Title
A Political Theory of Wonder: Feelings of Order in Modern Political Thought

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Publication Date
2019

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles

A Political Theory of Wonder:
Feelings of Order in Modern Political Thought

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

by

Kye Anderson Barker

2019

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Political Theory of Wonder:
Feelings of Order in Modern Political Thought

by

Kye Anderson Barker
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
University of California, Los Angeles, 2019
Professor Joshua F. Dienstag, Chair

How has wonder, an emotion tied to religion and philosophy in premodern European political thought, been used in the context of a modern, supposedly disenchanted politics? The past few decades have seen a dramatic reassessment of the importance of the emotions in the history of political thought. However, this broad reassessment has yet to address how canonical political thinkers conceptualized and deployed wonder in their theories of politics. I argue that we find in the writings of Thomas Hobbes, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, and Hannah Arendt a subterranean debate on the proper conceptualization and political use of wonder in modernity.

When Western political thought departed from a vision of the world as pre-structured by a divine, admirable order, there was no longer a readily available interpretation of the meaning of the potentially disruptive experience of wonder. Competing individuals and groups could make claims for wonder to be directed towards emerging aspects of political life as the foundation of political order. By using wonder to channel disruptive feelings of novelty into the cognition of order, these claims could structure the realm of possible actions. Moreover, a feeling of wonder

could be used to secure temporal stability within the fundamentally precarious conditions of modernity. Thus, I argue that Hobbes responded to the political use of divine signs during the English Civil War by incorporating wonder into his design for the emotional apparatus of the sovereign state; that Kant argued for a transformation of the feeling experienced by political and religious enthusiasts into a form of wonder befitting a republican and cosmopolitan order which became possible after the French Revolution; that Marx argued that the rise of capitalism was accompanied by a re-enchantment of political life through an affective attachment to the commodity form; and that Arendt attempted to redirect the wonder of political theorists and citizens towards the unexpected events and deeds of political life. In each of these political interventions, ancient Greek and Roman texts were used as a resource for rethinking wonder. Understanding this history helps us navigate the wonders of modern political life.

The dissertation of Kye Anderson Barker is approved

Davide Panagia

Sarah Tindal Kareem

Joshua F. Dienstag, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

To the memory of my grandparents

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the result of the support and guidance of many people. To my committee, I owe an enormous debt. Sarah Kareem, Kirstie McClure, and Davide Panagia shaped this work through the example of their scholarship, the insights of their criticism, and their faith in the project. My advisor and chair, Joshua Dienstag, has mentored me since I first arrived at UCLA. His wisdom, humor, and kindness have been an inspiration, and his confidence has motivated me to become a better scholar. For all this and more, I thank them. I have also been fortunate to have received support from a community of faculty members at UCLA beyond my committee. For their conversations, written feedback, and piercing insight, I thank Bryant Kirkland, Anthony Pagden, Melvin Rogers, Giulia Sissa, and Peter Stacey. At the graduate office of the UCLA political science department, I owe thanks to Joseph Brown, without whom I would have been completely lost during my first few years at UCLA.

I also owe a debt to my advisors and professors from the University of Chicago and the University of Kansas. Patchen Markell, who advised my master's thesis at the University of Chicago, demonstrated how electric that a seminar room could be and set a standard of academic generosity. Benjamin Sax, who advised my undergraduate honors thesis at the University of Kansas, taught me the importance of ideas in history and provided a staggering example of erudition. Allan Cigler, during one of the many times that I wandered into his office as an undergraduate who was unsure of his future, was the first to say that he could see me as a political scientist. Even though I ultimately decided to study political theory rather than American politics, I would like to consider myself a part of his legacy of mentorship.

The community of political theory graduate students at UCLA was the chief reason that I moved to Los Angeles and becoming a part of that community has been a gift. For their

friendship and support, I thank Micah Akuezue, Kristofer Armstrong, Jason Ball, Anuja Bose, John Branstetter, Arash Davari, Alex Diones, Mack Eason, Aerik Francis, Jenn Joines, Jared Loggins, Anthony Norton, Roey Reichert, Michelle Rose, Anna Scheidt, Will Stahl, and Rui Zhou. For their feedback on individual chapters of this dissertation at various stages of its development, I want to thank Steve Cucharo, Ziyaad Bhorat, Scott Dodds, Will Levine, Sean Monahan, Clara Picker, Alicia Steinmetz, and Lucy Williams. Finally, I wish to specially thank my friends Naveed Mansoori and Cody Trojan, who both read drafts of every chapter and never failed to offer helpful suggestions. Without them, I simply could not have written this dissertation or have made it through graduate school.

I could not have hoped for a better community of friends to provide support and sanity during my time in Los Angeles. I especially want to thank Libby Barringer, Tracey Brown, Courtney Cecale, Megan Gallagher, Angie Gutierrez, Roni Hirsch, Ioannis Kospentaris, Imil Nurutdinov, Francesca Parente, John Ray, Tyler Reny, Aaron Rudkin, Miranda Sklaroff, Michael Stenovec, Luke Sonnet, and Joy Wilke.

For feedback on various drafts of the chapters of this dissertation, I thank the anonymous reviewers for *Political Theory*, participants of my panel at the 2019 WPSA conference, participants of my panel at the 2018 APSA conference, and attendees of my 2019 Swarr Prize lecture. Here I would like to emphasize the feedback that I received from the discussants at my APSA 2018 and WPSA 2019 panels, Elizabeth Wingrove and William Clare Roberts, who offered careful and incisive comments that exemplified the best of academia. An earlier version of the first chapter appeared as “Of Wonder: Thomas Hobbes’s Political Appropriation of Thaumazein” *Political Theory*, 45, (3) 2017, pgs 362-384.

Finally, I cannot adequately thank my family for their unwavering support and love. For their acceptance of my strange decision to spend my twenties reading old books in Chicago and Los Angeles, I thank my parents and sister; and my cousin and uncles. I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my grandparents, whom I miss every day.

VITA

Kye Anderson Barker graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Kansas in May 2010 with a B.A. in Political Science and History, with departmental honors in History. From 2010 to 2011, he served as an AmeriCorps VISTA member at the Habitat for Humanity affiliate in Lawrence, Kansas. In August 2012, he earned an A.M. from the Social Sciences Division of the University of Chicago. As a graduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles, he was the coordinator for *Ethos*, the association of UCLA political theory graduate students, from 2014 to 2016; a co-president of the UCLA Political Science Graduate Student Association from 2016 to 2017; a campus steward of the UC Student Workers Union in 2017; and the Assistant Book Review Editor for the journal *Political Theory* from 2017 to 2019. In 2017 he published "Of Wonder: Thomas Hobbes's Political Appropriation of Thaumazein" in *Political Theory*. In June 2017, he earned an M.A. from the UCLA Political Science Department. In 2018, he was awarded the Swarr Prize, an annual award given for the best unpublished paper written by a graduate student in the UCLA Political Science Department. To complete his dissertation, he was awarded the Dissertation Year Fellowship from the Graduate Division of UCLA for the 2018-2019 academic year. For the 2019-2020 academic year, he will be a lecturer in the Department of Political Science at UCLA, offering courses in modern political theory, continental political thought, and the tension between property and freedom in republicanism.

Introduction

The Problem of Wonder in Modern Politics

> Are passions, then, the pagans of the soul?
> Reason alone baptized? Alone ordain'd
> To touch things sacred?
>
> Nothing can satisfy but what confounds
> Nothing but what astonishes is true.
>
> - Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*

1. From Signs to Wonder

Before he was crushed in battle, tortured, and executed, Thomas Müntzer, the firebrand radical Reformer and important leader of the German Peasants' War of the 1520s, spent his final days preaching about the sign of the rainbow. According to the testimony of Hans Hut,

> On Sunday [May 14, 1525] before the day on which the peasants were defeated, Müntzer preached publicly in Frankenhausen: the lord God almighty would now purify the world; he had taken power from the rulers and given it to their subjects, whereupon the rulers would tremble. In their infirmity the rulers would beg them [for mercy], but they should not be trusted for they would not keep faith with [their subjects]. God was on the subjects' side, for the peasants had painted a rainbow on every banner which they displayed, to which Müntzer explained: that is the [sign of the] League of God. After three days' preaching to that effect, a rainbow appeared in the sky around the sun. Müntzer pointed to that rainbow, declaring to the peasants: you see the rainbow, the league, the sign that God is on your side. You must fight valiantly and be bold![1]

Although Müntzer's invocation of the rainbow as a sign of God was not followed by the end he intended, this invocation gives us a glimpse into the use of signs when "the understanding of things as signs, and as signs addressed to us by God" saturated sensibilities towards the world, which was taken to be an unfolding of "God's speech act."[2] The sign of the rainbow could be

[1] Hut quoted in (Scott and Scribner 1991, 290). For an incisive reading of the significance for political thought of Müntzer and his role in the German Peasants' War, see (Colas 1997, 311-320).

[2] (Taylor 2007, 325).

interpreted to reveal an order of the world built upon a divine firmament. The s*aeculum*, or order of worldly time, could be shown to touch the eternity of the divine. For Müntzer, the rainbow hearkened back to the covenant of God with Noah at the end of the flood, when it signaled that the earth would never again by destroyed in a deluge. Yet in the words of the African American spiritual, "God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!" In other contexts, the rainbow has also been interpreted as a form of communication between the eternity of the divine and the mortal world. In Norse myth, the rainbow served as the Bifrost, the rainbow bridge, which connected the realm of the gods to the earth. For the ancient Greeks, the rainbow was divinized as Iris, a messenger of the gods. To Plato, "the man who said Iris was the daughter of Thaumas seems to have been doing his genealogy not at all badly."[3] This is so, as the rainbow is an object of wonder – *thaumazein* (θαυμάζειν) – the paradigmatic experience at the beginning of not theology, but philosophy.

What could this have meant? To see a rainbow is to see a strange twist of light curve over the sky.[4] The clouds begin to disperse; the rain slows to a halt. And from the darkness our eyes catch the sight of a rainbow. We've seen them before, but each new rainbow is experienced as a singularity. We can thoroughly *know* the causes of the rainbow – that it is nothing but a reflection, refraction, and dispersion of light through water droplets – yet to experience the dawning of it anew is to be enchanted by it. There is, as Walter Benjamin would say, an aura that envelops the moment: "a strange tissue of time and space: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be."[5] In each occurrence of a rainbow we endure, without any choice of our

[3] Theaetetus 155d.

[4] For a sustained and extraordinary reading of the wonder of the rainbow, see (Fisher, Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences 2003).

[5] (Benjamin, Selected Writings: Volume 4 -1938-1940 2003, 104-105).

own, a kind of wonder. And when we endure this passion which beckons us to find knowledge beyond the capacity of our senses – perhaps from gods or some other supernatural source – we suffer a thirst that knowledge alone cannot quench. In wondering we feel a need for the sense of things, for meaning. And that demand for sense in wonder, as Müntzer's example dramatizes, is eminently political. Yet Müntzer's example is distant from our condition today. In modernity, there is no 'author' of the things that strike us as 'signs.' Given that modernity is defined in part as secular, or, relatedly, as disenchanted, how then has the passion of wonder functioned politically in this moment of time?

Wonder has long been claimed as the beginning of philosophy, but what if it also has a constitutive role in politics? In *Theaetetus* 155d, Plato wrote that "wonder is what the philosopher endures most; for there is no other beginning [ἀρχὴ] of philosophy."[6] With some modifications, Aristotle follows Plato at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, where he claims that all human beings by nature desire to know the causes of things, and that this desire to know is felt as wonder.[7] Wondering and learning about things is a pleasurable experience, since it brings the human soul "into one's natural condition" – a state of knowledge of things.[8] Wonder might begin as an ordinary passion that could occur at any surprising moment, but, through philosophy, this initial passion leads one to questions of the soul and, eventually, of the cosmos as a whole. By forcing one to feel and follow the causes of moments of disorder, wonder would allow one to gain a fuller sense of the order of things. Yet for Aristotle, when one reaches this condition of

[6] The Greek is "μάλα γὰρ φιλοσόφου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν: οὐ γὰρ ἄλλη ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας ἢ αὕτη."

[7] (Aristotle 2001), and (*Rhetoric* 1371a25-30).

[8] (*Rhetoric* 1369b30-35).

knowledge, "we must end in the contrary state", meaning that wonder ceases once the causes of things are known.[9]

When aspects of ancient Greek philosophy were later incorporated into Christian thought through the efforts of Neo-Platonist writers such as Augustine and Boethius, this wonder towards the cosmos was transformed into a wonder towards all of divine creation.[10] In this sense, wonder was, as it was for Plato, an *arche* (ἀρχὴ) of thought, both beginning and guiding principle. The cosmos was subsequently perceived as wonderful, or admirable, as an effect of its divine creator, expressed in a hierarchical 'great chain of being' ascending from peasant to king and from emperor to God.[11] According to this view, ultimately, "to the true God alone the power to grant kingdoms and empires" is ascribed.[12] On the other hand, the kind of wonder described by Aristotle was incorporated into philosophy as a kind of curiosity limited only by what was understood as sacred.[13] In the thirteenth century Albertus Magnus wrote in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* that wonder "springs from an unfulfilled desire to know the cause of that which appears portentous and unusual; so it was in the beginning when he, up to that time unskilled, began to philosophize…Now the man who is puzzled and wonders apparently does not know. Hence wonder is the movement of the man who does not know on his way to finding

[9] (Aristotle 2001, 693).

[10] (Augustine 1972, 971-979); and (Boethius 2002, 67-90).

[11] See the chapter on monarchy in (Fried 2015); (Kantorowicz 2016); (Knuuttila 1981); (Lovejoy 2009); (Oakley 2006, 87-157); and (Taylor 2007, 209). Dante expresses an exemplary vision of this order in idealistic terms in both (Alighieri, The Divine Comedy 1954); and (Alighieri, Monarchy 1996).

[12] (Augustine 1972, 215).

[13] See (Blumenberg 1983, 279-324); and (Daston and Park 1998, 120-126).

out."[14] Albertus's most famous student, Thomas Aquinas would largely follow this reading of wonder which Albertus took from Aristotle, but would modify it to reconcile it to Christianity:

> The astronomer does not wonder when he sees an eclipse of the sun, for he knows its cause. And so, a certain event is wondrous [*mirum*] to one person, but not so to another. So, a thing that has a completely hidden cause is wondrous in an unqualified way, and this the name, *miracle*, suggests; namely, *what is of itself filled with admirable wonder*, not simply in relation to one person or another. Now, absolutely speaking, the cause hidden from every man is God.[15]

According to this interpretation, all wonders that endure are miracles. They escape our grasp as they are of a supernatural origin. Yet through that origin, they remain a part of the admirable order of creation.

The political consequences of this ordering were evident in the more or less stratified social and political organization of medieval political life. Early humanists, however, began to see man as having a special place in this order of being. According to Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, man is a "great miracle and wonderful creature" due to its character and place on the "universal chain of being" as a "creature of indeterminate nature" defined by free will.[16] Human beings still had a place in the admirable order of existence, but it was a space defined by freedom. William Shakespeare has Hamlet express a similar attitude, in saying "What a piece of work is man, How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, In form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an Angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, The paragon of animals."[17] It would even be within human capabilities to strive as a beneficent

[14] Quoted in (Greenblatt, Marvellous Possessions 2017, 81 & 176-177n79).

[15] Quotation from *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3.101.2 in (Daston and Park 1998, 122).

[16] (Mirandola 1948, 223 & 224).

[17] Of course, Hamlet, who murders the hypocritical humanist Polonius later in the play, follows these sentences with "And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me – nor woman neither" in Act II.2, 273-278 of (Shakespeare 2001, 53).

prince to imitate the "wonderful archetype" at the top of the chain of being as a "living likeness of God."[18] Yet when Western political thought moved away from a vision of the world as pre-structured by a 'great chain of being' or an 'admirable order of existence', there was no longer a ready interpretation of the significance of wonder within the world. This is not to say that no one in the modern world would experience a wonder for the world as divinely created and ordered, or that every single person in the ancient and medieval West would experience wonder in the same way.[19] It is rather that there would no longer be an implicitly agreed upon interpretive structure that could incorporate the potentially disruptive experience of wonder.[20] Yet the capacity to wonder endured, as a passion that makes us think, even as order became understood as something which could only be achieved through human initiative.[21]

2. Wonder in Modernity

It is the argument of this dissertation that in the modern world there is a programmatic redirection of wonder away from the world as it appears without the influence of human initiative – whether that might mean from divine effort or natural, inhuman processes – and towards political institutions or capabilities which center human activity and control. Competing individuals and groups would make claims for wonder to be directed at differing and newly emergent aspects of political life. The consequences of these claims are not only alterations of

[18] (Erasmus, The Education of a Christian Prince 1968, 158 & 157).

[19] Take, for instance, Charles Taylor's project in (Taylor 2007). For a treatment of the different senses of wonder in medieval Europe, see (Bynum 1997).

[20] For quite disparate examples of disruptive kinds of wonder that confronted the late medieval and early modern world see (Burns 2002); (Crawford 2012); (Cohn 1970); (Greenblatt, Marvellous Possessions 2017); (Hall 1990); (Knoppers and Landes 2004); (MacGregor 2007); (Platt 1999); and (Shaw 2006).

[21] "When the constituting factor is nothing other than such common action – whether the founding acts have already occurred in the past, or are now coming about it immaterial – we have secularity" (Taylor 2007, 194).

individual perspectives on the proper order of the political world, but the *endurance* of these attitudes in time. As dramatized by Müntzer above, in wonder we feel that we not only go beyond our limits of knowledge, but also experience something beyond our moment in time. Therefore, wonder could be enlisted in *projects* of political ordering when wonder is directed towards objects that are not diminished in time, or that may renew themselves. By using wonder to channel disruptive feelings of novelty into the cognition of order, these claims structure the realm of possible actions, and, in a sense, 'enchant' the political world. Thus, the struggle over wonder in modernity is a struggle over the body and its place in the ordering of the world. Modern political thought has responded to the destabilization of wonder in the world by incorporating it into the fabric of modern political life.

To develop this argument, I turn to four central figures in the history of modern political thought: Thomas Hobbes, Immanuel Kant, and Karl Marx, and Hannah Arendt. Each make claims upon wonder in the name of newly emergent and politically salient entities in the modern world: the sovereign state, the morally autonomy self, the market order, and political action. Although each of these entities resemble, to different degrees, pre-modern phenomena, they are not exactly structural repetitions. They are, in some definitive ways, newly emergent entities and thus objects of wonder. Each theorist presents us with a robust articulation of how the feeling of wonder towards a specific entity can be used to produce and reproduce a form of order in the world. These orders are then taken to be the legitimate foundations of action. Understanding the way that these claims of wonder are made is crucial to contemporary political life, since these entities have become central aspects of modern political life. To understand the way that they can – and according to some, should – induce wonder is to better understand the contours of the passionate life of political modernity. The composite of these views is somewhat discontinuous,

as each author gives us a framework for understanding experiences directed towards different objects, but they are overlapping experiences in all being responses to the problem of wonder in modern politics.

From a critical perspective we can read these four authors as providing examples of objects that confront us as wonderful, or over-aweing, in order to structure our activities accordingly under conditions in which there is no single proper object of wonder that can be determined by procedures exterior to politics. There is instead, to use a term from Hans Blumenberg's *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, a struggle for the "reoccupation" of the recipient of wonder in the conditions of a 'disappearance of order' in the modern world.[22] Blumenberg defines this disappearance of order as a "presupposition of a general conception of human activity that no longer perceives in given states of affairs the binding character of the ancient or medieval cosmos, and consequently holds them to be, in principle, at man's disposal."[23] Here Blumenberg argued against the claim that modern secular thought is no more than an illegitimate transformation of theological thought.[24] Blumenberg argued that the cosmic order that was accepted in the medieval world was not eliminated by a historical 'wrong', – the Faustian European spirit did not triumphantly destroy the "beautiful world" – but that the intellectual bases for the cosmic order of the middle ages were eliminated by contradictions internal to Christianity. Furthermore, the modern world does not have a 'debt' to medieval,

[22] (Blumenberg 1983, 137). For previous engagements with Hans Blumenberg by political theorists, see (Bennett, The Enchantment of Modern Life 2001, 72-75); and (Connolly, The Ethos of Pluralization 1995, 2-3).

[23] (Blumenberg 1983, 137). According to Blumenberg, and later Gillepsie, a complex of problems internal to the medieval world and then contemporary Christian thought raised by the nominalist revolution opened a space for the emergence of modern thought in the late middle ages. See also (Gillespie 2008).

[24] In particular, Blumenberg responded to claims made by the legal theorist Carl Schmitt in (Schmitt, Political Theology 1985) and (Schmitt, Political Theology II 2008), the philosopher Karl Löwith in (Löwith 1949), and other German thinkers who argued that the secularization of modern political life is in itself illegitimate.

theological propositions. The modern age has not illegitimately appropriated theological concepts for its own purposes but has responded to a condition in which the medieval vision of the cosmos was no longer persuasive through what Blumenberg calls "self-assertion." The "self-assertion" of modernity is "an existential program" in which "man posits his existence in a historical situation and indicates to himself how he is going to deal with the reality surrounding him and what use he will make of the possibilities that are open to him."[25] The institutions and orders of modernity are therefore grounded on a new understanding of human initiative shorn of the necessity of divine order.

However, according to Blumenberg, fundamental questions that existed in one epoch do not simply disappear in another. Rather, they often remain as lingering questions that still demand answers. The process which has been called secularization should be understood not "as the *transposition* of authentically theological contents into secularized alienation from their origin but rather as the *reoccupation* of answer positions that had become vacant and whose corresponding questions could not be eliminated."[26] Yet Blumenberg also admits that some questions that persist across epochs do so because of "residual needs."[27] As we can see by reading closely major figures in the history of political thought, there was a "residual need" to incorporate the human experience of wonder into a world that human beings order according to their own self-assertion.[28] In modern conditions in which given states of affairs are fundamentally at the disposal of human activity, the 'residual need' of wonder must be satisfied

[25] (Blumenberg 1983, 138).

[26] (Blumenberg 1983, 65).

[27] (Blumenberg 1983, 65 & 114).

[28] Martha Nussbaum even calls the "cognitive distinction-making" of wonder "an original need" in (Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought 2003, 189).

by those human activities themselves. As we can see through the reconstructions contained in the following chapters, the struggles to appropriate wonder exhibited in the works of Hobbes, Kant, Marx, and Arendt are all in some sense illustrations of responses to this residual need.

However, I amend Blumenberg's analysis of modern self-assertion in two ways. First, I find that the reconsideration in modernity of what Blumenberg calls the "central affect of consciousness," curiosity, not only gives rise to a positive evaluation of theoretical curiosity in the sciences, but also a transformation of the passion of wonder in political life.[29] It is unfortunate that Blumenberg limits his study to the development of the sciences in modernity; this constitutes a failure to think of the beginning of philosophy for the ancient Greeks – wonder – as not just a search for knowledge, but also implicated in the demand for meaning and significance. This leads Blumenberg to only focus on scientific development in modernity since, for him, theoretical curiosity is primarily non-political and only later comes to infiltrate or structure political domains.[30] However, as I show, the structuring of political domains by wonder has been a consistent concern of modern political thought.

Second, I find, in each instance analyzed in this dissertation, a turning to ancient thought to help make sense of the passionate life of the modern world. This is partly due to the definitively humanist spirit of this dissertation. As the medieval, Christian view on the proper understanding and role of the passions in political life diminished, Hobbes, Kant, Marx, and Arendt all benefitted from their humanist education and more than incidental interest in the

[29] (Blumenberg 1983, 232).

[30] See (Blumenberg 1983, 232, 400, & 437).

ancients.[31] In a sense, this dissertation documents a part of the long history of the humanist revival of interest of modern writers in antiquity, though this revival began well before what we today call modernity.[32] In these writings, including by ancient Greek historians, Plato, Aristotle, Epicureans, and Stoics, the writers at the heart of this dissertation found resources for rethinking wonder in the modern world. Since the focus of the dissertation is on the significance of wonder in modernity and not antiquity, the specific ways that ancient writers treat wonder in their writings will be dealt with in the substantive chapters of the dissertation. For the purpose of this study, what is significant about the ancient texts is revealed by the questions of the modern authors subjected here to interpretation.[33]

What I will say here generally, is that ancient authors provide a way to understand the passion of wonder when it is not understood as responding to 'signs' given by the author of nature. Moreover, through their accounts of wonder, they offer an embodied portrait of the activity of thinking that can make sense of the ways that the world impinges upon the mind. In the words of the great humanist Desiderius Erasmus, "life here below is best described as being a

[31] Charles Taylor thinks of this process as a movement away from a condition in which self is understood as living in an enchanted, porous world of spiritual forces to a condition in which the self is understood as fundamentally buffered from the forces of the world, but subject to occasional passions which could be met with disciplinary tactics of self-formation. See (Taylor 2007, 25-89).

[32] See, for a few classic examples on the significance for political thought of the resurgence of interest in antiquity, (Baron 1966); (Burckhardt 1990, 120-184); (Pocock 2016, 49-80); and (Skinner, The Foundations of Modern Political Thought 1978). I am, however, not claiming that humanism is exclusively pagan in origin and exclusively civic, as Gillespie accuses others**,** especially Baron and Burckhardt, to incorrectly believe in (Gillespie 2008, 69-100). To Gillespie, Francesco Petrarca's intense Christianity proves this to be an incorrect assessment of the humanism of the Renaissance and of the origins of modernity in general. In any case, this controversy is tangential the point of the dissertation. What is important here are the effects of passion in the modern world as it presents itself to us, and how the effects of those passions are deeply implicated in politics. Genealogy does not determine the full scope of ontology. And it is simply a fact that modern writers found recourse to ancient pagan authors to understand the effects of passions – as did Erasmus for that matter, the 'crowning glory of Christian humanists.'

