of enthusiasm as articulated by Burke, one of its staunchest and most potent critics, as well as the inconsistencies in that argument and its inheritance. Burke's *Reflections* represent a reaction to enthusiasm as destructive, at least when employed in political contexts. The danger of this application, by Burke's view, relates to the experience of humanity, through political action, of a kind of felt limitlessness. Within the confines of religion, such an experience – esp. where the object of the feeling of enthusiasm is divine – seemed appropriate to Burke. But when the feeling of the sublime was directed to a human world, the very operation of the sublime – a terrified delight in a perception of the subject's own limitedness in the face of the infinite – becomes confused. Without a properly functioning conception of the sublime, enthusiasm and reason cannot remain in balance. As Burke explains it,

Wisdom is not the most severe corrector of folly. They are the rival follies, which mutually wage so relenting a war; and which make so cruel a use of their advantages, as they can happen to engage the immoderate vulgar on the one side or the other in their quarrels. Prudence would be a neuter; but if in the contention between fond attachment and fierce antipathy conceiving things in their nature not made to produce such heats, a prudent man were obliged to make a choice of what errors and excesses of enthusiasm he would condemn or bear, perhaps he would think the superstition which builds, to be more tolerable than that which demolishes; that which adorns a country, than that which deforms it; that which endows, than that which plunders; that which disposes to mistaken beneficence, than that which stimulates to real injustice; that which leads a man to refuse to himself lawful pleasures, than that which snatches from others the scanty subsistence of their self-denial. Such, I think, is very nearly the state of the question

between the ancient founders of monkish superstition, and the superstition of the pretended philosophers of the hour.³¹³

Philosophy becomes a dangerous political tool when enthusiasm and reason remind ignorant of each other and their mechanisms. The German inheritance of Burke's critique here misses this point, and in so doing, corrupts Burke's lessons on the dangers of enthusiasm as he understood it for the purposes of a German debate that had more complicated notions.

³¹³ *Reflections*, p. 188.

Chapter 4

The Nation and the Swarm

A good and sound constitution is one under which the law holds sway over the hearts of the citizens; for, short of the moment when the power of legislation shall have accomplished precisely that, the laws will continue to be evaded. But how to reach men's hearts? Our present-day lawgivers, thinking exclusively in terms of coercion and punishment, pay almost no attention to that problem – for which, perhaps, material rewards are no better solution. And justice, even the purest justice, is not a solution either. For justice, like good health, is a blessing that people enjoy without being aware of it, that inspires no enthusiasm, and that men learn to value only after they have lost it.

– Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*

Introduction – Motivating Nationalism

As Burke's critique of enthusiasm helpfully illustrates, the question of political mobilization (both its mechanisms and its object) has long held pause as a stumbling block for well-functioning politics. How to inspire enthusiasm (which, as Rousseau observes in the above epigraph, is not easily accomplished, even with 'coercion and punishment,' gain of financial interest, or 'justice') is not well enough understood. This is especially the case, both because requisite outcomes to it are sometimes viewed as politically disastrous (pace Burke), or because, as a type of a behavior, enthusiasm is often (following Locke) eschewed.

By way of gaining further ground on the question of whether and how enthusiasm can serve as means for political mobilization, I transition in this chapter away from the experience of enthusiasm as such, and towards a context that exhibits the problems, and presumably also the benefits, requisite to enthusiasm. As should be clear by now, enthusiasm, when considered as a political concept (and not merely a religious or moral one) has historically been directly connected with nationalism.³¹⁴ Worth considering here, though, is how ‘the nation’ came to be that object which would be employed to mobilize political action by which enthusiasm would be of need.³¹⁵ The kinds of obligations and loyalties nations require for functional allegiance (exceeding local political structures, even while evoking bounded alliances through territoriality), seem – by most accounts – to depend on some expression of particularism. How that particularism expresses itself – that is, how the ‘mine-ness’ of narratives of allegiance feel to those involved in the narrative – is what remains under issue.

This chapter focuses specifically on the relationship between nationalism and enthusiasm. Redirecting the preceding discussion on political emotions to the process of nationalism should help make evident the consequences of these theoretical

³¹⁴ While some of this is already addressed in earlier chapters, it is worth reminding the reader of this context with regards esp. to nationalism. For historical transformations in passions alongside political transformations in concepts, esp. nationalism, see Kahn et al, *Politics and the Passions, 1600-1850* (Princeton University Press, 2006); also, Kingston et al, *Bringing the passions back in: The emotions in political Philosophy* (UCB Press, 2008); and William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*, Cambridge University Press, 2001). On Rethinking the parameters of the nation, see esp. Rogers Brubaker’s *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (esp. Chapter 1) (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³¹⁵ See David Miller’s “The Ethics of Nationality,” especially his critique of inconsistencies on the ethical motivations of universalists, in *On Nationality* (Oxford, 1995) pp. 49-80.

arguments on allegiance formation to lived politics. Here I examine Johann Gottlieb Fichte's attempts to justify a *Volkish* theory of national collectivity, paying particular attention to his efforts to generate enthusiasm through his use of the concept of the 'German nation.'³¹⁶ I show that, while Fichte attempts to disassociate his theory of the nation from *Schwärmerei*, the result is a trenchant – though inadvertent – defense of the coupling of the two. Moreover, I aim to show how this brand of nationalism commits similar closures as the politics of disgust described in Chapter Three.

Section 1 – Creating Nations

1.1

That the question of what constitutes the nation continually appears as relevant comes as much from the political viability of the concept of the nation, even despite its

³¹⁶ Central to my thinking here on the complexities of Fichte's nationalism is Arash Abizadeh's "Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist? On Cultural Nationalism and its Double," in *History of Political Thought*, 26 (2005). On the best historical overview on Fichte's thinking on enthusiasm comes in Anthony la Vopa's *Fichte: The Self and the Calling of Philosophy, 1762-1799* (Cambridge University Press, 2001). For the critical view of Fichte's nationalism as the initiation of German 'romantic' nationalism, see Liah Greenfeld's *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Harvard UP, 1993) esp. 360-369. For the philosophical context of Fichte's political theory see Fred Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Harvard University Press, 1987); also Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism* (Harvard University Press 2003); Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Daniele Brezeale and Tom Rockmore (eds.), *Fichte: Historical Contexts/Contemporary Perspectives* (Humanities Press, 1994); Fred Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Wayne Martin's *Idealism and Objectivity: Understanding Fichte's Jena Project* (Stanford University Press, 1997). For Fichte's relationship to Romanticism see Gerald Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution, and the origins of Selfhood* (Princeton University Press, 1992) and Beiser's *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: the genesis of modern German political thought, 1790-1800*, esp. chapter 3 "Philosophy and Politics in J. G. Fichte's 1794 Wissenschaftslehre" (Harvard, 1992). On Fichte's linguistic nationalism, see David Martyn's excellent 'Borrowed Fatherland: Nationalism and the Language Purism in Fichte's Addresses to the German Nation, in *The Germanic Review*, 72 (4) (1997).

lack of conceptual clarity. That so much force could be produced from something so unclear is perhaps the whole point of enthusiasm – but before we entreat any conceptual link between nation and the secularized political enthusiasm as consequent to their shared obfuscation, it is worth explicating some working conception of the nation (in part because the original motivation for this project was to find avenues by which motivations for civic allegiance could be activated, independent of the objects in which those energies were vested).

So to begin, a nation is an object of allegiance. By this I mean it is something that one can imagine oneself as belonging to. This is related (though somewhat distinct) from Anderson's claim that the nation "is an imagined political community... imagined as both in inherently limited and sovereign."³¹⁷ For Anderson, 'imagined' belonging is juxtaposed to 'experienced' belonging, in that – as he puts it – "the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members." My account of imagined is somewhat different. From my perspective, belonging is always 'imagined' is that what each individual is allied themselves towards in the formation of some general will depends on their capacity to invent that will or themselves prior to the action of that will. Anderson seems to admit at least part of this point when he critiques Gellner for confusing the falsity of 'invention' (e.g. fabrication) with the authenticity of 'creation.' Despite this important distinction, Anderson's failing is that

³¹⁷ Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1991) p. 6.

he does not go far enough in developing a portrait – and critique – of what it would mean to imagine this ‘political community’ (or not).³¹⁸

My interest is not in delving too deeply into these contemporary debates on what constitutes the nation, but simply in highlighting what it seems nations do when they are invoked.³¹⁹ This background proves particularly relevant in the context of Fichte because there is, as yet for him in early 19th century Prussia, no clear conception of what a nation is, nor of the political power of the idea of nation as contemporary usage would imply.³²⁰ Investigations of Fichte are particularly useful then for thinking through the early theoretical formulations of the idea of the nation so as to articulate what the basis of the political motivation (even in theoretical terms) might be.

Nations do need to be differentiated from states. Nations are those objects of allegiance that groups of people share by which they come to think of themselves as belonging to a self-determining political entity.³²¹ Thus nations are unique from states,

³¹⁸ On the development of nation-state projects see Philip Roeder’s *Where Nation-States Come from: Institutional Change in the Age of Nationalism* (Princeton University Press, 2007). On the problems of nations and nationalism, I follow on Brubaker’s recent arguments in *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Harvard University Press, 2004). The classic text with regards to the problems of nationalism is Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism* (Blackwell, 2006).

³¹⁹ Here, again, I follow Brubaker closely – see his *Ethnicity Without Groups*.

³²⁰ On Fichte’s place (and prejudices there) in contemporary debates on nationalism, see Brubaker’s *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Harvard University Press, 1992); and (again), Greenfeld’s *Nationalism* p. 368. The classic texts here remain Elie Kedourie’s *Nationalism* (Blackwell, 1993, reissue) and Hans Kohn’s *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study of its Origins and Background* (Transaction Publishers, 2005, reissue with Craig Calhoun).

³²¹ Mine is a composite definition compiled from Brubaker’s (*Nationalism Reframed*) and Margaret Canovan’s in her *Nationhood and Political Theory* (Elgar Publishing, 1998).

which themselves are sets of institutions which that polity employs.³²² Such a division between nations and states has several theoretical advantages. Nations, as conceptual (or imagined) entities can serve to motivate a populous that is, as yet, not in clear standing of political power.³²³ Having the nation precede the state, gives a theoretical vehicle by which to relocate groups, without sacrificing the stability and authority of the polity once formed. Here the nation risks everything for the state, where the state is the goal of institutionalized political power. This advantage increases over time, as when the state happens to become corrupt or impotent, nations can relocate their relationships to particular states without sacrificing the integrity of the group.³²⁴

The obvious danger in such linking between nations and states is that the legitimate location of authority can become obscured. If nations can always legitimately relocate away from state institutions and still preserve political authority, then state institutions risk becoming invalidated. Yet, despite this instability, if nations cannot freely exit state structures, those structures risk political legitimacy and viability.³²⁵ This instability was itself made evident in the French Revolution. There it was feared that the French nation, by excavating itself from the French state in the

³²² On the confusion of nation and state see Miller *On Nationality*, p. 18-19.

³²³ This is the logic that Rousseau employs in his development of the national project for Poland. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Government of Poland* (Hackett, 1985).

³²⁴ Though this logic can, sometimes, be too successfully, preventing groups from disassociating themselves from the authority instated in particular institutions. For further elaboration on this point, see Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, 2004); and (again) Brubaker's *Ethnicity without Groups*.

³²⁵ Albert Hirschman, in his *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Harvard University Press, 1970) tries – somewhat problematically – to defend these complexities in the interactions between nations and states.

ancien regime and relocating itself to a more modern democratic state apparatus, put the legitimacy of state structures themselves at risk. (For what would keep that nation from relocating again, and again, and again, whenever political turmoil and crisis emerged?)³²⁶

Such concerns as the viability of state power, as well as its maintenance and control, prove unendurably high stakes for groups competing for national self-determination. Indeed, these stakes create a real incentive structure to produce what Michael Walzer has aptly termed a ‘covering-law’ logic for universalism.³²⁷ By Walzer’s accounting, “Covering-law universalism describes the standard philosophical effort to bring all human activities, all social arrangements, all political practices, under a single set of principles or a single conception of the right or the good.”³²⁸ Nationalisms that operate according to such covering-laws have clear mechanisms for inclusion and exclusion; either the law is known and heeded (resulting in peace), or it is not (resulting in violence). Such nationalisms operate so as to achieve the satisfaction of all requirements requisite to completing the covering-law.³²⁹ A politics for a nation that relies on covering-law mechanisms to archive national self-

³²⁶ This is obviously one of Burke’s significant concerns. For an elaboration on this problem see Lord Acton’s “On Nationality,” (originally in *The Home and Foreign Review*, 1862), as well as Canovan’s “Power from the people: nationhood and political community,” chapter 7 in *Nationhood and Political Theory*, pp. 68-82.

³²⁷ See Michael Walzer’s, Tanner Lecture “Nation and Universe,” from 1989.

³²⁸ Walzer “Nation and Universe,” pp. 532-533.

³²⁹ Walzer compares this ‘cover-law universalism’ to a reiterative model: “The idea of reiteration, by contrast, reflects an understanding that morality is made again and again; hence there cannot be a single stable covering law,” “Nation and Universe,” p. 533.

determination means that everything can be sacrificed in favor of the success of that nation (the achievement of the covering-law), for the problem of nationalism is who will be included and when and how.³³⁰ The problems requisite to employing covering-law universalisms to national projects is that particular nations, operating under such logics, come to believe that the acquisition of a successful nation-state project for *them* comes to be the end goal for the rest; everything can be justified in favor of achieving the nation.

The problem of motivation is central to the problem of nationalism.³³¹ I have already stated that the problem of motivation (which is contingent on political institutions, or at least those that are aspired to) is one of directing political energies to successfully achieve political goals. This problem is made more complicated in liberal democracies by the ideal structure of inclusion, but any state must devise some solution to how it will motivate its members. The nation can be a helpful means to this motivational problem. As the object of allegiance, it can be employed so as to set the direction and space by which and to which political energies can be directed. I say ‘direction’ and ‘space’ because it seems that is the gulf between actual existing political conditions and desired outcomes (by which this conceptual ‘space’ attenuates itself). The space that appears because of an articulated distance between conditions and goals also creates avenues for energies to unite the two together. It is this

³³⁰ Obviously this is the danger as romantic nationalism is perceived. Again, see Judith Shklar’s *After Utopia, The Decline of Political Faith* (Princeton University Press, 1957); as well as Kohn’s *The Idea of Nationalism*; and Greenfeld’s *Nationalism* on this point.

³³¹ See Miller on the nation as motivation in chapter 2 of his *On Nationality*.

eradication of the gulf between existing conditions and the desired outcomes (embodied in the nation) that shapes the rhetoric of nationalism. This idea is similar to what one recent theorist has said of the concept of ‘a people,’ in that “it implies a gap with respect to every idea of the people as the gathering of parts of a population, a collective body in movement, an ideal body incarnated in sovereignty, etc.”³³² (How do we distinguish between the people and a nation?) This is sometimes articulated as a problem of the fluidity of nations – that nations lack so much definition as to be useful conceptual tools.³³³ But I want to argue, using Fichte, that this is part of the point of the idea of the nation. What requires clear definition is not the nation itself (for the nation is always some how in the future), but rather the space that appears between the present and the future. So long as clear avenues exist for directing political energies, the project of nationalism will be a successful political instrument for the motivational problem.

Indeed, it is precisely such ‘covering-law’ nationalisms that appear dangerous or hyper-violent, mistaking the end goal of national self-determination for their nation as the universal law for all other nations as well. As Canovan explains, “When the French revolutionary armies swarmed across Europe carrying their political understanding of nationhood as citizenship, they provoked German intellectuals like Fichte into articulating a Romantic counter-nationalism that focused on culture and

³³² See Jacques Ranciere’s *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (Continuum, 2010) p. 85.

³³³ Miller, *On Nationality*, p. 45.

particularly on language.”³³⁴ French nationalism operates under one covering-law; the reinvention of citizenship according to the ‘rights of man’ should form the basis for a well-functioning polity. The consequence of defending this (or any covering-law) is the provocation of reactions, of what will be termed ‘romantic’ nationalism.³³⁵

1.2

That the power of the nation as a political device lies in its capacity to motivate action aimed at eradicating that space which exists between current conditions and desired conditions (though also the avenues for the political energies of accomplishing such goals) expresses itself most clearly in Fichte’s political project. As Fichte explains,

Do not say: ‘Let us rest a while longer, let us sleep and dream a while longer,’ until, perchance, improvement comes of itself. It will never come of itself. He who has once missed the opportunity of yesterday, when reflection would have been more convenient, cannot make up his mind today, let alone tomorrow. Every delay only makes us more indolent and lulls us yet more deeply into genial habituation to our wretched plight.³³⁶

Fichte’s goal, of creating for his learned audience the conceptual framework and mechanism for employing the idea of the nation as a motivational tool to eventual

³³⁴ Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, p. 52.

³³⁵ Though, of course, such a reading of German nationalism as simply reactionary (or that it would be reactionary in this particular way) has its own politics to it.

³³⁶ Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*. ed. Greg Moore (Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 184.

cede from French occupation, has historical proved itself to be a complicated and yet instructive moment in the history of nationalism.

At stake in Fichte's nationalist project was a view of human freedom – both transcendental, but also political freedom.³³⁷ As Fichte puts the point, “Whatever has lost self-sufficiency has simultaneously lost its capacity to intervene in the stream of time and freely to determine the center thereof. If it persists in this state, its age, and itself with the age, are dispatched by the alien power that commands its fate; henceforth it is no longer has any time of its own, but reckonings its years according to the events and epochs of foreign peoples and empires.”³³⁸ Post the French Revolution, if the occupied German peoples would simply submit to the French, allowing their continued presence in German lands, than – so the story goes – the Germans would be absolving themselves of real (e.g. transcendental) freedom, at least insofar as they would merely be reacting to events in the world, rather than determining events in the world. Non-ethnic reading of Fichte: what is Fichte's relationship to the French revolution? Was this one-time supporter, and ally with Kant, now critiquing the French and their language because he was rejecting his previous stance and the value of the revolution? As Abizadeh observes, the French revolution is held in comparative opposition to romantic nationalism (collectivism of German versus individual rational contractarianism of France).³³⁹

³³⁷ See la Vopa, *Fichte*, p. 103. Also see Abizadeh's “Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist?”

³³⁸ *Addresses*, p. 10.

Fichte is held as a critique of this position, without succumbing to the kind of romantic nationalism that presumably someone like Müller (correctly) or Novalis (incorrectly) might best characterize.³⁴⁰ While Canovan wants to read romantic nationalism as itself always reactionary, Fichte at least premises his arguments on the basis of not letting reaction be the basis of his German nationalist project. At issue here then is whether and how Fichte can publically articulate a kind of nation that, through its creation, allows for the establishment of a sovereignty political entity capable of both foundation and maintain of its own political destiny.

The means by which Fichte hopes to develop this nationalist project is by returning legitimate authority to the public. Thus it is central to Fichte's political project that philosophy –by which Fichte means a Kantian critical reason – returns to the public sphere.³⁴¹ Fichte hoped that be engaging the (at least reading and thinking) public directly, that political freedom could become the cause of actualizing transcendental freedom. In order for any people to become truly free (which is to say, free from accident and nature), they must first establish themselves as political independent, both causally and historically. Philosophy, and esp. critical philosophy, was the means of accomplishing this.³⁴²

³³⁹ See Brubaker's *Nationalism Reframed* for the best reappraisal of this divide in nationalist literature. Here the French Revolution is not seen as nationalist, but as opposed to nationalism. As per Abizadeh, "Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist?" p. 338. Habermas is linked here with enlightenment conceptions of the contractarian nation imbued with the ideology of the revolution. 339.

