CHAPTER

Rhetorics of Affect: Notes on the Political Theory of the Passions 🔓

John Brenkman

Abstract

The place of rhetoric in political theory is inseparable from the philosophy of the passions. Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric* first catalogued the emotions, analyzing them in relation to the structure of feeling in Athenian society on which political persuasion depended. Hobbes and Rousseau placed fear at the joint between the state of nature and society, on the side of nature for Hobbes and society for Rousseau. Aristotle and Rousseau anticipated the problem of ungroundedness explored in twentieth-century thought. Since feelings and polity alike are ungrounded and since feelings are an essential dimension of politics, it falls to rhetoric to forge the link between them. The numerous pitfalls in specifying the affective dynamics of rhetoric in the political realm can be seen in the work of such influential theorists as Albert O. Hirschman, George Kateb, Brian Massumi, and Corey Robin. Moreover, political community itself is volatilized by questions of identity and belonging. The *polis*, as François Jullien emphasized, entails exclusions even as the principle of inclusion itself is ungrounded and contingent in the sense that the *we* of political community does not derive from reason or from nature. Unease, what Heidegger called *Angst*, is at the core of modern political experience. Peter Sloterdijk's provocative approach to the modern polity's collective energies and affects foregrounds rage and the symbolic, institutional, and discursive means by which the inchoate dissatisfactions of modern social life are stored, organized, and mobilized as political forces.

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I start from three interlocking premises. First, affective states and passions are an inherent dimension of politics and the political realm. Second, among the "ineluctable means" of politics, in addition to violence and deception as identified by Max Weber, is the power of rhetoric to arouse and dampen emotions, rhetoric in the double sense of the art of persuasion and the art of figuration. And, third, passions and affects do not exist independent of "discourse," specifically rhetoric, in the sense that rhetoric does not simply convey or express passions and affects but in some sense forms them.

The place of rhetoric in political theory is, therefore, inextricably bound up with the philosophy of the passions. Passions traverse the entire political realm. And emotion, affect, and mood have no political manifestation or valence except through rhetoric. Such fundamental phenomena as allegiance, alliance, loyalty, solidarity, mobilization, rivalry, and patriotism hinge on rhetorico-affective processes. Aristotle first characterized the emotions in *The Art of Rhetoric* and identified them in terms of human beings' civil relations with one another; replete with political potential are envy, jealousy, indignation, shame, fear, pity, confidence, hostility, and hatred. The most fundamental need of the political realm itself is legitimation, and the willingness of citizens or subjects to accept the form of rule in which they find themselves requires

complex symbolico-affective bonds that range from tribal-familial loyalties to civic pride or patriotic love or social solidarity to nationalistic fervor fueled by ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and racism. Since Nietzsche, *ressentiment* figures as a political passion and a storehouse for potential destructive or self-destructive outbursts of rage, vengefulness, and scapegoating. Political movements sometimes evoke feelings of humiliation in appeals for retribution or reparation. In other contexts, those who have defected from the political consensus and likemindedness of the group to which they belong are accused of self-loathing. Across the vast landscape, then, of the political realm, political mobilization, and political decision and action, is to be found the linkage of affect and rhetoric.

The relative clarity of the procedures for analyzing rhetoric and the extraordinary fuzziness of all notions of feeling, affect, passion, and emotion give this topic its peculiar élan and its conceptual viscosity. In what follows I will try to elucidate the bearing of the problematic of rhetoric and affect on political theory from five angles, without making any claim to systematicity.

Hobbes and Rousseau: Fear, the Joint Between Nature and Society

Fear is an emotion that plays a decisive role in modern political theory. More accurately, it enjoys varied and contradictory roles. It has foundational significance in Hobbes and Rousseau, who place fear along the divide between the state of nature and civil society but on opposite sides of that divide. The Hobbesian state of nature is pervaded by fear as the "condition of Warre of every one against every one" (Hobbes 1968, 189). Each individual lives in fear of violence at the hands of every other. In *De Cive*, Hobbes's thesis "that the origin of large and lasting societies lay not in mutual human benevolence but in men's mutual fear" was grounded on the notion that "every pleasure of the mind is either glory (or a good opinion of oneself), or ultimately relates to glory," and that sensual pleasures "can all be comprised under the name of advantages" (1997, 23–24). Glory and advantage: society is thus "a product of love of self, not of love of friends" (24).

In a note on his conception of "men's mutual fear," he clarified that what he understands by fearing is "*any anticipation of future evil. In my view, not only flight, but also distrust, suspicion, precaution and provision against fear are all characteristics of men who are afraid*" (25). Fear unfolds in various affective nuances (distrust, suspicion, precaution) because fearfulness entails *anticipated* and not just immediately impending harm. Fear entails imagination. A wide spectrum of philosophical reflections in fact gives imagination a constitutive role in the passions.[1] Descartes remarked in *The Passions of the Soul* that one cannot *will* a passion except "indirectly through the representation of things which are usually joined with" it. "For example, in order to arouse boldness and suppress fear in ourselves, it is not sufficient to have the volition to do so. We must apply ourselves to consider the reasons, objects, or precedents that *persuade us* that the danger is not great; that there is always more security in defense than in flight; that we shall gain glory and joy if we conquer, whereas we can expect nothing but regret and shame if we flee" (1985, 345 [emphasis added]). The arousal or dampening of a passion requires representation, associations, and persuasion, which are three fundamental aspects of the art of rhetoric itself.

The entwinement of the passions and rhetoric is a crux in Rousseau's endeavor in his *Discourse on The Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men* (the Second Discourse) to demarcate the boundary between nature and culture, and state of nature and state of society. Before the transition from the natural to the social state, language amounts to little more than spontaneous cries. It precedes any need to persuade: "Man's first language, the most universal, the most energetic and the only language he needed before it was necessary to persuade assembled men, is the cry of Nature" (1997, 146). Such prepersuasive language, along with spontaneous gesturing, was a not-yet-social expressiveness that at some point, Rousseau reasoned, had to have been "substituted for" by "articulations of the voice" via "instituted signs: a substitution which can only have been made by common consent." Hence the puzzle posed by language: "speech seems to have been necessary in order to establish the use of speech" (147). The dilemma implies another puzzle: "which is the more necessary, an already united Society for the institution of Languages, or already invented Languages for the establishment of Society?" Rousseau transmuted the conundrum into his strongest thesis. The fact that speech presupposes speech and that the origin of both society and language presupposes the other leads to two conclusions. On the one hand, exactly how "languages could have arisen by purely human means" cannot be decisively demonstrated, while on the other hand there is no basis for supposing that the natural condition of humankind led to social existence: "Whatever may be the case with

these origins, it is at least clear how little Nature, given the slight care it took to bring Men together through mutual needs and to facilitate their use of speech, prepared their Sociability, and how little of its own it contributed to all that men have done to establish bonds" (149 [translation amended]).