[33] (Gadamer 1975, 325-344).

type of continual warfare."[34] For Erasmus, the passions, elucidated by the ancients, posed a threat to the possibility of salvation; for us moderns the passions, are simply a fact of everyday political life, which we can either understand or blithely ignore. Although modernity might be defined in part by its self-assertion, the reflexive understanding of modernity relied in another part on ancient knowledge to make sense of the role of the passions in that self-assertion. It is not without irony that Marx, whose understandings of class struggle, the relation between production and politics, and so much more, were profoundly immersed in the thought of the ancients, wrote that "the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."[35] Even in their attempts to go beyond the humanist tradition of classical wisdom, the humanist tradition, broadly construed, remained indispensable to the authors in this study for making sense of the 'brave new world' of modernity.

It is my contention that there is a residual need in the modern age for interpretive structures that are able to incorporate the potentially disruptive experience of wonder while still accounting for the perceived ordering of the world. Wonder always exists at the edge of knowledge, but one can either respond to it by trying to eliminate it by understanding what caused it or by accepting and prolonging it as an enduring wonder. The examples that I will analyze are primarily attempts to prolong and sustain wonder through the establishment of interpretive structures that surround and, in a sense, capture it. Although the capture of wonder can never be total – in the same way that ideology, according to Gramsci, can never be complete - it had been fulfilled by the Ancient Greek wonder toward the cosmos, or the medieval wonder toward the great chain of being as a creation of God. I will say here that I believe that the

[34] (Erasmus, The Handbook of the Militant Christian 1993, 40).

[35] (Marx 1975, 103).

thematic examples that I focus on all express, but only incompletely, their modernity. These authors, consciously or not, grapple with the disjointed worldview of modern life, and, with the possible exception of Arendt, all settle on a singular sense of politically salient wonder towards newly emergent objects within the social world - toward the sovereign, the autonomous moral law, the market order, or political action. In so doing, they all express something profound, yet incomplete, about modern life: the dangerous freedom of deciding what to see, and how to see it.

I should be careful to note, that I not making in this dissertation a normative argument that we *should* always wonder at something, and that we should do so in an unreflective way. Instead I am claiming that we simply *do* wonder at things that are new and that profoundly challenge the way that we see the regular order of the world. The modern sovereign state is itself a wondrous and awe-inspiring entity, as is the modern belief that actions can be morally autonomous. In a similar way, the seemingly spontaneous way that the market allows for people to coordinate their actions is itself a cause for wonder as well for better and, to Marx, for worse. Yet, there is no reason that we should take these as unassailable and singular foundations for political order. If my dissertation succeeds, then it will have supported a critical sense of differentiated wonder toward the world. It will have stressed the importance of responsiveness to changing circumstances and times. Most important, it will have supported the view that the political world has no singular and predictable source of wonder that must necessarily be the foundation of order.

The fact that there is not a single interpretive structure for wonder in the modern world, but a multiplicity, provides us with both serious dangers and profound opportunities. I believe

that they both show the importance of wonder for democratic political life.[36] The dangers lie in the fact that wonder can be used to claim that certain orders of the world exist or should be created, and the opportunities lie in the fact that wonder is not only the beginning of awe, but of questioning as well. These opportunities are fundamentally democratic in nature. The lack of an agreed-upon object of wonder means that there is no single legitimizing principle that can be established by procedures exterior to politics. It also does not mean that any of those objects of wonder are impervious to doubt and question. To describe this trend in a cognitivist way, one could say that the openness of wonder gives an epistemological basis to democratic political life.

Nevertheless, even if we accept that wondering towards a multitude of irreducible events and objects is a fact of modern life, it is still necessary to ask whether it is *good* that we wonder. Is wonder itself legitimate? Might it be better to adopt the admonition of the ancient Stoics and Epicureans: *nihil admirari*, to acquaint ourselves so well with human affairs that we might marvel at nothing? Here I must admit that this dissertation will likely be animated by a relatively naïve belief in the capacity of citizens for a more reflective sense of wonder to which we should aspire. Here I claim, and argue implicitly and explicitly throughout the dissertation, that wondering is simply a fact of life, whether in modernity or elsewhere. There is some truth to the arguments of Hobbes, Kant, Marx, and Arendt, in that the objects that they describe do in fact have the capacity to inspire wonder – even if that wonder remains on the level of ignorance and never inspires questioning inquiry. It is therefore necessary that we become reflective about the sources of wonder in political life if we are to cope with the modern conditions in which we live. This comes through a thoughtful responsiveness and a bit of cunning. To allow oneself to wonder at political affairs – to adopt as a motto *admirari aude* – can give a fuller experience of

[36] The connections will primarily be explored in the chapter on Arendt, which I briefly outline below.

the strange multiplicity of modern life, which, I would say, is for the better. As I note in a subsequent chapter, wonder might not help us to prevent disasters, but it will force us to try to understand them. To refuse to acknowledge the pull of wonder altogether is akin to dwelling in ignorance.[37]

3. Wonder in the History of Political Thought, Secularization Studies, and the Study of the Emotions

This dissertation is staged at the intersection of the history of political thought, secularization studies, and the broad reassessment of emotion in political theory. I engage with other historians of political thought in each individual chapter, but not as a part of the general argument of the dissertation. At the same time, and often through the same arguments, I engage with classical and contemporary literature on the effect of 'secularization' upon political life in western countries. The argument here is more general, and I attempt to show how the processes that have been understood under the label of 'secularization' gain their political relevance not only through the changing balance between political and religious institutions, and the emancipation of philosophy from theology, but also through a shifted affective relationship to the world focused in the passion of wonder. The key here is in seeing a reoccupation of wonder in modern political life. In conversation with the third group of scholars, those political theorists concerned with emotion and affect in modern political life, I show how a struggle over wonder is endemic to modernity. Moreover, wonder has a central role in the relation between affect and cognition, as well as the generation and perpetuation of order.

[37] I return to the moral problems of wonder in the conclusion, which come to light in the preceding chapter on Arendt in the fact that the novel events of her century – particularly total domination under totalitarian regimes – which most forcefully made one think were not good, but evil.

What happened to the role of the emotions in politics with the rise of secularism in modernity? One of the most important and influential descriptions of the affective life of modernity was offered by Max Weber in the early twentieth century, who famously sad that "the fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.' Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations."[38] Reason, in principle, comes to fundamentally structure public life. To Weber, this is the result of a process that has taken millennia but has crystallized in modernity.

Charles Taylor, in his recent magnum opus, *A Secular Age*, largely agrees with this description of the affective life of modernity. Under modern, secular conditions, "it is the estate of the human being as such, as agent of rational control…to obey the commands of rational disengagement."[39] This is a dramatically opposed to the "enchanted, porous world" of pre-modernity, in which the self was vulnerable to being suffused by malicious spirits, and it was only by the power of the "good magic" of the church, in the form of divine grace, that one could cope with such affective conditions.[40] Mark Lilla has also argued in his *Stillborn* God that a result of the 'Great Separation' in modern thought between political theory and theology was a concerted effort to found political order on an anthropological view of human beings which had no need for the theological or for cosmological speculation.[41]

[38] (Weber 1946, 155).

[39] (Taylor 2007, 249).

[40] (Taylor 2007, 42).

[41] (Lilla 2008).

Contrary to the various descriptions of secularity by Blumenberg, Taylor, and Lilla, others, such as Michael Gillespie, Karl Löwith, and Carl Schmitt have argued that theological structures and problems have persisted in modernity.[42] Michael Gillespie's book *The Theological Origins of Modernity* is a retelling of the secularization story of modern disenchantment. According to Gillespie, "what actually occurs in the course of modernity is thus not simply the erasure of disappearance of God but the transference of his attributes, essential powers, and capacities to other entities or realms of being." In this interpretation, "the so-called process of disenchantment is thus also a process of reenchantment in and through which both man and nature are infused with a number of attributes or powers previously attributed to God."[43] The theological content of the medieval world was not so much secularized as it was simultaneously retained and concealed in the modern world.

Although I will not focus on the theological arguments that all these authors make through their stories of secularization, I would suggest that the manner in which they tell this story conceals a crucial part of the political relevance of the supposed secularization thesis: how it changed the way that people *felt* about their world, and how they responded to this feeling in word and deed. Gillespie's study, along with others, attempts to explain the modern break with tradition and theology in the western world, but my study will seek to understand not *why* this break happened, but the *meaning* that it has had, and continues to have, for emotional political subjects. The interesting question here is not whether there is a concealed theological core to modern politics, but whether the kinds of questions that we ask about modern politics themselves conceal the lingering emotional needs that persist in the modern world and the political appeals

[42] (Gillespie 2008); (Löwith 1949); (Schmitt, Political Theology 1985); and (Schmitt, Political Theology II 2008).

[43] (Gillespie 2008, 274). On my discussion below, see Kirstie McClure's question to Gillespie of "what is it that transference transfers?" in (McClure 2010, 703).

to them. However, given the fact that the emotions of human beings in modernity are directed towards institutions which themselves are new, Blumenberg's theory of modernity as a kind of 'self-assertion' provides the most useful framework, with notable amendments, for answering my question.

Thus, I argue that we should revisit the secularization thesis with a different framework, one which considers the struggle over wonder a crucial part of politics. In actual lived political experience, there are no theoretical models that render the world completely knowable. There have always been things that we feel and perceive as wonders, and therefore disrupt the order that we find the world to have.[44] These wonders can either be used to strengthen the order that they at first disrupt or be used as foundations upon which to build new orders entirely. To put it another way, this dissertation will take a new perspective on the old story of disenchantment. On my take of this story, the 'disenchantment of the world' has not resulted in a decline in the experience of wonder as such. Charisma perhaps has been routinized, but one still wonders at those social domains that are ordered by routine – the state, the market economy, and spaces of political action. Indeed, if wonder is a fundamental human emotion, then it simply does not make sense for it to disappear entirely

In this dissertation I also argue that wonder is used in modern political thought to provide stability to the fundamental precarity of secular time which has lost contact with eternity.[45] As J.G.A. Pocock wrote, a part of the movement away from the general Christian world-view of the middle ages was the "supersession of that world-view by one more temporal

[44] To be specific about modernity, the prevalence of the discourse on wonders in modern political thought goes against the thesis of modern Gnosticism of (Voegelin 1952).

[45] For sociological theories of the precarity of modern secular time which bring the political stakes to the forefront, see (Koselleck 2004) and (Rosa 2013). See also (Blumenberg 1983, 116).

and secular"[46] This means that ordinary time – time how we experience it in our everyday lives – wipes out the 'duality' of modes of time which existed in medieval Europe. God's eternity is no longer incorporated into the political order through religious sanctification of political institutions and the wide variety of festivals meant to allow the participation in an 'eternal time' set apart from ordinary, temporal affairs.[47] However, I find that the authors in this study describe wonder as an experience which participates in a non-theological 'higher time.' Wonder bestows a kind of immortality on political objects or makes into a political project the achievement of a political condition in which wondrous capabilities, such as freedom for Kant, are made secure within the world. For example, the sign of the rainbow served Müntzer as a point where the eternity of God touched the earthly realm.[48] To speak in general terms, miracles and wonders could be understood as revelations from a temporal order beyond the ordinary temporality of human life. Although the ancient Greeks held to a notion of time which was cyclical rather than the linear notion of Christianity, they too viewed wonders as, in some sense, beyond ordinary time. For Homer, wonder is regularly associated with the appearance of the immortal Olympian gods.[49] For Herodotus and Pericles, according to the account of Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, the wondrousness of deeds inherently demands praise so that the glory of those deeds might be everlasting.[50] Yet modernity finds itself in need of some temporal stability,

[46] (Pocock 2016, 8). For a classic statement on how worldly time was brought some stability though its political relation to the eternal in the middle ages, see (Kantorowicz 2016, 273-313).

[47] (Taylor 2007, 54-59 & 264-266). See also (Blumenberg 1983, 37-51). For the reading to which Blumenberg was responding, which claims that modern secular time is only an immanentization of higher, sacred time, see (Löwith 1949).

[48] It is important to note here that Müntzer's use of the sign occurred at a disjunctive moment in which the ecclesiastical authority of the Roman Catholic Church had lost control over what should count as a wonder. This is a problem which we will see Hobbes take up in the next chapter, and, in varying ways, the authors of the subsequent chapters.

[49] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 142-143).

or "self-reassurance," given that it "sees itself cast back on itself without any possibility of escape."[51]

Thus, in wonder, modern political theorists find a way to extend in time the institutions or project of order. For Hobbes, this means the endurance of the sovereign state so long as it can keep the dutiful attention of its subjects held in awe. For Kant, the wonder of the moral law exerts itself in history as a project to be realized politically. For Marx, the wonder towards the commodity form keeps those living under conditions of capitalism attached to this form of economic organization, even as the contradictions under its surface lead it to crisis. Finally, for Arendt, political action in modernity is ineluctably tied to the capacity to start new things, most paradigmatically in the foundation of new republics. To Arendt, these foundations are only as tenacious as they are felt as, in a sense that I will develop below, a wonder.[52] All these techniques of wonder function in quite different manners, but in each case, we shall see a passion used for its unique ability to stabilize political structures in the fundamentally unstable conditions of secular time. As William James wrote in his study of religious experience, "religious rapture, moral enthusiasm, ontological wonder, cosmic emotion are all unifying states of mind, in which the sand and grit of selfhood tend to disappear."[53] These unifying states of mind, as the authors under consideration show, is not only a unity of personality, but a gathering of time.

[50] (Herodotus 1972, 3); and (Thucydides 1919, 331). See (Hunzinger 2015); and (Priestley 2014, 58-108).

[51] (Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity 1995, 7).

[52] More than the other authors, Arendt seems self-aware of this modern problem of time, and returns to the ancient historians in such a manner.

[53] (W. James 1983, 240).

Accordingly, I believe that we should return to the question of secularization but within the framework of the study of the emotions and affect in politics. In the past two decades there has been a steady stream of important work on the importance of the emotions in political life. This has included work on the political relevance of fear,[54] love,[55] despair,[56] 'ugly feelings,'[57] and on the emotions in general.[58] In a related vein there has also been a notable wave of theorists who look to Hume and other sentimentalists to reconsider the role of sympathy in politics.[59] These works have shown the close connection between cognition and emotion in both the way that citizens make evaluative appraisals of certain objects, but also in sustaining certain kinds of political cultures. This dissertation makes a case for wonder being considered as a significant emotion for politics.

Over the past few decades, there have been great leaps in the study of wonder and its history.[60] However, this dissertation fills a significant gap in the treatment of wonder, by systematically bringing politics into the picture.[61] Conversely, I hope to bring to political theory

[54] For example, (Evrigenis 2008); and (Robin 2004).

[55] (Hanley 2017); and (Nussbaum, Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice 2015).

[56] (Marasco 2017).

[57] (Ngai 2005).

[58] For examples see (Fisher, The Vehement Passions 2002); (Kingston 2011); (Marcus 2002); and (Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought 2003). There is also a growing literature in political psychology focusing on the relation between cognition and emotional appraisal.

[59] (Frazer 2010); (Krause, Civil Passions 2008); and (Panagia 2013).

[60] Some of the most important texts include (Bishop 1996); (Bynum 1997); (La Caze 2013); (Cohen 2012); (Daston and Park 1998)**;** (Deckard and Losonczi 2011)**;** (Fisher, Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences 2003)**;** (Greenblatt, Resonance and Wonder 1990)**;** (Greenblatt, Marvellous Possessions 2017)**;** (Holmes 2008)**;** (Kareem 2014)**;** (Lloyd 2018)**;** (Malpas 2006)**;** (Onians 1994)**;** (Rubenstein 2008)**;** (Vasalou, Practices of Wonder 2013); and (Vasalou, Wonder: A Grammar 2015)**.**

[61] For tentative reflections on wonder and politics, see (Lloyd 2018, 155-182). Here I do not want to overlook the excellent works on wonder and ethics. See in particular, (Greenblatt, Marvellous Possessions 2017, 119-158)**;** (Irigaray 1993)**;** (La Caze 2013); (Rubenstein 2008, 61-132)**;** and (Young 1997)**.** However, for all their insight, these

a better understanding of the uses and historical transformations of wonder not only in the history of political thought, but in contemporary politics as well. The fact that wonder does not appear to us as immediately political in the same way as fear or sympathy is, I would argue, a great oversight on our part. Wonder is the emotion at the hinge between affect and cognition, making it crucial for the way that the political world is both felt and perceived.

In order to make this argument, my approach will highlight the ambiguous position that wonder has between affect and cognition in order to show how political projects relying upon wonder take place on the edge between the two. Wonder is generally treated in the history of philosophy and political thought as an emotion that one feels towards something that is just beyond cognition. Yet, at the same time, the feeling of wonder is also generative of *certain kinds of cognition*. The way that one experiences wonder is not tenuously connected to the cognition of objects and the world, but is a moment in which the border between feeling and thinking is blurred. Accepting the ambiguity between affect and cognition allows us to recognize the political struggle that takes place on the level of affect and at the same time to allow for the possibility of politically responding to those affects. In the work of Hobbes, Kant, Marx, and the traditions that flow from their works, one can see the struggle to respond to and control flows of affect. What we can see now, in the wake of the turn to affect and the acknowledgement of emotion in the history of political thought, is that the effort to channel wonder into various political projects has been a constitutive component of modern political thought and political struggle.[62]

works are primarily ethical rather than also political, in that they do not analyze the objective conditions which give rise to wonder, but instead focus on ethical relations between subjects.

[62] Here my project attempts to partly accept and fully learn from the critique of affect theory by (Zerilli, The Turn to Affect and the Problem of Judgment 2015).

Wonder is a passion that is poised at the threshold between affect and cognition – it is an affect that causes us to think, and how we respond to it can determine how we think. According to Susan James, early modern thinkers accepted wonder as the foundation of knowledge, but also held a "deep anxiety about the wisdom of depending on passion to gain *scientia*."[63] The cognitive patterns that the subjects of this dissertation suggest in interpreting the emotion of wonder are techniques for guiding affect into cognition. To focus on the example of Hobbes, when the sovereign state controls the conditions of possibility for things to legitimately evoke wonder, the state also controls a fundamental aspect of how citizens cognize the order of the political world. The state would therefore hold effective political sway over the way that feeling affects cognition. This is not only a condition that affects cognition, but also how one feels certain things to be possible, and others not, shaping the realm of action. The same can be said for Marx in his critique of political economy, Kant's normative depiction of freedom, and so forth.

My project will also therefore be engaged with affect theorists such as Brian Massumi, who argue that affect is not the same as emotion. Affect is an intensity that escapes confinement to individual bodies, and thus eludes the old distinction between subjects and objects. It is in this sense that Massumi calls it autonomous, since it cannot be completely perceived and controlled by individuals. Emotion, on the other hand, "is qualified intensity" that is localized in subjective experience.[64] By focusing on affect rather than emotion, Massumi is able to consider the continuity of the processes that take place inside and outside of subjective experience. This follows from what Massumi calls "the Bergsonian revolution," which reverses what Massumi

[63] (S. James 1997, 187).

[64] (Massumi, Parables for the virtual 2002, 28 & 35).

takes to be the standard hierarchy of position over movement. The central problem is therefore "to explain the wonder that there can be stasis given the primacy of process."[65] My project will attempt to follow this line of thought in the sense that I take affect and the generation of orders to be intricately connected. Political order is not something which is set outside of oneself, to which one is only abstractly connected by cognition. It is something which *affects* us and forces us to wonder when it does not fit with our cognitive schemes. Moreover, the way that we cognize emergent affects into recognizable emotions towards predictable actions and events is not politically neutral but is subject to political struggle.

Yet I will diverge from some affect theorists, especially Massumi, by attempting to avoid hypostatizing affect and the processes of which it is a part. It would be a great error to take affect as completely autonomous. Doing so comes dangerously close to simply reversing the rationalist project of purging reason of affect.[66] Neither position is completely accurate, nor very helpful in actual politics.[67] Let me dwell here for a moment on two specific theorists of affect, Jane Bennett and William E. Connolly. In both *The Enchantment of Modern Life* and *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett encourages what she calls an enchanted materialism that supports an affective engagement and generosity towards wonderful things that are often treated in modern life as

[65] (Massumi, Parables for the virtual 2002, 7-8).

[66] See (Zerilli, The Turn to Affect and the Problem of Judgment 2015).

[67] Here I think that Arendt's reflections in the last section of *The Human Condition*, "The *Vita Activa* and the Modern Age," are quite illuminating. There Arendt describes how in modern theory the wonder that theorists had once experienced towards eternal models, in the fashion of *homo faber*, is now experienced towards "the processes of inner life, found in the passions through introspection" (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 299). According to this account, affect theorists have made the same mistake of directing wonder toward a single 'object', but have made the quite inventive and paradoxical move of directing wonder towards affect itself. This appears to me to be an attempt to create order out of chaos, again quite paradoxically, by accepting processual chaos as orderly. To this I repeat my claim that there is no proper order, or no proper way to experience wonder in modern politics.

lifeless and inert.[68] In *The Enchantment of Modern Life* this is mostly focused on the affective engagements of subjects and in *Vibrant Matter* the focus is shifted to non-human actants. *The Enchantment of Modern Life* contests the disenchantment thesis that has been argued by important theorists like Max Weber and Hans Blumenberg. Bennett takes Blumenberg's position to be one of "disenchantment without regret" which gives a story of modernity that is "*not* founded on a fundamental loss" of a theological world, but on the self-assertion of modernity. Yet Blumenberg also, according to this reading, adopts a stance of "bland indifference" to nature in his acceptance of "the demise of disenchantment" and rejection of an orientation of "wonder-at-matter."[69] Bennett's defense of wonder in political life is an important contribution to political theory, but it seems that this stance on Blumenberg's disenchantment story occludes a crucial aspect of it for a treatment of wonder as a modern political emotion.

Specifically, Bennett's ethical use of wonder as a form of resistance to the story of disenchantment misses the central role that the rehabilitation of 'theoretical curiosity' in modernity plays for Blumenberg. I make this point not merely to argue with Bennett, but to point to the space that exists for a political account of wonder that shows its transformation and persistence in modernity. For Blumenberg, "naïve curiosity…[is] the constant; but at the same time it is the substratum around which historical articulation and focus set in."[70] Blumenberg does not reject this "central affect of consciousness," but looks at how it was historically articulated in the modern world after the reliable affective ordering of the medieval interpretive framework was gone. Curiosity did not disappear; indeed, it remained as a residual need. The

[68] (Bennett, The Enchantment of Modern Life 2001); and (Bennett, Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things 2010)

[69] (Bennett, The Enchantment of Modern Life 2001, 74).

[70] (Blumenberg 1983, 234).

development of the modern sciences responded to this need.[71] This need is not only addressed in the modern sciences, but also in the way that political phenomena are incorporated into cognitive schemes by major political theorists. Both are driven by what Blumenberg calls the "modern age's elementary theoretical claim: the lawfulness of nature, and then also of society and the state, as protections against arbitrariness and accident, against the fact that man's fate is not entirely at his disposition."[72] Ultimately, this dissertation takes much from Bennett's account of wonder, but I depart from this account significantly.

Connolly has also been engaged with the dimensions of affect in politics and the necessary contestability of fundamental perspectives in the modern world. With regards to affect, Connolly stresses the degree to which our appraisal of the world happens at an intense, affective register which forms "an infrasensible subtext from which conscious thoughts, feelings, and discursive judgments draw part of their sustenance."[73] With regards to fundamental perspectives, Connolly offers a form of pluralism which relies on what he calls a "bicameral orientation to citizenship."[74] On the first level there is the faith, doctrine, creed, ideology, or religion that one necessarily adopts as a participant in the world.[75] On the second level there is an engaged receptivity toward others. Here Connolly combines 'ontopolitical contestation' with 'agonistic respect' for others. A sustained focus on wonder can embody the concern that Connolly has on both affect and contestation, while also addressing a concern that some commentators have had,

[71] For my purposes, Blumenberg's notion of a "naïve curiosity" is roughly analogous to how I conceive of wonder. Here I think that Daston and Park's story in (Daston and Park 1998) of the dialectical relation between wonder and curiosity in the history of science can be read productively alongside Blumenberg.

[72] (Blumenberg 1983, 354).

[73] (Connolly, Why I am not a secularist 1999, 27). See also (Connolly, Neuropolitics 2002, 50-79).

[74] (Connolly, Pluralism 2005, 5).

[75] As Connolly notes, he does not "distinguish sharply between these," (Connolly, Pluralism 2005, 4).

particularly with the first level of the bicameral orientation to citizenship; that the affective grounding of the faith which Connolly adopts leads one to question whether there could be any way to live without faith.[76] A sustained focus on the ambiguous position that wonder has between affect and cognition can help us to understand the formation and perpetuation of the 'faith, creed, ideology, or religion' that one adopts as a political participant. Additionally, it can help us to do so in a way that can make us more reflective about those attachments.

Both Connolly and Bennett seek to "cultivate little spaces of enchantment."[77] Against this interpretation of affect and enchantment in the modern world, I argue that it is the duty of theory to look for sites of wonder not as fragile moments that "endure alongside a cynical world of business as usual, nature as manmade, and affect as the effect of commercial strategy."[78] Rather, I suggest that we look to the wonder that is imbued into those ordinary domains of modern life, and that sustains them. The extraordinary is not something that exists alongside the ordinary, as debris that must be collected and assessed. What is extraordinary is that we take the ordinary to be ordinary at all. It might be that it is ultimately appropriate to treat the affective force of wonder with "ethical generosity,"[79] but initially, the wisest thing to do is to follow the lesson that Walter Benjamin takes from the fairy tale – to face the affective force of wonder with "cunning and with high spirits."[80] Since, as I hope to show in the dissertation, wonder affects politics in multiple and irreducible ways, none of which having absolute priority over any other, it is

[76] (Dienstag 2009).

[77] (Connolly, Why I am not a secularist 1999, 17).

[78] (Bennett, The Enchantment of Modern Life 2001, 8).

[79] Ibid, 3.

[80] (Benjamin, Selected Writings: Volume 3 - 1935-1938 2002, 157).

necessary to respond to the effects of wonder politically; that is, tactically and courageously. To reflectively engage the effects of wonder is not only necessary but might help us to more tactically engage in the political task of thinking.

4. Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation will not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the different ways that we may experience wonder or an exhaustive history of the emotion in political thought, or even in modern political thought. That is beyond my abilities and the confines of a single dissertation. Rather, it is an analysis of wonder in the thought of four exemplary modern theorists who analyzed how wonder is a constitutive feature of four central aspects of modern political life: the sovereign state, the capacity for freedom, the market economy, and political action. These theorists' writings will be treated in a historically conditioned manner and in a way that indicates the endurance of the type of wonder that they described.[81] Additionally, these subjects were selected in part for the prevalent perception of their work as 'rationalist' and generally opposed to the passions. Their writings on wonder help to undermine this dichotomy in their work, and, at the same time, the supposed dichotomy of reason and passion in modernity. Further on the selection, I have noticeably avoided Romanticism and a more literary focus in this dissertation, even though works of literature do occasionally make an appearance.[82] The reason for this is my desire to assess the passions towards institutions and experiences which are already a part of the

[81] I should also note that my use of the term 'conditioned' is indebted to how Hannah Arendt used it in The Human Condition. There Arendt claims that humans are "conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence," (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 9). This means that not only the words in the discursive contexts of these authors are important to me, but also the things which they encountered in their historical moments. For example, this leads me to consider how things in early modern Europe, such as cabinets of curiosity, advances in optic technology, and the discovery of the New World; in modern Europe, such as the French Revolution; or in the nineteenth century, the influx of commodities, might have affected the conditions of possibility for wonder. I will further interpret the meaning of conditioned thinking in chapter four.

[82] For studies of wonder in Renaissance aesthetic theory, see (Bishop 1996); (Cunningham 1951); and (Hathaway 1968).

everyday experience of modern life.[83] To put it bluntly, where Romanticism seeks enchantment to reverse the supposed hollowing of modern political life, I find enchantment to profoundly shape the institutions and experiences at the core of what we consider to be modern.[84] This is also why I have neglected, even in places where it might be expected such as the chapter on Kant, to consider the modern discourse on the sublime.[85] Here I will only note in passing that Longinus's *Perì Hýpsous*, the translation of which kickstarted the interest in the literary sublime in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, holds that great writing, which is the subject of the text, "is the object of our admiration and wonder."[86] All that being said, I reiterate my intention

[83] Another line of inquiry that I also do not take up in this dissertation is the intensification of wonder by technology. This line of inquiry would have passed primarily through the first Frankfurt School. We have also seen in modernity an intensification of all the kinds of wonder that I survey below, except perhaps Kant's, through technological innovation. Take, for the most obvious example, the revolution of the passionate contours of political life that has occurred through social media. There is perhaps no better funnel for the passion of wonder than the screen. As recent elections in the United States and around the world have shown, states are expert manipulators of the passions of fear, rage, and sympathy through information technology. They are just as effective at grabbing our attention and not letting go through the inexplicable, the unbelievable, and the ineffable. The same, of course, goes for business interests, which operate across social media in much the same fashion. At the same time, the passionate networks of action have never been so accelerated.

[84] To unfaithfully borrow and alter a phrase of Nikolas Kompridis's, there is already a potentially suppressing romanticism embedded in everyday modern life, (Kompridis 2006, 274-276).

[85] For a persuasive reading of the Romantic focus on the sublime as obscuring wonder, see (Lloyd 2018). Additionally, I find Fisher's position persuasive on the unfortunate shift in focus in aesthetics from wonder to the sublime: "With the sublime we have for two hundred years built up a more and more intricate theory for a type of art that we do not actually have and would not care for if we did have it" (Fisher, Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences 2003, 3).

[86] (Longinus 1991, 48). In the century before *Perì hýpsous* was first published in English in 1652, the Roman vision of the *studia humanitatis* was on the rise in England (Skinner, Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes 1996, 23-25). It was in the wake of this focus on rhetoric in the English Renaissance that *Perì hýpsous* was first published in English in 1652. This was fitting, since the treatment in the book of its subject was "primarily rhetorical" (Monk 1960, 12). This is made evident by the English titles that were given to the early translations. The 1652 translation by John Hall was called *Περὶ ὕψους, or Dionysius Longinus of the Height of Eloquence*. The next English translation, in 1680 by J. Pultenery, follows this genre categorization by naming the book *A treatise of the Loftiness or Elegance of Speech* (Martin 1967, 10-11). Yet these translations were not what established *Perì hýpsous* in the modern world. Rather it was the 1674 translation into French by Despréaux Boileau as *Traité du sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours, traduit du grec de Longin* that "was the turning point of Longinus's reputation in England in France," and was reprinted in the eighteenth century alone over a dozen times (Monk 1960, 21; Roberts 1935, 249). Boileau's terms focused his interpretation of the text on the sublime itself, rather than on rhetorical style (Monk 1960, 32). Roughly from here on out the translated title of the book almost strictly included the word 'sublime.'

is not to set the extraordinary apart from the ordinary, but to find how the passionate forces of the extraordinary function within ordinary political life.[87]

There is, however, a narrative arc to the dissertation – even if it is expressed episodically – in how the selected theorists respond to the affective force of the problems of their times. In each of the chapters, the incitement to wonder is one of the shocks of the world to thought which political theory has long canonized. These are: for Hobbes, the radicalization of religious sects in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the French Revolution for Kant; the rise of capitalism for Marx; and the horrors of the twentieth century for Arendt. From these shocks, Hobbes redirects wonder to the state above politics; Kant towards autonomy underlying politics; Marx towards History behind politics; and Arendt towards, so she claims, politics itself. In a sense, the arc of the dissertation is the movement of the significance of things returning to their surface. Although only the first two chapters are broadly drawn from familiar territory for studying secularization, all the chapters study the transposition of wonder from religious contexts to secular domains, through recourse to the theories of the passions and wonder in ancient Greek thought.

The dissertation begins in a moment not too dissimilar to Thomas Müntzer's. It is a moment in which England is still wracked by the controversies of the Reformation. Thus, the first chapter presents a reading of the use of wonder in the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes as a response to the political use of signs for propagandistic purposes during the English Civil War. In this chapter, I argue that not only did Hobbes incorporate the ancient conception of wonder into his design for the emotional apparatus of the modern sovereign state, but that when

[87] (Kareem 2014, 3-4) shows how a major strand of eighteenth-century literature invited "readers to discover wonder within the quotidian." In a sense, this dissertation aims to do the something similar, in drawing our attention to the wonder inducing structural features of modern political life. My avoidance of Romanticism in this study is in part due to this aim.

he did so he also transformed it and other related concepts. Previous scholars have paid close attention to Hobbes's confrontation with ancient philosophy, but there has been no sustained study of Hobbes's use of wonder, which was a concern of his over the entire course of his authorship. More broadly, this study opens up a place for the study of wonder in contemporary political theory as part of the broader reassessment of emotion. The wondrous world in which Hobbes wrote was strikingly different from the contemporary world. Yet, I argue that the "pathetic apparatus" that I describe in this chapter is one which the state must adopt if it wishes to fully achieve its sovereignty.

The second modern author I consider is Immanuel Kant. The standard view of Kantian politics is that it completely rejects any role for the emotions, determining or otherwise. Although in recent years this view has been challenged, with consideration of the non-cognitive aspects of Kant's 'impure' ethics and writings on aesthetic political judgment, this reassessment has still not adequately touched upon two necessary but dangerous elements with which Kant supplements politics: enthusiasm and wonder. This chapter is an examination of enthusiasm and wonder throughout Kant's works. In a theoretical sense, I argue that both enthusiasm and wonder are crucial for addressing the supposed motivational deficit in Kantian, rational politics. Together they supplement an impulse to order the world in accordance with practical reason grounded in the moral law. This analysis is based both within the immediate revolutionary context of Kant's writings and in reference to the enthusiastic movements of the late medieval and early modern period. I show how Kant a similar operation to Hobbes's transformation of wonder as it was used by competing groups during the English Civil War. In a historical sense, I argue that Kant took upon himself the task of transforming the wonder experienced by enthusiasts into a form of wonder befitting a republican and cosmopolitan order. In doing so, he relied at multiple stages on

prominent theses of ancient Stoic philosophy, and, in this, was in conversation with other prominent figures of the Enlightenment who were also engaged in the reassessment of the passions.

The third chapter is a study of Karl Marx's thought and, in it, wonder, which was an emotion through which order was experienced in the nineteenth century by social theorists and revolutionaries. By this I mean wonder for the social order formed by the capitalist production and distribution of commodities. In this chapter, I argue that Marx gives us a framework for understanding how capitalism conditions how the ordering of the world is felt and the conversion of that feeling into an ideological representation of the world as it is. Wonder towards commodities and the system that they embody attaches one to the capitalistic order of private property in not just disconnected consciousness, but through conditioning an affective disposition towards the perceived economic order. In response, Marx offers an Epicurean attitude towards the troubling wonders of capitalism. The historical thrust of this argument will be that we can only understand Marx's critique of political economy if we see it as emerging out of the context of sentimental concerns of the early- and mid-nineteenth century. This then means that, theoretically, Marx's writings should be reconsidered in contemporary political theory as having an affective, and not merely cognitive content.

Due to the critical nature of Marx's depiction of wonder, this chapter appears at first to stand apart from the rest of the dissertation. However, this is only an appearance, and this chapter most exemplifies the overall argumentative thrust of the dissertation. Although this chapter, as well as the rest of the dissertation, is written with a similar intent as that of the Frankfurt School – in the service of the 'unfinished project of modernity' an immanent critique of rationality with

respect to its conditions of possibility as well as countervailing tendencies to it[88] – I adopt an approach which does not seek to banish the emotions from the political world, but rather to understand them and their dangers. Although I, like the theorists of affect, recognize and seek to show the inescapable, pre-cognitive events which suffuse the political world, I do not think that making these events present to theory means abandoning, or severely demoting, reason or critique into obsolescence.

Indeed, making present these events is a critical affair, since critique is always a practice of uncovering the conditions of possibilities for certain forms of reason.[89] In this spirit, I agree with Lauren Berlant's claim that "affect theory is another phase in the history of ideology theory."[90] However, it is my aim to show that theorists of affect still have much to learn from Marx, particularly when care is given to the significance of his work within his own context.[91] To achieve that aim in this chapter, I read Marx as a theorist of the sensuous who never fully, even with the so-called "epistemic break" of his work on political economy, put aside his early humanism. What Marx's early and late works reveal to us is precisely the affective conditioning of capitalism on those who live within it and how similar sentimental attachments which

[88] See (Habermas, Modernity versus Postmodernity 1981), (Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity 1995), and the essays in (d'Entreves and Benhabib 1997).

[89] For a similar approach to affect theory see (Zerilli, A Democratic Theory of Judgment 2016, 239-261) and, even though I have strong reservations with the treatment of wonder as 'non-eudaimonistic' therein, see also Nussbaum's treatment of emotions as judgments of value in (Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought 2003).

[90] (Berlant 2011, 53).

[91] Due to the emphasis on Marx in his own context, I put aside Freudian readings of Marx, which, of course, are only possible after Freud. Marx is staged in this dissertation as an inheritor of the Enlightenment reassessment of the passions, who does not, and could not, rely upon the Freudian dichotomy between the conscious and unconscious mind. For some prominent examples of the Freudian approach to Marx, see (Althusser 2005); (Deleuze and Guattari 2004); (Fromm 1962); (Laclau and Mouffe 2001); (Marcuse 1964); (Wolfenstein 1993);and (Žižek 2009). My thanks to Davide Panagia for pressing me to make explicit my interpretive approach to Marx in this regard.

appeared in the theologically saturated medieval world were displaced onto modern phenomena.[92]

The dissertation will conclude with a chapter on Hannah Arendt, who, of all the selected authors, wrote most explicitly on the topic of wonder. Wonder is a consistent theme in her work on political theory, yet there is no major study which analyzes the full scope of that theme. I argue that Arendt both offers a model for the experience of wonder by political theorists towards the field of political contestation, as contrasted to the wonder experienced by traditional philosophy, as well as describes a way that wonder can be institutionalized in human affairs to give the critical attention necessary to sustain spaces of political freedom. This argument is framed historically through Arendt's break from German philosophy, and through her critique of the major political ideologies of the mid-twentieth century. In both cases, Arendt finds a refusal to see and endure, in the sense of *pathos,* the real activities of human affairs. As a part of this analysis, Arendt takes up a systematic dismantling of different modes of wondering rooted in ancient Greek thought. Once we clearly grasp the full import of Arendt's writing on wonder, we will not only better understand the fraught relation between political philosophy and politics, but add further to our understanding of how secularization has affected the role of emotions in political life. This historically grounded analysis of wonder in Arendt's political thought will also provide a way to explore Arendt's often overlooked perspective on the involvement of emotions in politics, allowing us to see Arendt's place in the history of the emotions in political thought.

Although I described the character of modernity above largely in terms set down by Blumenberg, this project owes a significant debt to Arendt's understanding of both modernity

[92] For an understanding of critique as "a disclosive practice, revealing the background assumptions, ontological, epistemological, and political, and so forth, that are hidden within a text, a cultural practice, a political institution," see (Kompridis 2006, 254).

and its relation to thinking. The persistence of wonder as a significant theme in Arendt's works betrays the importance that Arendt gives to recognizing and reconciling oneself to the novelty that characterizes modernity. This novelty is, for Arendt, set against a historical background of a past whose tradition has been fragmented, which thinking can dismantle and from which it can retrieve 'thought-fragments,' such as the reflections of the ancients on wonder.[93] However, I depart from Arendt by finding that this practice of retrieving 'thought-fragments' from the past is implicit in the long history of humanism starting with Francesco Petrarca's program to return to the sources (*ad fontes*). This spirit, if anything, most definitively animates both the subjects and author of this dissertation. The movement of this spirt is not to find some 'purity' at the sources, but only to find tools to help clarify our own experiences.

Even though each chapter may be read in isolation, there is a development between them, in the sense that the problems which are put aside by one author are taken up by the next. As Hobbes argues to transmute the wonder of miracles and the admiration of individuals towards the artifice of the sovereign, diminishing the 'light' of subjects, Kant argues that the new order of republics is partly sustained by the wondrous capacity of each citizen to make laws for themselves. Thus, the wonder that was redirected towards the state is made to incorporate the wonder which one might feel towards the actions and deeds of one's fellows. However, this wonder is transformed by Kant into a wonder for the *capacity* which one's fellows have to live under laws which they make for themselves, and thus is universalized. As such, the wondrousness of subjects, now as citizens, is incorporated into the state order. In the following chapter, the order of republics is show by Marx to leave aside the material foundation of the political order. In this sense, the political revolution which Kant interprets in terms of wonder

[93] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 210-212).

puts aside the problems of economic and social organization, and what those problems mean for the possibility of freedom. Thus, Marx confronts the wonder inducing economic order of capitalism that developed during the nineteenth century, in the wake of the political revolutions of the eighteenth century.

Finally, Arendt argues that all these turnings can distract theorists from the always unpredictable activities of political life: if we focus all our passionate attention on some human artifice like the state, some non-immanent idea of human freedom, or the movements of political economy, we might fail to think about the unexpected novelties of the world. And this does not mean to hold those novelties in reverence – often quite the opposite – but rather to wonder about them; *to question what they might mean to us*. In broad strokes, my depiction of this development is not at all new for the history of political thought, but my depiction of how wonder has been a crucial consideration by key figures at crucial turning points is new. Through it, I hope to make clearer the stakes of not just wonder in the history of political thought, but also of the choices which theorists make of what they wonder about today, whether it be the state, morality, political economy, or political action.

Chapter One

The Admirable Order of Leviathan: Hobbes and the Sovereign State

Nature proceeds little by little from things lifeless to animal life…there is observed in plants a continuous scale of ascent towards the animal.

- Aristotle, *History of Animals*, VIII, 1, 588a 4-12

O favorable Spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
From center to circumference, whereon
In contemplation of created things
By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
What meant that caution joined, *If ye be found Obedient?*

- Adam to the Archangel Raphael in John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, V, 507-514

1. Wonder, What

In 1651, the year in which Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* was first published, a pamphlet appeared entitled *The Levellers Almanack: For, The Year of Wonders, 1652*. This short pamphlet was published at the end of the English Civil War (1642–1651) and at a moment of victory for anti-royalist forces. It contained not only predictions of natural wonders, but also linked these natural wonders to the catastrophic end of monarchy in Europe. It claimed that one such wonder, a "great Eclipſe" would foretell "general madneſs and confuſion to all such Kingdoms, Common-wealths, Countries, Cities and Towns."[94] This pamphlet and the stories in it were not out of place. After the death of Charles I, royalists told stories of God's wrath in the form of unusual

[94] (The Levellers Almanack: FOR, The Year of Wonders, 1652. 1651, 4-5).

tides, monstrous births, and three "bloody suns."[95] Parliamentarians and Puritans told stories of comets and signs from the heavens, confirming the rectitude of their rebellion. One such pamphlet from 1642, *A Blayzing Starre seene in the West*, tells the story of a royalist man who, before he could assault a parliamentarian woman, "was Struck with a Flaming Sword" which issued forth from a "Fearful comet...to the Terrour and Amazement of all the Country Thereabouts."[96] The church and state took seriously reports such as these. After the battle of Edgewater, a number of people claimed to see celestial armies re-enacting the battle in the night sky over the battlefield, and, according to historian William E. Burns, "so accurate was this image, which persisted for several weeks, that not only did the [justice of the peace] confirm it, but it was claimed that the king himself had sent two of his officers to view it."[97] These stories and others like them were used by political and religious figures, and made up an important part of the historical context for Thomas Hobbes. In fact, Hobbes gathered together a list of such events in chapter 12 of *Leviathan*: men are led to believe by prognostications and conjecture that they should find their fortunes "sometimes in Monsters, or unusual accidents; as Ecclipses, Comets, rare Meteors, Earthquakes, Inundations, uncouth Births, and the like, which are called *Portenta*, and *Ostenta*, because they thought them to portend, or forshew some great Calamity to come."[98] There is another term which encapsulates all of these: *wonders*.[99]

[95] (Burns 2002, 12); and (Cressy 2004). See also the essays in (Platt 1999).

[96] (Burns 2002, 13-14, 26n.8)

[97] (Burns 2002, 14).

[98] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 81-82).

[99] On '*Ostenta*,' '*Portenta*,' and 'wonders' see (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 300).

To counteract the prognostications and conjecture by charlatans and religious leaders within his model of the unitary, sovereign state, Hobbes reached into his vast humanistic learning, which has been documented by Leo Strauss and Quentin Skinner, for another understanding of wonder: that of the ancients. It should be no great surprise that Thomas Hobbes, the clever and errant student of humanism, should so effectively use concepts from ancient philosophy within his own political setting. [100] When Hobbes reached back into ancient philosophy for a conceptual apparatus to counteract the wonders of his own age, he found the emotion at the foundation of ancient philosophy. This chapter will track the structural movements made by Hobbes regarding wonder and argue that Hobbes both incorporated the ancient concept of wonder into the pathetic apparatus of the sovereign state, and, that in doing so, he reconfigured that concept.[101] Although Hobbes rejected much of ancient philosophy, not all of that rejection was by annulment; some was by reconfiguration.

The importance of fear in Hobbes's political philosophy is glaring and so well established in the secondary literature that many take Hobbes to believe that fear is the most essential human passion.[102] Yet wonder and awe remain underappreciated, despite being crucial points of reference in seventeenth century treatments of the passions and being what Hobbes calls "proper to Man."[103] Hobbes was a member of a discursive community, which included such figures as Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Benedict Spinoza, and Nicolas Malebranche that sought to

[100] On Hobbes's humanism see (Skinner, Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes 1996); (Skinner, Hobbes and the studia humanitatis 2002); and (Strauss, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes 1936, 30-43).

[101] On "pathetic apparatus" see (Sissa 2009, 283-293).

[102] See, for example, (Bilts 1989); (Gillespie 2008, 208); (Robin 2004, 30-47); and (Strauss, The Political Philosophy of Hobbes 1936).

[103] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 42). An important exception is (Deckard 2008). Amongst other differences between this chapter and Deckard's treatment of Hobbes, this chapter explores how Hobbes treated wonder as a passion essential to the theory of sovereignty.

understand the place of wonder in new accounts of the human passions.[104] To be precise, Hobbes calls "admiration" what is "proper to Man." As I will establish below, "wonder" and "admiration" are functionally identical for Hobbes. These emotions were objects of concern for Hobbes over nearly his entire writing career, appearing as early as his 1627 poem *De Mirabilibus Pecci* and as late as the Latin translation of *Leviathan* in 1668. For Hobbes, fear, the "anticipation of future evil", may direct men's actions toward the formation of the state and away from breaking the law,[105] but it is wonder and awe that *keep* the citizens of the commonwealth united and held together under the sovereign.[106] Order in the modern world must be achieved by human initiative. Thus, the state for Hobbes is an artifice that is constructed to best prevent challenges to the fragility of order, which can only be sustained by the ingenuity of its human artificers.[107] Hobbes's assertion of order requires measures to constrain or contain the potentially disordering passions that animate civil life.

Not only does Hobbes's political philosophy aim to control the conditions of possibility for wonder toward any human creation other than the artifice of the sovereign state, it psychologically sublates – in other words, isolates, transforms, and incorporates – the experience of wonder into his political philosophy through means which I contend can mostly be found in ancient philosophy. In the absence of an assumed divine ordering of the human passions, ancient philosophy provides Hobbes resources for making sense of the passions in order to incorporate

[104] On the significance of the Baconian program for thinking about the relation between wonder and the sciences, see (Daston and Park 1998, 253). See also (James 1997).

[105] (Hobbes, On the Citizen 1998, 25); and (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 206).

[106] See the use of the phrase "keep them in awe" or "keep them all in awe" in (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 88, 102, 117, 118, 120, & 163).

[107] On order being an achievement of human artifice in modernity, see (Blumenberg 1983, 219-221) and (Taylor 2007, 194 & 249).

them into his new order of sovereign states. Although Hobbes boasted that "civil philosophy" is a science "no older…than [his] own book *De Cive*,"[108] and that the supposed philosophy practiced in the universities of his day was "not properly Philosophy…but Aristotelity," grounded on an interpretation of *Philosophia prima* which was called "Metaphysics,"[109] Hobbes relied in his own work on the treatment of *thaumazein* as it appeared in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This should surprise us, given the fact that many of Hobbes's contemporaries held as closely as possible to the ancient maxim *Nihil admirari* – wonder at nothing. Quite remarkably, a fundamental emotion of Hobbes's political philosophy rests in close proximity to the passion at the beginning of both Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. It is important to note that I am not making a general argument for a hidden appropriation of Aristotle's political philosophy by Hobbes, but an argument regarding distinct elements of Aristotle's general philosophy.

This chapter will be broken into two major parts. The first will consider the place of wonder in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. The second will consider the chronological development of its place in Hobbes's political philosophy. Between these two parts will be a short discussion of the changing conditions of early modernity which disclosed a space for the political appropriation of wonder by Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes was not the first to write on the connection between wonder and the political apparatus of power. Many before him wrote on the majesty of royal power and the sanctity of the political body.[110] However, Hobbes was the first to treat the artificial state – a creation of man alone – as worthy of wonder. Thus, he opens up the

[108] (Hobbes, Elementorum Philosophiae Sectio Prima de Corpore 1839, ix).

[109] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 462 & 463).

[110] See (Bloch 1973); (Brogan 2015); (Kantorowicz 2016); and (Oakley 2006).

problematic of this dissertation: the use and reconfiguration of ancient notions of wonder to make sense of and, in some cases, order politics around new phenomena of modern political life.

Although this chapter will be focused on Hobbes, I conceive it to be conversant with three strands of contemporary political theory. First, it addresses those who are concerned with 'enchantment' in modern political life such as Jane Bennett, Michael Gillespie and Mary-Jane Rubenstein; and, second, those who refocus the gaze of political theory from the sovereignty of states to non-sovereign forms of power and action, such as canonical authors like Hannah Arendt, and Michel Foucault, but also contemporary theorists like Giorgio Agamben, Wendy Brown, Sharon R. Krause, Patchen Markell, and Linda Zerilli.[111] To the first group I suggest that the Hobbesian sovereign state is a form which, despite its centrality in modern, secular politics, retains an 'enchanted' core, and to the second I present a reading of Hobbes which shows how the state can manipulate the awe and wonder of its citizenry in a way that diminishes their capacity to be receptive to and participative in non-sovereign politics. This chapter will also be of interest to a third group: those involved in the reassessment of emotion in political life.[112] Although the political aspects of fear have been heavily studied, wonder has been mostly ignored.[113] The function of wonder within sovereign states, which this essay reconstructs from Hobbes's political philosophy, might serve as a structural foundation for studies in the field.

[111] For theorists concerned with forms of enchantment in modern life (Bennett 2001); (Gillespie 2008); and (Rubenstein 2008). On non-sovereign forms of power and action see (Arendt, What is Freedom 2006); (Foucault 2003); (Agamben 1998); (Brown 2010); (Krause, Freedom Beyond Sovereignty 2015); (Markell 2003); and (Zerilli 2005).

[112] For example, (Frazer 2010); and (Krause, Civil Passions 2008).

[113] For a similar argument regarding Hobbes and horror see (Anker 2014).

2. ***Thaumazein*** **in Ancient Greek Philosophy**

As noted in the introduction, it is *thaumazein* (θαυμάζειν), or wonder, that both Plato and Aristotle mark as the beginning of philosophy. This feeling makes its famous appearance in Plato's *Theaetetus* during a general discussion between Socrates and the young mathematician Theaetetus on the role of perspective in identity and change. Within that general discussion, which focused on rather idiosyncratic debates in ancient Greek thought, Socrates considers the difference between relative and absolute change, and states that his consideration of the topic commits him to say things which are "extraordinary and absurd" (θαυμαστά τε καὶ γελοῖα).[114] The paradox of these statements leaves Theaetetus in wonder. He is dizzy and isolated; he has lost his way. It is here that Socrates makes the famous statement that philosophy has "no other starting-point" but in wonder. According to Socrates, Theaetetus, in silently losing his way in wonderment, has shown his "natural gifts" for philosophy.