³⁴⁰ For a rearticulating of the depth and limits of this problem, see Patchen Markell's *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton University Press, 2003), esp. Chapter 2 "The Distinguishing Mark."

³⁴¹ See Wayne Martin on Fichte's view of public reason, *Idealism and Objectivity*, pp. 11-29.

Section 2 – The Limits of Fichte’s Nationalism

2.1

Fichte’s national project bases itself on the problems of the German people’s being absent a nation, and the political unfreedom they suffered as a result of being at the hands of Napoleon’s troops.³⁴³ While the French civic nation was employed as a means to motivate political and subsequent military action, Fichte saw his fellow Prussians as impotent to combat such motivational force. He hoped to develop a means by which such impotency could be absolved, and German peoples could unite to over through their oppressors.

Fichte sought the means to unite the German people along parameters that preceded the conflict with France, yet could be employed to delineate the French as other and foreign. The vehicle that would accomplish this task of delineation and unification was, Fichte believed, to be found in a common language. This, so he thought, created the conditions for national group formation and cohesion. As Canovan argues the point, “the sign of a genuine nation was the existence of a distinct language... (and) nations exist within time as well as space, and only gradually fulfill

³⁴² This view of what philosophy is and should be connects Fichte closely with Kant’s conception of publicness. See my discussion of this in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

³⁴³ Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation* were delivered as Sunday lectures in the winter of 1807-1808 at the Berlin Academy of Sciences. The city of Berlin, at the time, had already been occupied for more than a year by French troops and command.

their predestined mission.”³⁴⁴ As we will see, Fichte needed a mechanism by which freedom would be achieved. Public philosophy would be the tool, but the matter by which that tool would work would, we now know, be based on the German language.

The question of what a people is – what constitutes a people from others, but also whereby does people originate – lurks behind Fichte’s efforts to politically unify the German speaking peoples of Prussia together.³⁴⁵ Preceded by Herder, who before him had already started to initiate a discourse of the concept of *Volk* and its place as a cultural tool for political ends, Fichte sought to actively unify German peoples under a particular nation with a state project that accompanied this new self-determination.³⁴⁶ Moreover, Fichte hoped that in a linguistic model of nationalism he could establish psychic resources to motivate rebellion against the French.

Yet behind Fichte’s nationalist project is the problematic view that such a linguistic model might also prove the basis for a kind of ethnic nationalism.³⁴⁷ Does Fichte’s linguistic champion cultural but not ethnic nationalism? At stake in this question is whether or how Fichte stands in relationship to later conceptions of the genealogical production of the nation, and whether Fichte is responsible for developing a romantic (in the pejorative sense of that term) conception of the nation

³⁴⁴ Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, p. 8. Also see Paul Gilbert, *Philosophy of Nationalism* (Westview Press, 1998), esp. ‘Land of heart’s desire’ pp. 126-132.

³⁴⁵ Three recent endeavors at similar questions include Jason Frank’s *Constituent Moments* (Duke University Press, 2010); Jeffrey Green’s *The Eyes of the People* (Oxford University Press, 2009), and Margaret Canovan’s *The People* (Polity, 2005). For Fichte’s view see *Addresses*, pp.50; 103.

³⁴⁶ On Herder’s nationalism as distinct from Fichte’s nation-state project, see Kedourie’s *Nationalism*.

³⁴⁷ See Abizadeh’s “Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist?” for the most recent investigation of this problematic on Fichte’s nationalism.

that could stand (dangerously, by later critics) as a reactionary counter to enlightenment contractarian views of purified civic nationalism.³⁴⁸ Unmediated ethnic nationalism, which champions a nation defined in the first instance in genealogical terms; and mediated or crypto-ethnic nationalism, which initially conceives of the nation in other terms, but whose nationalist politics in the final instance draws upon an ethnic supplement.³⁴⁹ How is the imagination working in these two conceptions of the nation? Kateb argues, rightly I think, that how a ‘We’ is constituted provokes a particular boundary on the use of imagination: “I call the self incorporation of oneself into a *We* a double process of using the imagination and refusing to use it. My reason is that by identifying with a group to the point of merger and self-loss, one sees oneself as everywhere present in others and everywhere absent as oneself. There one claims to be what one is not (dissolved helplessly in solidarity) and also turns out not to be what one is (an individual).”³⁵⁰ The imagination can only be flexible, before the authority which guides it is loosed. How groups imagine the nation is precisely susceptible to the kind of false impression that Kateb describes. At stake here is how strong an attractant the nation can be before it is too strong.

³⁴⁸ The question is whether Fichte initiates the now central division in nationalists discourse between *ethnos* and *demos*, between ethnic and civic nations and the kinds of citizens each will legitimately accept. For the most recent theoretical review of this literature see Clarissa Hayward’s very nice “Binding Problems, Boundary Problems: The Trouble with ‘Democratic Citizenship,’” in Benhabib et al, *Identities, Affiliations, and Allegiances* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁴⁹ Abizadeh’s “Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist?” p. 336.

³⁵⁰ Abizadeh’s “Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist?” p. 399.

Yet, is the nation itself necessary to solving a mobilization problem?³⁵¹ Alain Renault wants to argue that Fichte allows for the kind of cultural motivation democracies might want without falling prey to the dangerous ethnic nationalism that provokes undemocratic closure.³⁵² Abizadeh wants to argue, by contrast, that Fichte's crypto-ethnic logic prevents such motivations from occurring. Still, the question remains, how – for Fichte – is a people produced through language (and where does Fichte's linguistic model fall along this democratic / anti-democratic axis)?³⁵³ In order to answer these questions we need to uncover the structure of Fichte's linguistic model of national belonging.

2.2

Fichte directs his energies at establishing precisely that mechanism by which he believed his conception of the nation could be perceived. The German language was, by British accounts anyway, itself still imbued with 'ancient barbarity,' of the kind that lent itself to derangements.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ Abizadeh's "Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist?" p. 336 See Brian Barry 'Self-Government Revisited' in *Democracy and Power: Essays in Political Theory*, (Oxford University Press, 1991); and David Miller's seminal *On Nationality*.

³⁵² 'Presentation,' in Johan Gottlieb Fichte, *Discours a la nation allemande*, ed. A. Renault (Paris, 1992).

³⁵³ *Addresses*, pp. 100-103.

³⁵⁴ See Joseph Priestly, "A course of lectures on the theory of language and universal grammar," (W. Eyres, 1762), p. 283. For a further elaboration on Priestly's comments on German language and their place within then contemporary views of the German peoples and their language, see David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt Against Theory* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), esp. pp. 94-103.

As a means of navigating past such prejudice (or perhaps relying on it as a point of differentiation) Fichte makes an important distinction for his theory between originary and foreign language. The difference here being, as Fichte puts it, “in the former case, something peculiar to them is retained and in the latter cases something foreign adopted;” an original language is simply that language which was and is continually spoken without interruption, “for men are formed by language for more than language is by men.”³⁵⁵ What constitutes the original language is less important than that its originariness persists through time. Fichte goes so far as to suggest it is not of issue what the “prior ancestry of those who continue to speak an original language” is – what matters is that the language continues. Foreign languages, by contrast, are interrupted, and defined by interruptions in their development. These interruptions create space for adaption and refinement, for modifications according to contemporary fashion. History, by this account, finds itself connected to language and thus its expression, rather than through shared heritage of common descent. (This proves an equal stumbling block for Abizadeh’s argument, though, as I will show later, much additional evidence lends itself to part of Abizadeh’s worry.)

Central for Fichte is the actual physicality of how language is produced – which is to say that language depends on the actual speaking of it, whereby lived human beings express the sounds that we come to recognize as having meaning embedded in a linguistic system. As Fichte puts it, “Language in general, and particularly the designation of objects through the production of sound in the speech of

³⁵⁵ *Addresses*, p. 49.

organs, does not by any means depend on arbitrary decrees and conventions; rather there exists in the first instance a fundamental law according to which each concept is expressed by this sound and bond other through the human speech organ.”³⁵⁶ Fichte’s worry here is that if this physical connection of language to sound becomes ignored, then language itself becomes de-systematized, and thus susceptibility to the foreignness he seems to think so problematic.

What Fichte tries to articulate is the connection between linguistic expression and the natural world: that the originary language is that which can eventually be connected to an originary accounting of persons findings themselves in (yet distinct from) nature. As Fichte articulates the point, “Even after thousands of years, and after all the modifications that during this time the external appearance of the language of this same people has undergone, it remains ever the same one linguistic force of nature that must originally erupt just as it did, that has flowed without break though all different conditions, that under each condition had to become just s it become, at the end had to be just as it is now, and at some future time must become what it must then become.”³⁵⁷ The connections between this conception of an originary language connected to nature and a nation are close. But drawing the lines too quickly may be misreading what Fichte hopes to accomplish with his articulation of the parameters of an originary language. At stake here is whether it is even possible to conceptualize an originary experience of the world, unmitigated by disruptions and thus a dislocation

³⁵⁶ *Addresses*, p. 49.

³⁵⁷ *Addresses*, p. 50.

from history and time. Fichte explains, “the purely human language s expressed by the organ of a people from the day it produced its first sound, together with all the developments that this first sound had to acquire under given circumstances, yields as its final result the present language of the people. For that reason, the language remains ever the same language.”³⁵⁸ Here the people, the nation, are the product of knowledge imbedded within the language. Insofar as that language is originary, than the people who are the product of that language will have a connection to nature that would otherwise be impossible in a foreign language.

The problem with foreign language, by Fichte’s view, is that the physical expression of these new sounds may be disconnected form humans origin capacity to express sound, and thus somehow impair the ability of such languages to actually be communicated. As Fichte puts it, “If we call a people those men whose speech organs are subject to the same external influences, who live together and develop their language in continuous communication, then we must say: the language of this people is as it is by necessity, and it is not really the people that express their knowledge, but rather knowledge that expresses itself through the people.”³⁵⁹ In order for there to even be an originary language, that language must be connected to human physicality and the capacity to express that language. The consequences of this connectivity are that real knowledge (as opposed to false knowledge) of the world can exist and be expressed in the use of language.

³⁵⁸ *Addresses*, p. 50

³⁵⁹ *Addresses*, p. 50

Obviously languages are not simply sounds, but each must also develop their capacity to convey information. For Fichte, this information is divided into two categories: the sensuous and the supersensuous. Sensuous language is that language we use to designate objects that are perceived through the means of our senses. Such languages can often be shared with others in close proximity to us, and can be used to establish commonality. Attempts to communicate experiences from the sensuous realm are less likely to become confused, even if people don't happen to speak the same language. But, according to Fichte's theory, much of our use of language is directed at objects beyond this realm – that beyond the sensuous and into the supersensuous.

It turns out that the costs of such language are substantial. In order to even conceptualize of a supersensuous realm that could be communicated, individuals must posit the existence of a supersensuous self – which is to say, the individual must be able to conceive of themselves as more than mere body, and more than their sense can tell them about the world. Fichte's claim is that the self-standing 'I' originates as a consequence of the experiences which demand articulation that exceed the sensible realm: "If the supersensuous is to be repeated at will and kept from being confused with the sensuous for the first individual (who is capable of apprehending the supersensuous), and if it is to be communicated to others and give them suitably guidance (to also make such apprehensions), the only way at first to keep a firm hold of it is to designate a self as an organ of a supersensuous world and scrupulously distinguish it from the self that is an organ of the sensuous world – to oppose a soul, a mind and so on to a physical body."

Of course, Fichte encounters a deep philosophical problem in how it would come to be the case that such an individual could escape the solipsism he seems to be immersed in. While it may be possible to communicate about the sensuous realm with others, it is unclear whether or how an individual would ever be able to conceptualize of someone else having a self that could understand the supersensuous world. Here, again, the originary language has imbedded within the capacity to establish the ground by which a well-composed self could emerge. It is as though individuals who have not yet perceived the supersensuous world would, at the instant of receiving a view of it, be able to trust that it (and relatedly the self that must exist of that world is able to be received by them) must also exist, because language exists which can coherently communicate such worlds. From Fichte's view, the "symbolic designation of the supersensuous must in each case confirm to the stage of development reached by their faculty of sensuous cognition in a given people; that therefore the beginning and further progress of this symbolic designation will take a very different turn in different languages, according to the difference in the relation to that obtained and continues to obtain between the sensuous and spiritual development of the people speaking a language."³⁶⁰

The stakes, for Fichte, of speaking a language capable of this kind of direct relationship between the sensuous and the supersensuous pertain to the capacity of language to stimulate life forces – literally the energies of life itself. As Fichte explains the point, "since language (here, living language) is not the product of

³⁶⁰ *Addresses*, p. 51.

arbitrary arrangement but breaks forth as an immediate force of nature from rational life, a language that has continued to develop without interruption according to this (supersensuous) law also has the power to intervene directly in life and stimulate it.”³⁶¹ Here Fichte draws close connection between the continuity of language that extends from humans originary place within nature, and the capacity of such language, when directly connected to such originary experiences, to invest those who understand this language with such natural life forces as were present in that foundational moment. As Fichte continues his account, “as things immediately present to man move him, so too must the words of such a language move him who understands it, for they also are things and by no means arbitrary conveniences.” What matters here most to Fichte is that there could be such a language capable of accessing and conveying such essences. Or, as Fichte puts it himself, “the words of such a language in all its parts are life and create life in turn.”³⁶² Language that did not allow such immediate access to the life-world, that was discontinuous form that world, would react conditions for alienation based on the distance between the world as it is and the representation of that worlds in language.

These two languages, the language that allows for the stimulation for life and the language that institutes conditions for alienation, are what Fichte labels as the living and the dead. Living language is marked by the continuous persistence of a living culture embodied in a language. By contrast, a dead language, distinguishes

³⁶¹ *Addresses*, p. 53.

³⁶² *Addresses*, p. 53.

between spiritual culture and life. The political stakes of this distinction are immense. What proves so dangerous in a dead language, according to Fichte, is what happens consequent to these apparent irruptions in the continuity of the languages development. A living language, because it has a contiguous development, can consequently be continually related historical to all preceding developments. Any new supersensuous development in a language (and thus in the consciousness of a people) can appear clearly to that people as coming out of a well-understood history. Dead languages do not allow such clear viewing. Instead, distress in the development of these languages create spaces where those intent on holding political power can employ the means of rhetoric to instantiate artificial (and thus ideological) manifestations in the apparent super sensuous components of the dead language. Fichte explains that any language, which is dead “lends itself very easily to perversion and misuse in white-washing human corruption.”³⁶³ What matters so much for language is continuity, beginning at the originary instantiation of language as the representative of sensuous essences perceived in an originary world, and traced form that moment to the present. So long as a continuous path can be traced between the two, those who speak and understand this language can experience the world in comparable ways. This is what it means, for Fichte, for humans to be reasonable. If, by contrast, individuals speak a language that lacks any clear continuity, then their own identity itself become incoherent. As Fichte argues the point, “In a language that has remained continuously living this super sensuous part is symbolical; it summaries

³⁶³ *Addresses* p. 55.

at every step the totality of the sensuous and spiritual life of the nation as it is embedded in language in perfect unity, in order to designate a concept that is likewise not arbitrary but necessarily goes forth from the entire previous life of the nation.”³⁶⁴

A living language, one that has access to the clear spiritual presence of those who speak it, embodying that spirit, but also fining definition in their use of the language itself, creates conditions for national unity.

For Fichte *who* speaks *our* language sets the parameters for inclusion and exclusion within the nation itself. It is not, presumably, enough to know how to speak the language – for it is not a question of mere utility. Rather, what matters for Fichte is how the language comes to condition the very structure of one’s thoughts with others – with a people.

That a people persist overtime and generations gives them a reason to commit themselves to each other, to a politics, or to the eternal on earth. What matters most for a nation is that its members share a language and share it through time. This is, for Abizadeh, where descent enters the picture.³⁶⁵ By his view, it is the ascending generations that prove the inheritance of language and thus the spirit that is imbedded therein. Indeed, there is much good evidence for Abizadeh’s claim. Fichte’s constant efforts to exclude anything French can easily locate itself in his distinguishing of languages, and thus particular world-views consequent to those languages. (Indeed, there is a striking correlation between Fichte’s conceptualization of German as an

³⁶⁴ *Addresses*, p. 57.

³⁶⁵ On the metaphysical potential of the nation, per Abizadeh, see “Was Fichte and Ethnic Nationalist?” p. 349.

originary language and Swedenborg's defense of the language of angels; "In the entire heaven all have the same language and they all understand one another, to whatever society, near or remote, they belong. Language there is not learned but is instinctive with every one, for it flows from their very affection and thought, the tones of their speech corresponding to their affections, and the vocal articulations which are words corresponding to the ideas of thought that sprang from the affections; and because of this correspondence the speech itself is spiritual, for it is affection sounding and thought speaking."³⁶⁶)

Yet it remains an open question who it is that could speak this originary language and how that group comes to exist. While Abizadeh suggests that it is mere descent that constructs this group, Fichte is less clear on this point. Fichte seems less concerned with the composition of the originary group that engages the world through language, than that there is some group is still connected to this originary conception of the world through that language. As he argues it, "Let the original people who spoke this language incorporate however many other individuals of another tribe and another language if these new comers are not allowed to raise the sphere of their institutions to the standpoint from which hence forth the language will continue to develop, then they remain without voice in the community and without influence on the language until they themselves have gained entry into the sphere of intuitions of the original race. And so they do not form the language but the language forms

³⁶⁶ Translation is from J. C. Ager's Swedenborg, *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell from Things Heard and Seen* (New York, 1900), p. 134.

them.”³⁶⁷ While Fichte certainly includes some elements here that might prove disquieting, descent seems ancillary to the structuring of the group in question. What matters most is the existence of a language that is continuously living, and a group of people capable of apprehending the world with this language. The composition of that group need not remain consistent. The speaking of the language itself is what continues to be the relevant definition of their existence. If new individuals arrive who are capable of engaging the language, and of shaping their intuitions of the world according into the language, so be it. The true test of the language though will be when individuals arrive who are capable, not merely of being shaped by the language, but of shaping the language itself, and in this way adding to the super sensuous perception of the world.

What proves so complicated here is how we come to understand Fichte’s model of originary and foreign languages. Originary language can, by its consistency in time, allow for both individuals and groups who have developed in accordance with the structures of thinking requisites to speaking such language to be present in the world. This presenting in the world allows for the apprehension of structures as therein truly are, and thus for successful thinking (and philosophy). The weakness of foreign (e.g. French) peoples comes from their speaking language that is divorced from reality and in this way keeping them from thinking and being free. By Fichte’s view it is the German nation, as the embodiment of freedom that comes from the realistic apprehension formally through a language that conveys the structures as they are, that

³⁶⁷ Addresses, p. 53-4.

should be directing human history (rather than the French). Language matters as a mode for the nation because it matters how reality is structured and who should be afford legitimate political authority.

2.3

The above discussion should illustrate that Fichte, rather than defending an uncomplicated chauvinistic nationalism, that his theory instead stands between the nation defined by genealogical descent (*ethnos*) and the contractarian civic nation (*demos*). Indeed, in between these, Fichte offers up a third model of the nation as educatable.³⁶⁸ As Abizadeh rightly argues the point, “Like the genealogical conception, (Fichte’s educable model of the nation) recognizes the importance of past tradition and culture, especially the nations’ rootedness in a historic language. But unlike the genealogical conception, and like the contractual one, it is in principle open to anyone, i.e. irrespective of supposedly ascriptive characteristics.”³⁶⁹

Where I disagree with Abizadeh is how Fichte’s education towards this nation remains ‘open to anyone.’ Indeed, Fichte nation is defined, not though descent, but by a learned sharing with others.³⁷⁰ But as Fichte himself put s it in his definition of the

³⁶⁸ On the history of *Bildung* in German national consciousness, see Harvey Goldman’s exceptionally helpful *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (University of California Press, 1992).