These reflections on language, society, and nature led Rousseau straight to his objection to Hobbes. First, Hobbes is wrong to postulate that man in the natural state is *miserable*, a term "which merely signifies a painful privation and suffering of Body or soul: Now I should very much like to have it explained to me what kind of misery there can be in a free being, whose heart is at peace and body in health. I ask, which of the two, Civil life or natural life, is more liable to become intolerable to those who enjoy it?" (Rousseau 1997, 150). He cited despair and suicide as phenomena of civilized not natural existence. Second, and more decisively, even as Hobbes grasps the essence of natural right in self-preservation he is wrong, Rousseau asserted, to claim that the natural state pushed humankind into the social state, for the ills that Hobbes attributes to the state of nature—violence motivated by glory, honor, advantage, possession—are purely a product of the state of society: "he improperly included in Savage man's care for his preservation the need to satisfy a multitude of passions that are a product of Society and have made Law necessary." By contrast, "the state of Nature is the state in which the care of our own preservation is least prejudicial to the self-preservation of others" (151).

Just as language's persuasive power presupposes "assembled men," so language's figurative powers are linked not to inherent needs but to the passions arising from "civil life." Language as persuasion and language as trope, that is, language in its twofold manifestation as rhetoric, established for Rousseau the solution to the problem of origin left unanswered in the Second Discourse. The inseparability of trope and passion is at the core of the famous fable of the giant in *Essay on the Origin of Language.* His double thesis remains an inexhaustible marvel of speculative fabulation: (1) language was invented not from need but from passion; (2) language was figurative before it was literal. As to the first thesis, it follows from Rousseau's notion that the natural state caused men to avoid one another. "This is how it had to be for the species to spread and the earth to be promptly settled." Needs did not need language to find satisfaction. Only "the moral needs, the passions," need language, since "All the passions bring together men whom the necessity to seek their subsistence forces to flee one another. Not hunger nor thirst, but love, hatred, pity, anger wrung their first voices from them" (1997, 253).[2]

It is not by chance that for the second thesis—*language was figurative before it was literal*—the passion in question is the elemental Hobbesian passion itself, fear in the strong sense of the fear of death. According to Rousseau's fable, "A savage meeting others will at first have been frightened. His fright will have made him see these men as larger and stronger than himself; he will have called them *Giants*" (254). The utterance *giant* is spontaneous and arbitrary; it is little else than the "cry of Nature" in the Second Discourse. Eventually, though, the savage encounters enough such strangers to realize that they are not larger and stronger than himself but comparable. They are his counterparts. He emits another sound just as arbitrary, *man*, to redesignate the other as someone like himself. *Man* refers to himself and the other in their likeness, and *giant* is henceforth restricted "to the false object that had struck him during his illusion." His passion—mortal fear—is signified by *giant*; the truth of his likeness to others is signified by *man*. Rousseau concluded: "Since the illusory image presented by passion showed itself first, the language answering to it was invented first; subsequently it became metaphorical when the enlightened mind recognized its original error and came to use expressions of that first language only when moved by the same passion as had produced it" (254). In the way of Rousseau's paradoxes, language is *at first* metaphorical because, *retrospectively,* it names not the object that prompted it but the passion that object originally aroused while the subject was in the grip of illusion; in turn, the very realization of that illusion arises from the civilizing recognition that the other is someone like oneself. *Re*naming the giant *man* is at the same time the first *naming* of oneself as *man.*

The story of the passage from nature to civilization is thus in effect told as the co-origination of assembly, sociality, language, passion *and* enlightenment, and mutual recognition. The fable supplies a solution to the recursive quandary encountered in the Second Discourse regarding the reciprocal origin of language and society and the necessity for speech to precede speech.[3] Rousseau's *homme Sauvage* served as the image of human nature prior to society in order to rebut Hobbes's view of innate human vainglory, possessiveness, and violence. At the same time, however, Rousseau did not grant any reality to human existence prior to society. In the Preface to the Second Discourse he said he had "initiated some arguments" and "hazarded some conjectures, less in the hope of resolving the question" of the origin and foundations of inequality posed by the Dijon Academy "than with the intention of elucidating it and reducing it to its genuine state"

(125). He at once radicalized the question of origin through a dichotomy of "original and artificial" and underscored the ungroundedness of the terms themselves: "it is no light undertaking to disentangle what is artificial in man's present Nature, and to know accurately a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never did exist, which probably never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to be exact" (125). The presocial state of human nature is a fiction. What makes it a necessary fiction? For Rousseau, as soon as it is recognized that society is a web of convention, artifice, habit, and institution, any and every aspect of society was in principle potentially open to criticism. Modern social criticism is in effect born with this recognition. The fictive postulate of an original and natural state becomes the lever of criticism, even as Rousseau remained acutely aware that there is neither an Archimedean point nor a solid place to stand in order to operate the lever. He specified the problematic that animates all the arguments initiated and conjectures hazarded in the Second Discourse: "*What experiments would be needed in order to come to know natural man; and by what means can these experiments be performed within society?*" (125 [emphasis in original]).

The crux of the difference between Hobbes and Rousseau lies in the asymmetry in their approaches to theory. Hobbes claimed to provide the empirical basis, the rational motive, and the causal chain by which the transition from the natural to the civil state occurred: fearful and insecure in the natural war of all against all, men reasoned that peace could be secured by transferring their natural right of self-preservation to a sovereign power over them who would protect them from harm from one another by threatening harm on anyone violating this pacifying compact itself. Fear of one another was dissolved and transmuted, *Aufhebung*-like, into awe of the sovereign, fear for one's life into dread respect for the sovereign's absolute power to protect life and deal death. Rousseau considered Hobbes's narrative to be a pure fabrication, but he did not claim to offer an alternative historical account. To the contrary, his narrative contained neither an empirical nor a rational nor a causal thread in the transition from the natural to the social; he did not even postulate an *actual* natural state past, present, or future, and his recursive concepts and undisguised fables suggested a leap from nature to society, an accident for which latent human capacities were providentially prepared, such that what is *natural* to human beings is enfolded within their postnatural *social* existence and cannot be discerned except from within society. There are no passions without society, there is no society without language, there is no language without passions. The apparent circularity of Rousseau's thinking affirmed the radical ungroundedness of language, passion, and society—*and* their originary dependence on one another.

Aristotle: Rhetoric, the Hinge of Politics and Feeling

In light of more recent, as well as more ancient, philosophy, such ungroundedness takes on special relevance. Gianni Vattimo offered the following commentary in remarking on the import of Heidegger's reflections on mood (*Stimmung*), state of mind (*Befindlichkeit*), and attunement (*Gestimmtheit*) for the conception of human existence (*Dasein*):

> For Heidegger, affective *Stimmungen* are the true sign of the finitude of Dasein, that is, of the fact Dasein does not dispose of, has no power over its own principle, over its whence. To find oneself in such and such an emotional disposition—sympathy, antipathy, love, fear, mistrust, and so on—cannot be modified or commanded, even if one were to assign or deny them an intellectual ground.... In this way, the ontological meaning of feelings emerges precisely from the character that [is] most striking in them, that is, their complete groundlessness. (2008, 65)

Comparably, Hannah Arendt found the ontological meaning of the political realm in *its* complete groundlessness. No transcendental principle or material necessity gave rise to the Greek *polis* in her view; the transition from clan to polity, from kinship to citizenship, was a leap, a break in causality rather than the outcome of a causal chain. It was an *event* in a sense resonant with Heidegger's use of that term. All polities, including democratic ones, share in the general fragility of human affairs, for over and above external threats that the *polis* inevitably faces, its survival depends internally on "the unreliable and only temporary agreement of many wills and intentions" (Arendt 1958, 201).[4] What then is the relation between these two perspectives, Vattimo's and Arendt's? It is my contention that since feelings and the polity alike are ungrounded and since feelings are an essential dimension of politics and the political realm as such, it falls to rhetoric to forge the link between them. However enduring or fleeting a particular linkage happens

to be, it is necessarily contingent, just as Rousseau's fable of the giant conveyed the necessity and the contingency among the three indissociable elements of his triad: society–passion–language.

