

## Book description:

This volume is dedicated to the exploration of *fanaticism*. Although fanaticism has not received much philosophical attention in recent years, it was a topic of great concern to philosophers in the period between roughly 1500-1950. Luther, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Shaftesbury, Rousseau, Voltaire, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and others analyzed and discussed fanaticism at length. Fanaticism fascinated these figures because it seemed to involve an intertwined set of epistemic, moral-psychological, and ethical features.

- *Epistemic features*: fanaticism is often associated with close-mindedness, with imperviousness to contrary considerations, with refusal to consider alternative perspectives, and with the presumption of absolute certainty about some ideal, value, or belief. Especially in the Enlightenment period, the fanatic is often taken as a paradigmatic case of irrationality. And yet fanatics are sometimes extremely articulate about their beliefs; they are not barred from critical and justificatory reasoning. How should we understand the epistemic state of the fanatic?
- *Moral-psychological features*: fanaticism seems to involve wholehearted, unwavering commitment to a goal, an ideal, or a group. In addition, fanaticism is sometimes taken to involve distinctive affective states, such as excessive enthusiasm or zeal. In some cases, these affective conditions are praiseworthy: we typically think that there is something admirable about the steadfast, committed individual. What, then, should we say about the fanatic?
- *Ethical features*: fanaticism is often associated with a potential for violent intolerance. The fanatic is typically pictured as dangerous. In addition, fanaticism is often portrayed as contagious: it tends to spread. Does fanaticism pose a distinctive kind of ethical problem?

These features lead to several questions. Are the features connected? Does a particular kind of epistemic condition promote wholehearted commitment and violent intolerance? Are the relevant forms of commitment available without the epistemic defects? Are the epistemic conditions displayed by the fanatic properly conceived as defects, or might they be in some respect salutary? Does fanaticism have some special connection to religion? Does the fanatic have a distinctive affective profile? These are questions about the *nature* of fanaticism.

Relatedly, philosophers asked therapeutic or practical questions about fanaticism. Are there social, political, epistemic, or psychological conditions that encourage the emergence of fanaticism? How should we relate to fanatical individuals and groups?

This volume seeks to gather historical and contemporary reflections on these topics. The current table of contents is below.

## **The History and Philosophy of Fanaticism**

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1. Introduction: Paul Katsafanas (Boston University)

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3. Fanaticism in Arabic Philosophy: Ahab Bdaiwi (Leiden)
4. Fanaticism in Indian Philosophy: Nathan McGovern (University of Wisconsin)
5. Fanaticism in Chinese Philosophy: Eirik Harris (Colorado State)

### **Part II. Fanaticism in the Early Modern Period**

6. Locke: Douglas Casson (St. Olaf)
7. Spinoza and Hume: Justin Steinberg (CUNY)
8. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson: Rachel Zuckert (Northwestern)
9. Germaine de Staël: Kristin Gjesdal (Temple)
10. Montesquieu: Vickie Sullivan (Tufts)

### **Part III. Fanaticism in Late Modern Philosophy**

11. Kant: Krista Thomason (Swarthmore)
12. Hegel: Dean Moyar (JHU)
13. Nietzsche, Heidegger, and others: Bernard Reginster (Brown)
14. William James and Nietzsche on scientism and fanaticism: Rachel Cristy (King's College London)

### **Part IV. Fanaticism in the Twentieth Century**

15. Sartre/Scheler/fanaticism/paranoia/mendacity: Nicolas de Warren (Penn State)
16. Jorge Portilla: Carlos Sanchez (SJSU)
17. Frantz Fanon: William Paris (Wesleyan)
18. Simone Weil: Beatrice Han-Pile (Essex)
19. Du Bois/Arendt/Shelby: "Mob Rule and Resistance in the Ghettoes: Du Bois, Arendt, and Shelby": Elvira Basevich (UMass Lowell)

### **Part V. Fanaticism in the Contemporary World**

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21. Fanaticism and Terrorism Studies: Quassim Cassam (Warwick)

22. Women, Hate Groups, and Fanaticism: Tracy Llanera (Connecticut)
23. Fanaticism and Close-Mindedness: Heather Battaly (Connecticut)
24. Psychological motivations for fanaticism: Sophie-Grace Chappell (Open University)