Following Socrates's approval of Theaetetus's wonder, Socrates makes a gnomic reference to the gods: "the man who said Iris was the daughter of Thaumas seems to have been doing his genealogy not at all badly."[115] The reference to Thaumas, whose name sounds like the Greek word for wonder, is not so obscure. But the allusion to Iris, goddess of the rainbow, who takes the place of philosophy in the reference, is more difficult to place.[116] Paul Stern has suggested two possible meanings that Plato might have wished for the reference. The first is that Iris's station as the messenger of the gods emphasizes philosophy's mediation between the human and the divine. The second comes from Hesiod's description of the power allotted to Iris

[114] (Plato, Theaetatus 1973, 19). For the original Greek see (Plato, Theaetetus 1903, 154b).

[115] (Plato, Theaetatus 1973, 19-21).

[116] For a sustained analysis of the longstanding coupling of wonder and the rainbow, see (Fisher 2003).

"when quarrel and strife arise among the immortals."[117] In these times "if one of them that dwells on Olympus speaks false," Zeus sends Iris to make the offending immortal "breathless and voiceless."[118] Stern parses this as Isis's "power to render her fellow gods speechless if they should be caught in a lie."[119] Stern's exegesis may seem esoteric, but it does illuminate some of the aspects of Plato's concept of wonder and its place in his philosophy, which may be summarized by the following: Philosophy, issuing from the silent wonder at the contradiction between things which endure (like the divine things) and those that pass away (like human things), is charged with the task of finding and bringing to speech the hidden truth from out of that contradiction, and silencing what is false.[120]

Aristotle followed Plato in defining the experience of wonder as the beginning of philosophy, but made significant alterations to the description of it. These alterations would be critical for Hobbes. Wonder, for Aristotle, begins first with obvious perplexities, and then progresses to greater matters which are more extraordinary. It can also be spurred on by seemingly spontaneous natural wonders, which appear to the observer as new and inexplicable:[121]

> It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize; wondering in the first place at obvious perplexities, and then by gradual progression raising questions about the greater matters too, e.g. about the changes of the moon and of the sun, about the stars and about the origin of the universe.[122]

[117] (Hesiod 1988, 26).

[118] Ibid.

[119] (Stern 2008, 106).

[120] See also (Benardete 1984, I.107).

[121] Ibid, 983a.

[122] (Aristotle, Metaphysics 1989, 6).

At the moment of rupture, of wonder, a person will sense "that he [or she] is ignorant."[123] For Aristotle, it is the task of philosophy, though admittedly beginning in Socratic ignorance, to eliminate that ignorance which allows for wonder and to "produce the direct contrary to its beginning."[124] If a person were to completely understand the world philosophically, that is, understand the principles according to which the world moves, then there would no longer be any room for the experience of wonder.

Both Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy are spurred on by what Martha Nussbaum calls a "hatred of being at a loss in the world," a hatred of being in a condition in which one is ignorant of the world, and in which the world seems to function in a way that is alien and arbitrary.[125] Wonder is the passion that moves a person out of this condition and sets him or her along the way out of that original ignorance and towards wisdom. For Aristotle, this means the discovery and understanding of the primary causes. Where Plato sought to bring out of the initial moment of wonder the truth hidden in contradictions, Aristotle's philosophy attempts to eliminate the initial condition of ignorance by passing through wonder toward an extraordinary and comprehensive grasp of the world, by attaining an understanding of the primary causes of its appearance.

Yet there is an additional twist in Aristotle's account of wonder. Immediately after he described the ignorance that a person feels at the moment of wonder, he notes that "the myth-lover [φιλόμυθος] is in a sense a philosopher, since myths are composed of wonders."[126] Martha

[123] Ibid, 982b.

[124] (Aristotle, Metaphysics 1960, 983a).

[125] (Nussbaum 2001, 259).

[126] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (1989), 982b.

Nussbaum interpreted this statement to mean that there is a natural continuum between story-telling and philosophy since in both "we seek to expand the comprehensiveness of our grasp."[127] Philosophy and stories both enrich our understanding of the world. From here we turn to the specifically *political* function that Aristotle gives to stories, and especially to tragedies.

This turn depends on a rather curious Greek term. Although I have been rather unambiguously translating *thaumazein* as wonder, there is another ancient Greek word that is often translated as that which inspires awe or wonder, although it is distinct in Aristotle's philosophy. That term is *deinon* (δεινόν). According to Nussbaum, *deinon* is "somehow strange, out of place; its strangeness and its capacity to inspire awe are intimately connected."[128] The word also suggests terror and fearsomeness. In Aristotle's *Poetics deinon* is intricately linked with, but delineated from *phobos* (φόβος), which is generally translated into English as fear. Aristotle defines *phobos* in the *Art of Rhetoric* as "a kind of pain or disturbance resulting from the imagination of impending danger."[129] This emotion has a special place in Aristotle's discussion of tragedy, which Aristotle describes as a kind of *mimesis* (*μίμησις*), or imitation, which is concerned with the emotions of pity and fear (*phobos*). A tragedy accomplishes "by means of pity and terror (*phobos*) the *catharsis* of such emotions."[130] It is this *catharsis* of the emotions, fear being the most important for the present study, which constitutes the political function of tragedies.[131]

[127] (Nussbaum 2001, 260).

[128] Ibid, 52. See also the interpretation of *deinon* in (Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics 2000, 149-165).

[129] (Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric 1991, 153).

[130] (Aristotle, Poetics 1987, 49b 24-27).

[131] For a different interpretation of *catharsis*, see (Lear 1992).

What is the function of *catharsis* here? To rephrase the effect of tragedy described above, we might say that the viewing of things which are *deinon* in a tragedy brings about the *catharsis* of the fearfulness of the spectator. According to Nussbaum's reading, *catharsis* is best translated as "clarification."[132] This makes the most sense for the case of fear, since Aristotle finds that *phobos,* "makes men deliberative, yet none deliberates about hopeless cases."[133] What is therefore needed is a clarification of the emotion of fear, so that it might be the most appropriate to a given situation, and cleared of excesses. Aristotle claims that in the experience of art "souls are changed," and, in the case of good art one is educated in how to "judge correctly" so that one's soul might be open to deliberation.[134] Stanley Cavell has put it as a matter of "purging attachment from everything but the present" in order to "make us practical, capable of acting."[135] Through viewing tragedies, we learn the proper objects of moderated pity and fear through our experience of such passions.

Ultimately, Aristotle's philosophy provides clear distinctions between *phobos*, *deinon,* and *thaumazein.* As I will attempt to show below, Hobbes reconfigured these three emotions from the clear, ancient distinctions by blending them, specifically *deinon* and *thaumazein,* as he incorporated them into the pathetic apparatus of the great Leviathan. I mean 'pathetic apparatus' here in two related senses. The first is as a *structure* of sovereign governance. In this sense, these three emotions are redirected *toward* the structure of sovereign state. The second is in the sense of pathetic apparatus of a system which itself creates the conditions of possibility for a certain set

[132] (Nussbaum 2001, 388-391).

[133] (Aristotle, The Art of Rhetoric 1991, 155).

[134] (Aristotle, Politics 1998, 1340a11-40).

[135] (Cavell, Must we mean what we say? 2002, 338 & 347).

of passions.[136] In this sense, these three emotions are incorporated *into* the structure of the sovereign governance. Through these two senses of the term, the modern apparatus of the sovereign state is self-reinforcing.

3. Hobbes and Modern Wonder

In order to fully appreciate the importance and aptness of Hobbes's appropriation of the ancient account of wonder, it must be understood that Hobbes did not appropriate the ancient notion of wonder in a vacuum, but did so in a way that was thoroughly conditioned by his time. As previous scholars have noted, the early modern period was one generally obsessed with wonders.[137] The following interlacing trends all provided a significant background for Hobbes's thought on wonder and politics. The immediate form of wonder that left its mark on Hobbes is the kind of wonder used during the English Civil War, illustrated at the beginning of this essay. This can take the form of the interpretation of signs in political propaganda, like in the examples given in the introduction, or the form of religious teachings which are meant to force citizens to certain political practices. Hobbes noted that common people would be "terrified and amazed by Preachers with fruitlesse and dangerous doctrines" by the fact that these same preachers claimed to hold the keys to eternal life, and the power to condemn to eternal damnation.[138] Although certainly not limited to seventeenth century England, this old practice of prognostication was transformed by the Reformation. With the prevalence of sects, the power to seize upon phenomena as wondrous, religious signs became a practice less constrained by authority.[139] At

[136] (Sissa 2009, 284-286).

[137] See (Daston and Park 1998); (Greenblatt 2017); and (Platt 1999).

[138] (Hobbes, Behemoth or The Long Parliament 2010, 198-199). See also ibid, 125, 129-130, 160-161, 197 & 296.

[139] For example, see (Crawford 2012).

the same time, miracles became more ambivalent phenomena, with major political and religious thinkers laying the ground for doubting the existence of contemporary miracles and the supernatural in the world.[140]

Wonder was also experienced towards material objects, either a "rare work produced by the Art of a man," a new mechanical invention, or a curiosity of nature, which could be possessed.[141] All of these curious objects could be found in the *Kunstkammer, Wunderkammer,* or 'cabinet of curiosities' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[142] These collections preceded the development of public museums in Europe and housed natural, technological, and artificial rarities. The 'cabinets' in Britain took a different form from those on the Continent, and started to appear later in time. For the most part, early British 'cabinets' were private, and not as rigorously ordered as their Continental counterparts.[143] Although Charles I did inherit the collection of his older brother Henry, Prince of Wales, after Henry's death, Charles focused almost exclusively on adding more paintings and sculptures to the cabinet rather than expanding it in all areas.[144] Nevertheless, this *Kunstkabinett* was a part of the prestige of the government."[145] Hobbes also left evidence that he consciously noticed the *Kunstkabinett* in his

[140] See (Daston and Park 1998, 126-134); and (Israel 2001, 218-219).

[141] There is an important background here in the discovery and plunder of the New World in not only the proliferation of Cabinets of Curiosity, but also in the development of the cultural formation which made possible the 'possession' of marvels. See (Greenblatt 2017).

[142] (Hobbes 1996, 301). For studies of these early predecessors of museums, see (Impey and MacGregor 1985); and (MacGregor, Curiosity and Enlightenment 2007). For studies of English collections of the seventeenth century in particular see (Hunter 1985); (MacGregor, The Cabinet of Curiosities in Seventeenth-Century Britain 1985); and (Peck 2005), 152-187. For a book on a contemporary collection done in the spirit of the 'cabinet of curiosities,' see (Weschler 1995).

[143] (MacGregor 1985).

[144] (MacGregor, Curiosity and Enlightenment 2007, 17-18 & 92-96).

[145] (Thomas 1977); and (MacGregor, Curiosity and Enlightenment 2007, 94-95).

1673 essay "Concerning the Virtues of an Heroic Poem*,"* in which he wrote that a "poet is a painter" who must paint with the most choice words. If this is not done nicely, the work "will not be worthy to be placed in a cabinet."[146]

Another form of wonder was inaugurated by the incredible advances in optics at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Wonder is, after all, a way of seeing and experiencing the world. These advances were most clearly encapsulated in the invention of the telescope, which presented to the human eye previously unseen celestial bodies. The universe itself became strange and new. These advances had the clearest effect upon Hobbes's writing career, as can be seen in his concern with optics in such books as *Tractatus Opticus I* (1640), *II* (1644), and *A Minute or First Draught of the Optiques*.[147] The revolutions in optics showed that one may be led to see wonders by a change in perspective brought about by a new medium.

Hobbes was also conditioned by and took part in the seventeenth century philosophical debates on the use of the passion of wonder and the rising assault against late medieval Aristotelian metaphysics. According to the Aristotelians, each body had an inherently proper *conatus* or inclination to move toward a particular point, such as heavy objects having a natural inclination to move toward the center of the cosmos.[148] Hobbes calls the small and occasionally insensible beginnings of internal motions, or passions, endeavor.[149] This term was a translation of the Latin *conatus*, which Hobbes adopted and revised in his polemic against the late

[146] (Hobbes, To the Reader: Concerning the Virtues of an Heroic Poem 1864).

[147] On Hobbes and optical devices see (Malcolm, Hobbes and the Royal Society 2002, 203-225); and (Prins 1996). See also Hobbes's 1634 letter noting his interest in Galileo's writings, (Hobbes, The Correspondence 1994, 19-20).

[148] (Leijenhorst, Sense and Nonsense about Sense 2007, 88).

[149] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 38).

Aristotelians to be a form of motion rather than an inclination to move.[150] Although Hobbes believed that the human body "sustains certain patterns of internal motion," these internal movements are fully conditioned by and respond to exterior movements.[151] The specific passions are the loci of these patterns of internal movement. With this fundamental transformation of Aristotelianism in place, Hobbes proceeds, as I noted above, with "liberal borrowings" of Aristotle's accounts of the specific passions.[152] This placed him squarely within the camp of seventeenth century philosophers who rejected Aristotelian metaphysics, but differed on how the passions should be reincorporated into modern philosophy, and what of Aristotle should be retained.

Within this general camp, including at least Hobbes and Descartes, there was a general agreement that wonder was a useful passion in that it, as Plato and Aristotle claimed, spurred on the development of philosophy.[153] To Descartes, wonderment was a fundamental passion in which "the soul is suddenly taken by surprise, which causes it to consider attentively the objects that it finds rare and extraordinary" and therefore enabled "us to learn and retain in our memory things of which we were formerly unaware."[154] However, it also put Hobbes at odds with Spinoza, who took the curious position that wonder is not a passion at all.[155] It seems then that the neo-Stoicism of the age, which held there to be a strong distinction between reason and passion, was more radically adopted by Spinoza than by Descartes. Hobbes, on the other hand,

[150] On Hobbes and Aristotelian *natural* philosophy, see (Leijenhorst, The Mechanics of Aristotelianism 2002).

[151] (James 1997, 129).

[152] (Gert 1996, 160).

[153] (James 1997, 187). On Descartes and Hobbes see (Deckard 2008) and (Frost 2008).

[154] (Descartes 2015, 223 & 225).

[155] (Spinoza 2018, 144-145).

took a position on the relation between passion and thinking much closer to Aristotle than thoses influenced by neo-Stoicism would dare. Ultimately for all these thinkers, there was also an anxiety about depending on a passion as a foundation for philosophy. Therefore it, like many other passions, should be simultaneously used and controlled.

These new forms of wonder and the reconsideration of Aristotelian philosophy conditioned Hobbes's appropriation of ancient wonder for his theory of the state. To adumbrate for the following discussion of Hobbes's political philosophy, I will point to three specific consequences of this historical condition. The first is that wonders, and purportedly miraculous events, were eminently political. Wonders were taken to be supernatural signs, used as political propaganda by opposing forces, or as an affirmation of a particular ruler or order. Crucially, for the purpose of this dissertation, these wonders could be taken not only as the confirmation of a divine order, but as a tool for establishing an order. In short, wonders could be used for political purposes. Second, since wonder was such a powerful, but dangerous, passion it needed to be controlled by a single, central authority. This could be done by gathering all wonders and wondering into one location. Third, ways of seeing could be altered by artifice; one could be led to see wonders by a change of perspective brought on by a new medium, much as how astronomers were struck by wonder by all the new and strange celestial bodies that they could suddenly see.[156] As we will see below, these consequences of Hobbes's historical condition helped set the stage for Hobbes's breaking of the strict distinctions that Aristotle set for *phobos*, *deinon*, and *thaumazein*. Of course, they did not determine Hobbes's appropriation of

[156] See (Malcolm, The Title Page of Leviathan, Seen in a Curious Perspective 2002).

thaumazein, but they conditioned it. But altogether, they set the stage for wonder to be used by an artificial human institution to establish and preserve its political order.

a) *De Mirabilibus Pecci*

The three concepts of *phobos*, *deinon*, and *thaumazein* appear in Hobbes's political philosophy in a way that is both clearly indebted to ancient philosophy, and transformed through Hobbes's historical condition. Hobbes's concern in this area begins with one of his earliest confirmed texts, a poem from around 1627 titled in Latin *De Mirabilibus Pecci*, *Carmen*, or, in English, *Of the Wonders of the Peak, a Poem.*[157] For approaching this work, and Hobbes's appropriation of *thaumazein* in general, it is important to know that this term was commonly translated into Latin as *admiratio*. Although there is some differentiation, this term was then translated into English as admiration or wonder.[158] Quentin Skinner has also discussed the place of *admiration* in Hobbes's works, but in the context of the classical theory of laughter. Skinner's account does not consider the relation between this Latin term and *thaumazein* in Aristotle's Greek philosophy. Thus it does not consider the role of *thaumazein* in Hobbes's account of admiration and wonder. Skinner's genealogy brilliantly captures the joyous side of admiration, but misses the aspects of *admiratio* which rely upon ancient Greek philosophy.[159]

The importance of wonder in this poem is quite obvious, since it is in the title itself, but the operative definition of wonder within it is more difficult to parse. The poem describes a trip from Chatsworth to the nearby town of Buxton and the natural wonders that the narrator

[157] For the publication history of the poem, see (Skinner, Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes 1996, 240-241). On the humanistic tropes in the poem see (Skinner, Hobbes and the classical theory of laughter 2002, 54 & 60).

[158] For an etymology see (Daston and Park 1998, 16). See Hobbes's own translation in (Hobbes, Leviathan - Volume 3: The English and Latin Texts 2012, 682-683).

[159] (Skinner, Hobbes and the classical theory of laughter 2002, 146 & 155-169).

encounters on the trip. Wonder first appears near the beginning of the poem: *Miranti similis portam praeterfluit amnis, / hic tacitus, saxis, infra supraque, sonorus*.[160] The anonymously written translation of the cited edition of the poem, which does not exactly follow the line structure of Hobbes's Latin verse, translates the above lines as "Here silent, as in Wonder of the place, but does from the Rocky precipices move in rapid streams below it, and above."[161] Here *"miranti*," the dative present active participle of *miror, mirare*, translates roughly to 'in wonder.' It is modified by "*hic tacitus,*" which means 'silent in this place.' Together they give the sense of silent wonder. Although this is not a clear reference to wonder as it is described by Plato or Aristotle, it retains the quality of silent stillness. Later in the poem Hobbes expresses wonder and amazement at the great torches of the heavens, and praises the eternal arts of the heavenly Geometer.[162] What is interesting here is that wonder is toward all of creation, at everything that exists. Wonder appears at various other points in the poem, but most of them are only to apply it to various sights on the journey, without doing much to describe the emotion. Yet the fact that wonder is directed toward natural sights, separated from human affairs, shows that at this point Hobbes's concept of wonder was not affected by the three consequences of the historical condition that I described above. At this point, in 1627, he was using a form of wonder which was directed towards the admirable order of existence, putting him squarely within the mainstream of late medieval and early modern thought. Although this text establishes that Hobbes was concerned with admiration and wonder from the beginning of his writing career, it was only in the political works that he turned wonder to his own purposes.

[160] (Hobbes, De Mirabilibus Pecci 1683, 5).

[161] Ibid, 4.

[162] Ibid, 24.

b) The Elements of Law

The Elements of Law: Natural and Politic, finished in 1640, was Hobbes's first major work of political philosophy after his early humanism. My discussion of this book will show it as a middle point between Hobbes's treatment of wonder in his early poem and in *Leviathan*. Although admiration appears in Hobbes's early poem discussed above, *The Elements of* Law was the first work wherein Hobbes started to spell out his system of the passions. Therefore we should pay very close attention to the description of admiration that Hobbes gives in Part 1, Chapter 9, Section 18 of *The Elements of Law*, wherein he started to make minor adjustments to ancient wonder.[163]

At the start of this section Hobbes describes the beginning of the increase in knowledge. He writes,

> forasmuch as knowledge beginneth from experience, therefore also new experience is the beginning of new knowledge, and the increase of experience the beginning of the increase of knowledge; whatsoever therefore happeneth new to a man, giveth him hope and matter of knowing somewhat that he knew not before.[164]

Hobbes calls this "hope and expectation of future knowledge from anything that happeneth *new* and *strange*…that passion we commonly call admiration" which, when considered as an appetite, is called curiosity.[165] This passion and appetite are what allow new experiences to proceed to new knowledge. Without them, human beings would be incapable of knowing anything new or, really, anything at all. It could be said that "wonder caught the attention; curiosity riveted it."[166]

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[163] (Hobbes, The Elements of Law 1969, 45-46).

[164] Ibid, 45.

[165] Ibid, emphasis added.

[166] (Daston and Park 1998, 311). For more on the historical division between curiosity and wonder, see (Daston and Park 1998, 303-327). On the development of theoretical curiosity in modernity, see (Blumenberg 1983, 229-456).

This passion leads one to "looketh for the cause and beginning of everything that ariseth new unto him."[167] The beginning of the increase of knowledge not only leads human beings to make sense of the world by the "invention of names," but also to find the causes of those new and strange things. Then "from this beginning is derived all philosophy."[168] This passion distinguishes humans from beasts; for a beast, which is incapable of admiration, will not give names to or try to find the causes of "anything new or strange" but instead would only seek to discern whether that new or strange thing would serve or hurt him, and thus whether it would be best to approach or flee from it.[169] Beasts, according to Hobbes, may only desire or fear the new and the strange.

We can see from the very beginning of Hobbes's work on political philosophy the importance of Aristotle's account of *thaumazein*. Like Aristotle, Hobbes sees admiration, or wonder, as the beginning of philosophy. Like Aristotle, the ground of this beginning, the initial ignorance necessary for wonder, is diminished by the means of philosophy. An example that Hobbes will use in *Leviathan* is that of the rainbow, which resonates with the anecdote that Plato uses regarding Iris the messenger of the Greek gods and the personification of the rainbow. "The first Rainbow that was seen in the world, was a Miracle, because the first; and consequently strange; … But at this day, because they are frequent, they are not Miracles, neither to them that know their naturall causes, nor to them who know them not."[170] Like Aristotle, Hobbes takes this

[167] (Hobbes, The Elements of Law 1969, 46).

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid, 45. On Hobbes's nominalism, and the importance of it for modern philosophy, see (Gillespie 2008, 207-254). On the 'mystical' power of naming the marvelous in early modern thought, see (Greenblatt 2017, 82-83 & 86-118).

[170] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 301). See also (Fisher 2003).

beginning as a basis for seeking what both he and Aristotle would call the causes.[171] Yet Hobbes slightly changes the drift of this beginning. The fact that these events are new does not separate Hobbes and Aristotle. For Hobbes, this wonder begins when something new and *strange* is experienced. It is important that Hobbes uses the word "strange." Aristotelian wonder, on the other hand, is an ordinary wonder which arises from difficulties close at hand. Although Aristotle thought that the lovers of myths, which in their tragic form were concerned with that which is strange or frightening (*deinon)*, were in a sense also philosophers, it was because, as Nussbaum pointed out, in both philosophy and storytelling "we seek to expand the comprehensiveness of our grasp."[172] It was not, for Aristotle, because philosophy begins with what is strange. Here we can see *thaumazein* beginning to take on characteristics of *deinon*.

We also can start to see *phobos*, or fear, being integrated into this account. In part 1, chapter 7 of *The Elements of Law*, fear is described as a motion which "retires" from expected displeasure.[173] If, like a beast, one makes no attempt to remove one's own original ignorance, one will likely respond to strange events with fear. This will have a compounding effect, since it is fear which makes the admiration of the new and strange impossible, as it leads one to recoil from an expected displeasure. To be sure, this is only a possible response to new or strange things, and a response that Hobbes thinks is more befitting to a beast than to a human. Yet, this will be important once we come to *Leviathan*.

[171] On the relation between the two see (Leijenhorst, The Mechanics of Aristotelianism 2002, 171-218).

[172] (Nussbaum 2001, 260).

[173] (Hobbes, The Elements of Law 1969, 28-29). See also Hobbes's definition of fear in (Hobbes, The Whole Art of Rhetoric 1840, 456-457).

Admiration also appears in Part 1, Chapter 9, of *The Elements of Law*, in the discussion of vainglory. It is here that Hobbes begins to adopt and transform the function of *catharsis*, and to show how it can go awry.[174] Vainglory occurs, according to Hobbes, "when a man imagineth himself to do the actions whereof he readeth in some romant, or to be like unto some other man whose acts he admireth."[175] Admiration here is concerned with the actions of others, but may go astray if one ascribes to oneself what was found in another.[176] While Aristotle's Athenians might have experienced a 'clarification' of their pity and fear through their spectatorship of tragedies, and thus have been able to act properly, Hobbes's readers of romances confuse themselves with the imitations that they read. *Mimesis*, it seems, goes wrong. Rather than sympathetically experiencing the imitations of the arts, the vainglorious refashion themselves after those imitations. Therefore the "signs of vain glory in the gesture, are imitation of others, counterfeiting attention to things they understand not, affectation of fashions, capitation of honour from their dreams, and other little stories of themselves."[177] The vainglorious hold these various imitations before themselves at all times, and thus keep all kinds of attachments, except for an attachment to the present. A certain reading of Don Quixote supports this characterization and was in the background of Hobbes's 1640 text.[178]

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[174] (Hobbes, The Elements of Law 1969, 36-38).

[175] Ibid, 37. See also (Hobbes, The Whole Art of Rhetoric 1840, 453-454).

[176] The ambiguity of admiration in early modern discourse between philosophical wonder and admiring greatness existed both for Latin *admiratio* and for Greek *thaumazein* as well. Of note is the fact that Hobbes translated *thaumazein* in Pericles's Funeral Oration as 'admiration,' (Thucydides 1989, 112).

[177] (Hobbes, The Elements of Law 1969, 37-38).