It is noteworthy that when Heidegger broached the question of feeling—mood, attunement, state of mind— in *Being and Time*, he did so with reference to Aristotle: "It is not an accident that the earliest systematic Interpretation of affects that has come down to us is not treated in the framework of 'psychology.' Aristotle investigates the *pathê* [affects] in the second book of his *Rhetoric*" (1962, 178 [H138]). This insight served Heidegger's purposes insofar as the necessary link of mood and rhetoric helped establish his own "equiprimordial" triad of mood—understanding—discourse, by which he in effect folded what today are called the linguistic turn and the affective turn *into* the very question of mind or knowledge that they supposedly turn *away from.* Mood, understanding, and speech are equiprimordial in the sense that none occurs without the others, each is affected by the others, and yet none causes or masters the others. Heidegger then used an analysis of fear indebted to Aristotle in order to distinguish it from *Angst*, which for him is the fundamental mood of modern existence. Little concerned with the Aristotelian emphasis on political deliberation or judicial decision, let alone their democratic underpinnings, Heidegger let Aristotle fall by the wayside.[5]

Aristotle's bearing on the problematic of rhetoric and affect remains crucial for political theory. He anticipated both Hobbes and Descartes, and in effect surpassed them, in recognizing that emotion invariably involves an element of imagination. Of shame, he wrote: "since shame is an imagination connected with disrepute, and felt for its own sake and not for its consequences, and none considers reputation except through those who confer it, one must needs feel shame before those whom one *holds in regard*" (*Rhetoric* 2004, 1384a14). Of fear: "*Let fear, then, be a kind of pain or disturbance resulting from the imagination of impending danger, either destructive or painful*" (1382a1). Of confidence, which Aristotle considered the opposite of fear: "the hope of safety is accompanied by the imagination of its proximity and of the non-existence or the remoteness of fearsome things" (1383a16). Of pity, where the necessary moment of imagination lies in the prospect of suffering what another is suffering: "*Let pity, then, be a certain pain occasioned by an apparently destructive evil or pain's occurring to one who does not deserve it, which the pitier might expect to suffer himself or that one of his own would, and this whenever it should seem near at hand*" (1385b2). Of anger, within which Aristotle says there is "an attendant pleasure … from the *prospect of revenge*": "a certain pleasure accompanies it for this reason and because men dwell on their revenge in their thoughts. Thus imagination arising on these occasions produces a pleasure like that of dreams" (1378b2). Emotion is neither pure sensation nor sheer sentience, even as they underpin it, for it entails an imagining of what has not happened but might or could. Nor does the pleasure–pain polarity account for emotion, since emotion is the form given to pleasure–pain by representations and symbolizations that are painful (shame, pity) or pleasurable (confidence) or at once painful and pleasurable (anger).

Emotion in Aristotle's account is immersed in the entire social fabric of equalities and inequalities, hierarchies and differences, recognitions and nonrecognitions (belittlement, disregard, insult). On insult: "The cause of pleasure for those insulting is that they think that by treating others badly they are themselves superior (that is why the young and the rich tend to insult; for in their insults they feel superior)" (1378b6). On those by whom individuals are angered: "Those belittling them in front of five groups: those of whom they are emulous; those whom they admire; those by whom they want to be admired; those whom they respect; or those who respect them. If before one of these groups one should show them disregard, they are the more angry" (1379b22). On those not in fear: "Now those in great prosperity would not expect to suffer (hence their arrogance, disregard and brazenness, the product of wealth, strength, good connections or power)" (1383a13–14) What Aristotle accomplished in the few pages on the emotions in *The Art of Rhetoric* is an account for ancient Greek society of what Raymond Williams called a structure of feeling (1977, 128–135) and Pierre Bourdieu *habitus* or the structured-structuring dispositions of social action (1977, 2000, 128–163). Since the public square, debate, and rhetorical competition were supremely important in Athenian society, the privileged site of Aristotle's analysis of the prevailing structure of feeling was the art of persuasion.

Aristotle's own aim, however, was not a sociology *avant la lettre* but a treatise on rhetorical practice. That he did both brings to light the triad polity–affect–rhetoric. There are in effect two separable levels of sociality operative in Aristotle's reflection, and it is the orator's task to connect them. On the one hand, there is the relation of orator to audience, where the question is the requisite conditions of the orator's character to make him capable of being persuasive; Aristotle specified "*common sense, virtue* and *goodwill*" (1378a5). On the other hand, there is the structure of feeling, that is, the compound of social perceptions, meanings, and

values that determines the disposition of the audience and makes it capable of being persuaded, that is, its capacity, readiness, and inclination to *listen to* the orator. Capable of persuading, capable of being persuaded —that is the cat's cradle within which political and juridical decision happens in Aristotle's conception. The orator's practice must take into account the social situation of the auditors as well as the immediate context of the decision to be made. For example, since fear is unlikely among not only "those in great prosperity" but also "those who reckon they have already suffered everything terrible and are numbed as regards the future," Aristotle described the rhetorical task of arousing fear as follows: "The evidence is that fear makes men deliberative, yet none deliberates about hopeless cases. So one must put the audience into the state, whenever it is for the best that they should be afraid, of thinking that they are in a position to suffer by pointing out that others, greater than them, have in fact suffered, and must show similar men suffering or having suffered, and from such quarters as they did not expect, and unexpected damages at unexpected times" (1383a14–15).

Underlying rhetorical practice, conditioning the orator's capacity to arouse or dampen particular emotions, is the structure of feeling specific to the lifeworld of those who practice persuasion and those who make judgments. That sense of a shared world is sometimes conveyed by the near-confusion of Aristotle's pronouns and their referents. For example, the description of those who are moved to anger is followed by the description of those they are angry with (1379b16–25):

> Those who are accustomed to respect them and show them consideration, if they do not on another occasion so address them. For they think they are being despised by them, as they would otherwise be doing the same as before.
>
> ...
>
> Those in opposition to them, if they are inferior. For all those of this kind seem contemptuous, some as inferiors, others as acting for inferiors.
>
> ...
>
> Those who are ironic when they are serious, since irony is contemptuous.