³⁶⁹ *Addresses*, p. 340.

Volk (which should be read here as the people of a nation), “We call a people those men whose speech organs are subject to the same external influences, who live together and develop their language in continuous communication.”³⁷¹ Such ‘living’ that defines the nation is open to those who experience the same external influences, and themselves develop in the same place, described by a language that is continuous and reflective of that place. Such a world is ‘open’ in the sense of it being open to those who could participate in it (e.g. open to children who have not experienced another foreign model – of living, not open to anyone who wants to participate in willingly).

Importantly Fichte is redesigning education in political terms. Where as previous models of education were directed at producing a ‘good order and morality,’ this did not itself allow for ‘stirrings and motions’ e.g. political action.³⁷² As Fichte worried, “what more could one expect (from that presumably old and impractical system) of an education than to show the pupil what is right and exhort him faithfully to do it?”³⁷³ More specifically, that older system fails in will formation, which is to say, “In admitting that, despite its best efforts, the will is still free – that is, remains wavering between good and bad – this system admits that it neither can nor means nor at all desires to form the will or, since the will is the proper primary root of man

³⁷⁰ For the counter Abizadeh is arguing against, See Renault’s ‘*Fichte et la Révolution française*’ in A. Renault, *La Révolution française dans la pensée européenne* (Lausanne, 1989). Membership is, according to Renault, adherence to a national spirit and a set of universal values.

³⁷¹ *Addresses*, p. 50.

³⁷² *Addresses*, p. 22.

³⁷³ *Addresses*, pp. 22-23.

himself, to form the human being, and that it holds this to be impossible.”³⁷⁴ Fichte is certainly concerned with education as central to his nationalism, but not in a way that remains open to anyone willing to participate (ignore the pun on willing), but rather on those who are capable of apprehending the world as it is (e.g. those who have a consciousness already conditioned by a language which is continuous with nature).

Fichte wants education to serve as the process of will formation, whereby individuals are able to remove themselves from a world determined by chance that they react to, and place themselves in a world of freedom, where their will determines the way of that world: “Whoever must exhort himself and be exhorted to will the good, does not yet have a firm and ever ready will, but determines it in each situation that arises.”³⁷⁵ This deterministic model of the will may superficially look similar to Kant's categorical imperative, whereby individuals should not commit any such action which they themselves could not will another to commit.³⁷⁶ But Kant's articulation of the categorical imperative need not have the absolute timeless command authority that Fichte and later Kantians seem so willing to attribute it. For Fichte, whatsoever one wills, so should it be willed ‘for all eternity.’ As he explains, “in no possible situation can he will differently than how he wills; for his freedom of will has (in his willing)

³⁷⁴ *Addresses*, p. 23.

³⁷⁵ *Addresses*, p. 23.

³⁷⁶ Kant articulates his categorical imperative in the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals* (ed. Mary Gregor; Cambridge University Press, 1998). The literature on this subject is vast. Some of the most recent helpful clarifications on Kant's thinking here include Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Harvard University Press, 1993); Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Christine Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); as well as her *The Sources of Normativity*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

been annihilated and subsumed by necessity.” The aim of this new education is to produce individuals capable of enacting the world, willing it to be, and in so doing, forfeiting their freedom to the necessity they have created. Fichte’s will is an absolute determinism. (This, we will see, is simultaneously its danger and – given the then current climate of uncertainty – its attraction.)

What is the basis for this kind of willing. What would make an individual capable of willing in such a way as to forgo their freedom (precise that freedom which was, at the beginning of the argument, that which seemed to motivate Fichte and his theory in distinction from the French civic model of the nation)? The basis for this kind of willing is, according to Fichte, love – or more precisely, that the individual is only capable of willing that which he loves: “Man can only will what he loves. His love is at once the sole and infallible impulse of this willing and of all his vital stirrings and motions. The statecraft practiced hitherto, as the education of man in society, assumed as a certain and universally valid rule that each loves and wills his own sensuous well-being and to this natural love it artificially linked, by means of hope and fear, the good will that it desired, the interests on the commonwealth.”³⁷⁷ These emotive conditions which frame the will’s experience of the world have, by modern conditions set by the French revolution – so Fichte thought – meant that there is a disconcert for his compatriots between that which one can will to love and the hope and fear that mitigate his good will in the commonwealth. Defeat and occupation at the hands of the French means that the very emotive experience of subjectivity is disconnected from

³⁷⁷ *Addresses*, p. 24.

itself. The education of the nation, specially a nation defined on linguistic parameters, is meant to rectify this political (and, so Fichte hoped, very temporary – discontinuity).³⁷⁸

Section 3 – The Logic of *Schwärmerei* in Fichte’s Nation

3.1

What is this experience of continuity? How or why should historical and political discontinuity be avoided at what might conceivably be such extreme costs? For Fichte, the self is capable of persevering such linearity to experience, and motivating itself in this act of preservation, through the will’s capacity to love. (What is worth considering here is how Fichte’s account of love seems to mimic – even while consciously attempting to avoid associations with – the experience of enthusiasm.³⁷⁹)

Love is the central process by which individual persons are capable of locating themselves beyond the boundaries of nature and the mortal world. As Fichte explains, “Love, to be truly love and not merely a fleeting desire, never clings to the transitory,

³⁷⁸ The reader should note Fichte’s relationship to the body in his use of language – how sense determines everything. If this is the case, then those emotions that are sense derived (disgust) gain more reference, as they did for Burke and his German allies. Just as with Burke, motives are either material (pleasure or pain) or spiritual. The state is limited in its capacity, at least insofar as it can only really be concerned with the material (not the spiritual). For further discussion on a related point in Fichte, see Abizadeh’s “Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist?” p. 345.

³⁷⁹ On Fichte’s views on enthusiasm generally, see La Vopa, *Fichte*, pp.101-110. On Fichte’s condemnation of the mis-use of philosophy as *Schwärmerei*, see Peter Fenves, “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. ½, *Enthusiasm and Enlightenment in Europe, 1650-1850* (1997), p. 23 for Fichte’s struggle with Schelling as emblematic of the condemnation of enthusiasm as fanaticism in Idealist discourse.

but awakens and kindles and resides only in the eternal.”³⁸⁰ For Fichte love is that foundational human experience by which one gains access to the eternal. The consequences of this access to the eternal are a very restructuring of the experience of the accidental (that is, natural) world. While Fichte explicitly avoids the use of the words *Enthusiasmus* or *Schwärmerei* (in part due to their dangerous political associations), the very claim that humanity could access the eternal would evoke that discourse for those conscious of its parameters.³⁸¹ For Fichte, the claim that what distinguishes man qua man from the natural world is the very experience of love, was a redefinition of enthusiasm: “Man cannot even love himself unless he conceives himself as eternal; he is unable even to respect or approve himself.”³⁸² For Kant, respect and this experience (which Kant called ‘enthusiasm’) were distinct.³⁸³ For Fichte, it seems they are inseparable.

The consequences of this redefinition of enthusiasm in terms of love means that Fichte can provide the psychological parameters for the basis of political enthusiasm for the fatherland (patriotism) in terms of the general human experience of love. As Fichte asserts it, “Less can he love anything outside himself, unless, that is,

³⁸⁰ *Addresses*, p. 104.

³⁸¹ See esp. La vopa’s discussion of Rehberg’s debate with Fichte on the ‘solipsism’ of enthusiasm, *Fichte*, p. 108.

³⁸² *Addresses*, p. 104

³⁸³ For Kant the moral feeling (e.g. respect) is incompatible with enthusiasm; feeling enthusiasm means, ultimately, that respect is as yet impossible, though there is still some moral cause that has, even pathologically, motivated the subjective consciousness towards some good; see Chapter 2 of this dissertation for a further elaboration on this point. Again, thanks to Axel Honneth for providing me with clarity on this point.

he embraces it in the eternity of his belief and his should, and joins it to this eternity. He who does not regard himself first and foremost as eternal has no love at all; nor can he love a fatherland, for nothing of the kind exists for him.”³⁸⁴ Fichte’s success here is in relocating patriotism to a more general experience of the human experience of love, basing it in the subjective access to the eternal, while avoiding the limits usually associated with advocating and defending enthusiasm.³⁸⁵

Fichte’s shift away from a discourse on enthusiasm and towards love makes itself explicit in his rhetoric on patriotism when compared to (contra Habermas) civic love:

What spirit is it that may in such cases (where orderly progress is imperiled) take the helm, that with its own sureness and certainty, and without uneasy to-ing and fro-ing, in capable of making a decision, that has an undisputed right to command everyone who may be concerned, whether he wants to or not, and to compel the objector, to jeopardize everything, even his own life? Not the spirit of calm civic love for the constitution and laws, but the blazing flame of the higher love of fatherland that embraces the nation as the vesture of the eternal.³⁸⁶

Only by accessing the eternal can logic of self-interest (and the obstacles of self-sacrifice) be circumnavigated. In this comparison of civic love and the higher love, Fichte makes it clear that civic love isn’t really even love, in that it is only directed at materials constructed in the temporal world (the constitution and the laws); true love is always already directed at and immersed in the eternal. Only therein could ‘the nation’

³⁸⁴ *Addresses*, p. 104.

³⁸⁵ For recent efforts in liberal nationalist discourse to employ such tactics, see Eammon Callan’s “Love, Idolatry, and Patriotism,” *Social Policy and Practice*, 2006.

³⁸⁶ *Addresses*, p. 107.

find access to affective resources capable of motivating political action (esp. the action of self-sacrifice in death).

By Fichte's account, a successful state project must be built on a national foundation to avoid egoistic interests. *Vaterlandsliebe* of a living people provides the affective base to mobilize towards a common good. Nations – and not the states – solve the motivational problem through love, allowing access to the eternal. And this love is not the spirit of clam, citizenly love; the nation is natural and sacred – this is what allows it to motivate (more than a state or a constitution): “It is not civic love for the constitution; for such love is altogether incapable of all this (mobilization) if it remains on the level of understanding.”³⁸⁷ Fichte's rhetoric must – if he intends to motivate political action in his audience, strategically avoid the discourse on enthusiasm while still accessing the sacred experience of the eternal that such a discourse depends on; love is the only means Fichte thinks allows for this delicate rhetorical balance.

3.2

It is worth noticing here how Fichte relates (yet distinguishes) between religious motivations and political motivations. For while access to the sacred is essential for Fichte's argument for the kind of patriotism he is defending, he also

³⁸⁷ *Addresses*, p. 107.

needs to be clear how this process is not political theology, and than he is not somehow a political *Schwärmer*.³⁸⁸

Religion... is quite able to transport us beyond all time, and beyond the present, sensuous life, without the least injury to the justness, morality and sanctity of the life seized by this faith. Even with the certain conviction that all our activity on this earth will not leave behind the slightest trace or bear event he smallest fruit, that the divine can indeed be perverted and used as an instrument of evil and yet deeper moral corruption e can still continue this activity solely to maintain the divine life that ahs broken forth in us and in relation to a higher order of things in a world to come, in which nothing that is done in God shall perish.³⁸⁹

Such relation to a ‘higher order of things’ sets the conditions by which love always evokes the divine, even if by analogy, in its experience of the eternal. The subjective reaction to metaphysical phenomena is worth considering seriously here as the process, for Fichte, by which the human becomes more than human; love is that experience that allows each person to exceed themselves through an object (be it themselves, another person, or the fatherland).

The problem with merely rely on religious enthusiasms such as this is that such experiences seem to revolve individuals from the world, as they are located in the sacred. As Fichte explains it,

The apostles, for example, and the earliest Christians in general, were even in life transported wholly beyond the earth by their belief in heaven; and they renounced the affairs of the world – state, fatherland, and nation – so completely that they no longer even deemed these worthy of their attention. However possible this may be and however easy for faith; however cheerfully we must reign ourselves, if it be the

³⁸⁸ On Fichte’s concern regarding such accusations (and indeed, his defense against them), see Fenves “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” p. 24.

³⁸⁹ *Addresses*, p. 100.

unalterable will of God, to having an earthly fatherland no more and finding ourselves outcasts and slaves here below: this is nevertheless not the natural way of the world, it is not the rule, but a rare exception. It is also a very perverse use of religion (of which Christianity, among others, has frequently been guilty), if it proceeds from the outset and without regard for the circumstances at hand to recommend withdrawal from the affairs of state and nation as a truly religious conviction.³⁹⁰

Religious motivation must always be distinguished from political motivation, in part because the pathways themselves that each has expressed itself prior to Fichte's defense have led to such disparate outcomes. Fichte wants to make absolutely certain that the parameters of both his cause and the objects of political motivations for are maintained as sacred, even while they are themselves not confined to the religious sphere of German cultural anthropology.

This critique of religious motivations serves the dual-purpose of politicizing the sacredness he aims to delineate as central to experience of his invention of the German nation, while at the same time repelling critiques of such a nation being merely *Schwärm*. As Fichte argues (and here I give both the English and the German),

In such a situation, if that conviction is sincere and not merely brought about by religious enthusiasm, temporal life forgets its self-subsistence and becomes merely forecourt of the true life, a severe trial tolerated solely out of obedience and submission to the will of god – and in this view it becomes true that, as many have imagined, immortal spirits are plunged into earthly bodies, as into prisons, simply as punishment.³⁹¹

In einer solchen Lage, wenn sie wahr und wirklich ist, und nicht etwa bloss durch religiöse Schwärmerei herbeigeführt, verliert das zeitliche

³⁹⁰ *Addresses*, pp. 100-101.

³⁹¹ *Addresses*, pp. 100-101. See Plato's Phaedrus 250c.

*Leben alle Selbstbeständigkeit und es wird lediglich zu einem Vorhofe des wahren Lebens, und zu einer schweren Prüfung, die man bloss auf Gehorsam und Ergebung in den Willen Gottes erträgt, und dann ist es wahr, dass, wie es von vielen vorgestellt worden, unsterbliche Geister nur zu ihrer Strafe in irdische Leiber, als in Gefängnisse, eingetaucht sind.*³⁹²

Fichte wants to be clear that there is a real authentic experience of the eternal that itself is not fantastical, not predicated on a religious enthusiasm (literally *Schwärmerei*).

This distinction between religious and political motivation (and enthusiasms) is so central for Fichte's argument because he needs to distinguish types of inspirations, upholding a kind of political engagement that looks similar to religious conviction, both in its sacredness and its removal from self-interest and self-interestedness, while at the same time not committing any act of sacrilege against an audience or their committed beliefs. Fichte argues the point as such,

Whoever sets himself a limited goal for his sacrifices, and likes not to venture beyond a certain point, gives up his resistance as soon as he runs into danger, no matter if it be absolutely vital and must not be surrendered. Whoever has set himself no goal at all, but hazards everything, even the highest boon that he can forget here on earth, his life, never ceases to resist, and doubtless triumphs if his opponent has a more limited goal. A people capable, albeit only in its highest representatives and leaders, of fixing its gaze on independence, that vision of the spiritual world, and of being seized by love for it, as were our distant ancestors, assuredly triumphs over one that is used, like the Roman armies (or the French), only as the instrument of a stranger's lust for power and to subjugate independent peoples; for the former have everything to lose, the latter merely something to gain.³⁹³

³⁹² *Addresses*, p. 126 (The German text from pp. 246-248/ VII, 379 in *Reden an die Deutsche Nation*, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1955).

Fichte hopes that by delineating between religious and political enthusiasm he can set the stakes for what kinds of persons (and their psychological motivators) would be necessary to resist that French. The new nation he aims to create must be composed of those willing to forgo self-interest in favor of national interest. The only comparison he can make is a religious one, yet it cannot appear as purely religious argument, not at least without sacrificing his actual political goals.

3.3

In order to understand precisely how persons react to such motivations, it is worth considering Fichte's conceptualization of the self, what he in his *Wissenschaftslehre* frequently refers to as the 'inwardness that posits the I.'³⁹⁴

The 'I' is that which, for persons, is the embodiment of the self. It is that which the self posits or locates as the psychic space by which it can ascertain the rest of the world.³⁹⁵ As Fichte explains, "What emerges in the I's necessary acting itself appears as necessary, i.e. the I feels constrained in its presentation of what emerges. Then one

³⁹³ *Addresses*, p. 110. It is not coincidence that Fichte follows this expression by drawing illustration for his concern on the confusion of religious and political enthusiasm by reference to Voltaire's play "*Le Fanatisme ou Mahomet le Prophète*" (originally performed in 1741), it being a commonplace cultural representation of the dangers of religious fanaticism.

³⁹⁴ See Fichte's *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and other writings, 1797-1800* (Hackett, 1994). Also see Beiser's *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, p. 83.

³⁹⁵ On the limits of the Fichtian self as determined or determinant see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (SUNY Press, 1988), esp. p.106.

says that the object has reality. The criterion of all reality is the feeling of having to present something just as it is presented. We have seen the ground of this necessity; the rational being must act in this way if it is to exist as a rational being at all. Hence, we express our conviction concerning the reality of a thing as: “this or that exists, as sure as I live,” or “as sure as I am.”³⁹⁶ The ‘I’ is, by Fichte’s accounting, the necessary locating the self employs to actualize a space for its own existence and therein experience the world in which that existence finds actualization.

In order for the self to perceive the ‘I’ it must first remove all foreign obstructions from such apprehensions. (Here we see how foreign language would itself provide the most serious obstacle to the achievement of the self, confusing it as to what is the world and what is the authentic self.) A well structured imagination, guided by practical reason, becomes necessary for persons to be able to have such an experience of the ‘I.’ As Fichte argues the point,

Imagination must be scrupulously kept outside of the realm of fantasy. In this realm it produces nothing but empty chimeras and incoherent, feverish dreams lacking any stability, force, or truth.’ And if what they are talking about is an unregulated imagination, which is not held in check by cool reason, then they are of course, completely correct. But if this is what they are talking about, then they have expressed themselves too narrowly: for it is injurious and ruinous to absconded oneself to the unbridled imagination in any affair of the same spirit, and not just in phylum. This produces wild, misshaped monstrosities in the finer arts every bit as much as in philosophy. But such undisciplined and overheated imagination is not spirit at all; on the contrary, it is the most fatuous spiritedness possible. Rather than a product of our pure spiritual nature, the I is a monstrous offspring of the wild force of

³⁹⁶ See Fichte’s *Foundations of Natural Right: According to the principles of the Wissenschaftslehre* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 5.

nature. Imagination of this sort does not raise to consciousness those ideas and ideals which have their basis within us; instead, it slaps together eccentric shapes out of material deiced form the external manifold. Rather than importing a higher order into nature, it destroys what order it finds. Rather than returning to the human heart, it storms around in a fiery rage on the surface of external things. There is nothing productive about such imagination. It is inse3tad, an unregulated reproductive imagination's soon as we have become aware of the way spirit works, we will be able to distinguish the creations of spirit within philosophy from the ravages wrought upon philosophy by such overheated enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) and fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*).³⁹⁷

Fichte resolves the constant anxiety that what his amendment to critical philosophy results in is the confusion of philosophy and enthusiasm. Here he feel compelled to distinguish in no uncertain terms that it is a malformation in imagination, not in philosophy as such, that allows enthusiasm access to create such dangerous psychic chimeras.

Feeling points out where the truth may lie. But it does no more than indicate this' it does not provide us with the truth... Feeling must be illuminated and developed. It has to be analyzed and determined by judgment. It is a sign of spirit to raise one's feelings to clear consciousness; but to appeal to mere feeling as a proof is a sign of lack of spirit and is the abundant and inexhaustible source of all overheated enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*) and fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*).³⁹⁸

That Fichte does not distinguish between enthusiasm and *Schwärmerei* is absolutely crucial to the structure of this argument. Unlike Burke, who has a singular conception of enthusiasm (and thus entirely different theoretical obstacles to overcome), Fichte is

³⁹⁷ Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, p. 91.