[178] (Hobbes, The Elements of Law 1969, 51-52). For more on the theme of Hobbes and his assault on the 'romances', see (Kahn 2001). It is also very likely that Hobbes is mounting an assault here on the use of stories of admirable deeds for political life. For example, see the reinterpretation of tragic poetry by Giason Denores in his *Discorso* of 1586: "Poetry, then, is an imitation of some human action, marvelous, complete, and sizable, which has in itself a change of fortune either from prosperous to adverse or from adverse to prosperous, which is presented to the listeners through language in verse, either in narration or in dramatic form, in order to purge them by means of

Instead of pity or terror, Hobbes takes admiration to be the stance that one takes toward stories that one wishes to emulate, and he finds it to be potentially disastrous. Crucially, Hobbes takes from Aristotle the way that stories can either promote or diminish certain types of emotions. Hobbes does not so much disagree with either Plato or Aristotle on whether stories are *necessarily* good or bad for political life, but he does take from them the concern over how stories *can be* dangerous, and must be dealt with in some manner.

c) Leviathan

It is in *Leviathan* that Hobbes makes use of the roots of ancient philosophy, transforms them in ways reflective of his historical condition, and redirects them toward the state. By doing so he creates a conceptual framework for the pathetic apparatus of the state and the emotional makeup of the citizenry. Although many of the parts were present in *The Elements of Law*, they were not yet put into place. In the beginning of chapter 46 of *Leviathan* Hobbes gives his definition of philosophy, which resonates with the account that he gave in *The Elements of Law* of the beginning of new knowledge, but actually relies here even more upon Aristotle's account of wonder. Hobbes defines philosophy here as

> *the Knowledge acquired by Reasoning, from the Manner of the Generation of any thing, to the Properties; or from the Properties, to some possible Way of Generation of the same; to the end to bee able to produce, as far as matter, and humane force permit, such Effects, as human life requireth.*[179]

This definition is quite similar to that given in *The Elements of Law*, but with the notable exception of the addition of the knowledge of the "Manner of Generation" of a thing, and the properties that lead to that "Way of Generation." Although Hobbes doesn't immediately say after

pleasure of the most important passions of the soul, and to direct them toward good living, toward the imitation of the virtuous, and toward the conservation of good republics." Quoted in (Bishop 1996, 40).

[179] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 458).

giving this definition of philosophy that admiration is the passion which leads to search for the causes, like he does in *The Elements of Law*, he doesn't really need to do so here; admiration is already incorporated into this definition of philosophy.[180] The only difference is that curiosity gains an expanded role. Crucially, he also adds an 'end' of knowledge, which is aimed towards fabrication for use. Here we are well on the way to wonder being incorporated into a modern edifice.

Hobbes begins his account of admiration and curiosity far earlier in the book, in chapter 6. Curiosity and admiration are not themselves primary passions in this text, but types of other

[180] Perhaps Hobbes wanted to hide his debt to Aristotelian philosophy in this chapter, since the point of the chapter is to challenge the way that Aristotelian philosophy has been used by and incorporated into medieval Christian doctrine. For example, in this version of *Leviathan* he states that "I belieeve that scarce any thing can be more absurdly said in naturall Philosophy than that which is now called *Aristotles Metaphysiques*," (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 461). Although this is largely due to Hobbes's disagreement with the use of Aristotle's doctrine of the substances which the Christian church took from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and used in the doctrine of the transubstantiation of the Eucharist, and not with Aristotle's account of wonder, which is not mentioned in this chapter, it makes sense that Hobbes would not want to make obviously Aristotelian arguments in a chapter devoted to a critique of an appropriation of Aristotle's philosophy. In the Latin translation of *Leviathan*, which Hobbes himself did in 1667-1668, many years after writing the English version of the book, Hobbes notably changes his critical evaluation of ancient philosophy. For a full treatment of the changes that Hobbes made, see (Malcolm, Leviathan - Volume 1: Editorial Introduction 2012, 175-195). Rather than starting chapter 46, "Of Darknesse from Vain Philosophy, and Fabulous Tradition" as he did in the English version with a definition of proper philosophy, Hobbes stresses to the reader that he will not make a speech "*contra Philosophiam aut Philosophos* [against philosophy or philosophers], (Hobbes, Leviathan - Volume 3: The English and Latin Texts 2012, 1053). Instead he seeks to distinguish in this chapter between "Philosophos; & non Philosophos," Ibid. In the appendix to the Latin version, Hobbes says something interesting about the ancient philosophers who had been subjects of relentless attack in the English *Leviathan*: "For even though I think that [they] themselves – Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus – were true philosophers, so far as pagans could be, that is, they strove after truth and virtue, and for that reason their names have deservedly shone with the glory of wisdom almost throughout the world, nevertheless I do not think that their sectaries should be called philosophers: apart from the fact that they knew what the opinions of their masters had been, they understood nothing. For they were ignorant of the principles (principia) and the arguments on which their masters' doctrines had been founded," This is the translation that Malcolm gives for this selection from the appendix from the Latin Leviathan, Ibid, 1190-1. For Malcolm's rules on translation see (Malcolm, Leviathan - Volume 1: Editorial Introduction 2012, 318-321). I take one of these *principia*, or beginnings, for Plato and Aristotle to be *thaumazein*. As the below shows, Hobbes seems to have thought so, too. Hobbes not only recognized this beginning, but exploited it in his political philosophy. Hobbes discussed the historical beginning of philosophy in chapter 46 of the Latin *Leviathan*. In this revised chapter he starts his long story of *Philosophandi* (the beginning of philosophy) with "*qui Opera Dei admirati sunt* (those who admired, or wondered at, the works of God)." Although he does not say that this practice began with the Greeks, they were the first to institutionalize themselves and their desire for novelty. From the moment of this institutionalization, philosophy went awry in Hobbes's story. Although Hobbes adopts the ancient definition of philosophy, he rejects most of the rest of it. Not all of this rejection is by annulment; some is by reconfiguration.

simple passions. Admiration is a manifestation of the passion called joy, delineated by the fact that it arises "from the apprehension of novelty."[181] The description that Hobbes gives of admiration in chapter 6 is sparse, to say the least. Although he does not identify it here as the beginning of philosophy, he identifies it with that which "excites the appetite of knowing the cause," curiosity.[182] Thus the two remain coupled in this text. Curiosity is the appetite, or "desire, to know why, and how."[183] Hobbes here puts into curiosity some of the qualities which before belonged to the passion of admiration. It is this passion, now along with reason, that distinguishes human beings from animals. Despite not calling it the beginning of philosophy, admiration must still play the same role that it did in *The Elements of* Law, since the definition of philosophy in *Leviathan* is concerned with the knowledge of the generation of a thing, and the properties that lead to that generation. Yet here in *Leviathan* both admiration and curiosity are defined as passions; one as a form of desire, the other as a form of joy.

A possible explanation for the scant description of admiration in chapter 6 of *Leviathan* is that, in this text, admiration has a much more theological role than before. Thus it is described in much fuller detail in the overtly religious half of *Leviathan*, in chapter 37, 'Of Miracles, and their Use.' Here wonder makes its appearance in Hobbes's mature system. Hobbes says that there are two things which may make human beings wonder at an event and call it admirable: The first is that it may be "strange," by which Hobbes means that either the event has never happened before or it only happens very rarely. The second is that "we cannot imagine it to have been done by natural means, but onely by the immediate hand of God."[184] In this chapter Hobbes is not very

[181] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 42).

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid.

interested in the first quality, or at least not in things which only have the first quality and not the second, for at the moment when an event can be imagined to have a natural cause, "we no more wonder, nor esteem it a miracle."[185] The first quality of wonder is slightly familiar, as it runs from Aristotle's example of spontaneous natural wonder, like events connected to the sun, up through Hobbes's account of admiration in *The Elements of Law*. It is in the second quality of wonder that everything changes. Admiration and wonder are no longer directed toward *any event* that is new or strange, but only toward those events which cannot be imagined to be natural – toward miracles. Hobbes thus defined miracles as "a work of God (besides his operation by the way of Nature, ordained in the creation,) done, for the making manifest to his elect, the mission of an extraordinary Minister for their salvation."[186]

Wonder in this case is an extraordinary mode of receptivity between an authority and a subject. The strangeness of those extraordinary events which break up the ordinary from the inside no longer have an adequate basis for admiration or wonder. Now wonder and admiration belong only to those things which *do not belong* to the ordinary world, yet give to that world a mission or plan for ordering it. Hobbes uses the phrase "admirable order" when the "visible things of this world" are apprehended as caused by a supernatural force: God.[187] It is only from the perspective which sees the world as a totality caused by God, even if there is no understanding of God and the word is no more than an empty signifier, that the world may be perceived in admiration, or wonder. Here we can see the importance of Hobbes's historical

[184] Ibid, 300.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid, 303.

[187] Ibid, 75.

context, particularly the first consequence of his historical condition. Wonders were taken to be supernatural signs of God and could be used as political propaganda by opposing forces, or as affirmation for a particular ruler or order.

Here Hobbes moves to enshrine that silent, dizzying wonder that Theaetetus felt for perplexing statements as a feeling which one may *permanently* feel toward an extraordinary authority, an authority which is outside of the context of the social field. If Hobbes follows this move to its conclusion, then that authority will have the same role which, Paul Stern noted, belonged to Iris, the goddess who has no other duty but to swoop down and render silent *all* those who would disagree with what is and is not a miracle.[188] Of course, Hobbes does follow this to its conclusion and holds that the "Sovraign power" is to be the judge of "whether the Miracle we hear, or read of, were a real work."[189] The important foil here for Hobbes is the Roman Catholic Church, whose supposedly ecumenical domain Hobbes likened to an ephemeral 'Kingdome of Fairies.' Hobbes argued that the sovereign, and not the Holy Office of the Catholic Church should be the focus for this power, since the sovereign state would be able to wield both political and ecclesiastical power, both of which stemmed at least in part from its affective authority.[190] Additionally, this would ward off the danger of independent ministers, specifically Presbyterian, from using wonder and awe to overwhelm citizens.[191]

[188] See (Stern 2008, 106).

[189] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 306).

[190] An important aspect of the context for Hobbes's anti-Catholicism, especially for my argument, was the doctrine of the cessation of miracles. This doctrine held, in opposition to the Catholic Church, that the miraculous gifts of speaking in tongues and prophecy ceased with the original twelve apostles. See (Quantin 2009, 130-139). My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for *Political Theory* for pushing me to develop this point.

[191] See (Hobbes, Behemoth or The Long Parliament 2010, 125, 199, 205, & 225).

The suggestion for an official body in Anglican England which would determine the veracity of wonders was not unusual for this time. For example, the Cambridge scholar of biblical antiquity, John Spencer (1630-93) suggested a "kind of Philosophy office; wherein all such unusual occurences [would be] registered."[192] Of course, Hobbes's proposal is quite distinct due to its incorporation into the core of his theory of the state. The theological form of wonder is *controlled* by Hobbes and becomes a tool of the sovereign power. Although the sovereign power cannot perform miracles, since that power belongs only to the divine, it can define what may and may not be considered a miracle. The sovereign cannot create this type of wonder, but it can eliminate it. Yet this is not only a matter of "political theology" or the power of the sovereign over questions of religion,[193] but a matter of using a conceptual framework from ancient philosophy to build a certain apparatus of the state, one which alters the emotional makeup of the citizenry. It is important to note that Hobbes grants that in private a person will always have the liberty to decide for his or herself whether or not a strange and unusual event is a miracle or a wonder. A person will believe what they believe in private, and Hobbes sees there to be nothing that the sovereign could or should do to change this. But as a public person, one must give over to the sovereign the right to judge whether an event was a wonder or a miracle and to experience that event accordingly.

In addition to devising a structure of the state which redirects and reconfigures wonder toward supernatural miracles, Hobbes's sovereign power redirects another, corrupted, form of

[192] Quoted in (Burns 2002, 67).

[193] This is Carl Schmitt's treatment in (Schmitt, The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol 2008, 53-56). It is important to note that the German word *Wunder* means both wonder and miracle, and it is this term that Schmitt mostly uses in his book on Hobbes's Leviathan, although Schmitt used it almost entirely in the context of religious faith. There are also a few exceptions when he uses the word *Mirakel*, which can be more strictly translated as miracle. See (Schmitt, Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes 1938, 79-91).

wonder; what Hobbes calls awe. It is the feeling that accompanies natural ignorance when fear disallows the search for the causes. Hobbes begins his description of awe with a powerful example of rudimentary philosophical inquiry, based in the ancient model, which does not have a sovereign power to decide on the supernatural causes. This inquiry follows Hobbes's description of a person curiously looking for causes, but not stopping upon the command of a "Sovraign power", and that Sovereign power's theology of the one "God eternall", but rather seeking out his or her own understanding of the causes. This occurs in chapter 11 of *Leviathan*, 'Of the difference of Manners.' By manners, Hobbes means the qualities of humans which "concern their living together in Peace, and Unity."[194] In the end of this chapter Hobbes describes a condition in which there is no natural peace and unity – a state without a common civil religion. This condition begins with "curiosity," which Hobbes calls here a "love of knowledge of causes."[195] It wouldn't be outrageous, especially after the above exposition, to take this as a reference to Aristotelian philosophy, or a passion for knowledge of the causes rooted in the essentially human "desire to know."[196] It is only natural for humans to be curious. Yet what is not natural is an innate idea of God. Thus when curiosity leads from effect to cause, and follows the causal chain all the way down to the first cause, a person will not know for certain what the first cause might have been. Hobbes notes that "even the Heathen Philosopher," likely referencing Aristotle, "confessed" the logical necessity of a "First Mover."[197] Yet, since Aristotle was a "heathen," his philosophy could not recognize this "First Mover" as the Christian God.

[194] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 69).

[195] Ibid, 74.

[196] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 980a23.

[197] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 77).

Here Hobbes states that those who do not make a *scientific* enquiry into the natural causes of things will be caught in the *fear* of the original ignorance.[198] Rather than seeking to remove the original state of ignorance, as in Aristotelian philosophy, which is concomitant with admiration, those who do not seek out the natural causes will see their admiration decay into fear. Without accepting the conclusion of a God which is "the eternal cause of all things," human beings will be inclined to create for themselves invisible powers in its place and by the "fear" of those invisible powers they will be hindered "from the search of the causes of other things."[199] These fearful people who "make little, or no enquiry into the natural causes of things," will experience awe toward their idols – which block off all other objects of wonder.[200] In order to ward off the fear which proceeds from ignorance, those without a theologically grounded science of the causes will *feign* unto themselves invisible powers which they create by their own imaginations, before which they stand in awe. Wonder is forced by fear to shift into a single-minded awe. These idols need not only be religious. They may also be what Hobbes called in *The Elements of Law* "little stories of themselves."[201] These stories, which may take the forms of "Histories, or Fictions of Gallant Persons", hold their audience captive, and direct their actions toward the enlargement of their glory at the risk of all.[202] This self-feigned glory is for Hobbes a principle cause of quarrel, and it can lead to conflict over nothing more than "trifles."[203] This account in *Leviathan* is different from that of *The Elements of Law*, since rather than

[198] It is plausible that Lucretius and Epicurean teaching on wonder, fear, and ignorance. See (Lucretius 2011, 148).

[199] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 77).

[200] Ibid, 75.

[201] (Hobbes, The Elements of Law 1969, 38).

[202] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 42-43).

[203] Ibid, 88.

experiencing admiration or wonder toward these little stories like the vainglorious, as they did in *The Elements of Law*, those who are bewitched by their stories experience awe.

Here we have a case in which proper *thaumazein*, which in the case of the world itself would lead to a wonder at the "admirable order" of the world as created by God, is blocked for some people by the fear which accompanies natural ignorance. Curiosity becomes frustrated by fear and changes into awe. It may also be the case that curiosity never took off, and a person immediately experienced awe. Hobbes illustrates how in this case, rather than experiencing *thaumazein*, these fearful people will create images and creatures to explain the cause of the world to themselves. They then stand in awe, or *deinon*, of these creatures of their fancy. In short, *phobos* replaces *thaumazein* with *deinon*. This, I believe, is the key transformation from ancient to Hobbesian wonder.

Remarkably, Hobbes responds to what he takes to be an absence of proper wonder in a way which structurally resembles Aristotle's account of tragic *catharsis*; humans vainly attempt to 'clarify' their initial fear through "little stories" that they tell themselves, and, before which, they experience awe. He finds this alternative to be an ordinary response that some people have to the original ignorance of what might have caused the order of the things of the world. Without a visible power to keep these people in awe they will fabricate an invisible one for themselves, and the *catharsis* that it provides will be completely inadequate for providing a harmonious social order. These stories do nothing to eliminate the original fear, but actually increase it to levels of excess that increase the likelihood of conflicts over false fears. At the end of chapter 11 of *Leviathan* it is made clear that *phobos*, *deinon*, and *thaumazein* will all be incorporated into Hobbes's political philosophy to address these dangerous excesses. A theoretical path is made for the redirection of both *thaumazein*, as we saw above in the case of wonders and miracles, and

deinon, which is treated here as a corrupted form of *thaumazein*, toward the fearsome Leviathan, leaving the citizen in a permanent state of *phobos*. Thus is order secured.

From here, Hobbes resuscitates awe, and channels it into his political philosophy. Some people will not have the capacity or perhaps desire to respond with the right kind of wonder to the admirable order of God as interpreted by the sovereign power, and thus will be dominated by the emotional need for the *catharsis* of awe. Hobbes builds upon this need, and uses it as the basis for the political education of the multitude through the over-awing Leviathan. Subjects are "to be taught not to be led with admiration of the vertue of any of their fellow subjects, how high soever he stand, nor how conspicuously he shine in the Common-wealth."[204] The subjects of the state, "though they may shine some more, some less, when they are out of his sight; yet in his presence, they shine no more than the Starres in the presence of the sun."[205] Set at the center of the political cosmos, the Sovereign is vested with the power over on what may appear as wondrous. According to Hobbes, only the sovereign state is capable of both controlling the wonder of the scientifically capable, and the awe of the incapable.[206] The laws of nature and the various religions of the world by themselves are not enough without a "visible power to keep them [all] in awe," for indeed the laws of nature themselves are contrary to the rest of the passions without "the terrour of some Power."[207] This awe, and the quarrels that it may create, necessitates the construction of a state structure to 'clarify' it. Immediately preceding the famous description of life during war as "solitary, nasty, brutish, and short," Hobbes defines the

[204] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 234).

[205] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 128).

[206] My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for *Political Theory* for helping me to clarify this point.
[207] Ibid, 117.

condition of war as a point when "men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe."[208]

For the Leviathan to affect *catharsis*, following Aristotle's formulation, it must be a *mimesis* – an imitation or representation. [209] The Greek term *mimesis* is the subject of vast body of scholarship, and has been interpreted in many different ways. The aspect that I find important here is the affective power of an imitation as it is described by Hobbes. Much like how the imitations of action, for Aristotle, achieved "by means of pity and terror (*phobos*) the *catharsis* of such emotions" in the audiences of ancient tragedy, Hobbes's imitations achieve fear and terror in his subjects. [210] In fact, Hobbes, purposefully or not, follows Aristotle's account of the affective power of *mimesis* from the very beginning of *Leviathan*. In his Introduction, Hobbes describes the art of man to be an imitation of nature, the art of God. Further, he describes the imitation of "that Rationall and most excellent worke of Nature, man" to result in the creation of the subject of the text, the great Leviathan.[211] Although the method of personification and authorship which Hobbes devises in chapter 16 is largely indebted to Latin sources, such as Cicero's *De Officiis,* the Leviathan itself *functions* as an Aristotelian *mimesis*.[212] It affects catharsis in its spectators; in this case, in the people who generated it. As Hobbes puts it later in the text, the Leviathan "hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by

[208] Ibid, 88.

[209] On *mimesis* in *Leviathan* see (Reagan 2012, 25-42); and (Kahn 2001). For an analysis of sovereignty and theatricality, see (Pye 1984) and (Vieira 2009, 15-144).

[210] Aristotle, *Poetics,* 49b24-27. See also (Kahn 2001).

[211] Hobbes, *Leviathan,* 9.

[212] (Cicero 1991, 42-48). See (Vieira 2009, 220-225).

terror thereof, he is enabled to conforme the wills of them all."[213] By a kind of *catharsis* the modern political order of sovereign states is achieved and maintained.

The *catharsis* that the Leviathan affects in its subjects is effective, unlike that of the little stories of the vainglorious. The excess of fear that some subjects of the state once had is clarified by the terror of the Leviathan, a proper object of awe. Rather than be consumed by a perspective of fear of each other, citizens are pacified by an enduring terror of the Leviathan. The subjects of the Leviathan will be "in admiration for a power not without testimony, but made evident by great argument, and which needeth not either a Homer to praise it or any other such whose poems may indeed bring delight, but the truth will afterwards confute the opinion conceived of the actions."[214] The state is able to facilitate this alteration of perspective for those who were previously blinded by their glory, for the Leviathan is designed to be the center of a unitary body in which "he is made so as not to be afraid," for he is the "King of all the children of pride."[215]

For those incapable of what Hobbes takes to be the proper sense of wonder, there can be no escape from the awe owed to the terrible Leviathan, the bearer of sovereignty. Even for the capable, miracles may only be a source of wonder when the sovereign allows them to be. Thus the citizens of Hobbes's commonwealth are bound together by reconfigurations of what once were the bases of ancient philosophy. The medieval faith in an admirable order of existence

[213] Ibid, 120.

[214] The quotation is from Hobbes's translation of (Thucydides 1989, 112). There is in fact some evidence that Hobbes took admiration as the effect of *catharsis* given the prevalent view of Renaissance literary criticism. For example, Sir Philip Sidney wrote that tragedy is defined by "stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration." Quoted in (Cunningham 1951, 60). On wonder and Renaissance literary criticism, see also (Hathaway 1968).

[215] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 221). For a reading of Hobbes which finds in his work a positive message about the virtue of modesty see (Cooper 2010). However, given the self-assertion of humanity in ordering political society by an institution of their own creation, I find Hobbes's position to be not so much modest as it is modern: immodest in the terms of medieval wonder, but modest in the terms of a modern view of humans needing some aid in ordering their institutions in a world without God. On self-assertion, see (Blumenberg 1983, 125-228).

confirmed by the divine is replaced with a reoccupation of wonder to assuage the need for order.[216] The domination of wonder and awe are permanent, from which citizens may not escape as long as the sovereign power endures. If they were to escape, according to Hobbes, the awe which was once directed toward the Leviathan, and the wonder, no longer proper, would change into uncontrollable fear. This need for the clarification of awe, and the control of wonder, aid in the creation of the modern state and sustain it. They give the state strength and together reaffirm it as a terrible wonder.

Altogether, the source of ancient philosophy is transformed and prolonged – the original isolation, and silent state of being lost in the world – as the permanent station of the over-awed modern citizen under the Leviathan. In the context of the English Civil War, as depicted in *Behemoth*, Hobbes argues for the redirection of all wonder and awe towards the sovereign state. There may be no admiration of fellow subjects at the risk that this might "deferre to them any obedience, or honor, appropriate to the Soveraign alone."[217] Perhaps, then, it might be said that under the Leviathan any attention to politics not condoned by the sovereign – what contemporary political theory call non-sovereign politics – is in a permanent state of deferral.

The effects of wonder and awe are therefore not merely spatial, but temporal. Politics beyond the visage of the state might continue to exist, but a populace turned in wonder and awe only towards the sovereign simply cannot see it. Since the conditions of possibility for the perception of marvelous, wondrous events has been altered, there cannot be any except for those authorized by the state itself. In this sense, "the world had to be 'disenchanted'" of the 'magic'

[216] On reoccupation in modernity, see (Blumenberg 1983, 65, 89, & 466).

[217] (Hobbes, Leviathan 1996, 234).

possessed by any institution but the state "in order to be dominated."[218] Deeds and events worthy of wonder might continue to appear, but subjects may take no notice. And it is imperative that subjects take no notice for, if they do, it threatens the mortal state to meet its end. By this fact, admiration bestows a kind of permanence on the state.

The modern state theorized by Hobbes needs this deferral of wonder. In fact, at the moment at which political philosophy and political observers turn their attention away from the actions of the sovereign entity, and lose their awe for it, the efficacy of the modern state diminishes. Techniques and practices which continually control wonder and reaffirm awe must be repeatedly employed. 'States of exception' are not merely the boundary-setting possibility of the sovereign, but an aspect of the affective apparatus of the modern sovereign state. In a sense, only the sovereign may be the font of admiration. This deferral is the supreme Hobbesian irony. What better tool could there be to overawe the proud than the Leviathan, itself a monster, and thus a wondrous marvel? What could be more absurd than to find this monster ordinary, and to accept it as necessary? Yet this is the fundamental function of wonder as it presents itself anew in modern thought – to direct our attention to the marvelous and the new, and to selectively include those phenomena into the fundamental order or the world to the exclusion of other potentially wondrous phenomena. Hobbes thus makes a grand foray into reordering the passionate life of politics, one which reached back to ancient Greek philosophy for tools to cope with and manage the new experiences of modernity. His innovative tiger's leap into the past, as we will see, was far from the last.

[218] (Federici 2014, 174).

Chapter Two

Wonder Taken for a Sign: Kant and an Order of Freedom

Reflect that nothing except the soul is worthy of wonder; for the soul, if it be great, naught else is great.

- Seneca, *Epistles*, VIII, 5[219]

Your magic binds again
What the sword of custom divided;
Beggars become brothers of princes
Where your gentle wing abides.

- Friedrich Schiller, "An die Freude/Ode to Joy"[220]

1. A War of Spirits

"Now is the time of the sword and of wrath, not of mercy."[221] Such was the less than conciliatory position that Martin Luther adopted in his May 1525 tract, "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants."[222] The Reformation which Luther began on All Hallow's Eve of 1517 had over the intervening years inspired much more radical reformers than Luther himself. Where Luther originally only intended to reform the abuses and corruption of the Holy See, and then later, once he gave up hope for reforming Rome, to break from the church, many of his immediate followers sought to overturn the ecclesiastical and political orders of the world in their entirety. Luther quickly realized that he could not endorse the reordering of the world that

[219] The Latin text is "Cogitate nihil praeter animum esse mirabile, cui magno nihil magnum est" (Seneca, Epistles 1917, 38-41).

[220] This is the first version of the poem. The German text is *"Deine Zauber binden wieder/ Was der Mode Schwerd geteilt; / Bettler werden Fürstenbrüder / Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt."*

[221] (Luther, Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants 2013, 121).

[222] Ibid, 116-122; See also the original German in (Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe 1908, 357-63).

he identified with radical Reformers such as Thomas Müntzer, whom he principally blamed for the religious impetus behind the German Peasants' War of 1524-1525.[223] Nor could he follow his once protégé, Andreas Karlstadt, who also, according to Luther, sought too quickly to abandon traditional orders and "pounce[d] on outward things with such violence" as though he wished to overturn the foundation of Christendom.[224] For Luther, all radical Reformers who posed a danger to the secular order deserved the same name: *Schwärmer*, or, translated loosely, fanatics.[225]

Luther's attack on *Schwärmerei* began as a sectarian struggle over forces which Luther unleashed but could no longer control, but it would reverberate throughout the Reformation, and ultimately through the many pitches of Enlightenment political thought.[226] This reverberation in the Enlightenment would ultimately culminate in a stunning key change in the thought of Immanuel Kant, a modulation which is currently misunderstood in much of the writings on his place in the history of political thought[227] and his current relevance for contemporary political theory. In this chapter I argue that Kant achieved that modulation by using as leverage the

[223] (Luther 2013, 117).