If it is the translation rather than the original Greek that produces the confusion and melding of all the *they*s, so much the better! For these passages help us understand how Athenians were steeped in shared social perceptions and values. The structure of feeling is the element in which everyone moved and breathed and out of which individuals could distinguish themselves and emotions could differentiate themselves in sharpened but fluctuating shapes that were inflected by the social differences and distinctions themselves. Aristotle thus gave a social and political perspective on the Heideggerian point underscored by Vattimo, namely, that one is always in a mood; being-in-the-world is a mooded condition from which specific emotions emerge in a continual process of differentiation, heightening and lowering, arousal and dampening. The key point about the political realm is that there the affective undulations are at once the source and the effect of rhetoric.

Pitfalls

Problems ensue. Political theory and especially political analyses encounter numerous pitfalls in specifying the affective and rhetorical dynamics of the political realm.

The first pitfall is the temptation to assign a one-to-one relation between a political stance and its rhetorico-affective expression, overlooking the complex structure of emotion and so missing how the political significance of affects lies in the rhetorico-affective structures and not in a particular feeling per se. When the first round of the French presidential election in 2002 sent France into shock, as Jean-Marie Le Pen and the National Front eliminated Lionel Jospin and the Socialist Party and made it into the second round to face President Jacques Chirac, massive demonstrations took place animated by the slogan *La honte! La honte!* Shame! Shame! It voiced national shame—"We are ashamed"—which was the sentiment no doubt of the bulk of demonstrators. It also, though, voiced an accusation hurled at Le Pen's supporters. Folded into "we are ashamed" was "you have shamed us." The oscillation between the shock of "how could this happen to us?" and "how could you do this to us?"—that is, the oscillation between unity and division—was captured in the twofold meaning of *La honte!* But yet another meaning lay hidden behind the slogan's

accusatory valence. The left's energetic chanting of *La honte!* disguised its own role in the debacle, for the green and far-left candidates had pushed their own agendas and ideologies in the first round, in antagonism toward Jospin and the Socialist Party more than toward the right. Their strategy intensified divisions on the left even as polls showed a dead-heat among Chirac, Jospin, and Le Pen. No small share of responsibility for how a racist and anti-Semitic demagogue could outscore the nation's Socialist Prime Minister belonged to the left itself, which now took to the streets shouting Shame! Shame! The rhetorico-affective structure of *La honte!* contained then no less than three distinct, contradictory vibrations. The feeling expressed fused national shame, partisan accusation, and disavowal of responsibility.

A second pitfall stems from the difficulty in knowing whether the affect discerned in a political actor, whether individual or collective, is that actor's actual feeling or merely an impression or even invention on the part of the political theorist or analyst. Here the *rhetoric of affect* has the sense of the purposes and effects of the discourse *on* affect. The question already lurks in the term "affect" when used to indicate what emotion a subject shows or manifests to others; the primary form of such a usage among psychologists and in everyday life is usually negative: so-and-so lacks affect, that is, does not show what he or she feels. This is treacherous terrain for the political theorist or social scientist. That terrain is deftly explored in Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas's (2012) ethnographic study of the interactions among African-American, Puerto Rican, and Brazilian youth in Newark, New Jersey, especially teenage girls, as they study one another's behavior and attribute or infer emotions like anger, jealousy, and depression. The boundary between the external and the internal is indistinct. "'Having attitude'—in all its indeterminacy—was a central affect-encoding assessment among minority youth in Newark. 'Attitude' was understood as an individual's propensity to exhibit particular emotions, rather than aiming to control or hold these emotions back. Moreover, having attitude also implicated a strategic or manipulative access to emotions; whereas it was generally assumed that one had control over whether or not to display a certain attitude, attitude was simultaneously viewed as an intrinsic aspect of one's personality" (249–250). How the groups look to one another is based on how they look *at* one another, as interpersonal and intergroup perceptions give rise to varied affect-interpretations: "For many Latinas, instances of ocular exchanges reinforced the perspective that African American women were dangerous and gave life to stereotypes that arose from and fed into a deep social structural separation that, in turn, impeded some black and Latino possibilities for mutual understanding and meaningful engagement…. Many Brazilian migrants, for instance, viewed African American anger as 'narcissistic,' while African Americans and some Puerto Ricans viewed 'anger' and 'attitude' as instrumental" (262–263). Ramos-Zayas's fine-toothed account of everyday analyses of affect serves as a caveat to any speculation in the political realm about particular groups' emotions and their meaning.

Perhaps the greatest pitfall for affect theory lies in the temptation to identify rhetorical excesses exclusively or mainly in political discourses with which one openly or covertly disagrees. Albert O. Hirschman, whose *The Passions and the Interests* made such an indelible contribution to the understanding of passion in political and social matter, addressed just this problem in *The Rhetoric of Reaction* (1991). He examined the typical themes and forms of argument employed by conservative and reactionary authors against modern political and social developments, in particular the French Revolution and the rise of individual liberties, universal suffrage and rise of democracy, and welfare-state policies. Hirschman identified three accusations that conservatives and reactionaries have deployed to denounce such developments: *perversity*, *futility*, and *jeopardy*. For example, Joseph de Maistre decried the French Revolution, or any radical change, for inevitably bringing about worse ills than those it set out to eliminate (*perversity thesis*), whereas Alexis de Tocqueville advanced the claim that French society would have evolved into a more democratic formation without the Revolution (*futility thesis*). Several British and American authors in the 1960s and 1970s declared the futility of social welfare by claiming it never helps those for whom it is designed. Friedrich A. Hayek used the *jeopardy thesis* to say that the welfare state jeopardizes liberty, while it was used by the nineteenth-century historian Fustel de Coulanges to say that democracy jeopardizes liberty.

Acknowledging that his "primary purpose … has been to trace some key reactive/reactionary theses through the debates of the last two hundred years and to demonstrate how the protagonists followed certain invariants in argument and rhetoric" (1991, 164). Hirschman turned in the two final chapters to "progressive rhetoric" in order to test the possible bias of his original intent. "Reactionaries," he concludes, "have no monopoly on simplistic, peremptory, and intransigent rhetoric" (149). For example, the reactionaries' argument via the jeopardy thesis that social equality is incompatible with freedom and democracy is matched by two counterpositions. Besides Marxism's advocacy of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which simply reverses the reactionary valuation and claims that social equality trumps liberty and democracy, there is the more predominate progressive rhetorical gesture which transforms the

jeopardy thesis by rejecting "the assumption of *incompatibility*" and replacing it with "the more cheerful idea, not only of compatibility, but of mutual support" (150). That is, three supreme modern values—liberty, democracy, and social equality—are projected as a harmonious unity ultimately without tensions, contradictions, or strife. "Progressives are eternally convinced that 'all good things go together'" (151). Likewise, the reactionary evocation of inviolable laws and traditions of social life is counterpoised by progressives' "assertion of *similarly lawlike* forward movement, motion, or *progress*" (157).