³⁹⁸ See p. 211 in *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*, trans. Daniel Breazeale (Cornell University Press, 1993), from the essay "Concerning the Difference Between The Spirit and the Letter within Philosophy" (1794). See p. 185 for the history of this course in Breazeale's introduction.

well immersed in the debates on the distinction between these two affective states. But what conditions as Fichte's response is the worry that their one would be consumed with philosophy, thus losing his critical system from the ground of reason.³⁹⁹

What Fichte hopes to achieve is the actualization of transcendental freedom, and thus political freedom, through well-structured practical reason. Freedom, for Fichte, is the determining of the world (rather than the world determining the self). In order for the I to be able to make such determinations, it must be capable of accessing the temporal and the eternal. A critical philosophy helps shape practical reason so that it, by retraining the imagination, can succeed in this effort. If this looks like *Schwärmerei* or enthusiasm (Fichte does not distinguish), this is because of a misunderstanding of the limits of reason, not a failing of philosophy. Thus, by Fichte's view,

The *Wissenschaftstehre*'s claim, "What exist, exists through the I's acting (through productive imagination, unparticular," has been interpreted as if it were a claim about a free acting; but once again, this is due to an inability to elevate oneself to the concept of activity in general, a concept that has adequately articulated in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. This inability made it easy for some to decry this system as the most outrageous fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*). But the charge of fanaticism would be much too weak. Confusing what exists through free acting with what exists through necessary acting, and vice versa, is really madness.⁴⁰⁰

Only a clear articulation of language as the grounding experience of continuous thought (which Fichte thinks, by the time he delivers his addresses, he has accomplished, can the *Wissenschaftstehre*'s claim not be confused with *Schwärmerei*.

³⁹⁹ For further elaboration on this point see La Vopa, *Fichte*, pp. 100-110.

⁴⁰⁰ Again, see *Foundations*, p. 5.

Indeed, very much depends on, how much we conceded to Fichte's linguistic model of the self and its ability to establish the conditions of human existence.

Conclusion – Creating Objects of Allegiance

Fichte's aim in his construction of the German nation was to provide an object whereby allegiances could be directed and generated. This foundational task was set by the practical political conditions of France's occupation. Yet it was severely limited by Fichte's own critical theory. Fichte was determined not to create an idea of the nation that was mere fantasy, to avoid the condemnation of political *Schwärmerei* at all costs. His hope was that public philosophy could initiate a new form of education directed at political reform and restitution.

Yet, as I have tried to illustrate, this entirely radical project of descent was limited by Fichte's avoidance of (unlike Kant) a serious evaluation of enthusiasm as opposed to *Schwärmerei*. As Fichte explains, "In maintaining the traditional constitution, laws and civic welfare there is no truly authentic life at all but only an original decision. These are the creation of circumstances and contingencies, of legislators perhaps long dead; subsequent ages continue faithfully along the road once taken and do not in fact live a public life of their own, but merely repeat a former one."⁴⁰¹ His hope was by explaining a path by which radical political descent could be justified, so to could he motivate national rebellion against the French.

Yet, by relying on the eternal, rather than the affective experiences of inspiration as such (e.g. enthusiasm), Fichte's theory becomes mired by metaphysical constraints that he otherwise could have avoided. Because his focus continually resides on the objects of allegiance, rather than the experience (just as his epistemology focuses on the object of consciousness – the 'I' – rather than the experience of consciousness as such), Fichte cannot explain – without chauvinistic principles, the validity of the kind of political project he hopes to defend. The limits of Fichte's nationalism are not simply that his is a crypto-ethnic model of belonging, but that he imports metaphysical concepts to bolster his theory of descent, even while seemingly trying to rationalize a pathological universality.

This is precisely the danger that Wieland was concerned with. Because enthusiasm and Schwärmerei were considered so vile, Fichte avoids their employ, even though such avoidance creates confusion when he tries to replace their function with less suitable alternatives. By not being clear about political enthusiasm, allegiances always risk relativism or chauvinism in their basic structure. Such confusion certainly limits Fichte's nationalism.

⁴⁰¹ *Addresses*, pp. 106-107.

Chapter 5

The Allure of Fanaticism

The deep feeling of mortality, of change, of temporal limitations, enflames man so that he attempts much; it exercises all his worries, and does not allow him to fall into idleness, and one struggles so long with chimeras until finally something true and real is again found for knowledge and creative occupation. In good times, there are seldom *Schwärmer*. Yet when man lacks great, pure objects, then he creates some phantom out of this or that, and he closes his eyes in order to be able to take an interest in it and live for it.

–Hölderlin, “Judgment and Being”

Introduction – Fanaticism and *Schwärmerei*

The previous chapters illustrated how a host of thinkers have tried, often vehemently, to distance themselves from association with either *Schwärmerei* and/or enthusiasm. This begs the question though, would anyone defend *Schwärmerei*? Can (or even should?) democracy actually endure *Schwärmerei*, or is it something to be avoided at all costs? In this chapter I explore answers to these queries through an examination of the romantic theorist Friedrich von Hardenberg (perhaps more well known by his pen name Novalis) and his defense of *Schwärmerei* as distinct from

fanaticism.⁴⁰² My aim is to illustrate how Novalis makes clear the problems requisite to ignoring the role of *Schwärmerei* in political identification (though, perhaps, not unproblematically).

Developed through readings of Novalis and the ‘Jena Circle’ of early German romantics, I begin this exploration through the context of the originary romantic notion of imagined communities and political psychology. Here I describe the psychological process of romanticization, the “alteration of highering and lowering”, and the related theory of “being in between” which were so crucial to romantic political thought. I demonstrate how Novalis and others within the early German romantic movement employed *Schwärmerei* to develop a more fluid conception of allegiance than traditional republican notions of civic identity. While this brand of *Schwärmerei* does not (ideally anyway) necessarily result in the closure that the politics of disgust or hyper-nationalism might entail, I show how the absence of any fixed object of allegiance – which Novalis’ theory suffers from – creates affective voids likely to result in the emergence of closure.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² The basis for this chapter is Novalis’ “*Apologie die Schwärmerei*,” original penned in 1789, when Novalis first heard of the outbreak of war in France (included here as Appendix 2). Recent work on Novalis has started to take him seriously as a resource for political theory. Fredrick Beiser’s *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics* (Cambridge UP, 1996), coupled with his *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought* (Harvard UP, 1992) both helped initiate this reevaluation. Recent works that go beyond Beiser’s view include Jane Kneller’s *Kant and the Power of Imagination* (Cambridge UP, 2007), esp. chapter 7, “Novalis’ Kantianism and Kant’s Romanticism;” and Pauline Kleingeld’s “Romantic Cosmopolitanism: Novalis’s ‘Christianity or Europe,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 46, no. 2 (2008). Recent translations of Manfred Frank’s work, compiled as *The Philosophic Foundations of Early German Romanticism* (SUNY UP, 2004) by Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert, esp. lecture #9 “Novalis’ Pivotal Role in Early German Romanticism,” have been crucial.

⁴⁰³ Ultimately, Novalis’ claim is that human emancipation means transcending both family and state – that this is the true cosmopolitanism that can be hoped for. For a defense of this position, see Kleingeld’s “Romantic Cosmopolitanism,” p. 283. There, as Kleingeld articulates it, Novalis’ thesis of

My reading of Novalis' Romantic political thought as useful to a reformulation of the psychology of democratic citizenship, at least as pertaining to the experience of enthusiasm, challenges three contemporary interpretations of Romanticism. First, some see Romantics as the initiators of the 'aestheticization' of politics – a brand of utopianism that seeks to perfect humanity from the failures of pluralism.⁴⁰⁴ These critics take Romanticism to be dangerously antidemocratic and even anti-political; Second, other critics of Romanticism point to the consequent dangers of what they believe is the Romantics' conception of 'the people' as a prepolitical ethnos, defined by identities that transcend politics.⁴⁰⁵ They draw close connections between the political ideas of early Romantics and later exclusionary, conservative, and nationalist particularisms. Lastly, others, by contrast, find resources within Romanticism for a regrounding of liberal pluralism.⁴⁰⁶ These theorists point to Romanticism's aesthetic notion of the individual as an important tool for rethinking the concept of the self in

political emancipation is the fulfillment of *Bildung*. While I agree with her analysis, the outcome she seems to advocate for has political costs which seem, to me, too high. I address these costs in Section 5 of this chapter. For an elaboration of the concept of *Bildung* in German Romanticism, see Beiser's *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism*, (Harvard UP, 2003), esp. Chapter 6, "The Concept of *Bildung* on Early German Romanticism."

⁴⁰⁴ Kateb "Aestheticism and Morality: Their Cooperation and Hostility," 2000; Judith Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith*, (Princeton UP, 1957). Interestingly enough, Kateb, for all his critiquing of the aestheticization of politics and the dangers of patriotism, he also shares an interest in preserving the distinction between enthusiasm and fanaticism. For an elaboration on this point, see the conclusion of this dissertation and Kateb's own "The Adequacy of the Canon," in *Patriotism and Other Mistakes*, (Yale UP, 2006).

⁴⁰⁵ See Jürgen Habermas, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian's Debate*, (MIT Press, 1989), esp. chapter 7, "Taking aim at the heart of the present," and chapter 8, "Culture and Politics;" for a more recent accounting of the dangers of romantic conceptions of 'The People,' see Margaret Canovan, *The People*, esp. pp. 48-55 (Polity, 2005).

⁴⁰⁶ Nancy Rosenblum, *Another Liberalism: Romanticism and the Reconstruction of Liberal Thought*, (Harvard UP, 1987); also Gerald Izenberg, *Impossible Individuality: Romanticism, Revolution, and the Origins of Modern Selfhood, 1787-1802* (Princeton UP, 1992); and, again, Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

modern politics, while ignoring the concept of ‘a people’, thereby entirely disaggregating Romantic individualism from Romantic theories of collectivity. Ultimately, all three approaches prove problematic – misreading all of Romantic thought as a single coherent political movement. And my reading of Novalis’ political thought complicates each of these positions directly.

The vehicle I use to rethink this problematic history and its evaluation is Novalis’ defense of *Schwärmerei*. For Novalis, *Schwärmerei* is the initiation of collective romantization. Aligning Enlightenment rationality with mechanization, Novalis describes *Schwärmerei* as the process of recovering the organic qualities of existential experience (which, for him, are ‘Faith’ and ‘Love’). Such a process, when aligned with nationalism, certainly has the potential to become the archetypal model for political closure. But Novalis’ intention is to direct such expression towards the universal (and, specifically, away from the parochial).⁴⁰⁷ Thus, I aim to show it was a corrupted model of this political psychology that became the aegis for conservative ethnic nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries, obscuring the original romantic model of political psychology which this chapter recovers.

This chapter subsequently challenges the assumption that civic and ethnic allegiances are the only options around which to form collective identities. While Romantic political thought later became co-opted by more reactionary political thinkers, the originary German Romantic project was a progressive political movement, struggling to articulate the complexities of group affiliation for ‘a people’

⁴⁰⁷ And here I agree with Kleingeld’s analysis.

as yet undefined.⁴⁰⁸ I show that within the early Romantic movement, there is an alternative view that answers both how to think of a greater political union, and how to avoid – however ultimately difficult it may prove to be – the particularization of that polity.

Section 1 – Romanticism in Context

1.1

Romanticism has inspired a perplexing and mixed political legacy.⁴⁰⁹ (Indeed, the question “What is Romanticism?” itself has its own varied and complex history.) A. O. Lovejoy’s famous study set the stage for complicating the unraveling of various historical and intellectual strains associated with the romantic movement.⁴¹⁰ From Lovejoy’s perspective, it is unclear whether Romanticism is best seen as a social, cultural, intellectual, or political movement (or some combination of some or all of these). Moreover, Lovejoy finds complications in claiming that Romanticism is an international movement (concluding that it is historically unfounded to relate German, British, or even French Romanticism on requisite footing). I will have more to say on this point later, but for now, it is important, I think, to be clear that Lovejoy’s position

⁴⁰⁸ Jeffrey Herf makes a similar point on the misuse of ‘romanticism’ as the basis for conservative nationalism in his *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, (Cambridge UP, 1984), esp. pp. 13-14.

⁴⁰⁹ For an overview of the history of Romanticism, see Meyer Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford UP, 1953).

⁴¹⁰ Arthur Lovejoy, “The Meaning of ‘Romantic’ in Early German Romanticism,” *Modern Language Notes* 21 (1916), 385-396, reprinted in Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Putnam, 1955)

(that there are many Romanticisms) may be an accurate account of how some Romantics thought of themselves. However, these groups (labeled as ‘Romantics’) have all been received under one rather large and vexing umbrella, which is relevant to how Romanticism as a body of thought has effected subsequent political ideas.⁴¹¹

Here, I define ‘romanticism’ as an intellectual movement, beginning in Germany in the period following the French Revolution, and transmitted and transformed in England, France, Italy, and America. This movement, at least initially, was directed primarily at articulating a theory of human freedom in response to increased feelings of alienation, consequent of high levels of education coupled with significant unemployment, changing political ecologies in America, France, and Ireland, and the subsequent tensions felt by additional European political elites (particularly in the German response to events in France). In scholarly debates, this movement is traditionally characterized as reactionary, marked by a “loss of faith” in progress. Here, I take an alternative view, defining romanticism as a discourse on human freedom that, while fed by a loss of faith in progress, is best seen most readily as an optimism grounded on the transformative effects of the imagination. To my mind, the dichotomy between hope and despair is inseparable for all groups of romantics, and grounds their attempts to circumnavigate conceptual dichotomies between faith and reason, nature and culture, self and community.

Some have come to see Romantics as the initiators of the aestheticization of

⁴¹¹ For further elaborations and critiques of Lovejoy’s thesis, see Charles Larmore’s *The Romantic Legacy* (Columbia UP, 1996), esp. pp. xi-xiii; Beiser “Romanticism Now and Then,” in *The Romantic Imperative*, esp. pp. 6-12.

politics, a process they take to be dangerously antidemocratic and even anti-political.⁴¹² These critics draw close connections between early Romantics' political ideas and their inheritance in exclusionary, conservative, and nationalist particularism (evidenced in 19th and early 20th century European political debates, culminating in National State Socialism).⁴¹³ Others, by contrast, find resources within Romanticism for a grounding of liberal pluralism (as evidenced in the writings of some mid 19th century liberal advocates, as well as their 20th century inheritors).⁴¹⁴ They argue that

⁴¹² Aestheticization here means the complete subjectification of all things through the experience of art. As Schmitt articulates it, “the general process of aestheticizing serves only to privatize through the medium of the aesthetic the other domains of intellectual life as well. When the hierarchy of the intellectual sphere disintegrates, then everything can become the center of intellectual life... Religious, moral, political, and scientific matters appear in fantastical draperies and in strange colors and hues because, consciously or unconsciously, they are treated by Romantics as a theme for artistic or art-critical productivity” Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism* (MIT Press, 1991), p. 16. For more recent elaborations of a similar position, see, again, Kateb's elaboration of the dangers of this position in “Aestheticism and Morality.”

⁴¹³ Conservatism here is best defined as a political ideology that looks towards longstanding traditions as the ground for the authority of moral and political institutions. The danger in conservatism, especially to democratic polities, regards the orientation of citizens to political knowledge and judgment. It is necessary for the functioning of democracy that the authority of both these categories rest in the people that currently reside within the democratic order. This is not to say that such peoples could not derive personal authority from longstanding traditions, but that the mixture of conservatism and democracy becomes more complicated when democracy itself finds its own authority in historical traditions, rather than in the will of its people. Though such a view of democracy may point this system more towards anarchy than stability, such a risk is - I think - necessary, if democratic theorists intend to develop a theory reflective of the ideal type. The connection between conservatism and early 20th century varieties of particularism (especially National State Socialism) are related through Isaiah Berlin's *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought* (Princeton UP, 2006), esp. his essay “Two Concepts of Freedom: Romantic and Liberal,” pp. 155-206. Also, importantly, see Honneth “Negative Freedom and Cultural Belonging: An Unhealthy Tension in the Political Philosophy of Isaiah Berlin,” *Social Research*, 66/4, 1999.

⁴¹⁴ The connection between Romanticism and liberal pluralism is addressed initially by Alexis de Tocqueville (who relatedly labels himself a Romantic – see Volume Two of *Democracy in America*). Tocqueville, and later Mill, advocate for a kind of liberalism that upholds the freedom of individuals from external constraint, supporting a political structure that affirms this fundamental right through various protections in favor of increased tolerance. Later Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (Princeton UP, 2001), and subsequently Rosenblum's *Another Liberalism* and Larmore *The Legacy of Romanticism*, follow through with a continued redefinition of the relationship between liberalism and Romanticism. These authors share the common concern that liberalism needs more than rationalism (as

with the emergence of modernity came the necessity to think through political conceptions of the individual, particularly the political obligations of individuals in the process of democratic rule.⁴¹⁵ For these theorists, Romanticism offers important resources for the bolstering of such individualism; they see Romantics as advocates of a conception of self that is not simply about the freedom to make choices (through votes or economic exchange), but relies on a more complex set of principles including maturity, responsibility, and a well-developed sense of judgment.⁴¹⁶ Both genealogies exhibit adherents of conservatism and liberalism attempting to draw Romanticism – and the resources therein – towards their own ideology and away from the other. (I will attempt to navigate past these ideologies in my presentation of romantic ideas.)

Romanticism, in its earliest expression, developed in Germany amongst a collection of poets and radicals, eager to take up the challenge posed to them by contemporaneous social, political, and economic developments. Absorbed in a fever of political reform,⁴¹⁷ the reported events of the revolution in France fueled the already

per the French Enlightenment or Lockean models) to sustain the individualism necessary for the functioning of modern liberal politics. For a related criticism of Locke, and the possibility of alternative articulations of liberalism, see Uday Mehta *The Anxiety of Freedom: Imagination and Individuality in Locke's Political Thought* (Cornell UP, 1992).

⁴¹⁵ For a significant elaboration on the complexities involved in the foundations of individualism, especially the problem of autonomy within the concept of modernity, see Pippin's excellent discussion in *Modernity as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture* (Blackwell, 1999), esp. chapter 2, "Modernity and Modernism."

⁴¹⁶ Part of the problem of the mixing of Romanticism comes from the divide between liberalism and conservatism, and overcoming the limitations of this debate means turning (at least in part) away from a strict Millian liberalism, and instead towards democratic theories of individualism, focused on principles of non-exclusion and the responsibilities involved in self-rule.

⁴¹⁷ King Friedrich II of Prussia (Friedrich the Great), in 1781, issued a whole host of social and political reforms, in line with the principles of the *Aufklärung* and French Enlightenment thought. For Further

brewing discontent of many of the young and increasingly large middle-class in the German states.⁴¹⁸ The early German Romantics embraced the founding principles of the revolution, seeing equality, fraternity, and liberty as the best foundation to a truly just polity.⁴¹⁹ Schiller, Schlegel, and Novalis saw the ‘rights of man’ as a universal declaration that pointed the way to the only possible legitimate political arrangement.⁴²⁰ This declaration proved so attractive because it articulated a set of universal rights that spoke to the widespread alienation felt across Germany during the period in and around the war.⁴²¹ Though these views were certainly popular amongst many in the German middle-class during this period, these romantics continued to uphold these doctrines long after news of the reign of terror reached the German press.⁴²² What stirred these romantics to ultimately react against the efforts of the French revolutionaries was not the explosion of radical violence, but instead France’s failure to produce a positive model of community and citizenship to cement the ideals of the revolution in the foundation of a new republic.