[224] (Luther, Letter to the Christians at Strassburg in Opposition to the Fanatic Spirit 1955, 67). For Karlstadt, see (Karlstadt, Whether One Should Proceed Slowly 1991, 49-51).

[225] See the original German in (Luther, Ein Brief an die Christen zu Straspurg widder den Schwermer geist 1899). See also (Windhorst 1977). The word *Schwärmerei*, according to Peter Fenves, is derived from the movement and sound made by the swarming of bees, and invokes, in general, the low absurdities or pastoral life. However, it does not lend itself to a clean translation into English, and thus it is often problematically, as we will see below with Kant, translated varyingly into fanaticism, enthusiasm, zealotry, visionary rapture, or, as is the (eminently reasonable) case for Fenves, exaltation. See Fenves 1993, ix-xii. To avoid such confusion, the term will go untranslated for the rest of the essay.

[226] (Heyd 1995); and (La Vopa and Klein 1998).

[227] See Clewis's note on the confusion between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* in secondary literature on Kant in (Clewis 2009, 5-6).

experience of wonder, at his historical moment destabilized from its ancient and medieval place as the passion by which one recognizes and experiences the order of the *cosmos*.[228]

However, it will take us a bit more historical reconstruction before we can reach a point from which we can recognize Kant's intellectual modulation, and therefore the significance of his use of wonder in his later thought and for us. For Luther, the term *Schwarmerei* was not simply a name of opprobrium, but, as Dominique Colas has noted, it was "a concept at the heart of his political theory" that he used for those who struggled "to abolish civil society in the name of the Holy City."[229] The wayward radical Reformers, according to Luther, failed to base their teaching on rigorous textual hermeneutics, and therefore wavered according to their passions, with a mind like a swarm of bees.[230] Luther's deployment of this term against radical reformers not only expressed a central concept in his political theory, but with it he also enunciated a heading that would be slanderously used against a wide variety of confessions that emerged out of the waves of Reformations.

As a set of historical phenomena, the term *Schwärmerei* has a dizzyingly complicated history, and referring to it with both concision and specificity is perhaps impossible. In one

[228] On the destabilization of wonder in early modern thought, see (Daston and Park 1998).

[229] (Colas 1997, 4).

[230] (Luther, The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ - Against the Fanatics 1955). Sarah Kareem pointed out to me a fascinating difference here between the pejorative simile of bees used by Luther, and the image of bees in Swift's *Battel of the Books*, wherein the collection of honey by bees is like the curious searching of ancient wisdom compared to the spider of modern wisdom. Here I would venture the following interpretation: To Luther, for whom the world was a field of deception, or moderns, for whom knowledge of nature can only come through a doubting of the senses, the immediacy with which the bee collects honey from nature is only possible because of its naiveté. This may be why moderns cannot help but find the advice of Matthew 6:28, to "consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin" as naïve for all but those who live in the Land of Cockayne or Utopia, where human life is immediately reconciled to nature.

respect, its pre-history flows out of the millenarian, chiliastic movements of the middle ages.[231] Luther and later his humanist associate Philip Melanchton coined and used the term against their radical opponents, the Anabaptists. The German discourse flowed, in one of its channels, into England in the mid-seventeenth century and came to be defined under the heading of "enthusiasm." A 1646 pamphlet by Friedrich Spanheim, *Englands Warning by Germanies Woe: or An Historicall Narration, of the Originall, Progresse, Tenets, Names and several Sects of the Anabaptists, in Germany and the Low Countries*, names "*Anabaptists, Catabaptists, Enthusiasts, Fanaticks and Libertines…Enthusiasts,* for the *Enthusiasms, raptures* and other such like things, which they give out for *secret* and *divine inspirations*."[232] This English term, *enthusiasm*, came to be the center of a lively discourse up through the various locales and waves of the European Enlightenment.[233] As R.A. Knox wrote in his classic, though dated, book on the subject, "words are born and die; they live only so long as they have an important errand to fulfil, by expressing what needs expression."[234] And the word was very much needed in Britain during the tempestuous seventeenth century.[235] Five years after Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* appeared, works such as the Cambridge Platonist Henry More's *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (1656) and Meric Casaubon's *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasm* (1656) attacked the enthusiasts.[236]

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[231] See, for example, (Cohn 1970); (Engels 1966, 24-27); (Knox 1950, 71-116); and (Toscano 2010, 43-97). For a comparison between Cohn's approach to millenarianism and that of two others (Hobsbawn 1959); and (Worsley 1957) who participated with Cohn at a 1956 seminar on the subject, see Toscano 2010, 45.

[232] Quoted in Toscano 2010, 113-114.

[233] See (Eron 2014); (Heyd 1995); the essays in (La Vopa and Klein 1998), especially (Pocock 1997); (Mee, Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the culture of radicalism in the 1790s 1992); and (Mee, Romnticism, enthusiasm, and regulation: poetics and the policing of culture in the Romantic period 2003).

[234] (Knox 1950, 6).

[235] For an overview of various radical religious and political ideas in England during the seventeenth century, see Hill 1972. For a fuller account of the intellectual context, see Hill 1997.

[236] (Pocock 1997, 9).

According to More, "Enthusiasme is nothing else but a misconceit of being inspired" by the spirit of God.[237] Therefore the enthusiasts, according to those who gave their adversaries this epithet, were led by their passionate visions to blasphemy. However, as we'll see below, this overdetermined cluster of phrases – enthusiasm and *Schwarmerei* – would discursively find its way through the German strand of the Enlightenment to the work of Immanuel Kant as a problem to be solved.[238] He did so not by completely banishing emotions from political life, but by elevating wonder and redefining enthusiasm.

Conversely, within contemporary political theory, it is the supposedly perverse influence of the work of Immanuel Kant which stands to many as problem to be overcome. According to some contemporary theorists of the sentiments, morality without motivation is practically useless, and a kind of Kantian inspired political philosophy is to blame for this problem.[239] Therefore, it is argued, we must open our eyes to the driving forces of passions and affects which we experience in everyday life, such as sympathy, to find an ethos which might undergird the norms that are necessary for liberal democracy.[240] From the perspective of these theorists, the fault for this motivational deficit is an appropriation of Kant by some prominent political philosophers.[241] According to this perspective, theorists like Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls

[237] (More 1966, 2). For more, see the essays in (Klein and La Vopa 1998).

[238] (Vopa 1997).

[239] See for example (Krause, Civil Passions 2008, 9), (Frazer 2010), and (Marcus 2002). To be sure, Krause (2008, 27-47) offers a more complicated picture of the sentiments in Rawls and Habermas, the common targets of attacks against neo-Kantian rationalism in political theory. Nevertheless, Krause ultimately accepts the claim that both Rawls and Habermas have real problems of motivation in their theories.

[240] (Markell 2000).

[241] See, for example, (Bennett 2001, 133-136). The account above owes much to Bennett's weaving of a "subterranean theory of moral motivation," (134) but I disagree with Bennett on two major points. First, Kant's treatment of *Bewunderung* and *Enthusiasmus* is in no way subterranean, but is a consistent and non-trivial thread in his thought from at least the mid-1760s to the late-1790s. Second, Kant's account of *Bewunderung* and *Enthusiasmus* are not merely moral and ethical, but political. They are experienced by subjects, but in such a way

offer visions of overly-proceduralized political life which do not provide the necessary incentives for politics.[242]

Yet, on the other hand, the Kantians also have a powerful case. Relations of equal dignity would quite likely be frequently endangered if not hinged to something outside of the capricious whims of human passion, or if moral motivations could only arise from habits and national custom. As many Enlightenment figures recognized, the particular sentiments of patriotism may ultimately be no better than affectionate tribalism.[243] According to Rawls, the reasonable "modus vivendi" of toleration, which emerged after the bloody Wars of Religion, rather than passionate adherence to an ideal of the good life, made possible the intermittent peaceful coexistence of Europeans with wildly contrasting views after those wars.[244] Only under these increasingly secular and dispassionate conditions could norms of equal dignity and respect flourish and make possible a liberal democratic way of life. Or, at the very least, these conditions would quell one

that they are brought outside of themselves and into the world of others. For another work on enchantment and the Enlightenment, but in the field of literature, see (Kareem 2014).

[242] The responses to Kantian political theory are immense and have come in waves. For one of the earliest responses from our current wave, see (Sandel 1984). On Kant as one of the first modern "liberal democrats," due to his support for what he called republican government, which included representative government, a broad set of rights, and popular sovereignty, see (Doyle 1983) and (Pagden 2013, 356-358).

[243] See (Kleingeld 2012, 1-39) and (Pagden 2013, 315-319).

[244] (Rawls, Justice as Fairness: A Restatement 2001, 1 & 192-193). What Rawls calls moral motivation by conception-dependent desires is quite similar to what I reconstruct below of the type of motivation that I find in Kant's writings, in the coupling of *Enthusiamsus* and *Bewunderung*. The significant difference is that the affective motivation that I find in Kant is tied to what Rawls calls a comprehensive moral view, and part of what he rejects in Kantian constructivism. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that Rawls claims the theory of justice might realize the ideals of equal human worth that Kant "finds to be beyond all price," but cannot start from them, due to their substantive character, in (Rawls, A Theory of Justice, Revised Edition 1999, 513). Yet, this misses the fact that for Kant, *Enthusiasmus* restrains itself from attempting to immanentize the ideal in the manner of the *Schwärmer*. Rather, Kantian *Enthusiasmus* and *Bewunderung*, as we will see below, motivate one towards a moral order that is formal but not substantive. On moral motivation in Rawls, see (Rawls, Political Liberalism 2005, 81-85) and for Rawls's rejection of the comprehensive moral view of Kantian constructivism, see (Rawls, Political Liberalism 2005, 99).

source of the wrath outlined above by Luther, even if they did not support relations of mercy and mutual beneficence.

Both of these positions capture something important about the widely accepted moral framework of respect for the equal dignity of all human beings in the modern world.[245] An order which incorporates a moral framework of equal dignity and respect must be abstracted from our particular passions and affects to be made universal. However, an order must inculcate the proper passions and affects to support that moral framework to be effective in any particular case. Therefore, I suggest a solution to these views which is rooted in Kant's thought; an alternative that Kant developed in his encounter with enthusiasm; and, finally, an alternative which is, I would argue, already prevalent in modern political life.[246]

It is the argument of this chapter that the Kantian respect for dignity and the moral law already provide affective motivating supplements.[247] Two of the most important supplements are what Kant calls the *Enthusiasmus* for the idea of a republic and the wonder, or *Bewunderung*, for

[245] On relations of equal dignity as a constitutive framework of the modern world see, for example, (Habermas 1996, 80, 109, 251, & 314), and (Taylor 1989, 3-24; 151-2; and 363-384).

[246] Another view has recently been offered by Linda Zerilli, that it is to reflective judgment which we must turn to overcome this deadlock between public reason and affect or the passions. Given the pluralistic conditions of modern liberal democracies, we require the exercise of aesthetic and reflective judgments to reach across the chasms that separate our beliefs, which involves both our cognition and aesthetic sensibilities. The absence of an ethical wholeness of our worlds demands that we should judge anew, according to this view. (Zerilli 2016). In contrast to this view, I show how Kant already imputes into our cognitions an affective support for the world, or order, in which modern democratic, or rather republican, life is possible.

[247] For a very different take on the problem of motivation in Kant, see (Sargentis 2012). On the controversy in general in Kant scholarship, (McCarty 1993).

the moral law.[248] The role of *Enthusiasmus* in Kant's thought has been explored recently,[249] but this chapter argues that Kant's deployment of this term can only be understood with reference to the affect of wonder. The relative dearth of Kant scholarship focused on wonder is, in a word, astonishing.[250] This is especially baffling, since, according to the *Concordance* to Kant's published works, while there are only 23 appearances of words related to *Enthusiastisch* and 79 to *Schwärmer*, there are 120 of words related to *Bewundern*.[251] When one studies this prevalent term, one sees Kant uses wonder systematically as an affective supplement to politics. Further, we see that Kant intervened in the debates on the role of enthusiasm in political and philosophical life in the German Enlightenment and late eighteenth century philosophy more broadly by arguing that *Schwärmerei* is the reception and misinterpretation of wonder. A legitimate and proper experience of wonder, on the other hand, is occasioned by the contemplation of the inexplicable capacity to be moral and motivates one to make such a capability a foundation of order in the world. In a word, the fanatical visions of the *Schwärmerer*

[248] Although *Bewunderung* can be translated as wonder or admiration it is often translated as admiration when Kant contrasts it against *Verwunderung*, usually translated as astonishment. See (Kant, Critique of the Power of Judgment 2000, 154) and (Kant, Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View (1798) 2007, 363). For this chapter, I will translate *Bewunderung* as wonder and, when appropriate, *Verwunderung* as sudden wonder. *Wunder* in Kant's works, and commonly in German, is usually best translated into English as miracle. See fn. 1 in (Frierson 2010, 285). *Enthusiasmus* will generally remain untranslated to avoid, as best as possible, ambiguities with the English enthusiasm.

[249] (Clewis 2009); (Fenves, A Peculiar Fate: Metaphysics and World-History in Kant 1991, 170-285); (Fenves, Late Kant: Towards Another Law of the Earth 2003, 45, 125, 136) and (Lyotard 2009).

[250] For an exception, see (Frierson 2010). However, both history and politics are missing from this account. The ontological study of what Satkunanandan calls awe (*Achtung*), although most English translators call respect, in (Satkunanandan 2011) is interesting, but underestimates the negative character of *Achtung* in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. See (Saurette 2005). For a different account of Kantian *Achtung* see (White 2000, 148; and 2009, 49).

[251] Obviously, some of these are not used in a technical sense, but often in phrases such as 'one wonders if…' It is worth noting, however, that 75 of the uses related to *Bewundern* are as *Bewunderung*, the noun form, which would generally only be used in a technical sense. (Roser, Mohrs and Borncke 1992, Vol II: 172-174; Vol VI: 424-425).

are displaced by a reinterpretation of wonder, making space for a moral and free republican order.

As it is bounded by the limits of reason, *Enthusiasmus* for the idea of a republic is distinguished by Kant from the *Schwärmerei* of the fanatical visionaries.[252] Wonder at the inscrutable source of morality is distinguished from passionate, irrational, forms of motivation. Together, they give affective supplements to the pursuit of a republican, moral way of life for not only oneself, but for the entire *cosmos*.[253] Kant remains in some sense then on the side of the contemporary Kantians, since he rejects the formulation and immanentizing of substantive ideals of the good life like fanatics, but Kant does still maintain a non-cognitive motivation for duty to the law – alternatively in *Enthusiasmus* and *Bewunderung*. Motivation is built into the moral order.

When we recognize this, we can see that, in a similar vein to Hobbes, Kant was deeply embroiled in a controversy over the political dangers of enthusiasm and fanaticism. Rather than attempt to banish emotions entirely, Kant, like Hobbes, attempted to transpose and 'clarify' those vivifying experiences to make possible a certain way of life.[254] For Hobbes this way of life would be mere survival under a Leviathan, but for Kant it would be republican. Unlike in Hobbes's account, for Kant, wonder is used not to dominate citizens through an affective and visible apparatus of sovereignty, but to undergird a republican way of life. An internal rearrangement of wonder within citizens becomes a resource for living a free and moral life

[252] See (Clewis 2009, 169-214) and (Vopa 1997).

[253] On the need for liberal democratic affective supplements even in the sentimentalist account, see (Krause, Civil Passions 2008, 77, 88).

[254] (Barker 2015).

under laws made with fellow citizens. Like Hobbes, Kant also turns to ancient philosophy to make these discursive moves. Yet it was not Aristotle's writing on wonder that was most consequential for Kant, but that of the ancient Stoics.

The transformed notion of wonder which Kant uses to supplement his political theory is vastly different in its consequences from that of the 'enthusiasts' who preceded him. Where they sought to 'turn the world upside down' or radically overturn the predominant order of the world based on their passionate vision of the truth, Kantian wonder affects one to adjust the principle order of the world only slightly, even imperceptibly, but by doing so to make a moral life possible. And, finally, even though this wonder, like Rousseauian patriotism, would be writ "in the hearts of the Citizens," it would not rely upon the "sublime reason" or "great soul" of a Lawgiver.[255] It would not be achieved by a single individual for all others, nor towards a single state, but would be available to all rational beings in the world as the imperceptible reconciliation between the natural and moral orders achieved in the form of a moral feeling.

As well as revising our sense of Kant's relationship to wonder, this chapter also has a place in a much larger history, one which this dissertation attempts to track in outline: the history of wonder in a secularized world. Although it certainly was not the intent of Luther or most Reformers to spur on enthusiastic movements, decouple ecclesiastical and civil orders, and therefore participate in the process of secularization, intentions do not determine the ends of action. Kant is usually seen as writing at the end of the early modern fascination with curiosities and wonders.[256] Yet, Kant himself famously situates *Bewunderung* as the anthropological origin

[255] (Rousseau 1997, 81, 71). It is also fundamentally distinct from the wonderful, terrifying, and politically expedient aspects of the Roman religion which Machiavelli found to be useful in reordering a city (Machiavelli 1996, 39).

[256] (Daston and Park 1998, 360-363) and (Frierson 2010).

of moral and natural philosophy in the conclusion to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which must not be taken as an inconsequential aside.[257] Kant tells us that the "wonderful capacity in us" which goes beyond the ability to "calculate [a] human being's conduct" (*CPR* 5:98-99) stands in stark contrast to the disenchanted world wherein "one can, in principle," as Max Weber would say, "master all things by calculation."[258] Kant here makes a lasting claim on the role of wonder in a world whose order is not perceived to be ordained by the divine. Therefore, the struggle over wonder, and the meaning of enthusiasm, is a struggle over a very old question which had lost its answer, but for which new answers were being posed. Where Hobbesian wonder leads one to order the world under discreet and absolute sovereigns, Kantian wonder motivates one, morally and politically, to a cosmopolitan order of republican states.

Ultimately, though, why should we care? The reason, I suggest, is that the moral order which Kant describes and supplements with a transformed sense of wonder tells us not only of a chapter of the history of wonder, but about the potential use of wonder in the world in which we live. In a general sense, wonder is a feeling that, like other feelings such as anger or fear, predisposes us into orderings of the world, or into movements to alter those orders. However, wonder is distinct from feelings like anger or fear, in that it is felt as an object comes into view and we *are compelled to desire it to come into view*.[259] For Kant, a feeling of wonder towards the

[257] For the uneasy acceptance in early modern thought that scientific knowledge relied upon a passion, wonder, see (James 1997, 183-207).

[258] The references to Kant's works are designated to the English title abbreviation, as well as volume, and page in the German academy edition, and, for the most part, use the translation provided by the corresponding volume of the Cambridge Edition of Kant's works, included in the bibliography. The Cambridge Edition includes the German page numbers in the margins. The key to the title abbreviations is at the end of the dissertation before the bibliography. The *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in two editions, will be abbreviated as A or B. (Weber 1946, 139). For more on Kant's description of the capacity for morality, sometimes called *dignity*, to be beyond calculation or price see also *GM* 4:434-35 & 442.

capacity to be moral, and live under laws which one makes for oneself, brings into view a possible order of the world, desirable in itself. It helps reveal the republican and cosmopolitan destiny of historical progress and to motivate one towards it. To us, assuming that we live in republics, it might be a part of the glue that holds them together. In short, when we see the way that Kant uses wonder to intervene in debates on enthusiasm and fanaticism during the Enlightenment, we gain a greater understanding of the foundation of the moral order of the modern world.

Metaphorically speaking, then, the history of enthusiasm is a ripple in the long story of the contested secularization of wonder. In the moment of Kant's writing, the moment of republican revolutions, that ripple would turn itself into a wave. When we look to this context, we can see that Kant did not seek to fully banish the emotions from political life. In fact, wonder and *Enthusiasmus* were important supplements to the practical reason that grounded the life of a republic. Returning ourselves to the intellectual torsions of Kant's moment will help us to understand the fact that the procedural republic of liberal democracy is based not on a purely rational formal structure but relies as well upon a necessary supplement of wonder. This wonder remains as an artifact of the so-called Age of Reason.

2. Enthusiasm, From Then to Kant

So how did that ripple of enthusiasm find its way to Immanuel Kant? What was the shape of that discourse when it reached him?[260] Returning to the point in the British trajectory that was briefly outlined above and briefly sketching that ripple on its way to Kant will give us a sense of the

[259] When the feeling of wonder towards an object is regularized it might be said, as Kant would say of the endlessly recurring *Affekt* of wonder towards the moral law, that the object never ceases coming into view, but is always dawning.

[260] For a short "Excursus" on enthusiasm in the thought of Spinoza, Locke, and Hume, written with a genealogical intent for Kant's intellectual background, see Dicenso 2011, 39-43.

discursive context of Kant's use of wonder, so we may recognize his innovative use of wonder in his later works. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the term enthusiasm moved through a dispersion of texts in which it was generally, but not entirely, associated with fanatical religious movements, often through a medical lens, and, following Henry More's assessment, applied to those who were accused of falsely claiming to be inspired by the divine.[261] For early eighteenth century Anglophone writers, enthusiasm was an obsession.[262] But, as we'll see shortly, this term and discourse was not limited to British philosophers; the French *Lumières* and German *Aufklärer* took part as well, and it climaxed with the work of Immanuel Kant.

In the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1787, seven years after the first edition, Kant accused John Locke of "opening the gates wide to enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*)" (B:127-129). The reason for this, according to Kant, was that Locke, in assuming that it was possible to encounter the pure concepts of the understanding in experience, had elevated the authority of reason beyond its own capabilities, ultimately leading to the conclusion that it would be possible to cognize what is beyond experience. Although Locke had destroyed the premise of innate ideas, he also led reason to reach towards things which, according to Kant, it had no access. Without giving the account of the structure of apperception that Kant would argue made any experience possible, Locke, according to Kant, was led to believe that he could access in experience that which Kant took to be inscrutable. Thus, by not

[261] (Heyd 1995).

[262] Enthusiasm was the focus of many mostly forgotten British works of the period, including but not limited to: *Reflections upon a Letter concerning Enthusiasm* by Edmund Fowler (1709); *Nature and Consequences of Enthusiasm, by a Protestant Dissenter*, Thomas Morgan (1719); *A Discourse proving that the Apostles were no Enthusiasts* by Archibald Campbell (1730); *Enthusiasm explained: with rules to preserve the Mind from being tainted by it* by Henry More (1739); *Piety freed from the many delusions of Modern Enthusiasts* by Philalethes (1755); *Letters on Religious Retirement, Melancholy, and Enthusiasm by John Langhorne* (1762); and *Essays on Enthusiasm* by William Green (1780). See list in note to Locke's *Essay* by editor Alexander Campbell Fraser, (Locke 1959, 432).

recognizing that there were certain *a priori* structural limitations on what is available to experience, Locke led himself into what Kant called *Schwärmerei*. The first thing to note is the inherent irony of Kant's position. Of course, Locke is famous not only for breaking new ground in the empirical philosophy of the late seventeenth century, but also for his critical essay on enthusiasm.

Locke's essay on enthusiasm, which appeared in 1700 in the fourth edition of *An Essay Concerning Understanding*, held that enthusiasm was a kind of assent, apart from reason and revelation, which subverted them both.[263] To Locke, reason and revelation are consistent with one another, and complementary. Enthusiasm, however, "takes away both reason and revelation, and substitutes in the room of them the ungrounded fancies of a man's own brain, and assumes them for a foundation both of opinion and conduct."[264] Fundamentally, enthusiasm is an epistemological problem in which one refuses to rationally assess the truth of one's propositions. Enthusiasts are led by what they take to be illumination by God, but illumination that cannot stand up to scrutiny. Enthusiasm is but darkness that refuses, and ultimately cannot withstand, the natural light of reason.

Perhaps the most famous early eighteenth-century text on enthusiasm would be written by one whose education Locke would oversee, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.[265] His *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1707) offered a slightly more ambivalent take upon enthusiasm than Locke. This might have, along with Hume's remarks below, led the eighteenth century German discourse on *Schwärmerei* to have included *Enthusiasmus* as a

[263] (Locke 1959, 428-441).

[264] (Locke 1959, 430).

[265] (Heyd 1995, 211-240). On Shaftesbury's education, see (Voitle 1984, 7-12).

related, but potentially less dangerous experience.[266] For, although Shaftesbury lambasts the enthusiasts throughout his essay, he ends it by saying that he has "justified enthusiasm and owned the word" and labels himself to the recipient of his letter their "enthusiastic friend."[267] According to Lawrence Klein, Shaftesbury took enthusiasm to be "an essential component of the philosopher's psychic equipment since it made available to him fundamental insights about the nature of the cosmos and its moral axes."[268] One cannot help but recognize in ancient and modern figures a degree of enthusiasm in noble "heroes, statesmen, poets, orators, musicians and even philosophers."[269] Disturbingly, this "wonderfully powerful and extensive" experience that poses as divine inspiration is nearly impossible to distinguish from it.[270] Ultimately Shaftesbury concludes, similar to Locke, that it is up to reason to protect us from this false feeling of divine presence, and that it is socially salubrious to mock those impostors who feign its authority, even if it might be a potential resource to more sober minds.[271]

Following this discursive trend, David Hume, in his 1741 essay "Superstition and Enthusiasm" is surprisingly not merely ambivalent about enthusiasm, but even argues that it may have beneficial political effects. Again, Hume takes enthusiasm to be a species of false religion, akin to superstition, but suggests it is one which elevates the mind.[272] Although it might at first

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[266] (Vopa 1997). However, it must be noted here, that Kant did call Shaftesbury's topic '*Schwärmerei*' in an unpublished text. See (Kant, Other Exaltations 1993, 104).