The theoretical balance sheet is squared. "Exaggeration and obfuscation" are a part of "progressive rhetoric" as of "its reactionary counterpart" (163). Hirschman was thus able to summarize how they mirror one another as follows (167):

> **Reactionary:** The contemplated action will bring disastrous consequences.
> **Progressive:** Not to take the contemplated action will bring disastrous consequences.
> **Reactionary:** The new reform will jeopardize the older one.
> **Progressive:** The new and old reforms will mutually reinforce each other.
> **Reactionary:** The contemplated action attempts to change permanent structural characteristics ("laws") of the social order; it is therefore bound to be wholly ineffective, futile.
> **Progressive:** The contemplated action is backed by powerful historical forces that are already "on the march"; opposing them would be utterly futile.

Hirschman thus fulfilled the aim of demanding the same level of analytic rigor for progressive as well as reactionary rhetoric. What is it, though, that makes these argumentative molds exaggerations and obfuscations? To say that they are stereotypical or exceed reason would, as Hirschman recognized, simply beg the question. Besides, any of these arguments in certain circumstances is capable of being fully justified. Extrapolating from the schema outlined above, I see the exaggeration and obfuscation as lying in what both sides in each of the three pairings *deny*, whether by conviction or deception. They deny, on the one hand, that political action and inaction are inevitably fraught with uncertain consequence, and, on the other hand, that no law guarantees modern society's stability *or* directs its transformation. In the terms the ancients used for comprehending ungroundedness, political decision and judgment belong to the realm of *phronesis* and *kairos*. The stylized arguments of reactionaries and progressives that Hirschman charted eschew *kairos* by projecting temporality as, respectively, continuity guaranteed by the past or inevitability guaranteeing the future, and they disguise *phronesis* with claims to act on certitudes of principle.

The explanatory power of Hirschman's study is limited in one important respect. The even balance of reactionary and progressive rhetorics presupposes that such a dyadic construction, or a variant like liberal–conservative or Tory–Whig, structures the entire argumentative and semantic field of political discourse as though between two poles, and as though a movement away from the extremes toward the middle reduces exaggeration and obfuscation. In situations where the very political form of society is in flux and at stake, as in 1789 France, the reactionary–progressive dyad is not really adequate (an irony, perhaps, since the Revolution gave birth to the dyad itself in the Western political imagination). Nor does the bipolar model adequately account for the rhetorical dynamics of relatively stable democracies, even those with two-party rather than multiple-party formations. Polarization certainly does occur, usually marking moments of crisis or decision, but the matrix from which it arises is not itself dyadic. Debates and antagonisms in democratic states germinate from three competing conceptions of democracy: the liberal–, the civic–, and the social–democratic.

The values generated by this triad are never altogether compatible with one another and continually combine and recombine. For example, welfare provisions can be opposed by evoking a liberal valorization of individual self-reliance or a civic-ideal claim that welfare dependency fosters a culture of poverty and undermines civility and responsibility; contrariwise, advocates of welfare provisions can invoke the social-democratic value of the equitable distribution of wealth or a liberal-democratic principle of equal opportunity or, indeed, a civic-democratic appeal modernizing the ancient assumption that the citizen must have sufficient material security to judge the common good in public affairs. The confrontation over gun laws in the United States pits a defense of individual freedom against a civic affirmation of peaceful coexistence enforced by the state's monopoly on legitimate violence, while the conflict over abortion pits a defense of individual freedom against the newly minted fetal "*right* to life." The antiabortion position is inseparable from traditional male domination and certain theological definitions of life, but it has been recoded with considerable success in the liberal-democratic language of individual right—as though the

unborn have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, notwithstanding the biblical affirmation that life and soul originate in *breath*.[6]

Democracy at bottom—that is, in its ungroundedness—entails an ongoing contestation not only over what is democratic but also over what democracy is. Stated in the inaugural language of modern democracy, there is a permanent contestation over the meaning of *liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité*, and their relation. The place of the passions in politics is defined by this ungrounded strife. Hirschman's account of the argumentative dimension of reactionary and progressive rhetorics left open the question of their affective dimension. The generative liberal–civic–social triad helps explain why the adherence to one position or the other in a polarized dispute cannot rely on the argumentative content alone. Reasons and interests do not exhaust the motives of political adherence; there must also be a value commitment or conviction, which necessarily entails the passionate attachment to a particular value or combination of values rather than others. The relative intensity of commitment to this or that liberal, civic, or social value varies, and the potential bearing of any particular value on concrete policies or objectives is at once situational and contingent.

In sum, the pitfalls of the political analysis of the passions include the oversimplification of the emotion manifested in a particular political situation, the attribution of affect to others in the guise of description, and the assignment of political emotions and rhetoric only to one's adversaries. To these pitfalls must then be added the failure to take account of the ungrounded, contingent, and yet ineluctable entwining of passion, interest, and reason in every political commitment.

Kateb, Massumi, and Robin

Theorists paid especial attention to fear as a political emotion in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, particularly in relation to the rhetoric by which the Bush administration mobilized support in Congress, the public, and the media for the invasion of Iraq and overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the exceptional measures taken to bolster national security and revamp the rules and norms governing detention, interrogation, and torture.

George Kateb (2006) started from the gap between the actual dangers posed by al Qaeda and the policies pursued by the administration as it gave short shrift to neutralizing al Qaeda and instead justified an invasion of Iraq by raising fears of Saddam Hussein's association with al Qaeda and his weapons of mass destruction. The weapons turned out not to exist and the association was a pure fabrication. For Kateb, the gap between the actual and the invented threat explained the administration's need to foster fear in order to garner public support. Rhetorically aroused fear disguises unacknowledged motives. Kateb then looked to identify what the real motive and purpose were and adduced that the neoconservative architects of George W. Bush's policies colluded with the Israel's Likud government under Benjamin Netanyahu, for whom Iraq was a perceived threat. This conclusion is a surmise based on the close association of several influential American neoconservatives and Likud, but it neglects several other elements that determined the administration's course of action, including the pervasive role of *error*: bad intelligence about the weapons of mass destruction, the naïve belief that toppling a dictator would usher in democracy and jump-start democratic movements in the Arab world (domino theory *redux*), blindness regarding the troop levels and strategy required to secure Iraq's civil society after the overthrow of the Baathist regime, and disregard for the consequences of liquidating the country's Sunni-dominated military while empowering the long-oppressed Shiite and Iran-oriented majority. Kateb instead attributed purely ideological, quasi-conspiratorial motives, such that—following a well-worn paradigm—ideology, falsification, ulterior motive, and rhetoric are bound together as a kind of complete configuration of nation-state will-to-power (60–92).

Brian Massumi's view of Bush's foreign policy (2010) differed little from Kateb's, but he did not acknowledge a fear within the limits of reason after 9/11 and therefore did not locate the arousal of fear in a mere excess of emotion over rationality. He took a different tack to link affect and politics, centering on the rhetorical twist by which the Iraq invasion was defended after it had to be admitted that there were no weapons of mass destruction or ties to al Qaeda. The invasion was rejustified as the overthrow, in Bush's words, of "a declared enemy of America, who had the capacity of producing weapons of mass destruction, and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them" (as quoted in Massumi 2010 53). Massumi keyed in on the intangible, purely hypothetical "declared," "capacity," and "could have" in order to formulate, first, the ascendance of the potential over the actual: "Just because the menace potential never

became a clear and present danger doesn't mean it wasn't there, all the more real for being nonexistent." When preemption turns out to have preempted something that was never in fact about to happen, a distinctive temporality comes into play: "The invasion was right because *in the past there was a future threat.* You cannot erase a 'fact' like that…. The threat *will have* been real for all eternity." And that temporality in turn reveals the primacy of affect: "It will have been real because it was *felt* to be real" (53).