The failures of the revolution, from the perspective of these early romantics, were not a result of radical democracy or mob rule (at least initially), but rather the

elaborations of Friedrich’s rule, see James Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (Oxford UP, 1993) esp. chapter 1 on Eighteenth Century Politics.

⁴¹⁸ Sheehan, *German History*; and Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

⁴¹⁹ See Beiser’s edited edition of the *Political Writings of the Early German Romantics* (1996).

⁴²⁰ Again, see Beiser *Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*.

⁴²¹ For a good articulation of the political ecology in and around Germany in the 1790’s, see Sheehan’s *German History*.

⁴²² In addition to Beiser *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*; see Hans Reiss’ *The Political Thought of the German Romantics, 1793-1815* (Blackwell, 1955); and Reinhold Aris’ *History of Political Thought in German, 1789-1815* (Routledge, 1965).

inability of the people to find place to maintain themselves and order within this new political project.⁴²³ Such concern for the ability of individuals to rule over themselves has a long history in political thought. What was unique amongst the early romantics was their solution to the problem of developing individualism and autonomy. Rather than turning to reason, as their predecessors in the *Aufklärung* had, the romantics looked to art and the artist as a model for individual cultivation and moral (and subsequently political) autonomy.⁴²⁴

1.2

The turn towards art (as opposed to reason) as the foundation of authority can be traced back to Kant and his assertions in his *Critique of Judgment* (see section 3 of this chapter).⁴²⁵ For Kant, and subsequently the Jena Romantics, what proved so crucial regarding art as a structuring point was its inference from externally confining values; art must be evaluated on its own terms, and moreover, on terms it sets for itself. In so doing, art became immune to the critique (and failures) to which reason must submit.

This move towards aesthetic categories above and beyond pure epistemic ones, originates from two distinct and related contexts in German romanticism. The first is a reaction to Fichte's efforts (discussed in the previous chapter) to delineate

⁴²³ Sheehan, *German History*; and Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

⁴²⁴ Schmitt's introductory essay to his *What is Enlightenment?* Also, again, see Beiser *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

⁴²⁵ For the most recent iteration of this view (with an extensive literature review) see Zerilli's "We Feel our Freedom."

consciousness beyond the confines of subjectivity. As already discussed, Fichte's move to outline both object and subject consciousness so as to develop an ultimate and unitary foundationalism does, when mixed with his theory of nationalism, work to outline the basis for a politics of closure. The second contextual nexus (which grows out of romantic reactions to Fichte's foundationalism) was that certain aesthetic experiences delineate the parameters of rationality that are simultaneously observed and (at least attempted to be) transcended.⁴²⁶ In using art and the artist as a model for citizenship, the Romantics hoped to provide a kind of moral psychology of independence that, when combined with the founding principles of the Revolution, would produce a well-functioning democratic republic.⁴²⁷

The reading I develop of the early German Romantic model of psychology originates the complex epistemological structure imbedded in that model, which I see as based on imagination, as opposed to practical or pure reason.⁴²⁸ Responding to the always-changing social and political structures these early Romantics found in their world, they imagined humankind as always being 'in between' – through which they hoped to explain the psychologies of group affinities in disaggregated communities. This psychology of always being 'in between' points to a model as yet overlooked in

⁴²⁶ For the best accounting of these facets of German Romanticism, see Manfred Frank's magisterial "*Unendliche Annäherung*": *Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997). For a recent selective translation into English, see Manfred Frank, *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, translated by Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert, SUNY Press, 2004.

⁴²⁷ Beiser *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

⁴²⁸ Though Kant was certainly extremely influential on the early German Romantics, it should not go without some mention that his defense of reason, even if critical, served as one of the initial and central provocations of their critique of enlightenment rationality. For an elaboration of this complicated relationship, on both sides, see (again) Kneller's *Kant and the Power of Imagination*, esp. chapter 5, "The Failures of Kant's Imagination."

contemporary debates on collectivism, illustrating a psychology for ‘a people’ as always evolving, both culturally and politically.

For the early German romantics, such a view of ‘a people’ is directly connected to their ‘ambiguous’ republicanism.⁴²⁹ The romantic view of a well-formed republic (unlike that in France), was one that only found constitution in reform from above through elites, not from revolution and the mass public.⁴³⁰ Only through gradual reform from elite control did the Romantics see any possibility for actualizing a community where the ‘rights of man’ could be secured.⁴³¹ (Here we see the seeds for romanticism’s shift towards conservatism.) The conditions in France provoked the romantics to conclude that only a populous educated in the principles of the rights of man – of equality, fraternity, and liberty – could possibly actualize such a republic and that they, as the educators, would begin such a process. The early German romantics saw as their cause, then, the education and enlightenment of the people as the beginning of the genesis of this new, ‘principled’ republic (one that corresponded with what they took to be the “natural” order).

Thus Novalis, and later the Schlegel brothers (amongst others in the Jena circle),⁴³² employed resources from then recent technological and social

⁴²⁹ On this ambiguous republicanism of the early German Romantics, see, Terry Pinkard’s discussion in *German Philosophy, 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge UP, 2002), pp. 164-171.

⁴³⁰ This contention of the early German Romantics developed later than their initial democratic allegiances, and should be thought to point the way to this movement’s decline into conservatism.

⁴³¹ Beiser *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

⁴³² For a complete analysis of the composition of the Jena circle, see Ernst Behler, *Frühromantik* (Walter de Gruyter, 1992).

developments, establishing a journal – *The Athenäum* – to help propagate their social, aesthetic, and political ideals.⁴³³ The *Athenäum* served as a platform on which the early German romantics were able to evidence both an explication of the kinds of artistic endeavors they hoped would transform the populace, as well as a model of the kind of community of friendship they envisaged as the foundation for this new republic (revealed in their authorship and production of these writings).⁴³⁴ This task of education was made easier by new innovations in technology and social change (of which these same Romantics would later come to react against).⁴³⁵ As a rising middle-class began to emerge in Germany, so too did social outlets for encouraging and maintaining their education. Reading groups sprang up amongst towns and cities throughout most of the German states.⁴³⁶ This, coupled with drastically increased literacy rates and the refinement of printing and magazine publications, made the task of disseminating information to large masses drastically improved. The relevance of this here regards the possibility of democratic social reforms through writing, and the power such acts were seen to have in this transition towards modernity.

Within the *Athenäum* we find much evidence for the romantics' belief in the structuring and reforming power of aesthetics. Such a turn to aesthetic conception of human experience and art, as opposed to reason, can be justified – so thought the early

⁴³³ See Beiser's selections from Schlegel's critique in *Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*.

⁴³⁴ Beiser *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*; Behler *Frühromantik*.

⁴³⁵ Again, for further explication on this point, see Sheehan's *German History*, chapter 1 for a good overview.

⁴³⁶ Again, see Sheehan, *German History*, chapter 1.

romantics – by art’s ability to inspire (and, relatedly, art’s ability to connect individuals to the natural world). Unlike rational principles that must be explained through an architecture of logic and authority, art allows the audience the possibility of judging for themselves, and being inspired by themselves to act in accordance with their own judgments (as opposed to be driven – or forced – by self interest). Novalis and Schlegel were both immensely worried by the effect that self-interest had on individuals’ motivations, seeing interest as a model of force, interfering with choice.⁴³⁷ The implementation of an aesthetics into a politics stands as the single most important resource that can be gleaned from the romantics, and should be seen as the model form which developed a new moral psychology of citizenship – one that is self-determined, and inspired, through the principles of imagination, as opposed to (though not in conflict with) reason.⁴³⁸

Importantly, these early romantics did not envisage their reform movement as replacing any Enlightenment model constructed through reason.⁴³⁹ As Friedrich Beiser reminds us, “The Romantics’ ambivalent reaction to the crises of the *Aufklärung* – their recognition of reasons’ power and limits- left them with a very disturbing dilemma. How is it possible to fill the vacuum left by reason without betraying reason? How is it possible to restore unity with nature and the community without

⁴³⁷ For an elaboration of the early German romantics’ critique of interest, especially as evinced in social contract theory, see Kleingeld’s “Romantic Cosmopolitanism,” p. 282.

⁴³⁸ Mehta speaks precisely to the worry of employing imagination into a liberal contract theory, and Locke’s efforts to suppress such efforts (see his *Anxiety of Freedom*, esp. “Curiosity, Imagination, and Madness”).

⁴³⁹ Beiser *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, chapter 1, for an elaboration on this point.

forgetting the freedom that comes with criticism?”⁴⁴⁰ Early romantics ultimately concluded that aesthetics allowed them to navigate through this problematic. Reason, on their view, was negative – merely able to reflect nature. Aesthetics, by contrast, was positive – able to create new values, and new planes for values to be criticized. Through aesthetics, reason is made potent, in that art allows for the invention of new modals on which reason can reflect. Given this system, aesthetics and reason function in harmony together, allowing for the space of the invention of autonomous selves.

Within this context, romanticism is best viewed then as both a political and aesthetic movement aimed at defending human liberty above all else.⁴⁴¹ But, if this is the case, how is that romantic political ideas have come to be so closely associated with politics of closure.⁴⁴² There persist two popular views on the literature on this question: Either (A) nationalists (like Schlegel, Müller, and Eichendorff, amongst others) have misused romanticism to justify projects of political exclusion, and in so

⁴⁴⁰ See Beiser *Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, p. xvii. Hegel too takes up a similar position here- though there are important reasons not to turn to Hegel to address this problematic. The Romantics I address here offer alternative resources to Hegel at least insofar as Hegel is conceptually a wholist, and therefore any implementation of his theory must rely on wholism as a limiting factor, one that cannot be placed on the Romantics (contra Shklar). Though both sides of this debate are attractive, the Romantic side has been less well explored, and whether we pick one or the other depends on having made the stakes clear- this is at least one payoff for this dissertation.

⁴⁴¹ Precisely what is at stake in this dissertation is the kind of human liberty Romantics aimed to defend. Contra Berlin in his *Two Concepts of Liberty*, there are anathematic consequences to polarizing liberty, and instead democratic theory may be best served by reconceptualizing liberty as one concept that resides within a spectrum, where both of Berlin’s two concepts serve as poles. I advocate this position because, to my view, the polarizing force Berlin employs must ignore the necessarily constructive elements in liberty (as I believe some Romantics’ notions of liberty express), and instead looks towards the spaces these spheres of liberty define. Merely limiting the scope of the concept of liberty to the space defined (and not also to the space defined by), leaves Berlin in the position of having to advocate negative liberty over positive liberty, and to detrimental consequences. For a related argument, see Eric Nelson’s “Liberty: One Concept Too Many?” *Political Theory* 33/1 2005.

⁴⁴² The best articulation of this closure comes from Hans Kohn’s strident critique in “Romanticism and the Rise of German Nationalism,” *The Review of Politics*, Oct. 1950.

doing have misshaped this intellectual tradition from its intellectual roots (closing off a valuable resource for democratic theorists to draw from).⁴⁴³ Or, by contrast, (B) liberal theorists (such as John Stuart Mill, amongst others) have misused romanticism in their defense of liberal pluralism, mistakenly undermining the structural frame of democratic politics they seek to support through incorporating anti-liberal structures for individualism.⁴⁴⁴ While there is much interesting theoretical work that has been done in support of both these theses, it is my contention that each contemporary group has, in co-opting romanticism for their own purposes, deformed this tradition.

It is not that romanticism, as a theory of freedom, does not have within it resources that support a conservative, reactionary model of politics – one that could and has been employed by national socialists to produce dire political results. Nor is it the case that Romanticism does not also have within it resources that speak to the problems of maintaining individuality within a community, as Mill and earlier Tocqueville (amongst others) were so keenly aware. Both readings of Romanticism, to my mind, mistakenly take the part for the whole, and in so doing have cut off important capital expressed within the romantic movement (particularly in its early genesis). As a result of this confusion, romanticism has become vague,⁴⁴⁵ employed at the whim of both conservatives and liberals alike for their own political purposes,

⁴⁴³ This view is put forth by both Berlin and, later, Rosenblum.

⁴⁴⁴ I point here specifically to Mill's use of the concept of genius in *On Liberty* as a device for encouraging varied public opinion.

⁴⁴⁵ Both Lovejoy and Larmore make related claims regarding the obscurity of the history of Romanticism.

entangling this tradition from its roots, and thus obscuring what I take to be most valuable within it: a progressive theory of agency.

Section 2 – On the Synthesis of Thought and Feeling: Romantic Agency

2.1

The historical puzzle of romanticism provides an opportunity to think through the relationship of identity and agency to democratic rule (as this is the framework that conservative and liberal inheritors of romanticism have often employed these theories for). Recently, many democratic theorists have begun to turn away from the problem of identity – the question of “who” the people are and how they become a people – and instead have turned toward an investigation of agency – the analysis of “what” the people do that makes them democratic.⁴⁴⁶ Concerned with the limitations of democratic structures, and the expression of democratic principles, these theorists have taken up the task of questioning our underlying assumptions regarding the nature of rule in democratic politics. In so doing, they seek to unravel the complexities associated with the characterization that democratic politics – a politics of self-governance – depends on a foundation of equal dignity amongst citizens who rule over themselves.⁴⁴⁷ Understanding the activity of democratic citizenship, they argue, should

⁴⁴⁶ For a clear articulation of this problem, as well as a review of the debate and important players involved, see Markell “The Rule of the People: Arendt, *Arche*, and Democracy,” *APSR* 100/1 2006.

help to establish some solutions to the puzzle of democratic legitimacy and consolidation. Given the revealed complexities in global politics of establishing and maintaining political legitimacy (not to mention the frustrated efforts in political science to conceptualize democratic consolidation), this problematic is of the utmost importance –addressing difficulties in both contemporary political discourse, as well as scholarly debate.

The question of the ‘what’ of the agent, romantics argued, can best be delineated through the agent’s expressions. It is not, as it will be for existentialism, that the agent is merely what the agent does, but that the agent is best viewed as the reflection of the action as interpreted by the actor. Most central to this articulation of agency are the ideas of Novalis, who capitulates a relationship between the agent’s felt expression of her own deeds, and the context of interpretation that allows that expression to be read in a context by the agent. Here Novalis helps refine a notion of agency as expression by relating the agent’s own capacity to determine actions as actions by the cultural and political context in which such actions originate. Following on Terry Pinkard’s general articulation of the expressive mode of agency, “Since meaning and the expression of meaning is critical to understanding agency, and meaning is irreducibly normative, no third-person, purely objective understanding of agency is possible; one must understand both the agent’s culture and the agent himself as an individual from the ‘inside,’ not from any kind of external, third-person point of view.”⁴⁴⁸ Unlike Fichte,

⁴⁴⁷ For an elaboration of this view of democratic politics, see Axel Honneth’s “Decentered Autonomy: The Subject After the Fall,” (esp. pp. 181-3) in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Polity, 2007).

who affected a model of consciousness (and later political behavior) on the possibility of a third-person (and, so he thought, neutral) perspective, Novalis sought to navigate past neutrality, which he saw resulting in identify-based model of politics, rather than an agency model. Consciousness for Novalis (especially political consciousness) finds itself appearing in interactions between first persons and second persons (between I and you).

2.2

How does Novalis accomplish this move away from identity and towards agency (and thus away from third-person neutrality)? Central here is Novalis deconstruction of dogmatism and the fear of dogmatism. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Kant had – and many would argue, rightly so – a central fear of the effects of moral dogmatism on the structural of rational agency and the function of cognition generally.⁴⁴⁹ His critical project was meant to circumnavigate dogmatism (and, so some have argued, the fear of dogmatism also).⁴⁵⁰ Much of Kant's efforts, as is well known, were directed at moving between the conflictual structures of grounding agency in faith or in reason. Novalis, taking Kant as his jumping off point, hopes to expand on this bifurcating move, particularly its consequences.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁸ See Pinkard's informative account of romantic agency, in the section titled "The Problem of elf-Consciousness and Post-Kantian Romanticism," excerpted from *German Philosophy, 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴⁴⁹ See Kant, *Werkausgabe*, volume 11, p. 328.

⁴⁵⁰ Susan Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Novalis begins his fragmented investigation of agency through an exploration of mysticism. For Novalis, the central question provoked by Kant's grounding was, "Does mysticism kill reason?"⁴⁵² (e.g. how compatible are mysticism and reason, and can mysticism be distinguished from dogmatism?) Mysticism was, for Kant at least, irrevocably tied to dogmatism. The mystic produced and controlled dogma, and the affects of dogma – and his aim in all this was to create mystery, obfuscating reason. Novalis, however, does not hold so stringently to this connection: "What is mysticism? –What must be treated mystically (mysteriously)? Religion, Love, nature, State... Anything *specially chosen* relates to mysticism."

It is the presence of mystery (of the unexplainable and the unattainable) that attracts Novalis to mysticism. (Of course, this may also be what drives Kant away from it.) Those things which cannot be fully explained, without creating distance through metaphor, are what make mysticism necessary. Mysticism is not the obfuscation of the world, but instead should best be thought of as the process by which we invest meaning in those necessary life-world processes that we even yet do not fully understand. Mysticism is necessary because we do not have direct access to all our experiences of the world. Novalis believes Kant right that there is the world of things as they appear and the world as things in them, the former of which is known,

⁴⁵¹ This is what makes Novalis (to borrow Bernie Yack's phrase) a 'left Kantian.' See Yack's review of the 'Kantian Left' pp. 89-132, in his *Longing for Total Revolution: Philosophic Sources of Social Discontent from Rousseau to Marx and Nietzsche* (University of California Press, 1992)

⁴⁵² See Novalis, *Das Allegemain Brouillon*. Recently translated by David Wood as *Notes for a Romantic Encyclopedia* (SUNY 2007). For Novalis' accounting of dogmatism, see note 782; for his discussion of mysticism, see notes 775-782. On Novalis' practical mysticism (and its limits), see William O'Brien's *Novalis: Signs of Revolution* (Duke UP, 1995), pp. 111-116.

the latter of which remains unknown. But if such a world exists, where the unknown is acknowledged as unknown, we still must have a way of engaging with that world.

This is the use of mysticism. Mysticism should not be feared – simply acknowledged as a necessary device in navigating a world that is not always understood.

Novalis (even if somewhat dangerously) acknowledged the need for a kind of pragmatic mysticism that comes from a fundamental restructuring of Kant's epistemology. This new mysticism would be based on the premise that thought (pure reason) is not enough to navigate through experiences of world. As Novalis himself puts it, "As we observe ourselves so we enliven ourselves. Without this visible and tangible form of immortality we would not be able to think truly."⁴⁵³ It is not that pure reason comes upon us, but rather, through our own cognition of ourselves (our own self-consciousness) – which comes from our feeling of ourselves – that we are able to think of the world as an experience.