[267] (Shaftesbury 1999, 28).

[268] (L. Klein 1999, xxx-xxxi).

[269] (Shaftesbury 1999, 27).

[270] (Shaftesbury 1999, 27).

[271] On this point I have benefitted greatly from Cody Trojan's work on Shaftesbury.

[272] (Hume, Of Superstition and Enthusiasm 1963). Consider also his letter of 1734 in which he writes "I have notic'd in the Writings of the French Mysticks, & in those of our Fanatics here, that, when they give a History of the Situation of their Souls, they mention a Coldness & Desertion of the Spirit, which frequently returns, & some of

bring disorder, it ultimately, as Hume sees in the historical trajectories of the Independents and Deists in English history, becomes a friend to civil liberty in its eventual support for freedom of conscience and toleration.[273] In contrast to superstition, which Hume associates with Roman Catholicism, enthusiasm culminates in a greater desire and support for freedom. Thus, while the British discourse on enthusiasm was originally formed and sustained as a violent reaction to radical Reformers and their role in the English Civil War, it now began to reflect the changing role of those dissenters in English political society. This transformation would be carried back into the German branch of the discourse, which had originally flowed into the British, new semantic valences of *Schwärmerei*, at first more or less encapsulated by enthusiasm. But now the equivalence between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* would not be so clear.

Subsequently, there would be in the German context an ambiguous relation between ambivalent *Enthusiasmus* and dangerous *Schwärmerei* in the second half of the eighteenth century, with many philosophers trying to sort them out, to varying degrees of success.[274] In 1775, while he was the editor of the literary review journal, *Der teutsche Merkur*, the German writer Christoph Wieland – "once," according to Anthony Pagden, "described as the German Voltaire"[275] – challenged his reading public to find fixed meanings for the two terms. Although there was a clear recognition that *Schwärmerer* were more or less only ever a kind of religious

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them, at the beginning, have been tormented with it many Years. As this kind of Devotion depends entirely on the Force of Passion, & consequently of the Animal Spirits, I have often thought that their Case & mine were pretty parralel, & that their rapturous Admirations might discompose the Fabric of the Nerves & Brain, as much as profound Reflections, & that warmth or Enthusiasm which is inseperable from them", (Hume, Letter to George Cheyne, 1734 1932, 17).

[273] (Hume, Of Superstition and Enthusiasm 1963, 79).

[274] The following two paragraphs closely follow (Vopa 1997).These concerns raised in this German context were remarkably similar to those of the British, wherein the legacy of sentimentalism was called upon to make sense of the 'collective sympathy' in the French Revolution and in its wake. See (Fairclough 2013).

[275] (Pagden 2013, 9).

zealot, authors had up to that point insufficiently differentiated the term from *Enthusiasmus*, which was unfortunate, since it appeared to Wieland that *Enthusiasmus* was an affect [*Affekt*] that could be harmonious with reason, while *Schwärmerei* was a passion [*Leidenschaft*] that destroyed it.[276] However, in his 1788 text, *The Secret of the Cosmopolitan Order*, Wieland would claim that the tyrannicidal sentiments experienced by republican enthusiasts [*republicanische Enthusiasten*] – from Brutus to Sidney and Milton – were inimical to the cosmopolitan, and therefore rational and moral, order. This is not to say that Wieland would take a position against patriotism – German, French, or otherwise. In fact, it was quite the opposite. The point is rather that he took *Enthusiasmus* to be a reliable, but potentially very dangerous source of sentimental attachment in political societies.[277]

Authors such as Johann Gottfried Herder, Gotthold Lessing, Christian Garve, and, finally, Immanuel Kant, would all answer Wieland's call to find fixed meanings for the terms.[278] Of course, none of them did so in the same manner. In 1776, Herder, one-time student of Kant's and major figure of the *Sturm und Drang* [Storm and Urge] movement, found *Enthusiasmus*, *Schwärmerei*, and, scandalously, philosophy, to be all more or less synonymous terms.[279] Lessing, also writing in late 1776, found it the critical responsibility of philosophers to carefully watch this precarious line between the philosopher and the *Schwärmer*, since they could be tempted to appeal to the masses in the very same way. He noted also the reliance of philosophers

[276] (Wieland, Enthusiasmus und Schwärmerei 1858, 137). The way that Kant makes use of the distinction between affect and passion will be explored below in the fourth section.

[277] (Wieland, Das Geheimniß des Kosmopoliten-Ordens (1788) 1901, 217-219), but see also (Beiser, Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism 1992, 335-362); (Kleingeld 2012, 22-33); and (Pagden 2013, 313).

[278] (Wieland, Enthusiasmus und Schwärmerei 1858). See also (Vopa 1997, 86-87).

[279] (Herder 1877); (Vopa 1997, 91).

on the same sort of inspiration that *Enthusiasmus* provides artists, going so far as to point out the reliance of many philosophers on the "*Enthusiasmus* of speculation."[280]

Garve, a popular philosopher who did much to disseminate the works of British empiricists like Locke and Hume to the German public, argued in the early 1790s that *Schwärmerei* was a kind of false knowledge and *Enthusiasmus* a kind of creative inspiration for great literature, art, and perhaps even philosophy.[281] Altogether, these German authors would use the term *Schwärmerei* in a way still deeply indebted to the original invocation of it by Luther over two centuries prior. Yet, *Enthusiasmus*, which carried with it linguistic resources from the British debates on enthusiasm of the early eighteenth century, would be used in a more or less ambivalent manner. Although it might pose its own kinds of dangers, it might also somehow support reason and be channeled towards the defense of freedom.

Kant, as we'll see below, was already concerned with the distinction between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* in the mid-1760s, well before Wieland's 1775 call for clarity. In fact, he took up this distinction again during and after he was done with the 'critical business' in the late 1780s and 1790s, and, in doing so, reinterpreted them both through the experience of wonder. When he did so, he seized upon the ambivalence in the account of *Enthusiasmus*. It could be said that his later reflections appeared near the close of the European fascination with enthusiasm in general. There would still be works on enthusiasm and *Schwärmerei* after Kant's final works, but they would no longer be part of the same lively discursive context, and would be like the reiterative 1823 book by Isaac Taylor, *The Natural History of Enthusiasm*, which was

[280] (Lessing 1902, 297).

[281] (Garve, Ueber die Schwärmerey 1985); (Vopa 1997).

singled out by R.A. Knox as "probably the most uniformly dull book ever written."[282] Although this is perhaps a bit harsh, it strongly suggests that later works on enthusiasm lacked the vim of Luther's call for the sword. And in the German speaking context at the dawn of the nineteenth century, even if Schiller and Fichte's arguments with one another relied, in some sense, on these terms in the background of their debate, they "stopped short of calling each other *Schwärmer*."[283] Kant's work stands near the end of this string of discourses, if not by argumentative force, at least by chronology. Kant's work therefore bookends the revival of the German discourse on *Schwärmerei*. And, in a way that I'll explore below, that climax is one that has been unfairly taken into political theory as cold, affectless, and ultimately debilitating. Yet even after Kant would bring the boundary defying movements of reason within their theoretical and practical limits, reason, and reason's law, would remain objects of wonder and awe to him. So, then, how did Kant intervene in this body of discourses and how did he use the notion of wonder to do so?

3. Nothing Great Was Ever Accomplished Without *Enthusiasmus*: Pre-Critical Kant

The Kant of the 1750s and 1760s did not find an inscrutable discontinuity between the observable order of the natural world and what he would later call the supersensible, or noumenal, world. The fundamental task of reason was not to understand its own limitations and conditions of possibility through critique, but to rationally and directly cognize the immanent structure of the world. Correspondingly, there was no break between nature and human morality. Therefore, wonder was legitimately directed in the same manner toward both the natural world and distinctly human things. Additionally, *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* were differentiated, following from the ambivalence of the British discourse on enthusiasm, but their difference was

[282] (Knox 1950, 6-7).

[283] (Vopa 1997, 114-115).

not yet explained by a misinterpretation of wonder, nor through the lens of a critique of the limits of reason. Wonder, for Kant, would not yet have a transformative moral and political role.

Kant discussed wonder briefly in one of his earliest published works on natural philosophy, the breathlessly and revealingly titled 1755 work, *Universal natural history and theory of the heavens or essay on the constitution and the mechanical origin of the whole universe according to Newtonian principles*. The book was written by a young, unestablished Kant in a popular rather than academic manner with hopes to elicit a wide, European readership. Unfortunately, this was not to be, as the publisher went bankrupt shortly after publication and most copies of Kant's book were impounded.[284] Nevertheless, the book gives us an early picture of wonder in Kant's Pre-Critical works, and therefore gives us insight into the way that wonder was modified to allow Kant to intervene in the debate on enthusiasm.

At the beginning of the first part of the work is a quotation from the first epistle of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* which encapsulates the entwinement of wonder and cosmological order in Kant's thought: "See that great chain of miracles (*Wunderkette*) that unifies and draws together all the parts of this world and preserves the great whole" (*UNH* 1: 241).[285] Wonder here is the proper response to the intricate system, or chain, of existence. It is indeed the intrinsic wondrousness of the ordered system that holds it together. The basic structure of the universe is comprehensible through observable laws that have governed it since

[284] (Kuehn 2001, 98, 104-105) and (Watkins 2012).

[285] The German text used by Kant is from Brockes' German translation: "*Seht jene groß Wunderkette, die alle Theile dieser Welt / Vereinet und zusammenzieht und die das große Ganz' erzahlt.*" The actual text by Pope, which is used in the Cambridge Edition, reads, "Is the great chain that draws all to agree, / And draws supports, upheld by God or thee?" (Kant, Natural Science 2012, 208, 708).

its origin. The contemplation of the comprehensive order of the natural world simultaneously occurs with wonder, both under the heading of reason:

> One cannot look at the universe without recognizing the most excellent order in its arrangements and the sure characteristics of the hand of God in the perfection of its relations. Reason, having considered and wondered at so much beauty, so much excellence, is righty incensed at the bold foolishness that has the audacity to attribute all this to coincidence and a fortuitous chance (*UNH* 1: 331).

The admirable order of existence is admirable by the fact that it is clearly ordered, and the principles of the ordering are open to being understood through human reason. Most crucially for Kant at this stage of his thought, wonder arises from observation of the phenomena and their immanent relations to one another. These relations are universal, as "the whole extent of nature is connected by a graduated sequence by the eternal harmony that refers all links to each other" (*UNH* 1:365). Here Kant is clearly speaking an old language forged by early modern humanists out of the rationalist metaphysical framework of late medieval scholasticism, that of the Great Chain of Being.[286] Using a notion of wonder and the place of human beings in the natural order strikingly similar to that of Pico della Mirandola in the *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486), wherein Pico described as "wondrous" "man as a creature of indeterminate nature" with a "place in the middle of the world", Kant says that there is, so to speak, a Great Ladder of Being, on which human beings occupy the middle rung (*UNH* 1: 359), linking and ordering all beings in the cosmos.[287] And it is through wonder that this order is revealed to us**.** Adam Smith in his *History of Astronomy*, written roughly at the same time as Kant's book, also associated wonder

[286] See, for example, (Gillespie 2008, 34-36); and Lovejoy 2009.

[287] (Mirandola 1948, 223, 224). Kant is still following Pope in this quotation. On the late medieval and subsequently early modern view of man as a middle link in the Great Chain of Being, see (Lovejoy 2009, 79, 103, & 198-200). On the Great Chain of Being and eighteenth century thought, see (Lovejoy 2009, 183-226). See also (Gillespie 2008, 85-87).

as that which prompted man to "lay open the concealed connections that unite the various appearances of nature."[288]

Reflecting Kant's use of an old notion of wonder, and its relation to cosmological order, this work not only fails to give us an original but also a rigorous treatment of wonder in the fashion that one might expect from the author of the three *Critiques*. Kant's view in this work relies heavily on the traditional view of the Great Chain of Being which one can find in writers from Pico to, in Kant's own century, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.[289] This lack of rigorous treatment is shown by the fact that *Erstaunen*, generally translated into English as marvel or amazement, is used by Kant in essentially the same manner as *Bewunderung* (*UNH* 1:306; 1: 312). It would not be until 1763 that Kant would rigorously conceptualize wonder, more than simply rely upon the rationalistic and traditional background to give meaning to the term.

The pre-Critical text of Kant's which conceptualizes the brief remarks on wonder from *Universal history*, and which was even more filled with a traditional sense of wonder towards the order of the natural world, was undoubtedly *The Only Possible Argument in Support of the Existence of God* (1763). This text is one of Kant's most important of the period, and it is where he argues against the traditional structure of the ontological argument, as well as that the "physico-theological proof" of God, offered by Christian Wolff, devotee of Leibniz, is insufficient. It is rather the case that, first, *a priori*, there must be some being whose non-existence would cancel the possibility of existence, and second, *a posteriori*, that "matter contains the principles that give rise to an ordered universe" in its unity. These two conditions,

[288] Kant could not have read this text of Smith's, although he read many others, since it was published posthumously in 1795, (Smith, The History of Astronomy 1980, 48).

[289] On Leibniz's idiosyncratic invocation of the Great Chain of Being, see (Lovejoy 2009, 144-182).

the *a priori* and *a posteriori*, give rise to the notion to a Supreme Being, or God.[290] It is into the second part of the argument which wonder is incorporated.

"Wonder is the daughter of ignorance" (*OPA* 2:94), and it is our ignorance for how the world could have been harmoniously made according to predictable laws which is most astonishing. Here Kant is again close to Smith, who wrote that wonder occurs when a "quite new or singular object is presented" and we are "uncertain or undetermined where to place it".[291] It might be said that this broadly falls in the Aristotelian understanding of wonder, which identifies it with ignorance which can be dispelled with knowledge. However, according to Kant, even if all the mechanical functions of the universe could be made comprehensible, the universe itself would remain wonderful.[292] "Some wonder is left over, no matter how we may have adduced the above consideration to render the phenomena more comprehensible…I should still be in wonder – in wonder at how so many functions can be united in a single structure" (*OPA* 2:152). Further, the thought that this unity is made possible by the design of a creator does not even diminish the wonder of this great unity of structure and functions (*OPA* 2:153). Even if ignorance is completely removed, admiring wonder at the observable structure of the cosmos endures as not just the beginning of thought. Rather, it endures in the manner Plato would have Socrates say of wonder in the *Theaetetus*; as the *arche* of thought: both beginning and guiding principle (155d).

[290] (Kuehn 2001, 140-141).

[291] (Smith, The History of Astronomy 1980, 39).

[292] To Smith, if we could understand fully all the connections between the novel and singular object of wonder and other natural phenomena, the wonder will fully cease (Smith 1980, 39). Here Kant is using wonder in a way that is closer to Smith's notion of admiration: "We admire the beauty of a plain or the greatness of a mountain, though we have seen both often before, and though nothing appears new to us in either, but what we had expected with certainty to see (Ibid., 33). It is quite likely that Smith was following Kames' account of wonder in *Elements of Criticism*, wherein he wrote that wonder is "raised by new and strange objects" by that it diminishes as "we are acquainted with" it (Kames 1765, 245 & 246).

The unity and order of existence is itself wonderful, and remains so even if every component of it could be understood. To describe the feeling which arises out of the contemplation of the harmony of all existence, Kant uses the phrases wonderful unity [*bewundernswürdige Einheit*] and wonderful community [*bewundernswürdige Gemeinschaft*] (*OPA* 2:101.31; 2:103.16; and 2:131.28). These are important phrases which shall be important in understanding Kant's transformative use of wonder in the post-Critical works in not only the field of nature, but also of morality and politics.

> There is a wonderful community [*bewundernswürdige Gemeinschaft*] to be found among the essences of all created things. This community is such that the natures of things are not alien to each other but are united in a complex harmony. They spontaneously agree with each other. Their essences contain within themselves an agreement which is extensive and necessary, and which aims at the perfection of the whole. (*OPA* 2:131)

Though the remarks on wonder in these two texts are primarily directed towards the natural world, there is no break assumed between the natural and the moral worlds. Therefore, the wonderful unity, or community, that is observed in the natural world is also a description of the moral and human world.[293] However, it would not be until his texts from 1764 that Kant would explicitly use wonder towards moral characteristics. It would also be in these works that he would first gesture towards the distinction between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei*.

Before his silent decade of the 1770s and then reemergence in the 1780s with his Critical works, Kant held views which were more or less common for a philosopher of the Enlightenment in that he sought not to eliminate the passions from moral and political life but rather to understand and instruct them. In 1764, Kant wrote one of the more remarkable sentimental texts of the Enlightenment. It must be said, however, that it was remarkable not only for its style and

[293] See (Blumenberg 1983, 213).

perspicacity in describing moral life, but also for its unabashed and disgusting racism and sexism. Nevertheless, it still gives us a picture of Kant as a sentimental *Aufklärer*, glaring warts and all. As Anthony Pagden has noted, "'sympathy' or *pitié*" had been taken by "so many of the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment…as the sole enduring definition of the human species."[294] In this set of texts, Kant was not so different.

Observations on the feelings of the beautiful and the sublime shows wonder used in moral terms associated with the sublime (*OBS* 2:209). The most significant aspect of wonder here is that it is used to describe the feeling (*Gefühl*), or sometimes sentiment (*Empfidung)*, that is aroused upon observing aspects of sublimity in both nature and in human characteristics (*OBS* 2:227). In this early work, Kant treats wonder in moral terms quite similar to the Stoic manner which Adam Smith treated it in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* of 1759. There Smith wrote that "we wonder with surprise and astonishment at that strength of mind which is capable of so noble and generous an effort" as to display magnanimity and calm under conditions of great duress.[295] There are two crucial aspects to Kant's redolence of Smith's Stoical invocation of wonder in this context. The first is that wonder is legitimately directed towards human characteristics, such as virtue, and virtuous action. The second is that there is no distinction in this account of the sentiments made between what is moral and what is natural. One wonders at human morality in a way that is not fundamentally distinct from how one wonders at nature. Both these aspects will be set in stark relief once we come to Kant's Critical works.

[294] (Pagden 2013, 338). See also (Frazer 2010), but particularly (Frazer 2010, 132-138) on Kant's 'abandoned' early sentimentalist moment, which is the occasion of this section.

[295] (Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments 1984, 48).

In this stage of Kant's writings, both *Schwärmerei* and *Enthusiasmus* are best understood in their simultaneously moral and physical respects in the clinical argot of humorism, much in the manner of the British discourse on enthusiasm following Henry More, as being potential characteristics of the melancholic character (*OBS* 2:221; *EM* 2:266-267). *Schwärmerei*, according to Kant, is "a pious brazenness and is occasioned by a certain pride and an altogether too great confidence in oneself to come closer to the heavenly natures and to elevate itself by astonishing [*erstaunlichen*] flight above the usual and prescribed order" (*OBS* 2:251). The *Schwärmer* falsely presumes that he can ascend the chain of being to that of more divine beings. "The *Schwärmer* only talks of unmediated inspiration and of the contemplative life," but this, Kant says, is merely talk (*OBS* 2:251). The presumptions of the *Schwärmer* to the domains of the philosopher or the theologian are no more than presumptions. The *Schwärmer* was historically a character in England and Germany, Kant tells us, surely referencing the past prevalence of radical Reformers in both countries. Interestingly, Kant says that in both countries that the *schwärmerischen Geistes* has cooled itself off in moderation. Here Kant follows part of the narrative of enthusiasm offered by David Hume. The similarity is made more likely to be less than coincidental in the fact that Kant also poses *Schwärmerei* against superstition in the same manner as Hume.[296]

Kant insists like Hume that the political effects of *Enthusiasmus* are not altogether deleterious, while maintaining the usual Enlightenment view of *Schwärmerei* as a form of religious fanaticism. Kant clarifies in a footnote that,

> Fanaticism[297] must always be distinguished from *Enthusiasmus*. The former always believes itself to feel an immediate and extraordinary communion with a higher

[296] (Hume, Of Superstition and Enthusiasm 1963).

> nature, the latter signifies the state of mind which is inflamed beyond the appropriate degree by some principle, whether it be by the maxim of patriotic virtue, or of friendship, or of religion, without involving the illusion of a supernatural community (*OBS* 2:251).

In *Essay on the Maladies of the Head* of the same year, Kant goes even further to valorize *Enthusiasmus*. He makes the shocking claim regarding *Enthusiasmus* that "nothing great has ever been accomplished in the world without it" (*EM* 2:267). Kant identifies Aristides, whom Herodotus called the best and most just man ever produced by Athens;[298] Epictetus, the freed Roman slave and stoic philosopher; and Jean-Jacques Rousseau as exemplary of *Enthusiasmus* in that they all were moved by a moral feeling to greatness and freedom (*EM* 2:267). *Schwärmerei* appears as an extreme form of piety, but *Enthusiasmus* as a zealotry for freedom (*OBS* 2:222). This is also reflected in Kant's first published use of the word *Enthusiasmus* in *The Question, Whether the Earth is Ageing, Considered from a Physical Point of View* (1754), wherein Kant notes the "drive of the ancients towards great accomplishments, such as their *Enthusiasmus* for fame, virtue and love of liberty, which filled them with high ideals and raised them above themselves" (*Q* 1:212-213).[299] It seems as if Kant focuses the deleterious effects of extreme passionate motivation in the experience of *Schwärmerei*, of which "human nature knows no more dangerous illusion" (*EM* 2:267). This is not only a problem for morality or rationality, but also a political problem since the *Schwärmer* is particularly successful in infecting crowds, and "even the state occasionally suffers raptures" (*EM* 2:267).

[297] Kant uses the term *Der Fanaticism* here, but he uses the term interchangeably in this section of the essay with *Schwärmer* (2:250).

[298] Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.79.

[299] See (Fenves, A Peculiar Fate: Metaphysics and World-History in Kant 1991, 242-243).

A general shift in Kant's thought begins to become apparent in 1766, when Kant wrote one of his most enigmatic books, *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by the Dreams of Metaphysics*. Here, in the years just preceding the 'silent decade' when Kant would develop the groundwork for the Critical project, Kant developed his attack on those who imagine that they may break through the boundaries of perception and take it as divine experience. Kant does this through, first, a perplexingly friendly analysis and, then, devastating attack on the theological ravings of the lively 'visionary' and kook, Emanuel Swedenborg. This was a piece of Kant's larger project against those who, in Kant's view, would suppose that the passionate inspiration of poetic genius breaks through the boundaries of the understanding. At this point Kant shifts in a direction that would fully crystallize in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, wherein he puts strict limitations on what can be perceived and the transcendental structure of all apperception. In fact, one would not go too far to say that where Kant explores the delusions of the *Schwärmer* in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*, in the following years, he would critically define the boundary of reason which in turn gives definition to the overextension that is enacted by the *Schwärmer*. The Critical project is necessary to define what exactly *Schwärmerei* is, and subsequently, as we will see, to provide a satisfactory way to differentiate it from *Enthusiasmus* through the account of wonder.

Additionally, there would be a transformation in the following decade regarding the role of wonder. Where before wonder was legitimately directed towards experientially available examples of virtue, or the observable order of nature, now Kant moves us on a path that will see wonder directed at something entirely different, outside of the natural order of the world and toward a transcendental structure which cannot be experienced or known, but is nevertheless universally accessible as a feeling. And as a *moral* feeling, wonder may give solace to those who

seek in humility a condition of equal dignity and respect which might be called a republican way of life, which, in the end, achieves a reconciliation of the natural and moral worlds.

4. A Sign of the Times: Post-Critical Wonder

According to the usual story, Kant's project of the three *Critiques* turned fully against any substantive role of feeling in political life.[300] And this view is not without substantial, or even overwhelming, textual support. After Kant's search for the transcendental structure, limitations, and powers of reason, he delineated from reason those other inclinations, such as passion, which might determine the grounds for action. According to the post-Newtonian view of the world as composed of causal forces, human beings are caught in chains of causes, including feelings, which are out of their control. Hence the problem for Kant after the Critical works, was that feeling, broadly construed, would incline one to act in ways that are not grounded in a reasonable, and therefore free, way of life. To be free meant to be able to act in a way that is not determined by one's natural impulses. The only possible route for freedom, according to this reading of Kant, is through reason unconditioned by nature.

However, Kant will deploy wonder, a rational "astonishment [at ideas] that does not cease when the novelty is lost" (*CPJ* 5:272), as that which reconciles freedom with the sensible, natural world. In so doing, Kant not only shows an affective supplement for moral motivation, but also intervenes in the Enlightenment debate on enthusiasm. According to Kant's redeployment of terms, *Schwärmerei* is an experience wherein wonder goes awry, and one thinks that it is possible to cognize and make immanent the supersensible. *Enthusiasmus*, conversely, is a feeling of wonder for the idea of a moral order, or republic, which remains within the limits of

[300] For example, (Frazer 2010, 112-138). For an account of Kant's post-critical practical philosophy which shows the 'impure' elements, see (Louden 2000).

reason. Here Kant draws upon the writings of the ancient Stoics to meet the philosophical and political challenges of his own day. Moreover, Kant not only intervenes in a contemporary debate, but found an affective attachment which remains viable, and perhaps necessary, for the perfectionist project of federated republics in a cosmopolitan order.

The hub of Kant's ethical and moral works during and after the Critical period is freedom. Freedom is only possible when the will is not determined by inclinations stemming from sensation (*CPR* 5:72-3). Inclinations hinder the capacity of one to be moral, to freely determine one's own actions, since "the moral disposition must be free from any sensible condition" (*CPR* 5:75). However, from the perspective of a sensible world governed by the laws of nature, this would seem to be impossible. The world which is apparent to the senses must function according to necessary laws of nature, and these laws would leave no room for the possibility of human freedom. This is the essence of Kant's third antinomy in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which, like each of the antinomies, is a contradiction which arises out of the attempt by reason to access that which is beyond what can possibly be known through experience (A444-451/B472-479).

The third antinomy, concerned in particular with freedom, is the dialectic, seemingly without resolution, between these following two assertions: the first is that "causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only one from which all the appearances of the world can be derived. It is also necessary to assume another causality through freedom in order to explain them." The second and opposing thesis is that "there is no freedom, but everything in the world happens solely in accordance with the laws of nature" (A444-447/B472-475). Between these two positions reason is stuck at an impasse. For freedom to be possible, it must be that there is some causality which is not in accord with natural laws. However, reason is incapable of

perceiving anything which is beyond the natural, sensible world, in which our sentiments and feelings are embroiled.