The primacy of affect in this instance is, from one angle, the effect of the rhetorical construct (and hence not primary at all), whereas from another angle the effectiveness of the rhetorical construct lies in making the feeling of fear the primary motive of the recipients' belief and judgment. Looked at in this way, Massumi's position roughly accorded with the sort of recursivity that the rhetoric-affect relation had in Aristotle and Rousseau. Massumi's own view, however, seemed to go further insofar as the primacy of affect in the analysis of post-9/11 fear is an example of what he elsewhere called the autonomy of affect (2002). With that concept he was applying to political analysis a philosophical perspective derived from Gilles Deleuze, for whose English-language reception he had played a vital role as translator and commentator. An ambiguity haunts the idea of the autonomy of affect. Is this autonomy an intrinsic aspect of experience or is it an effect of specific social and cultural processes "of our information- and image-based late capitalist culture" and the "capitalist monetary system" where "affect is a real condition" in the form of investors' and speculators' "'mindset'"? (Massumi 2010, 27, 44–45). Massumi tried to resolve the ambiguity via a gesture typical of sweeping condemnations of "late capitalism," mass media, and American global power: the mass media under capitalism have "captured" this intrinsic aspect of experience for ill purposes, and the theory of this capture is validated by its *promise* to aid or guide a never-fulfilled, always on-the-horizon resistance and reversal of this sociopolitical order it purports to describe. "Resistance is manifestly not automatically a part of image reception in late capitalist cultures…. In North America at least, the far right is far more attuned to the imagistic potential of the postmodern body than the established left and has exploited that advantage for at least the last two decades. Philosophies of affect, potential, and actualization may aid in finding countertactics" (43–44). In validating itself on the basis of an indistinct promise within a totalizing vision, this argumentative structure is, in a way Hirschman would surely be attuned to, but an inversion of Bush's justification of a policy on the basis of the threats it imagined but never found.

Corey Robin (2004) developed a third approach to as he fit his analysis of 9/11, which shares the broad outlines of Kateb's or Massumi's, to a general political theory and history of fear. He advanced a two-pronged thesis, addressing the idea of fear in political theory and the phenomenon of fear in politics itself. In regard to practice, his thesis was simple and blunt: he defined "political fear" as "a political tool, an instrument of elite rule or insurgent advance, created and sustained by political leaders or activists who stand to gain something by it" (16). The actual emphasis falls overwhelmingly on elites' use of fear to maintain their own power, whether by arousing fear of some potential harm or through various institutions and practices threatening "the individual's enjoyment" of "some good" (19). In regard to theory, Robin's thesis was that political thinkers postulate and define some fear to justify the vision of the political realm they advocate: "Hobbes, Montesquieu, and Tocqueville were convinced that established political moralities were no longer capable of grounding political arguments and political forms, and that fear could provide the basis for a new morality and politics. Each theorist mobilized an image of terrible consequence—the state of nature, despotism, mass democracy—on behalf of a new political form—the sovereign state, a liberal regime, pluralist democracy" (109).

Despite occasional nuances, Robin attributed ulterior or disguised motives for evoking fear to theorists and political elites alike. But rarely is political theory reducible to an existing political position, even as it emerges in response to those available at the time. Such a reduction is especially pronounced in Robin's claim that Montesquieu strips fear down to terror and associates it with despotism out of a "polemical impulse": "if he could show that terror possessed none of the attributes of a liberal polity, terror could serve as the negative foundation of liberal government. The more malignant the regime, the more promising its liberal alternative" (54). Montesquieu was charged with failing to grasp that terror might well emanate *from* a liberal polity, a charge that is a bit anachronistic in the historical context. For even though Robin grudgingly acknowledged that Montesquieu "described terror as the political condition toward which Europe's most prominent regimes were tending" (67), he passed over the crucial theoretical innovation that followed from that concern. Whereas Hobbes, in distinguishing the three forms of the state as democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, dismissed "despotism" or "tyranny" as merely empty names given to monarchy by its enemies, Montesquieu distinguished republic, monarchy, and tyranny in order precisely to differentiate despotism from monarchy and warn against the potential for eighteenth-century monarchy, with its valued affects of honor and pride, to devolve into tyranny, where fear was the emotion

that in Hannah Arendt's paraphrase "guides all action … namely, the subjects' fear of the tyrant and one another, as well as the tyrant's fear of his subjects" (2005, 65). Montesquieu's conception of fear under despotism hovered between hypothesis and diagnosis; it is not a mere rationalization of his liberalism and preference for constitutional monarchy but an attempt to imagine the fate of monarchy if it were to lose all the legitimizing bonds that tied aristocrats, peasants, and the third estate to it. The reign of Louis XIV achieved Europe's most successful absolute monarchy, and yet its very legitimacy utterly collapsed in 1789, a scant seventy-five years after his death in 1715. *The Spirit of the Laws* was published in 1748 in the midst of the still-indecipherable course of French history from the Sun King to the Revolution and mapped the array of political passions, forms of state, and conditions of legitimacy that were the possibilities and risks of the age.

More promising than Robin's thesis would be the hypothesis that the great works of modern political theory register seismic disturbances in history, be they faint or devastating, subterranean tremors or catastrophic fissures, in order to create concepts capable of deciphering from such perturbations the origins and directions of political formations. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1973) and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) are Arendt's attempt to register and think through twentieth-century catastrophe, looking first at the mass mobilizations that brought to power and sustained the mass-murderous regimes of Nazism and communism and, then, thanks to the Eichmann trial, examining an organizer and perpetrator of mass murder. Arendt is the fourth theorist Robin took on after Hobbes, Montesquieu, and Tocqueville. He attributed to her the notion of *total terror* and treated it as the ultimate permutation on political theory's obfuscating concepts of fear, in her case designed to "establish a new political morality" (Robin 2004, 109) specifically, in her own words, "the politically most important yardstick for judging events in our time, namely: whether they serve totalitarian domination or not" (Arendt [1951] 1973, 442).