2.3

For Novalis, the capacity to observe epistemic qualities of thought from within one's own consciousness means that one is capable of locating one's consciousness outside of pure thought – specifically, in the place of imagination. That the imagination has the capacity to examine self-thought from an externalized (though still internal) position, is Novalis' observed counter to Fichte's objective-consciousness. Novalis does not find imagination as objective, as in coming from beneath the object

⁴⁵³ From Novalis' *Fragments*. For the best English translation, see Frederick Beiser's *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 81-91.

of observation. Rather, imagination is the standpoint from which a critical location of consciousness works on itself. Such relocation of components of consciousness upon itself is best observed in the reorientation of one's perspective to the ordinary experiences of the world. This reorientation to the ordinary is only possible because of the substantive weight of the imagination over and above the function of pure-reason. The conscious-self, in Novalis' epistemological model, is capable of moving from ignorance of the ordinary to cognizance of the ordinary because of imagination, and this imagination draws from the premise of there always already being a presumptive Absolute that precedes the experience and conditions it.⁴⁵⁴

This reorientation (as will be discussed in further detail below) is Novalis' theory of 'romanticization.' It is perhaps best described as a psychological process of reimagining identities, rather than an object-oriented psychology of attaining a higher, transcendental identity. For Novalis to romanticize is "the alteration of highering and lowering."⁴⁵⁵ While Novalis' dictum is usually seen as a form of perfectionism – relocating the individual self to a 'higher' place that is imagined as more perfect – such a reading ignores the context and motivations for the early Romantics' project. Witnessing the success of national allegiances in France, Britain, Ireland, and the United States, Novalis and the rest of the early Romantics sought a way to articulate a means for unification under a particular allegiance. Yet their model of identity formation was not intended to be limited to this particular context, and they

⁴⁵⁴ For further elaboration on Novalis' epistemology, see Manfred Frank's "*Unendliche Annäherung*": *Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997); esp. notes 164-169.

⁴⁵⁵ Novalis, *Sketches* (see Beiser's translation, *Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*).

endeavored to extrapolate a more general model that could be employed to other problems of collective formation. To ‘romanticize’ individuals and communities is – originally – the process of an important psychic relocation in all directions; it was a reformulation of the structures of epistemology.

Section 3 – Novalis’ Inheritance of Kant

3.1

Central to Novalis’ reformulation of epistemology is, I would argue, his understanding and incorporation of some portions central to Kant’s theory of judgment.⁴⁵⁶ (And, indeed, the relation of aesthetic judgment to political engagement that Hannah Arendt observes, was – arguably – prefaced in Novalis’ thought).⁴⁵⁷ The notion that morality, grounded in rationality and progress, should commingle with politics is – at first glance – deceptively unproblematic to the structures of a contemporary theoretical lens. (Liberalism, in its various iterations, always still advocates for a system of politics that protects a collection of rights derived from universal moral principles.) But for Kant, and many of his contemporary German political theorists, there was a lurking inherent tension between morality and politics –

⁴⁵⁶ While Novalis was initially taken with Kant’s 3rd Critique, we know that he also later followed Schlegel in condemning it, in part as a way of distancing themselves from Fichte. For an elaboration on this, see Thomas Pfau’s *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840* (JHU Press, 2005), p. 43. Reading Novalis as a reformed Kantian is best evinced in the work of Jane Kneller, *Kant and the Power of Imagination, as well as* and Manfred Frank 9th lecture on Novalis as a Frühromantik.

⁴⁵⁷ See Arendt’s *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 1992) for her articulation of Kant’s aesthetic theory as a resource for politics.

a tension that Novalis argued remained unresolved in Kant's political theory. As one contemporary theorist recently explained, it is "perhaps (Kant's) central political conviction – that morality and politics must be related, since 'true politics cannot take a single step without first paying homage to morals.'"⁴⁵⁸ But, "at the same time, however, Kant draws a very strict distinction between moral motives (acting from respect for the moral law) and legal motives, and insists that their definitions must never be collapsed into each other."⁴⁵⁹ Though Kant may seem to offer an appealing moral theory to uphold liberal articulations of rights that commingle morality and politics, he himself could apparently not reconcile the two together. Novalis drew from this apparent tension a space for self-creation that always would allow the individual (as individual) to reorient themselves to an absolute and universal structure for traversing the gap between the moral and the political (or, as Novalis often put it, between religion and the state).⁴⁶⁰

Novalis found an architecture to think through these complications in his account of human judgment (rethinking Kant's own critique), particularly in his account of reflection. In this accounting, Novalis describes conceptual resources that would, as I read him, offer citizens a means to effect such binds on their political structure and hence their community, but from a subjective rather than objective (and

⁴⁵⁸ Patrick Riley's *Kant's Political Philosophy* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1983) p. 2.

⁴⁵⁹ Riley's *Kant*, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁰ Novalis' best articulation of this comes in his *Christianity or Europe: A fragment*, where he argues for the basis of a union of moral and political universalism. See Beiser's translation in his *Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, pp. 59-80.

atomist) position. In order to understand Novalis' assertion clearly, we must turn (briefly) to an analysis of Kant's thinking though of the problems of judgment.

3.2

Kant claims, "Judgment in general is the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal."⁴⁶¹ As a further elaboration of this definition, Kant offers us two categories of judgment- 'determinate' and 'reflective' – for explaining how individuals make specific judgments of the world. Accordingly, for Kant, 'determinate' judgments begin with a given universal category - derived from principles through reason - employed to determine the value of particular events in the world according to those already revealed in universal categories.⁴⁶² Kant explains, "Determinative judgment, which operates under universal transcendental laws given by the understating, is only subsumptive. The law is marked out for it a priori, and hence it does not need to devise a law of its own so that it can subsume the particularity in nature under the universal."⁴⁶³ In contrast, 'reflective' judgments are those judgments where the particulars are given and a possible (e.g. imagined) universal must be sought out. As Kant describes it, "Reflective judgment, which is obliged to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal, requires a principle, which it cannot borrow from experience, precisely because it is to be the basis for the

⁴⁶¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 18.

⁴⁶² Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 59.

⁴⁶³ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 19.

unity of all empirical principles under higher though still empirical principles, and hence is to be the basis that makes it possible to subordinate empirical principles to one another in a systematic way.”⁴⁶⁴ Thus, with determinative judgments, universals are known, and the value of particulars remains unknown (but discoverable through experience), while with reflective judgments, particulars are known and universals remain unknown (but imaginable).

The distinction between determinative and reflective judgments becomes important for the kinds of objects Kant believed such judgments were to be directed towards. According to Kant, determinative judgments often pertain to the moral sphere, while reflective judgments pertain to the aesthetic sphere.⁴⁶⁵ Kant makes this distinction explicit in his attempt to account for our experience of the beautiful. As Kant explains, “If we judge objects merely in terms of concepts, then we lose all presentation of beauty. This is why there can be no rule by which someone could be compelled to acknowledge that something is beautiful.”⁴⁶⁶ In contrast for Kant, as all autonomous individuals have reason and understanding, and moral concepts are determined by that rationality, there can be rules by which someone is compelled to acknowledge the moral.⁴⁶⁷ Moral judgments, thus, are determinative, because we have

⁴⁶⁴ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 19.

⁴⁶⁵ For an elaboration of this distinction, see Barbara Herman’s *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Harvard UP, 1993).

⁴⁶⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 59.

⁴⁶⁷ See Kant’s *Groundwork*.

concepts from which to guide us in our assessment of the world, while aesthetic judgments are merely reflective, because we lack such concepts.

This distinction between the moral and the beautiful has important consequences for the parallel epistemologies that develop from the making of such judgments. Determinative judgments align the individual, through reason, with universal norms. When the “I” assesses the moral value of an action, that “I” holds the universal as its own. That is, the “I” of the individual that makes determinative judgments develops the habit of subsuming their individuality underneath the universal. As Kant explains, “A judgment that is universally valid objectively is always subjectively so too i.e. if the judgment is valid for everything contained under a given concept (as it must be in moral judgments), then it is also valid for everyone who presents an object by means of this concept.”⁴⁶⁸ By contrast, reflective judgments align the individual’s epistemology with particularity. There, when the “I” has an experience, it is merely that particular experience that is known, and the “I” holds that particular experience as its own – and not as universal. This “I” of the individual – the “I” that makes reflective judgments - reaffirms the particularity of their own existence through aesthetic experience. As Kant describes it, “If a judgment has subjective – i.e. aesthetic- universal validity, which does not rest on a concept, we cannot infer that it also has logical universal validity, because such judgments do not deal with the object itself at all (but rather our particular experience of that object).”⁴⁶⁹ Thus, determinative

⁴⁶⁸ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 58.

⁴⁶⁹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 58.

judgments pertain to the universal, while reflective judgments apprehend the particular.

Kant ascertained that his system of morality, laid out in his *Critique of Practical Reason* and in his *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, had not proved sufficient for overcoming the crucial problem of how one lives one's life with others – that is, how one can develop moral autonomy within the confines of a political community.⁴⁷⁰ As Kant explains it, “There are those who would like to regard every activity of man to which his inner natural predisposition impels him as being directed to the ultimate purpose of humanity, the morally good.”⁴⁷¹ Indeed, one could easily confuse Kant as being one of these people, given his account of morality and the good will presented in the texts noted above. But, at least in his writings after 1789, Kant began to believe there was much reason to contend that moral perfection demands not simply moral rules, but a feeling of morality. The problem for Kant is that there are those “who not just occasionally but apparently as a rule, are vain, obstinate, and given to ruinous passions, (and) can perhaps, even less than other people, acclaim distinction of being attached to moral principles.”⁴⁷² Clearly, Kant was all too aware that moral principles, without a feeling of morality, could be employed to corrupted ends.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ See Kuehn's *Kant: A Biography*, p. 375, for an account of Kant's disappointment regarding this issue.

⁴⁷¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 165.

⁴⁷² Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 165.

But, what then, is this feeling of morality – and how do we recognize it? For Kant, the practice of accessing the feeling of morality comes through aesthetics, from recognizing beauty as a *symbol* for morality.⁴⁷⁴ For Kant, aesthetics reveals our unique relationship to the beautiful: We have a direct relationship to it – I feel this is beautiful; We have this feeling independent of interest- I like it whether or not it is good for me; Our imagination intercedes into our understating- I imagine the beautiful thing at the same time that I understand it is beautiful; And we come to believe that all will experience this beauty in the same way- I believe that this beautiful thing contains within it an assertion that you too might also think it beautiful.⁴⁷⁵ As Kant describes it, “We have a merely aesthetic power of judgment, an ability to judge forms without using concepts and to feel in the mere judging of these forms a liking that we also make a rule for everyone, though our judgment is not based on an interest and also gives rise to none. On the other hand we also have an intellectual power of judgment, i.e. an ability for determining a priori with regard to mere forms of practical maxims (insofar as such maxims qualify of themselves for giving universal law) a liking that we make a law for everyone; this judgment too is not based on interest, yet it gives rise to one. The pleasure or displeasure in the first judgment is called that of taste; in the latter, that of moral feeling.”⁴⁷⁶ Moral feeling, for Kant, is the feeling of pleasure

⁴⁷³ We see this danger, at least for Kant, most clearly exhibited in the reign of the Jacobin terror. For an Account of Kant’s reaction to these events see Kuehn’s account in *Kant: A Biography*, pp. 340-385).

⁴⁷⁴ For an original and precise account of beauty as a symbol of morality and the consequences this has for Kant’s moral theory, see Paul Guyer’s *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge UP, 1996).

⁴⁷⁵ For an excellent discussion of these points see Kuehn (2001, p. 375).

⁴⁷⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 167.

or displeasure that arises from our making a rule that we believe all others will adhere to: “If we call an object beautiful we believe we have a universal voice, and lay claim to the agreement of everyone.”⁴⁷⁷ This “claim” arises from a feeling, not a universal moral principle. According to Kant, I can never know for sure that others will agree with my feeling, but I conjecture that the feeling is possibly universal.⁴⁷⁸ Given this architecture, the beautiful is best viewed as a symbol of morality. Thus, as Guyer rightly observes, “Moral perfection requires the development of feeling compatible with and conducive to those intentions that are dictated by pure practical reason alone.”⁴⁷⁹ Following Guyer here, this feeling finds ground for cultivation in aesthetics.

In order to understand this process of cultivation, Kant directs us to his notion of taste. Kant explains, “Taste makes, as it were, the transition from the charm of sense to habitual moral interest possible.”⁴⁸⁰ For Kant, taste is the ability to develop the moral feeling that is so important for how persons act in the world. But it cannot be conflated with morality. Kant theorized that in taste “judgment does not find itself subjected to a heteronomy from empirical laws, as it does elsewhere in empirical judging- concerning objects of such a pure liking it legislates to itself, just as reason does regarding the power of desire;” adding that “because the subject has this ability within him, while outside him there is also the possibility that nature will harmonize

⁴⁷⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 59.

⁴⁷⁸ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 60.

⁴⁷⁹ Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, p. 30.

⁴⁸⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 229.

with it, judgment finds itself referring to something that is both in the subject himself and outside him.”⁴⁸¹ From this, we see latent in Kant's theory the notion that reflective judgments become so important to our epistemologies in that they allow us to locate reference both within ourselves, as well as external to us - to serve as a linking point between autonomous individuals and the plurality to which those individuals belong. We see a similar impulse when he exclaims in his fourth thesis from the *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent*, “The first true steps from barbarism to culture, in which the unique social worth of man consists, now occur, all man’s talents are gradually developed, his taste is cultured, and through progressive enlightenment he begins to establish a way of thinking that can in time transform the crude natural capacity for moral discrimination into definite practical principles and thus transform a pathologically enforced agreement into society and, finally, into a moral whole.”⁴⁸² But Kant’s account here begs the question, if taste (the fundamental component of aesthetics) is what grounds respect for the particularity of others, what is the relationship between taste and politics?⁴⁸³

Of utmost import for understanding the connection between Kant’s conception of taste and his conception of politics is the notion of detachment.⁴⁸⁴ For Kant, an

⁴⁸¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 229.

⁴⁸² Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent* (Hackett, 1983) p. 32.

⁴⁸³ The question of taste and judgment in politics has proved dramatically difficult for political theorists attempting to align Kant’s moral theory with his political theory. For a good summary of the literature aimed at resolving this difficulty, see Ellis’ recent study of judgment Kant’s Politics (Yale, 2005) chapter 2.

⁴⁸⁴ See Guyer’s dialectic of disinterestedness for a good account of this process (1993, p. 48).

individual's detachment from the world places one in the position of spectator.⁴⁸⁵ The spectator is aware of events and experiences, but lacks concepts from which to measure them. What confronts the individual are not general categories, nor categories grounded in interest, but rather the 'this' of a particular thing. There is nothing necessary about the particular, the 'thisness' is all contingent on the subjective experience of participating in the viewing of the object itself. Regarding the interest of the spectator, Kant claims, "Interest is what we call the liking we connect with the presentation of an object's existence. Hence such a liking always refers at once to our power of desire, either as the basis that determines it, or at any rate as necessarily connected with determining that bias."⁴⁸⁶ Thus, interest is my subjective taking-in of the world - in observing the world, I find myself drawn to some aspects more than others.

But when we assess something as 'beautiful', interest alone cannot get us to think through the parameters of our experience. It is not my interest that makes me think 'this' is beautiful – the assessment of beauty depends on disinterestedness – a space where the faculty of judgment can engage the subject. As Kant describes it, when confronted with the beautiful, the spectator "cannot discover private conditions

⁴⁸⁵ This should not be confused with Smith's account of the "impartial spectator." Where Smith is concerned with assessing the *moral value* of another's actions from a detached and impartial position, Kant is concerned with the an individual's aesthetic experience of an event for themselves (and the assessment of how others might have experienced such an event). It is the particularity of the event that inspires Kant. For an excellent recent account of Smith's 'impartial spectator' from his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, see Griswold's *Adam Smith and the Virtues of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge UP, 1999). For accounts of Smith's influence on Kant, see Kuehn's *Kant: A Biography*. Also, for an interesting opposing argument, see Fleischaker's *Third Concept of Liberty*.

⁴⁸⁶ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 45.

(for his assessment) because his liking is not based on any inclination he has - rather, the judging person feels completely free as regards the liking he accords the object.⁴⁸⁷ The 'I' as spectator, as judge, remains disinterested. This freedom is essential to one's experience of the beautiful. For Kant, interest is binding, but the beautiful, and the feeling it affords one, is the experience of freedom.⁴⁸⁸ Significantly, what follows from this freedom is not simply a notion of freedom *for* one's self, but freedom *from* one's own interests. Thus, the spectator conceives that it is not his or her own assessment of beauty, but the experience of the 'beautiful' that all might have.

Here is the link between the aesthetic and the political. That the spectator *imagines* that his or her experience of the beautiful is that experience that all might have is the process of representative thinking- that is, thinking for others as you imagine they would think for themselves.⁴⁸⁹ Importantly, as Kant explains, "The judgment of taste itself does not postulate everyone's agreement (since only a logically universal judgment can adduce reasons); it merely requires this agreement from everyone, as an instance of the rule, an instance regarding which it expects confirmation not from concepts but from a agreement of others. Hence the universal voice (the imagined response of all others for whom constructs this rule) is only an

⁴⁸⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 54.

⁴⁸⁸ For a further elaboration on this point, see Zerilli's "We Feel Our Freedom."

⁴⁸⁹ The complexities of this term will be explored in greater detail in section II of this essay. For further elaborations of Kant's theory of representation, including a discussion of Reinhold and Fichte's additions, see Allen Wood (1999).

idea.”⁴⁹⁰ For Kant, the individual, in representing the thinking of others for himself, creates for himself an imagined plurality of voices that are transformed into an possible universal voice – what Kant describes as a “claim to subjective universality.”⁴⁹¹ This (very contingent) universal voice that lays claim to subjective universality speaks the rule presented in an aesthetic experience. Such a process is precisely not grounded in abstract rationality, but in the particular feelings one has in the world.

Importantly, the consequences of this claim to subjective universality are not simply of the individual. In seeking assent, the universal voice also reaffirms the community (the *sensus communis*) to which the individual belongs. Kant explains the *sensus communis* as grounded in these maxims: (1) to think for oneself, (2) to think from the standpoint of everyone else, and (3) always to think consistently.⁴⁹² As Kant explains it, we should define “taste as the ability to judge something that makes our feeling in a given representation universally communicable without mediation of a concept;”⁴⁹³ adding, “taste can be called a *sensus communis* more legitimate than can sound understanding, and that the aesthetic power of judgment deserves to be called a shared sense more than does the intellectual one.”⁴⁹⁴ For Kant, the shared sense that

⁴⁹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 60.

⁴⁹¹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment* p. 54.

⁴⁹² Kuehn, Kant: A Biography, p. 348. Also, see Weber’s related account of passion, responsibility, and proportion in his *Vocation Lectures* (Hackett, 2004) p. 76.

⁴⁹³ Kant, *Critique of Judgment* p. 162.

⁴⁹⁴ Kant, *Critique of Judgment* p. 162.

develops from the experience of taste opens us to the reality of our community. We emerge into community, and navigate ourselves there with the *feeling* of morality that should guide us within such community.

Here, in Kant's exposition of taste and the feeling of morality, we discover the particularly political component of judgment. Kant claims, "Only in society is the beautiful of empirical interest. And if we grant that the urge to society is natural to man, and that his fitness and propensity to it, i.e. sociability, is a requirement of man as a creature with a vocation for society, and hence is a property pertaining to his humanity, then we must inevitable regard taste as the ability to judge whatever allows us to communicate even our feeling to everyone else, and hence regard taste as a means of furthering something that everyone's natural inclination demands."⁴⁹⁵ Taste itself becomes the ground on which we enter into the human community - it is the beginning of what Kant calls "civilization" and rightly also should be considered the origin of the political. As Cavell explains it, "to speak for oneself politically is to speak for the others with whom you consent to association, and it is to consent to be spoken for by them- not as a parent speaks for you, i.e., instead of you, but as someone speaks in mutuality for you, i.e., speaks you mind."⁴⁹⁶ Our having taste results in the genesis of a community that allows for plurality. As Kant asserts, "There were peoples during one age whose strong urge to have sociability under laws, through which a people becomes a lasting commonwealth, wrestled with the great problems that

⁴⁹⁵ Kant, *Critique of Judgment* p. 163.