Dichotomizing her reflections, Robin considered the central theses of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* to be wrong, and those of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* to be fundamentally right. Although he objected obliquely to treating communism and Nazism under the same rubric, in effect resisting the very idea of totalitarianism, he mounted his frontal attack on Arendt's linking totalitarianism to general features of mass society, the ambiguous role of the masses in politics, the power of all-encompassing ideologies, and the modern social forces that undermine and erode the individual, whether as a moral subject capable of autonomous decision or as a fellow being whose dignity is recognized and protected by the rule of law. Compared to these kinds of speculative reflections, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* came back to earth and exposed the "hard political realities of rule by fear" (Robin 2004, 110), and confirmed in Robin's mind the thesis that fear or terror is simply a weapon used by political elites to exert and maintain power. "*Eichmann in Jerusalem* is our sole sustained enquiry into the relationship between careerism and rule by fear" (116). The path that led Eichmann from traveling salesman to Party member climbing his way up the Nazi hierarchy to *génocidaire* displays the "aspirational qualities" of the careerist's search for "power and prestige"; neither depth psychology nor metaphysics is required to understand Eichmann, whose careerism, "reflect[ing] a retrograde social consensus," is "worthy of contempt—not, however, because it signaled internal pathology, but because it registered a base set of values hitched to a genocidal project" (118).[7] In a final sheep-and-goats dichotomy, those who dispute the outlook of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* are called "scholars of Nazism and Stalinism" and contrasted with the "intellectuals, particularly those of a more literary or philosophical bent," who maintain its continuing relevance (126, 128).

The relation between *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* appears contradictory, as though the latter refutes the former, only as long as one cannot wrap their mind around the two-sided problem that Arendt addressed: What motivated and enabled the leaders and officials who organized Nazi rule and the Holocaust? And what mobilized masses of Germans from all social classes to support and legitimize the regime? To claim that "political fear" is simply a weapon of "elites" not only fails to make qualitative distinctions among elites but more fundamentally fails to address the phenomenon of fear. For Aristotle, there are three elements to analyze: not only the emotion of fear itself—"*a kind of pain or disturbance resulting from the imagination of impending danger, either destructive or painful*"—but also those things that are *fearsome* and the "*condition* men are [in] when they are afraid" (1383a16). Heidegger's gloss on Aristotle tweaked the definition of the three elements as "(1) that in the face of which we fear, (2) fearing, and (3) that about which we fear" (1962, 179 [H140]). An account of political fear needs to address the "*condition* men are [in] when they are afraid" and "that about which we fear."

The condition in question is that of political modernity itself. The demand that the modern state derive its legitimacy from the people was inaugurated by the French Revolution. The totalitarian regimes of fascism

and communism evoke the principle of popular legitimacy no less than democracies do (Lefort 1986). What is a people, how does it manifest its will, how do political institutions sustain their legitimacy? These questions animate and roil modern states. Political modernity lodges a question in the heart of modern experience: what does it mean to belong to a political community? Michael Walzer offered an important perspective on the stakes. Analyzing the interpretations of goods and principles of their distribution as they are determined within the various "spheres of justice," he defined political community as the "bounded world within which distributions [take] place." Hence the overarching importance of belonging: "The primary good that we distribute to one another is membership in some human community. And what we do with regard to membership structures all other distributive choices: it determines with whom we make those choices, from whom we require obedience and collect taxes, to whom we allocate goods and services" (Walzer 1983, 31).

The *we* in the phrase "that we distribute to one another" is the trick knee in this pragmatist formulation. There is an unacknowledged Rousseau-like recursivity, for there can be no "one another" without a "we" and no "we" without a "one another." Just there lies the unease—the condition for becoming afraid—at the very core of modern political community. The feeling of belonging to a political community is susceptible to uncertainties and fluctuations, since neither the subjective sense nor the collective principle of belonging is intrinsically stable or truly permanent. Commonality and belonging are, so to speak, the ungrounded foundation of the political realm. François Jullien developed a tripartite distinction among the universal, the uniform, and the common. The "common" in this scheme is "a concept which is neither logical (and arising from reason) like the universal, nor economic (arising from production) like the uniform, but is political in its essence …: the common is what we are a part of or in which we take part, which is shared out and in which we participate. This is what makes it a 'political' concept in its origin: what is shared is what causes us to belong to the same city, that is to the *polis*." The notion of the common "signals towards that never completely determinable ground, the groundless ground, from which, even without being able to measure it, we collectively draw, and whose resources we ceaselessly exploit" (2014, 16). Restricting our attention to that commonality that is the modern political realm, another distinguishing feature of the common stands out: "For if the common is what I share with others, it is also, due to this fact and following this dividing line (which also stands as a line of demarcation) that which excludes all others" (21). Commonality and belonging: belonging entails exclusions, whereas the principle of inclusion is itself ungrounded and contingent in the sense that the "we" of political community does not derive from reason (or from nature). The constituting "event" of modern political communities that demarcates the included and excluded is seldom visible and is therefore usually confirmed in a retrodetermining myth of founding. Hence the permanent unease.[8]

While Martin Heidegger rejected every liberal and democratic value produced by political modernity, and like other fascist sympathizers saw the French Revolution itself as a perversion of sovereignty to be rectified by a mysticosymbolic union of *Führer* and *Volk* (2013, 58 passim), his Dasein-analysis of *Angst* as the fundamental mood (*Stimmung*) of modern existence has direct relevance to the question of modern political passions. Unlike fear, *Angst* (anxiety, dread) does not have a tangible object: "That in the face of which one has anxiety is not an entity within-the-world…. That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens is nowhere" (1962, 231 [H186]). The modern individual's animating and debilitating dread is their own unmoored existence: "*That in the face of which one has anxiety [das Wover der Angst] is Being-in-the-world as such*" (230 [H186]. *Angst* is the base form of modern affect—the fundamental attunement—from which manifest emotions like fear unfold. The political corollary lies in the fact that belonging to a political community is at once the very basis of security, identity, and sense of agency and yet ungrounded. The problem haunts modern politics, including liberal democracy, since the polity to which one belongs depends upon popular legitimacy and yet one's own participation in that legitimation varies in intensity, certainty, and recognition. The terror specific to totalitarian regimes stems from their ability to symbolize the "people" as a race in the case of Nazism (Aryans) or a class in the case of communism (the proletariat), thus recasting other members of the society not only as those excluded from the community but also as its internal enemies.

Sloterdijk: Collective Rage and Anger Banks

To account for collective passions within the modern polity and for the receptivity that conditions the awakening of those passions is a task more speculative than empirical, more interpretative than quantitative, more a scanning of history than a narrative of causalities. It is a task not easily formulated within the stricter boundaries of political theory and yet is indispensible for any political theory of the passions. In a final angle on the bearing of rhetoric and affect on political theory, I will indulge my own "literary and philosophical bent," without apology, with a brief reflection on Peter Sloterdijk, the contemporary thinker who offers the richest and most original reflection on the affects, energies, and stresses that undulate beneath and within the political realm.

Sloterdijk himself signaled an affinity between his aims and Deleuze's, even as he pursued them in his own way. He reversed the psychoanalytic question of "which individual and family affects can be put into action on the collective and political scenes":

> What interests me, similar to Deleuze, is the contrary perspective: which genuine group and mass dynamic energies are articulated through collectives and only through them? Which successions of emotions, which fantasies, which thematic epidemics are typical of large societal bodies? And how do they spread themselves, how are they communicated to individuals and to groups? Which tensions can be lived by the sole fact that the emotion of the group takes hold of us? To what extent and in which cases is that which is integrated by individuals no more than, seemingly individual, manifestations of currents of collective force and waves of imitation of sensation?"