⁴⁹⁶ Stanly Cavell, *The Claim of Reason* (Oxford, 1979) p. 27.

surround the difficult task of combining freedom (and hence also equality) with some constraint (a constraint based more on respect and submission from duty than from fear);” adding, “A people in such an age had to begin by discovering the art of reciprocal communication of ideas between its most educated and its cruder segments, and by discovering how to make the improvement and refinement of the first harmonize with the natural simplicity and originality of the second, finding in this way that mean between culture and an understanding of nature constituting the right standard, unstateable in any universal rules even for taste, which is the universal human sense.”⁴⁹⁷ The problem of agreement in plural societies is the fundamental problem of politics. This account of aesthetics gives us essential resources to understanding how to navigate as autonomous selves within that plurality, while simultaneously maintaining freedom within politics.

3.3

For Novalis, the preservation of freedom is the ultimate task of politics. As Kant asserts, “(Reflective) judgment makes possible the transition from the domain of the concept of nature to that of the concept of freedom.”⁴⁹⁸ Such freedom is only possible if individuals remain individuals both for themselves and for others.

⁴⁹⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgment* p. 231.

⁴⁹⁸ Kant, *Critique of Judgment* p. 196.

The means by which this individuation takes place, and indeed the basis of romantic agency, is only possible – according to Novalis – through the process of romanticization. As Novalis articulates it:

Romanticizing is nothing more than a qualitative involution. In this operation the lower self is identified with a better self. In the same manner, we are such a qualitative series of powers. This operation is still completely unknown. When I give the commonplace a higher meaning, the customary a mysterious appearance, the known the dignity of the unknown, the finite the illusion of the infinite, I romanticize it. The operation is the converse for the higher, unknown, mystical and infinite; through this connection it becomes logarithimized. It receives a customary expression. Romantic philosophy. *Lingua romana*. Reciprocal elevation and debasement.⁴⁹⁹

This process of romanticization, of highering and lowering, is the basis for the expressive agent's location in the world. Within this dense passage we see the cornels of each aspect of romantic agency revealed. Being in the world, which, for Novalis, is the basis of agency, appears as a navigation of selves, narrated as higher or lower in relation to every ordinary thing experienced in and of that world. The reciprocity of romantic agency results in a constant progression (though, non-linear), which allows the romantic access to (that very pregnant phrase) 'authentic experience.'

Such an accounting of highering and lowering can indeed be inspiring, especially when viewed in the context of poetic or even social transformations. But, when drawn to political contexts, Novalis' theory has been characterized as raising troubling signals of perfectionism.⁵⁰⁰ Thus, when Novalis argues, "The word

⁴⁹⁹ From Novalis' *Sketches*, #104. See Beiser (1996), p. 85.

Fatherland has lost its magic power; the place of patriotism has been taken by a more general but therefore colder interest for mankind,”⁵⁰¹ critics can read him (esp. retroactively) as driving towards a politics of exclusion that will form the basis for conservative nationalism. But such a characterization may be too harsh – at least for Novalis. He did not seem to hope for exclusion so much as the re-invigoration of politics; past the cold, mechanized model he witnessed emerging in Prussia and beyond. Romantisizing was not a stagnant reprising of elite power over weakened masses; nor was it the unleashing of unmanageable powers with those masses themselves. Instead it was the constant reorienting of selves towards strictures that enlivened – rather than suppressed – the lived moral ends of politics. Novalis’ aim was not to exclude others from social and political goods (though his theories have been driven to that use).⁵⁰² Novalis’ aim was, more than anything, to combat stasis by invigorating the electorate. (The lurking question here, of course, is whether citizens can be invigorated with such aesthetic mechanisms, without safeguards to the abuse of power within the spaces between the aesthetic presentation of political goods, and the actualization of their ends?)

Section 4 – Understanding *Schwärmerei*

⁵⁰⁰ See, for instance, Hans Kohn’s strident critique in “Romanticism and the Rise of German Nationalism,” *The Review of Politics*, (Oct., 1950).

⁵⁰¹ From Novalis’ contribution to the *Athenäum*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 28f.

⁵⁰² See Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* for the best articulation of this incorporation by National State Socialists.

4.1

Novalis' articulation of the failures of state patriotism, and the need to romanticize the state and the citizen, raising one 'up,' while bringing the other 'down,' is his hopeful articulation of the kind of state that would best suit a happy citizenry. Yet Novalis is often viewed as a sort of 'realist,' where his realism is his honest articulation of what should be hoped for if politics can even begin to function well.⁵⁰³ While I understand the impulse of the 'realist' reading, I also think it ignores Novalis' strengths – his ability to rethink the ordinary, and even the abhorrent, in a way that makes them new and sometimes available. Moreover, it covers over what, at least for some critics, are the inherent dangers to Novalis' ideals – a utopianism that denies the (at least possible) corruptibility of institutions.⁵⁰⁴

But it does still remain an open question – how, if state patriotism is currently failing, can such a well-functioning state-citizen relationship develop? What would the experience of allegiance entail, if not the traditional mode of patriotism? For whatever Novalis' weakness may be, he does offer a substantive attempt to address this problem.

Novalis turns to *Schwärmerei* as a means of addressing the fundamental emotion to the experience of romanticization, and thus the basis of this heightened patriotism he seeks.⁵⁰⁵ For Novalis, that *Schwärmerei* – the 'feeling of extending into the infinite'

⁵⁰³ For elaborations on romantic 'realism,' see Frank, *Früromantik* pp. 208-9, and Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

⁵⁰⁴ See Shklar, *After Utopia*, for an extension of this critique.

– is possible, stands as an empirical rejection of the ‘apostles’ of Enlightenment and reason (*Aufklärungapostel und Vernunftprediger*).⁵⁰⁶ From his view, Wieland and the other Berlin *Aufklärer* are responsible – through reconstructions of social ideals – for the ‘mechanization’ of reason, and consequently politics.⁵⁰⁷ And not merely that, but Novalis accuses Wieland and his fellows in the Berlin Enlightenment as guilty of persecution, “Men and women, young and old alike are made happy in such a feeling as *Schwärmerei*. And yet for centuries, many of these same happy people have been decried as the enemies of humanity and happiness and morality, attacked with mocking bigotry, enduring bitter persecution.”⁵⁰⁸ For Novalis, *Schwärmerei* is the process by which “individuals open themselves up to the warmth and happiness in lived experience,” and thus should not be considered a danger, but a blessing for society.⁵⁰⁹ It is a feeling, but a feeling that only arises when the mechanical view of the world is ‘cast aside,’ and the individual absolves into the universal.

Novalis is especially attracted to defending *Schwärmerei* because it gets at the possibility of balancing the condition he finds emblematic of lived human experience – being ‘in between.’⁵¹⁰ The capacity to be individuated and un-individuated, to be one

⁵⁰⁵ For an account of the context of Novalis’ thinking on *Schwärmerei* compared to other romantics, see Peter Fenves, “The Scale of Enthusiasm,” esp. p. 14.

⁵⁰⁶ From Novalis’ “*Apologie der Schwärmerei*” (1789), in Novalis *Schriften: Das Philosophische Werk I* (Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 20-22. I provide my own translation in Appendix 2 and all citations are excerpted from that text.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵⁰⁸ Novalis’ “*Apologie der Schwärmerei*,” paragraph E.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

and not one, is the experience which *Schwärmerei* delineates. To feel *Schwärmerei* is to feel as though one is in a swarm, which is to feel oneself and to feel the universal (at least as represented by the group of the swarm).⁵¹¹ When in the metaphoric ‘swarm,’ one does not where the swarm begins and ends, where the individual begins and ends, where the universal begins and ends. Because of that, the individual in the swarm acquiesces to a power greater than the individual’s, yet made powerful by the individual.

4.2

Novalis turns to the feeling of *Schwärmerei* as a way of articulating his critique of mechanization.⁵¹² The critique of modernity made potent by the Jena romantics was the mechanization of the world resulted in the mechanization of humanity. As Friedrich Schlegel puts it, “Mechanism is certainly the evil principle in philosophy and

⁵¹⁰ Being ‘in between’ – between the finitude and the infinite, the moral and the divine, the nature and the mechanical world – is what, for Novalis, characterized lived human experience. Embracing the state of being ‘in between,’ as opposed to denying its reality, and instead pretending that persons can be ‘natural’ or ‘mechanical’ was ultimately what he aimed to avoid. (See Novalis’ *Sketches*, Beiser’s translation (1996), pp. 85-86. Relatedly, it should be noted that Novalis, felt himself closely aligned with Ancient philosophy, and here self-consciousness frames his argument with the (often mistranslated) ‘Apologie,’ – which, for the Greeks, would be a defense, rather than an abdication (as in Socrates’ Apology). That he concludes with a selection from Pindar’s 9th *Olympic Ode*, regarding the experience of the divine, is not unrelated to this frame, highlighting the possibility – and stakes – of acknowledging the feeling of the divine. “*Apologie der Schwärmerei*”, p. 20 and 22.

⁵¹¹ For a related discussion of the swarm and *Schwärmerei*, see Peter Fenves, ‘The Scale of Enthusiasm,’ p. 5.

⁵¹² The best account of German romantics critique of modernity, and yet incorporation of modern social and political institutions as framework for their critical theories, is Theodore Ziolkowski’s *German Romanticism and Its Institutions* (Princeton, 1990). Esp. relevant here is chapter 4, ‘The Madhouse: Asylum of the Spirit,’ pp. 138-217.

reality. Because in mechanism *finitude* is posited absolutely.”⁵¹³ Transformations in society, both in Prussia and aboard, had resulted in the introduction of the machine into the lived daily-lives of modernizing European citizens. From the romantics’ perspective, such an introduction redirected psychic energies away from the balancing point of the finite and infinite, and –instead – weighted all thought and action towards the finite. This romantic critique stood in direct contrast to the earlier generation of enlightenment thinkers. As Novalis complains, “In general, it seems that both thinkers and laymen alike (even if the former more frequently than the latter) stand so often in opposition to natural law that they find themselves predisposed to a disparaging view, whether what they oppose is real or imaginary.”⁵¹⁴ By contrast, Novalis’ conception of *Schwärmerei* fits closely here as his effort to remind others of the possibility of using internalized psychic resources to combat the mechanization of the human world.

Novalis’ main contribution to political theory is the argument that understanding citizen psychology is central to engaging the problems and benefits of forming collective identities. The payoff of such a theory is the uncovering of a new moral psychology of citizenship derived from his defense of *Schwärmerei*. This moral psychology, so Novalis believed, allows citizens to preserve a capacity for justice, as well as a clear conception of the good, through the employment of judgment, thought, inference, and (significantly from Novalis’ perspective) imagination. Novalis’ romanticism lends resources to a complex rethinking of the role imagination plays in

⁵¹³ From Schlegel’s *Lectures on Transcendental Philosophy*, Beiser (1996), p. 150.

⁵¹⁴ Novalis’ “*Apologie der Schwärmerei*,” paragraph A. The ‘thinker’ Novalis seems most worried about is Wieland.

agents' development and continued reshaping of normative foundations through the cultivation of a frame that allows for a perpetual reformulation of each individual's conception of themselves. Important here is the notion that democratic individuals cannot imitate artificial (or external) constructions of themselves, but rather must themselves be the author of their own individuality.⁵¹⁵ This rearticulation of the moral psychology of citizenship provides for a more coherent and robust psychological structure, endowing citizens with the capacity to resist both social and political tyranny – thus allowing for the wellness of democratic self-rule.⁵¹⁶

Section 5 – The Problem of 'Europe' (Past and Present)

5.1

How does Novalis' conception of *Schwärmerei* connect – beyond political theory – to contemporary political problems? In an effort to think past national identity, previous chapters of this dissertation have pointed to enthusiasm as a means of addressing the question 'What could motivate democratic collective identities beyond particularism?' Novalis provides us with an answer to this question in his account of *Schwärmerei*, which he also applies to the case of Europe in 1799.⁵¹⁷ (As it

⁵¹⁵ This is a reapplication of Romantics' aim to replace classical conceptions of art (based on the notion of art as mimesis), with their own explanation of art as a new creation of values.

⁵¹⁶ Meaning a capacity to resist both a tyranny of the majority, as well as tyranny from minority rule.

⁵¹⁷ Novalis' account of Europe and its problems appear in his *Christianity or Europe* (1799). The English translation used here is from Beiser (1996), pp. 61-79.

turns out, his concerns about Europe were not so far away from those of theorists some two centuries later.)

On May 12, 2000, Joschka Fischer delivered a now famous address that revealed both the hope and essential problem of post-national politics, calling to “re-establish” Europe beyond the model of the traditional Westphalian nation-state. As justification for his claims, Fischer drew on the recent theory of constitutional patriotism, in which group identities form around shared norms and values rather than the civic or ethnic allegiances of a nation.⁵¹⁸ Fischer’s sentiments still stand in stark contrast to those of the majority of citizens in the European member-states. Citizens across disparate economic and social backgrounds have continued to voice a highly particularist cultural response to the idea of a European political union, continuing to defend the value of their own unique national identities. Much of the current debate around constitutional patriotism and European integration assumes that national particularism – fueled by romantic (e.g. conservative) political psychologies – encourages attachments that stand in the way of a European Union.⁵¹⁹

The Habermasian defense of constitutional patriotism rests on the notion that the particularism of a unified European identity is more advantageous for citizens than the particular identities of single nation-states. Without, however, a clear enunciation of what actual European citizens would gain from reforming an identity past their own current modes, constitutional patriots work against their own critiques, substituting

⁵¹⁸ See Jan Mueller, *Constitutional Patriotism*.

⁵¹⁹ See Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation*.

one object of particularism for another. A theory of how citizens would be empowered by a broader collective identity than the parochialism afforded by national identity, and the mechanisms for imagining this new community, is still necessary as justification for the re-establishment of Europe.

5.2

It is here where Novalis' thought becomes at least possibly valuable. Concerned with the limiting structures of local, particularist politics on the one hand, and the effects of mechanization on society and individual psychology generally on the other, Novalis sought political structures that would allow individuals access to greater valances of cultural meaning. (Sounding strikingly similar to Fischer) Novalis exclaims, "If only there were a new stirring of hitherto slumbering Europe! If only Europe wanted to awaken again! And if only a state of states, a new political theory of science, were impending. Should perhaps the hierarchy, the symmetrical basic figure of the sciences, be the principle of the union of states as an intellectual intuition of the political ego?"⁵²⁰ For Novalis, particularism (at least political particularism) was symptomatic of modernization, and resulted in the redefinition of psychological structures as localized and of finite direction.

The counter to this problematic, so Novalis proposed, was a reinvestment in the universal. This is not simply a religious or moral claim, but a political one. As Novalis explains, "It is impossible that worldly powers come into equilibrium by

⁵²⁰ Novalis, *Christianity or Europe* (1799), translation in Beiser, *Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, p. 77.

themselves; only a third element, that is worldly and supernatural at the same time, can achieve this task.”⁵²¹ Here Novalis makes perhaps his most dangerous move. The only power, so he argued, which could reunite Europe in everlasting peace was a civil religion – what Novalis labels as a ‘New Christianity.’ As he explains, “Only religion can reawaken Europe, make the people secure, and install Christianity (the old religion) with new magnificence in its old peace making office, visible to the whole world.”⁵²² Here the ‘New Christianity’ of Europe – the political Christianity – must come to fruition so as to save the old religion of Christianity, as well as the old states of Europe.⁵²³

Novalis’ model for such a union of religion and politics was the Europe of the Middle Ages. This was not (as would be true for later, more conservative romantics) because of any cultural supremacy he witnessed in the old German structures. But, rather, because the Middle ages of Christendom were marked explicitly be a celebration of the mystical universalism present in the world.⁵²⁴ For Novalis, the past did not imbue itself with authority simply by being past, but a specific cultural past was relevant because of its access to the universalism he sought as necessary to the preservation of peace in Europe. After all, Novalis thought, “The European stands as

⁵²¹ Ibid, p. 77.

⁵²² Ibid, pp. 77-8.

⁵²³ For a further accounting of Novalis re-definition of ‘Christianity’, see Kleingeld’s “Romantic Cosmopolitanism,” pp. 273-276.

⁵²⁴ Ibid, p. 79.

high over the German as the German does over the Saxon, the Saxon over the resident of Leipzig. (And) above the European is the cosmopolitan.”⁵²⁵

Yet, this reliance on the past structures has been criticized as the beginning of a politics of closure. As Kohn argues the point, “The individual [under the romantic theories] found himself rooted in the past and determined by it. He appeared conditioned by the peculiar traditions of the national community. Though they had no factual foundation for it, romanticists were convinced these national characteristics were never as pronounced as in the Middle Ages. The art of knights and guilds seemed to them to express the true national soul, its creative force not yet corrupted by a rationalism which makes everything alike and which deprives it of life.”⁵²⁶ Here Kohn seems partly right. Novalis and other early romantics are concerned for the costs of modern rationalism to the structures of contemporary politics. Where Kohn missteps is in the obfuscation of what drives the claims of mysticism and particularism or universalism in romantic thought. Novalis is much more concerned with accessing universal structures because he sees Prussia (and even Europe broadly speaking) as too grounded in exactly the kind of particularism Kohn claims romantics defend. For the early romantics, only a politics that induced *Schwärmerei*, and allowed for romanticization of both citizen and the state would allow exit from such finite structures.

⁵²⁵ Novalis, *Fragments* (#756). Also cited by Hans Kohn, “Romanticism and German Nationalism,” *Review of Politics*, 1950, p. 449.

⁵²⁶ Again see Kohn, p. 446.

The confusion between Novalis' aims, and Kohn's (and others') critiques seem to revolve around the actual result of incorporating mystification and aestheticization into political institutions. While the incorporation of these strategies certainly motivated mass societies for political ends, the moral quality of those ends, as well as the capacity for an immanent critique of such ends, seems an important failure in romantic political theory. The allure of *Schwärmerei* – that the individual could become more than just individual, yet still somehow preserve the structures of individuality – ultimately fails in a democratic politics that employs such structures as the foundation of its own institutions.

Conclusion – Romantic Psychologies

Though crucial to at least conceptualization the limits of contemporary democratic problematics, the resources of the romantic tradition of political thought still remain relatively unexplored.⁵²⁷ This is a consequence as much as of early detractors of the romantics (who characterized the movement as dangerously anti-liberal), as it is of the opponents to those detractors with more conservative political

⁵²⁷ Regarding this point, the impact of France's revolution cannot be underestimated. In Germany, where power and scope of Friedrich's enlightened despotism was becoming fragmented, the question of nationhood and democracy was immediately important. With increasing levels of education, matched by decreased levels of employment, and the fractured nature of German city-states, the question of German nationalism, including language, politics, and the order of the state, were hotly contested, and the early Romantics are best viewed as responding to and thinking about these very problems. See Beiser's introduction to *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, for further elaboration on some of these points.

platforms (who used the movement to their own political advantage).⁵²⁸ Contemporary views of the early romantics as politically removed at best, and more often as antidemocratic and anti-egalitarian advocates of a conservative, aristocratic order- one that ignored progress and the benefits of modernity – is indeed not uncommon.⁵²⁹ And, though there is some kernel of truth within this articulation of romanticism seen from afar, the close examination of political thought in the early German romantic movements I have offered here reveals a much more complicated story of their social and political theories – one that seems valuable for democratic theory (at least in conceptualizing limits).

I have tried to argue that contradictory ideologies developed out of the incomplete ideas of the movement labeled “Romanticism” (in response to external and independent social, political, and intellectual pressures). To my mind, the recovery of the originary ideas of this movement – no matter how confused – will be of use to democratic theorists (both positively through the articulation of an expansive moral psychology, and negatively as a caveat to the requisite dangers therein).