(Sloterdijk and Heinrichs 2011, 77)

These are the sorts of questions that animated Sloterdijk's *Rage and Time* (2010), where the elemental political or politicizable emotion he addressed is not fear but rage, anger, and wrath.

Sloterdijk thinks in metaphors, indeed in the sort of extended, often witty, occasionally grotesque metaphors that literary criticism calls *conceits*, as in the seventeenth-century poetry of John Donne. The shared etymology of *conceit* and *concept* is relevant, since in poetry an extended metaphor requires an exercise of thought that forges improbable likenesses out of differences and in a philosophical endeavor like Sloterdijk's, metaphor and concept are so completely fused that the concept would lose its meaning if shorn of its metaphoricity. By the same token, the metaphoricity tacitly acknowledges, indeed exuberantly affirms, that concepts are approximate, experimental, provisional, mutable. In his three-volume *Spheres* project (2011, 2014, 2016) the conceits are *bubbles*, *globes*, and *foam* as well as an infinitely suggestive metaphor for all forms of sociality as *immunological envelopes*, from the mother–child dyad to housing to nations. The conceit he put to work in *Rage and Time* is *anger banks*, the idea that certain institutions and practices gather, store, and manage the more or less inchoate or latent rage in society as an asset to be drawn on for specific purposes.

Following an extensive discussion of the decisive place of rage in Western culture—beginning in ancient times with the first significant word of the literary tradition, as Homer asked the muses to help him sing Achilles's wrath, and with the recurrent manifestations and prophetic threats of God's wrath in the Hebrew bible—the center of Sloterdijk's interpretative adventure is a harshly lit reflection on Leninism and Maoism as the last revolutionary movements to issue from the nineteenth-century European ideas and models of revolution, anarchism, and communism. Communism's predecessor in this task in Sloterdijk's account was several centuries of Catholicism, which managed the anger banks of European populations via the symbolization of the wrath of God, the messianic promises of eventual relief from one's own inescapable suffering, and the aesthetico-moral pleasure in imagining how offending others will burn in eternal damnation. "To the degree that Christians internalize the prohibitions against rage and revenge that have been imposed upon them, they develop a passionate interest in God's ability to be full of rage. They realize that it is a privilege to practice rage, a privilege they renounce in the interest of the one and only furious one.... It is not accidental that the depiction of the Day of Judgment became the paradigmatic topic in the Christian imagination" (2010, 102). Sloterdijk shared the lineaments of Nietzsche's analysis of Christian morality and *ressentiment* and developed it in new directions. The morality of meekness, obedience, and passivity unfolded with an inner lining of vengeful delight in the eventual annihilation and punishment of those who refused this morality. To understand this dynamic, Sloterdijk rehabilitated the notion of *thymos*, which, in contrast to the concupiscence of *eros*, signified for the ancient Greeks the capacity to become

impassioned over an injury or threat to one's sense of oneself; *thymos* is having heart. It manifests itself in rage and indignation and more negatively in envy or jealousy. All these thymotic affects are symbolized as sin in Christian teachings, and it is that symbolization that undergoes the infolding-unfolding that assigns wrath and righteousness to God, the promise of salvation to the faithful, and spectacular punishment to the unfaithful.

By the time of Bakunin, Marx, and Lenin, as the Christian symbolico-moral webbing of European society wore away, revolutionary leaders and parties "had to act like a banker assigned to manage a global financial [institution].... In this bank the accumulated emotions of indignation, memories of suffering, and impulses of rage are stored and united to become an active mass of value and energy.... Thanks to its appearance on the market of passions, collective rage is transformed from a mere aggregate of psychopolitical impulses to a form of capital that calls for utilization" (2010, 135). Sloterdijk unwound this conceit in order ultimately to look at the social and political predicament of contemporary Europe and the world in the context of globalization and in the wake of the collapse of revolutionary and pseudo-revolutionary ideologies: "no movements and parties are visible that could once again take on the function of a world bank for the utopian-prophetic use of thymotic impulses" (203). There is no nostalgia in this claim but rather a sober and at moments pessimistic reflection on what our contemporary politics have yet to achieve in the rhetorico-affective as well as the pragmatic registers. "Rage," he wrote at one point, "belongs to the renewable energies of those left behind"; such "failed aspirants" with too few paths of political and economic participation to follow can today include fifty-year-old former factory workers or teenage ISIS recruits (114). Xenophobic forms of populism and Islamic forms of radicalization and martyrdom are often treated as symptoms, but our analyses falter when it comes to causes and cures. Or, the demon is identified confidently, monolithically, pointlessly, as global capital. Sloterdijk himself took a measured stance, as though to mobilize pessimism on behalf of clarity, and, quite rightly in my view, evoked the lowercase humanism of belonging "to one common 'humanity.'" He cited a comment of Albert Camus at the end of World War II: "Disaster is today our common fatherland," and added, "Contemporaries do not want to hear about common fatherlands beyond their own sphere of interest.... If it belongs to the lessons of the twentieth century that universalism from above fails, the stigma of the twenty-first century could become the failure to cultivate a [feeling] for common situations from below" (188).

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Notes

1   The editors' Introduction to *On the Citizen* (1997, xx–xxi) cites other of Hobbes's works where imagination is a necessary force in passions such as glory and vainglory but also "pity, which is 'imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense of another man's present calamity.'"

2   Rousseau began the *Essay* as part of the Second Discourse but then composed it as a separate essay that remained unpublished in his lifetime.

3   In saying "supplies a solution," I allude to the structure of supplementarity that Jacques Derrida elaborated in his classic study of Rousseau ([1976] 2016, 141–316). Rousseau's nature/culture boundary is in effect not a separation but a relation of supplementarity: culture supplements nature because nature is never full and adequate to itself, that is, is never Nature in the widely accepted sense that Rousseau himself seemed to employ. In an equally classic study, Paul de Man demonstrated that the logic of supplementarity so insightfully drawn out of Rousseau's texts by Derrida does not amount to a "deconstruction" of Rousseau as much as an unacknowledged revelation of Rousseau's very intent (1983, 102–141). In any case, once Derrida drew attention to supplementarity it was astonishing that its centrality in Rousseau's writing and thinking had never been noticed before.

4   See Brenkman (2007) for this and related aspects of Arendt's thought (9–10, 13–16, 56–59, 66–69, 179–180, 185–187).

5   See Brenkman (2020, 1–26).

6   "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

7   It is striking that Robin's emphasis fell on "careerism" rather than "hitched to a genocidal project," since it is precisely the nature of the articulation (hitching) of the everyday and genocidal politics that is in question. Otherwise we are left with the unilluminating and implausible notion that "careerism" *caused* Eichmann's participation in the atrocities of the Third Reich. Reducing Eichmann's actions to "a vice of morals and politics" further begs the question. For a nuanced and insightful account of the differences between *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and Arendt's own continual refinement of her thinking about totalitarianism and terror, see Villa (1999, 11–60).

8   Rousseau postulated the inaugural legitimizing act as a fictive gathering. Arendt tried to concretize it in historical acts by referencing the Mayflower Compact and the Hungarian and Russian "soviets" in the early moments of proletarian revolution.