Democratic politics faces the perennial problematic that equality is in direct tension with the maintenance of liberty for democratic citizens. This problem - that more equality may dangerously limit personal (and ultimately political) liberty - was of great concern to a whole host of modern advocates and critics of democracy

⁵²⁸ Heine, amongst others, was particularly instrumental in disseminating a malformed (though now popular) view of the negative consequences of Romanticism. His inheritors, who vary widely in scope of thought and political belief, from Marx to Schmitt and the many iterations of neo-Kantianism, reveals how powerful (and confused) this tradition in thought has been received.

⁵²⁹ Kateb’s “Aestheticism and Morality” summarizes this position well.

alike.⁵³⁰ Novalis' romanticism, and especially his account of *Schwärmerei*, provides unique access to an affective basis of balancing these tensions. This is so crucial, not simply because of it reveals what are often partial readings of the resources of Romanticism, but because of the relevance I see Romanticism playing in support of rethinking the limits of affective allegiances for democracies. Exclusive politics, grounded in interpretations of romantic principles of positive freedom, that advocates a return to feudalist structures and economic and political exclusions, has little to recommend it to liberal politics (at least insofar as his principles of freedom trump any notion of equality, in favor of what he takes to be the important political problem of alienation through lost identity). But liberal theories of liberty finds basis in related Romantic conceptions of freedom, of which contemporary democratic theorists should be equally concerned. Democratic citizens need a more robust moral psychology that helps them procure and maintain a kind of individualism that allows democracy to function.

I hope to have illustrated precisely how complex these early Romantics conceptions of liberty were, and to reveal how such reflections of liberty are so susceptible to malformation and misuse. Romanticism – as a theory of freedom – transformed from its original course to this entangled legacy. Here, unlike some recent efforts to turn towards Romanticism for liberal theory,⁵³¹ I take seriously

⁵³⁰ This position was famously articulated by Tocqueville in his *Democracy in America*, though we see much context for this position, both within French debates from Constant to De Staël, as well as in German debates from Humboldt and Fichte, and even later in Britain via Mill's particular brand of liberalism.

Romanticism's decline into conservatism, and acknowledge that, while Romanticism offers attractive resources for democratic theory, ignoring the conservative elements that rest within it means maintaining a willful ignorance of wholly undemocratic elements therein. Only by consciously acknowledging the dangers of Romanticism in its turn towards conservatism can we begin to access a moral psychology that would benefit democratic citizens in their attempts to develop their own individuality- a necessary resource for the functioning of democracy.⁵³²

In explicating this complex history of the development, decline, and eventual entanglement of Romantic ideas, theorists can begin to access resources for democratic citizens to develop power (in self-understanding) over themselves.⁵³³ In addition, while some have attempted to employ resources from Romanticism to bolster up and support liberalism, doing so - to my mind - forces a commingling of a brand of conservatism to liberal-democratic theory that undermines such liberal projects. An exploration of Romanticism, if responsible, must acknowledge this problem and address it directly, at least if we want to develop a moral psychology for democratic citizens that will not succumb to conservatism, as many Romantics themselves admittedly did.

The moral psychology I aimed to describe through this uncovering of the

⁵³¹ Again, see Berlin, Kateb, and Rosenblum.

⁵³² For further explication on this point, see Zerilli's "We Feel Our Freedom."

⁵³³ Note, Mill asserts that the power of the people over themselves is an illusion of democratic politics, to which his conception of eccentricity is used to correct. I take issue with Mill here, arguing that Romanticism offers us resources to develop a notion of self-rule that affords individuals self-expression while maintaining strong communal attachments.

originary ideas of Romanticism is one grounded in individuals' capacity to imagine (and the consequent freedoms that result therein). While democratic citizens should preserve a capacity for justice, as well as a clear conception of the good, through the employment of judgment, thought, and inference, doing so depends on the ability to imagine and critique the limits of external authority, and to construct a ground on which one is able to base such claims.⁵³⁴ The capacity to make such political judgments - on which democratic rule depends - cannot be evoked without the support of a newly refined psychology that encourages the use of imagination. The preservation of opinion, as the matter of political judgment, is the ground for a reformation of democratic citizenship. Opinions are not simply debated – they are also exchanged; subjectivity merges with intersubjectivity, and individuals make judgments of the world that give it history, transforming it. In this way, politics does become aestheticized, though not destabilized.⁵³⁵ Ignoring the inherent instability of democratic politics risks sacrificing the requisite advantages consequent of the freedom of self-rule.⁵³⁶ The new moral psychology of democratic citizenship I aimed to describe here is one that affords citizens frames on which to ground their own authority, thus allowing for the emergence of a kind of citizen able to withstand the

⁵³⁴ Romantic resources become important here as the rejection of mimesis and classical explanations of artistic creation (both in form and content), instead looking towards the artist as an actual creator of art (independent of the confines set in the process of imitation). This freedom from imitation is precisely the model on which the moral psychology of democratic citizenship need be based.

⁵³⁵ See Arendt *Origins of Totalitarianism*, (Harcourt, 1965), p. 228, for a further elaboration on this point.

⁵³⁶ See Alan Keenan, *Democracy in Question* (Stanford UP, 2003) for an excellent rearticulation of the costs and benefits that come from this inherent instability in democratic politics. Also, see Patchen Markell's "The Rule of the People," on Arendt and self-rule.

consequences of this instability inherent in self-rule.

Again, to reiterate my point from above, Romanticism lends resources here to a complex rethinking of the role imagination plays in agents' development and continued reshaping of normative foundations through the cultivation of a frame that allows for a perpetual reformulation of each individual's own authority. The payoff here is a coherent and robust psychological structure that will endow citizens with the capacity to resist both social and political tyranny – thus allowing people to maintain power over themselves. The new moral psychology of democratic citizenship that I advocate relies on the increased practice of political judgments, grounded in the reimagination of the limits of one's own authority. Concealed within the history of Romanticism are the resources to ground such a reformulation.

Appendix to Chapter 5:

Novalis' "Apologie der Schwärmerey" (1789)

Une mauvaise cause se fait plaider souvent plus facilement, qu'une bonne.

[A] Jeder Gelehrte und Ungelehrte machte sich heut zu Tage zur dringendsten Pflicht, Schwärmerey zu verschreyen und sie mit dem blinden Fanatismus zu verwechseln. Und doch getraut ich mir hundert gegen eins zu setzen dass die mehrsten Aufklärungsapostel und Vernunftprediger nie recht über Schwärmerey, über die Folgen ihrer Ausrottung und den Nutzen, den sie für die gesamte Menschheit hat, nachgedachte haben, dass die mehrsten Quasi hellen Köpfe sich selbst nicht recht von Grund aus kennen, andere nur nachlallen und mit den tausenderley Arten der Schwärmerey so unbekannt, wie mit dem menschlichen Herzen sind. Überhaupt scheinen Denker und Layen (doch erstere noch öfterer) darum oft gegen die Gesetze der Billigkeit zu handeln, dass sie eine Sache eher und scharfsichtiger von der schlimmen Seite betrachten und ihre wahren oder scheinbaren Folgeübel geschwinder zu berechnen wissen, als die Wolthaten und herrlichen Vortheile, die daraus auf der andern Seite für die menschliche Gesellschaft entspringen.

[B] Nothwendig ist es allerdings, dass ein Philosoph, oder jeder der auf das Herz und den Geist seiner Mitbrüder und Zeitgenossen einen wirksamen Einfluss hat, eh er gegen oder für eine Sache, die das Wol von Tausenden entscheidet und eine allgewaltige Einwirkung auf das moralische und physische Glück der Menschen behauptet, genau und mit der äussersten Sorgfalt, die er seiner Mitwelt schuldig ist, abwägt, ob die Nachtheil, den sie vielleicht für Individuen mit sich führt, reichlich durch die wolthätigsten Wirkungen für das Menschengeschlecht auf Jahrhunderte ersetzt wird. Er muss sie verwerfen, wenn die nachtheiligen Wirkungen von den wolthätigen nicht aufgewogen werden, selbst wenn sie diesen nur gleichkommen.

[C] Ob aber dies der Fall bey der Schwärmerey sey, (ich brauche dis Wort nicht in dem herabgewürdigten Sinne, wo es mit den blindesten Fanatismus vertauschte wird) wie viele ja die mehrsten unsrer aufgeklärten, vernunftseligen Köpfe und Weltphilosophen despotisch zu bestimmen pflügen, werde ich in diesen wenigen Blättern so unpartheyisch, als es einem Sublunariet möglich ist, zu untersuchen mich unterstehen. Ich weiss wol, dass auf jedes freymüthige Urtheil und Sentiment Acht und Bann von den Bischöfen und Archimandriten unsrer gelehrten Aristokratie lauert und dass Geistesgenossen des Herrn Aloysius Merz unter dem Bart und Mantel eines Philosophen, Toleranzlehrers und Vernunftsehers in Menge verborgen sind deren

Enthüllung dem Patriarchen der Jalozie zu Pascala und seinen beyden Amtsgehilfen mehr Ruhm einärndten würde als die mühsame Jagd der Xixapitzli; doch wollte ich Ihnen dann unmassgeblich rathen in Rücksicht ihrer werthen eignen Personen ein Auge zuzumachen:

[D] Aber mein Vorschlag scheint mit selbst so lächerlich, so widersinnig, als ein Vorschlag an die Mönche und Cardinäle die Lukaszettelchen und Reliquien zu verbrennen und gegen Wunder und Pfaffenthum zu schreiben: Aber trotz allen diesen wage ich es doch Angesichts der Herrn ins Feld zu schreiten, als ein richtiger Degen meinen Fehdehandsschuh hinzuwerfen und schauete nun auch die Menschlichkeit mich an wie den edlen Ritter von Mancha vor den Windmühlen beym ersten Anblick, den Kampf ritterlich zu bestehen. Aber Scherz bey Seite. Ihr Freunde, die ihr getrennt von mir in fernen Gefilden vielleicht in süßer Einsamkeit die goldnen Bilder unsrer Jugendfreundschaft zurückruft oder denen im Getümmel der Welt mitten in glänzenden Assembleen und rauschenden Tanzsälen ein Seufzer nach der ländlichen Stille und häusslichen Glückseligkeit entschlüpft: fallen euch diese Blätter eures Freundes in die Hände, so schenkt mir nur eine freundschaftliche Erinnerung, ein Lächeln des Beyfalls und schwärmt ein wenig mit mir.

[E] Ihr sehet meine tiefsten Empfindungen, meine innersten Gefühle enthüllt, und mich als Vertheidiger einer Sache auftreten, die die Menschheit veredelt, unendlich erhebt, Jünglinge und Greise beseligt, Männer und Weiber; die auf Jahrhunderte hinaus schafft und doch von vielen für die Feindinn der Menschheit und der Glückseligkeit und Morlität verschrien, und als diese mit Witz, Despotismus, blinden Eifer und Laune angegriffen und verfolgt wird. Möchte doch diese süsse Trösterinn der Unglücklichen, mich selbst mit ihrem hinreissenden Feuer zu ihrer Vertheidigung beseelen, mir Wieland platonisch-erhabene, unaussprechlich sanfte Begeisterung und Zimmermanns Wärme und kraftvollen Pinsel mittheilen!

[F] Götter! o führ ich stolz auf den Wogen
 Der Sprache, ein Empfindungsschöpfer
 Daher und begleitete mich Kühnheit und
 unwiederstehliche Suada.

–Pindar

Novalis' "In Defense of *Schwärmerei*" (1789)

Une mauvaise cause se fait plaider souvent plus facilement, qu'une bonne.

[A] Recently everyone, both learned and unlearned, has made it their most pressing duty to denounce *Schwärmerei*, which they confuse with blind fanaticism. Still I had dared to presume, at odds a hundred to one, that most of the apostles of the Enlightenment and the preachers of reason had never correctly thought through this matter of *Schwärmerei*, nor of the consequences of its eradication, nor of its use for humanity. Indeed, most of these supposedly clear-headed spirits don't really seem to have a very deep understanding of themselves: They continue to prattle on about this and that concern, while continuing to remain as unacquainted with the thousand varieties of *Schwärmerei* as they are with the human heart itself. In general, it seems that thinkers and laymen alike (even if the former more frequently than the latter) stand so often in opposition to the rules of fairness that they find themselves predisposed to a disparaging view, whether what they oppose is real or imaginary; all this, no doubt, a consequence of their being quick to defend the benefits and happy advantages that arise on the far shore of our human society.

[B] It is, however, necessary that a philosopher (or he who has a real influence on the heart and spirit of his fellows), before he can say that he is really for or against this matter or that concerning the welfare of thousands (and which will make claim upon their moral and physical happiness) he must, precisely and with the greatest care (for which he is responsible to the world in which he lives), determine if the disadvantages which these matters may carry for individuals substantially compensate humanity over the centuries by their good effects. He must dismiss them if the consequences of this charitableness have no effect, even if they are in fact charitable acts (i.e. amount to the same).

[C] But whether this is the case with *Schwärmerei* – and I do not mean this word in the degraded sense, whereby it is often interchanged with blind fanaticism, as many of our most enlightened, rational minds, and blissful cosmopolitan philosophers have so violently insisted – I will in these few pages attempt to determine (with, to use the phrase of a recent critic of mine, the impartiality of a Sub-Lunarian). For I want to expose each frank opinion and sentiment, whether outlawed by the bishops or the archimandrites of our learned aristocracy, such as those views professed by Aloysius Merz and his spiritual companions. These are the kind of thoughts that remained hidden under the beard and cloak of a philosopher, of a teacher of tolerance, or a prophet of reason. Such an unveiling to the patriarchs and all their officials, from Jalozie to Pascala, would – I think – garner more fame than the laborious hunting of

the Xixapitzli. I hope my efforts worthy of their consideration, especially in comparison to those who currently advise with one blind eye.

[D] Yet I worry that my proposal seems too ridiculous and absurd – as ludicrous as a proposal to the monks and the cardinals that they burn St. Luke’s gospel and his relics, as a irrational as a proposal to denounce miracles and the priesthood. Notwithstanding all these concerns, I have yet to walk as a righteous warrior in the fields of the Lord and throw down the gauntlet. Now I look at humanity as the noble knight of La Mancha when he first sighted the windmills, insisting on a knightly combat. But all joking aside... you, friends, who are separated from me in some far-off lands, perhaps even recalling the sweet solitude of such golden visions from our youthful friendship – of the escape from the tumult of the world into the midst of brilliant assemblies and roaring dance halls – please give a sigh for the rural quiet and our freeing of happiness. Deliver these pages to your friends’ hands – for it will serve me as a happy reminder that you share a smile of approval and your enthusiasm with me.

[E] You see my deepest passions, my innermost feelings revealed, and experience me as a defender of a cause that ennobles an infinitely rising humanity. Men and women, young and old alike are made happy in such a feeling as *Schwärmerei*. And yet for centuries, many of these same happy people have been decried as the enemies of humanity and happiness and morality, attacked with mocking bigotry, enduring bitter persecution. Would that the sweet divine comforter of the unfortunate inspire me to their defense with its ravishing fire, then the unspeakably gentle inspiration and warmth of the maker, the powerful brush would confide in me as a solemnly Platonic Wieland!

[F] Götter! o führ ich stolz auf den Wogen
 Der Sprache, ein Empfindungsschöpfer
 Daher und begleitete mich Kühnheit und
 unwiderstehliche Suada.

–Pindar

Conclusions

Enthusiasm and the Limits of Democracy

The spectacle of sound and fury “may perhaps be moving for a while; but the curtain must eventually descend. For in the long run, it becomes a farce. And even if the actors do not tire of it – for they are fools – the spectator does, for any single act will be enough for him if he can reasonably conclude from it that the never-ending play will be of eternal sameness.

–Hannah Arendt (citing Kant), *The Life of the Mind*

That such ‘sound and fury’ – as Arendt describes it – could naturally lose its power proves, I think, a good thing for democracy. So many arguments about the dangers of political affect ignore the very functioning of those emotions. Unlike other resources of motivation, affective basis for attachments are themselves momentary, made active and powerful so long as, in some sense, each individual can endure.

Such momentariness, consequent to reflecting, is what lies at the heart of Kant’s account of enthusiasm. What matters most is that individuals, in reflecting on the world, find the chance to remember or recognize their moral world as disrupted. Democratic allegiances should benefit from the function of this mechanism. As Ranciere explains,

It is in this power of associating and dissociating that the emancipation of the spectator consists – that is to say, the emancipation of each of us

as spectator. Being a spectator is not some passive condition that we should transform into activity. It is our normal situation. We also learn and teach, act and know, as spectators who all the time link what we see to what we have seen and said one and dreamed. There is no more a privileged form than there is a privileged starting point. Everywhere there are starting points, intersections and junctions that enable us to learn something new if we refuse, firstly, radical distance, secondly the disruption of roles, and thirdly the boundaries between territories. We do not have to transform spectators into actors, and ignoramuses into scholars. We have to recognize the knowledge at work in the ignoramus and the activity peculiar to the spectator. Every spectator is already an actor in her story; every actor, every man of action, is the spectator of the same story.⁵³⁷

What enthusiasm allows for is such disruption. It is how it feels as the spectator to have one's moral world unloosed (and also the position they hold as they attempt to rejoin it). Rather than identifying the spectator as opposed to the actor, or the object or experience by which the spectator becomes the spectator, I have tried to show how identifying political enthusiasm, as a discursive affect distinct from fanaticism, allows for a clearer understanding of such disruptions.⁵³⁸

It is, after all, the case that our lives are filled with such disruptions, of moments when – both personally and historically – we encounter a world that we have forgotten (sometimes consciously, sometimes not). While many of the authors discussed in this dissertation have worried about affective states and their place in public life, I have tried to make the argument that attempts at their exclusion proves more destructive to democratic political realities. That, counter-intuitively, the

⁵³⁷ Jacques Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator* (Verso, 2009), p. 17.

⁵³⁸ Here my research parallels Jason's Franks discussion of 'Constituent Moments,' although his focus remains on the objects that allow for such disruptions, and mine aims to focus on how the experience operates once it has been constituted; see his *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Duke University Press, 2010).

disruptions consequent to enthusiasm can allow for a reaffirmation of identity without the closure provoked in absence of sympathy.

In this dissertation I have aimed at developing a model of enthusiasm that helps explain a mechanism by which to motivate democratic allegiances. The terms of this mechanism were, I argued, set out by Wieland in his provocation of debate on the question of whether or how enthusiasm might be distinguished from fanaticism. I have tried to show how Kant's answer to that question, that enthusiasm acts as a moral feeling that guides reason when there is a historical disjuncture, can serve as an essential ground by which to rethink the role of affect in democratic allegiance formations.

This should prove relevant to democratic politics in two central ways: (1) By outlining the means of generating a space where such disruptions are conceived and permitted (as I believe Kant's model allows for), democratic citizens could create public spheres capable of enduring such disruptions, rather than forcing closure at their appearance; and (2) by delineating how the enthusiast is importantly not ignorant of their identity or place in the polity (that they do not suffer, nor are they asked to suffer, such amnesia). The enthusiast does not sacrifice themselves in favor of some collective. Instead, the enthusiast comes to reorganize anew the moral structure of their world. If enthusiasm is to become viable for a rethinking of democratic allegiances it is because it motivates through a very temporary focusing in defense of a possible political identity.

Patriotism as a political practice usually arises on conditions of defensiveness, and thus is already predetermined by a kind of closure, where such ends appear descriptive to democracy.⁵³⁹ What is necessary is a kind of affectivity that allows individual citizens to find spaces for their own disruptions. Only a patriotism of that kind would truly be compatible with democracy. And that kind of democracy would find legitimate basis in political enthusiasm.

⁵³⁹ At least on this point, I agree with George Kateb. See his “Is Patriotism a Mistake?” esp. pp. 13-15, in *Patriotism and Other Mistakes* (Yale University Press, 2006).

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