If there were ever to be a resolution to this conflicting set of doctrines which would hold freedom to be possible, it would have to mean that there is some way to act that isn't determined by necessity. This, as Kant works through in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason,* is possible to conceptualize through a deontological framework, which holds freedom to be possible through a procedure of giving universal laws for oneself to be followed as duty. Freedom is therefore not a natural, but a moral condition; "the domain of the concept of nature" is under one set of laws and "that of the concept of freedom under the other" (*CPJ* 5:195). Fundamentally this is because there must be a division, "crude," as Kant admits, "between a *world of sense* and the *world of understanding*" (*GM* 4:451).[301] Freedom, in this sense, is "independence from *determining* causes of the world of sense" such as "impulses of sensibility" and inclinations (*GM*: 4:455, 454). To put it simply, to be free is to be able to act in a way which is determined by reason and not by feelings, which constitute a fundamental danger to freedom.

For these reasons, contemporary theorists of the sentiments, often inspired by Hume, have taken Kantian inflected political theorists to task for blithely ignoring the feelings that legitimately motivate people in normal political life.[302] Attacks on Kantian practical philosophy by Humean sentimentalists are not exactly new. One of the first to claim that Kantian practical

[301] (Guyer 1993).

[302] For example, (Frazer 2010); (Krause, Civil Passions 2008)**;** (Panagia, The Poetics of Political Thinking 2006, 75); and (Panagia, Impressions of Hume: Cinematic Thinking and the Politics of Discontinuity 2013)**.** See also Zerilli's Arendto-Kantian response to Humean aesthetics in (Zerilli 2016, 41-82).

philosophy is motivationally deficient was Christian Garve in 1792.[303] Garve, who we briefly encountered above in his view on *Schwärmerei* and whose ambition it was, according to historian Frederick C. Beiser, to be the German Hume,[304] accused Kantian practical philosophy of being too abstract and unconcerned with the end which all humans share: to be happy.[305] In real examples of action, he argued, our motivational determination is inextricably linked to the purposes for our actions. Will is always aimed towards specific objects, towards which one has concrete feelings and desires. For Garve, to ignore the motivation of action is to fundamentally misunderstand the reason that people act freely, which, whether it is to achieve moral perfection or happiness, is always motivated.[306]

In the first section of *On the Common Saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice* (1793), Kant responds to Garve's accusation to say that he does recognize a kind of moral motivation, but that it takes the form of moral feeling (*OCS* 8:278-289).[307] Kant acknowledges that

> the will must have *motives*; but these are not certain objects proposed as ends related to *natural feeling*, but nothing other the unconditional law itself; and the will's receptivity to finding itself subject to the law as unconditional necessitation is called *moral feeling*, which is therefore not the cause but the effect of the determination of the will, and we would not have the least perception of it within ourselves if that necessitation were not already present within us. (*OCS* 8:283-284)

[303] (Garve, Ueber die Geduld 1792).

[304] (Beiser, Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism 1992, 312).

[305] (Garve, Ueber die Geduld 1792, 111-116).

[306] (Garve, Ueber die Geduld 1792, 111).

[307] (Kant, On the common saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice (1793) 1996, 281-290). For more on the discursive context of this political intervention, see (Maliks 2014, 41-60).

Kant argues that the experience of following a nomos that one gives oneself out of the exercise of one's own reason inspires a kind of feeling. But it is not a feeling of need for pleasure or avoidance of pain, which Kant thinks of as natural. Rather it is a feeling which is moral. This moral feeling takes the form of respect [*Achtung*], submission, and, if necessary, humbling before the moral law (*CPR* 5:75-80).[308] This has a "*negative* effect", in that the result of the moral feeling is the negation of any form of determination of the will by inclination (*CPR* 5:78).[309] This is the strictly negative and limiting case of feeling in Kant's practical philosophy. It is only as an effect of the will being determined by the universal maxim that it has chosen for itself. It appears, then, that even in the case that Kant argued that he incorporated feelings into his philosophy, he only did so in a technical sense and in order to exclude all others. However, when we look to the way that Kant returned to the debate on *Schwärmerei* during and after writing the *Critiques*, we find that he did indeed suggest two affective supplements for motivation in moral and political life.

The problem of extreme feelings overwhelming the capacity for moral politics was not only for Kant an abstract formulation but was tied to some of the most consequential debates of the Enlightenment. The debate on *Schwärmerei*, in particular, would reappear for Kant in his mid-1780s encounter with the philosophy of his one-time student and now-tepid friend, Herder. This encounter would lead him to modify his position on *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* and restructure it through an interpretation of the experience of *Bewunderung* within the structural limits of experience set by the Critical enterprise. It would no longer be a problem to be analyzed

[308] See also (Saurette 2005, 1-160).

[309] This is against the reading of *Achtung* in (Satkunanandan 2011) as providing both an ontological and positive basis of morality.

with medical categories, but philosophical, through the lens that Kant developed in his Critical works.

From the period of 1762 to 1764, the period in which Kant wrote many of the earlier works noted above, Herder was one of Kant's finest and most loyal students.[310] Later, Herder fell under the influence of Johann Georg Hamann, a verified *Schwärmer* and so-called 'Magus of the North' who was a leading figure in the *Sturm und Drang* movement, formed in large part as a response to the German Enlightenment. Obviously, Herder's shift was a disappointment to Kant, but this disappointment did not immediately break into the open. As early as 1768, Kant privately warned Herder that his taste for the insight of genius led him to tend dangerously toward *Schwärmerei*.[311] This rift would go public with Kant's review of Herder's *Idea for a Philosophy of the History of Humanity* in 1784, and the Kant scholar John Zammito has gone so far as to argue that Kant's rivalry with Herder and the controversy over *Schwärmerei* lay at the origin of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.[312]

Kant's conflict with the *Sturm und Drang* movement over *Schwärmerei* would break out most famously in *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?* (1786). The immediate cause of this essay, of course, was the Pantheism Controversy, in which Kant was forced to intervene to respond to the charge that Enlightenment necessarily led to atheism and ultimately nihilism.[313]

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[310] (Beiser, The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte 1987, 149).

[311] (Zammito 1992, 35 & 357 fn.11). It is interesting to note here that Elizabeth Montagu's 1769 essay on Shakespeare celebrates the genius of dramatic poets to catch audiences with their enthusiasm, (Montagu 1772).

[312] (Zammito 1992, 9). It perhaps was also important in instigating Kant's revisions, including the reference to Locke's purported *Schwärmerei* mentioned above, in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787) as well. In particular, the growing role of the understanding at the expense of the imagination is important here.

[313] See (Beiser, The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte 1987, 44-126) and (Vopa 1997, 107-109).

A key danger that Kant encounters in this essay is that of *Schwärmerei* overthrowing and replacing reason in the German intellectual moment, or, worse, reason warping into a kind of *Schwärmerei* by the desire to not only critique but also destroy all forms of order in the world.

What Kant offers instead is the orientation of thinking by reasonable principles rather than by the wild and lawless movements of supposed insight into supersensible things (*OT* 8:143-146). It is difficult to not see here the reprisal of Kant's accusation against Herder and Hamann – that the belief in inspiration and genius beyond the limits of clear reason by the *Sturm and Drang* movement would lead one to solipsistic raving and irrationalism.[314] On questions of religion, if we are led to think that even reason may speak on what is beyond the senses, then, according to Kant, "a wide gate is left to all *Schwärmerei"* (*OT* 8:143). Reason that does not obey any sort of law is inexorably led to the same conclusion that Luther recognized in the radical Reformers: the complete overthrow of all existing forms of order. This is the political end of *Schwärmerei*. It acts under the belief that it is truly rational, but in its presumption that there are no limitations on reason, which it "calls Free Spiritedness [*Freigeisterei*]," it recognizes "no duty at all" (*OT* 8:146). Therefore, if it is not limited by civil authorities, the only outcome can be disorder. Yet, crucially, Kant does not describe *Enthusiasmus* in these terms. Indeed, far from it.

In the Critical and post-Critical works Kant would turn again to *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei* to rigorously reconceptualize them. When doing so, he would also use and transform the notion of wonder. To delineate between these two kinds of enthusiasm in this period of his thought, Kant used a conceptual distinction between different kinds of sensations in

[314] On Kant, Herder, and the Pantheism controversy, see also (Zammito 1992, 228-247).

their relation to moral action. The two specific ways that Kant thought about sensations which could overtake the rational basis of moral action in this period were what he called affect [*Affekt*] and passion [*Leidenschaft*]. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant writes that "Affects are specifically different from passions. The former are related merely to feeling; the latter belong to the faculty of desire, and are inclinations that make all determinability of the faculty of choice by means of principles difficult or impossible" (*CPJ* 5:273). One way to think of this is that during the experience of *Affekt* one is caught off balance, but in the experience of *Leidenschaft*, rooted in the word *leiden* [suffer], one is enduringly aggrieved, whether one chooses to be or not.[315] In other words, affects are only ever feelings, but passions also always hinder or destroy the ability to freely determine one's own actions.[316]

Further, affects are sudden and overwhelming feelings which momentarily overpower the ability of reason, whereas passions are slow and methodically overtake the desires which determine one's choices (*CPJ* 5:273). Affects are quick to pass, whereas passions go to the root of things and corrupt them. In the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, based on the final form of the annual anthropology lectures which Kant offered from 1772-1796, Kant wrote that "affect works like water that breaks through a dam; passion, like a river that digs itself deeper and deeper" (*AP* 7:252). Kant is cautious of both affects and passions, saying that either is in some sense always "an illness of the mind," but it is the "lasting inclination" of passion that removes the freedom of the mind, where affect might only occasionally hamper it (*AP* 7: 251; *MM* 6: 408; *CPJ* 5:272).

[315] I thank Joshua Dienstag for his suggestion on this point.

[316] This distinction surely bears some trace of Stoical thinking on the passions, which distinguished between fleeting feelings and those feelings which ossified into an attachment that hindered one's ability to act rationally. See especially Seneca's *De Ira* as well as Wieland's discussion noted above.

Enthusiasmus, Kant writes in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, is "the idea of the good with affect" (*CPJ* 5:272). *Schwärmerei*, on the other hand, is a "deep rooted, oppressive passion." "[*Enthusiasmus*] is a passing accident, which occasionally only affects the most healthy understanding; [*Schwärmerei*] is a disease that destroys it" (*CPJ* 5:275). Remarkably, when Kant defines the distinction between affect and passion in both the *Critique of Judgment* and the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, he does so in immediate proximity to and in service to the difference between *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei*.[317] *Enthusiasmus* is the means by which one suddenly feels that which is morally good. It strikes one and stretches the mind to the limit. Nevertheless, this sensation does not seep down into one's character, and weaken one's *ability* to be rational, moral, or free. *Schwärmerei*, on the other hand, gives one "the incentive *pathologically* (in sympathy or self-love), not *morally* (in the law); but [it] produce[s] in this way a frivolous, high-flown, fantastic cast of mind, flattering themselves with a spontaneous goodness of heart" (*CPR* 5:85). The *Schwärmer* loses their rational self to their fancies.

Through his elucidation of the experience of *Enthusiasmus* Kant admits that affects can be useful supplements to moral action. It is an affect which may "handle the reins *provisionally*, until reason has achieved its necessary strength; that is to say, for the purpose of enlivening us, nature has added the incentive…as a temporary surrogate of reason" (*AP* 7:253). The example that Kant gives of *Enthusiasmus* here is in the affective response to reason representing to itself the morally good in a manner that enlivens the will. *Enthusiasmus* is here a special kind of

[317] It appears that Kant follows the framework to which Christoph Wieland adhered in 1775 in defining *Enthusiasmus* as an affect and *Schwärmerei* as a passion. (Wieland, Enthusiasmus und Schwärmerei 1858, 137).

feeling. Kant says that an "*Enthusiasm* of a good intent" can be the result of reason "enlivening the soul" and is thus useful achieving moral ends (*AP* 7:254).[318]

Where *Enthusiasmus* is an affective incentive that nature provides reason to overcome seemingly impassible obstacles, *Schwärmerei* is "in the most general sense an overstepping of the bounds of human reason" (*CPR* 5:85). It is not, as Herder and other thinkers of the *Sturm und Drang* movement proclaim, the sister of philosophy, but rather its usurper.[319] In practical affairs, *Schwärmerei* not only leads humans away from acting rationally, but also morally (*CPR* 5:86). In a fragment written sometime in the late 1790s, Kant even goes so far as to define his Critical project, and therefore the Enlightenment, against the danger of the *Schwärmer:* "The cause of *Schwärmerei* is a lack of a critique of reason itself" (17:438).[320] The *Schwärmer* believes that the "appearances of the world present to the senses are merely a *symbol* of an intelligible world hidden in reserve" (*AP* 7:191). They would presume that they can clearly and in isolation recognize the presence of the supersensible in experience (*R* 6:174). The *Schwärmer* is therefore prepared to read in these signs any number of things, almost ineluctably leading to a justification for the total overthrow of world order. And foreseeing the ruin of this world order, "the pious [*fromm*] *Schwärmer* by this time is already dreaming of the restoration of all things and a renovated world after the time that this one will have perished in flames" (*CF* 7:81).

Yet what is it that leads the *Schwärmer* to assume that they can gain access to that which reason denies them? Kant's answer to this is simple: they are enthralled in wonder, but in the

[318] See also (Clewis 2009, 200-214). Here Clewis makes a distinction between aesthetic and practical *Enthusiasmus*. While I agree that Kant is cautious of *Enthusiasmus* in the post-Critical works, it seems to me that Kant is willing to accept that in some circumstances, when necessary, it may momentarily take the place of practical reason.

[319] (Herder 1877).

[320] (Kant, Other Exaltations 1993, 105).

wrong manner. Both *Enthusiasmus* and *Schwärmerei*, according to Kant, are responses to the "inscrutability of the idea of freedom," of the fact that we can act in a way that is not determined by sheer natural forces (*CPJ* 5:275). However, it is the *Schwärmer* who misperceives their experience of this inscrutability as something positive and available to perception. This misperception takes the form of a "deep-rooted, oppressive passion" which not only misleads, but destroys the understanding (*CPJ* 5:275). They suppose that they may give positive reasons for what makes freedom possible, even if there is no rational way to uncover this mystery. They think that they may perceive what they simply cannot perceive.

In the cases of wonder for both the natural world and the possibility of freedom, Kant tells us that a misunderstanding of wonder can also give rise to *Schwärmerei.* Kant gives the example of the pre-Socratic Anaxagoras, who began with a great wonder for nature, but that "through misunderstanding this wonder gradually rose to *Schwärmerei*" (*CPJ* 5:364-6; see also *CPR* 5:137). In the same vein, one can see in the famous conclusion of the *Critique of Practical Reason* the warping of wonder at the moral law into *Schwärmerei*: "Morals began with the noblest property of human nature," the ability to be free, "and it ended with *Schwärmerei* and superstition" (*CPR* 5:162-163**;** see also *MM* 6:387). In believing that one may sense and take as a clear guide the supersensible which is hinted to us in the boundary-experience of wonder, the *Schwärmer* loses their senses entirely.

There is something of a paradox in Kant's treatment of wonder as an affect and not a passion.[321] Wonder, Kant writes in this period, is an affect which is exceptional in the fact that it may *endure*; it strikes one in the experience of a "novelty that exceeds expectation," but it is "an

[321] My thanks to Ziyaad Bhorat for pushing me on this point.

astonishment [*Verwunderung*] which does not cease when the novelty is lost" (*CPJ* 5:272). However, this does not mean that it is only a kind of extended surprise. Although it is related to surprise in how it is experienced, wonder is an affect which is "stimulated [*angeregt wird*] only by reason and is a kind of sacred shudder [*Schauer*] at seeing the abyss of the supersensible opening before one's feet" (*AP* 7:261; see also *ONA* 8:402-403). In tying wonder to the "abyss of the supersensible" which dawns on a spectator, but which never comes into view, Kant here completely leaves behind contemporary theorists, such as Smith and Kames, to set out a new path in thinking about wonder. Children may be surprised at every novelty, which will occur frequently since they are themselves new to the world, but it takes reason to perceive the order of things. This is precisely the explanation for how it may endure; we may constantly return to it and, as Kant says, one "cannot be surprised enough" (*AP* 7:261). Although the forces which made that order possible may elude us, the existence of that order is itself enough to affect us. What then does Kant take to be the proper object of wonder? And how exactly does Kant in his later writing think that one is to respond to it?

The capacity of human beings to be moral is that which is most wonderful to Kant, and about which we must be careful to not presume that we may know its 'inscrutable source.' It is this that he means when he refers to the "abyss of the supersensible" above (*AP* 7:261), and that which sets apart his early writings on wonder from the later in this regard. In the *Critique of the Power of Judgement,* Kant wrote that "nothing more sublime" has ever been said or expressed than the inscription above the temple of Isis, the Egyptian goddess, taken in contemporary European historiography to be the mother goddess of nature[322]: "I am all that is, that was, and

[322] (Hadot 2006).

that will be, and my veil no mortal has removed" (*CPJ* 5:316).[323] For Kant this meant that although mortals might be tempted to look beyond what is apparent to the senses, one would have to do the impossible: go beyond one's rational capacities.

Elsewhere, Kant deployed the metaphor to say that "the veiled goddess before whom we…bend our knees is the moral law in us, in its inviolable majesty" (*ONA* 8:405). The source of a human being's ability to deny their sensual nature is itself a mystery. However, Kant believes that we should not wonder at examples of those who are obedient to moral laws, since obedience to moral laws lies "objectively in the natural order of things as the object of pure reason" – but rather that all of us have the *ability* to be moral. This capability – the possibility of a moral predisposition – is the thing about which we cannot cease wondering. It is the "object of the greatest wonder" which only "increases the longer we contemplate" it (*CF* 7:58-59; see also *CPR* 5:161-162; *R* 6:49).

Kant also says that the feeling of wonder at the capability to be moral makes one *more* capable of acting morally and thus freely. This is similar to how Kant says that *Enthusiasmus*, a kind of wonder, may be used as an affective supplement which may momentarily incentivize one to act morally when one's reason is not yet able to do so directly. With regard to the moral feeling, Kant tells us that one is to "*cultivate* it and to strengthen it through wonder at its inscrutable source" (*MM* 6:400). Wonder at the capability to be moral, and to be free, makes one more receptive to the possibility of being both. This leads one to "enhance the moral *incentive* (the thought of the law), both by contemplating the dignity of the pure rational law in us (*contemplatione*) and by *practicing* virtue (*exercitio*)" (*MM* 6:397). Wonder is a positive

[323] (Kant, Critique of the Power of Judgment 2000, 194). See also Peter Fenves's note in Kant, On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy, 1993, 78.n9. The metaphor of the veil of Isis would also appear as lynchpin of Kant's 1796 essay "On a Newly Arisen Tone in Philosophy" (*ONA*).

supplement to the moral feeling, respect for the moral law, that makes it more robust and efficacious. In other words, wonder energizes one to live according to virtue.

In stark contrast to how wonder was used by Kant in a moral setting in the pre-Critical works, wonder at exemplary moral characteristics or actions does not fulfill a didactic purpose in the post-Critical works. Wonder is not properly directed towards any observable traits or characteristics. Almost in direct opposition to the Stoical reading of wonder in a moral context by Adam Smith noted above, according to which "we wonder with surprise and astonishment at that strength of mind which is capable of so noble and generous an effort" as to display magnanimity and calm under conditions of great duress, Kant maintains that "even in wondrous [*bewunderten*] action, if the motive from which it was done was esteem for one's duty, then it is just this respect for the law that straightaway has the greatest force on the mind of a spectator, and not, say, any pretension to inner magnanimity and a noble case of mind" (*CPR* 5:156-157).[324] No matter how wondrous that an apparent action or an observable moral characteristic might appear to be, Kant argues that they are not proper objects of wonder. It might seem that Kant departs from the modern Stoic position demonstrated by Smith. This is true in part, but only in part. Kant *radicalizes* the modern Stoic position. As Seneca wrote in the eighth of his *Epistles*, "one should reflect that nothing except the soul is worthy of wonder; for to the soul, if it be great, naught is great."[325] It is only the *capability* of free choice – granted by the divine spark of the soul for the ancient Stoics and as a postulate of reason for the modern Stoic, Kant –

[324] (Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments 1984, 48).

[325] (Seneca, Epistles 1917, 38-41).

which is worthy of wonder.[326] All else is, as Epictetus would say, external to the "faculty of reason", and thus not worthy in itself as an object of admiration.[327]

It is the disposition to be moral, and to freely follow a law that one gives oneself, that is worthy of wonder. Kant argues that wonder for virtuous actions falls short for moral education, indeed it also falls short of proper wonder: "to teach only *wonder* for virtuous actions, however great a sacrifice these may have cost, falls short of the right spirit that ought to support the apprentice's disposition in favor of the morally good" (*R* 6:48-49; see also *MM* 6:483). This is so, because to wonder at action is to wonder at that which appears. What makes the capability to be moral so incredible is that there is simply no way to explain it in natural, sensible terms. When one considers the virtuous action of an individual as a didactic example, one also opens to consideration the inclinations of that individual which may have determined their action. We may start to consider the things which caused them to do what they did, besides their own free choice. This leaves the morality of the actions vulnerable to annihilation through contemplation. Remember, it is the capacity for freedom which is wondrous for Kant, not its enactment. Consequently, wonder is *universalized* towards a capacity that *all* human beings intrinsically possess.

In this fact, Kant's remarkable transformation of his own conception of wonder from that which appeared in his pre-Critical works, and of his striking importance in the political history of wonder, becomes clear. For Kant, wonder is not properly experienced when one's attention is drawn towards the observable, in contrast to the general orientation of wonder in the pre-Critical

[326] On the Stoic notion that reason is an element of the divine in humanity, see, for example, (Epictetus 2014, 85-86).

[327] (Epictetus 2014, 4).

works. Instead, wonder is experienced when one's attention goes *beyond what is apparent* and *shudders* at the absence of something invisible that could make sense of the inexplicable. Our desire to find the causes of things leads us to demand to know *why* people would ever act in ways not determined by nature. It is jarring to know that there is simultaneously no imperceptible, supernatural cause of moral action, and yet moral action is possible. The proper orientation of wonder between the visible and the invisible in the post-Critical works also shows one how *Schwärmerei* is so frequently translated into English as "visionary rapture" (*CPJ* 5:275). The *Schwärmer*, seized by wonder at that which is inscrutable, imagines that they may see, and make immanent, that which they do not and could never see.

Finally, it is wonder which is the experiential point where the possible reconciliation between the moral and the natural worlds is revealed in time. In the way that Kant describes this reconciliation, Kant returns to terms which he used in *Universal History* (1755) *and The Only Possible Argument* (1763) to transform and reinscribe them into a new view of order that is focused around the principle of human freedom. Again, wonder is not directed towards the observable structure of the world, but instead, now, towards the purposiveness which one may reasonably judge to be structured into nature. This purposiveness, or "hidden plan of nature" is to bring about a political and moral order which makes manifest the human capability for freedom (*IUH* 8:27). The reconciliation between morality and nature is therefore one which is revealed as a project, and it is wonder which projects us into it, extending us into an unforeseeable but unmistakable moment in future time. Here again, Kant turns to a Stoic notion, this time the notion that the natural universe can be observed as purposive and guided by providence, and he radicalizes it. Where Epictetus could say that "God has brought the human race into the world to be a spectator of himself and of his works and not merely to observe them, but also to interpret

them" and that the rational contemplation of nature would end "with contemplation and understanding, and a way of life that is in harmony with nature", Kant would also find the observed purposiveness of the course of history to point to a condition in which freedom is made manifest and morality reconciled to nature.[328]

Following Kant's 'Copernican Revolution', the experience of wonder is an affective dimension of how consciousness prestructures the world through its cognition of it. Where Kant in the 1750s and 1760s described the "wonderful unity" [*bewundernswürdige Einheit*] or "wonderful community" [*bewundernswürdige Gemeinschaft*] of the world of nature, Kant now writes of "wonderful purposiveness" [*bewundernswürdige Zweckmäßigkeit]* or a wonder for the purposiveness of nature (*OPA* 2.101.; 2.103.; 2:131.; *CPJ* 5:423; *CPJ* 5:364). Human beings naturally wonder, in a manner akin to a religious feeling (*CPJ* 5: 482), at what they take to be the purpose, or final end, of nature.[329] The phrase "wonderful purposiveness" [*bewundernswürdige Zweckmäßigkeit]* in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is primarily associated with biological phenomena, but it maps quite well onto the "plan of nature" which Kant takes as a presupposition of reason in *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim* in 1784. Kant clearly held to this belief for the next five years through writing the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, wherein he said "that if reason is to provide a final end *a priori* at all, this can be nothing other than the human being (each rational being in the world) under moral laws" (*CPJ* 5:488). From the perspective of human reason, the purpose or end of nature can only be a

[328] (Epictetus 2014, 16), but see also (Seneca, On Providence 2007). There are many more resonances between Kant's philosophy of history and that of ancient Stoicism but examining them all would simply take us too far afield here. See (Lloyd 2008, 90-128).

[329] It is also interesting to note a similar kind of wonder at the useful and beneficial character of nature in both *Only Possible Argument* (2:131) as well as in *Perpetual Peace* (8:363), where Kant remarks on the way that the earth provides for humans as they are driven by conflict to inhabit seemingly uninhabitable parts of the globe.

political end. It must also be a political end which is universal for all human beings. This end is no longer the hierarchical order of the Great Chain of Being, but an order of equals.

Once again, for Kant what is most wonderful is the capacity of human beings to be moral, to freely obey laws they give themselves in overcoming natural inclinations. That wonder which they *feel* towards their moral disposition implicitly reveals that there must be some natural purpose to that feeling. It is a *hint* given to us by nature of the future place of morality, a "world in accordance with moral laws" (*CPJ* 5:458):

> In all probability this moral interest would have first aroused attention to the beauty and ends in nature, which would then have served admirably [*vortrefflich*] to strengthen that idea, but could not have founded it, let alone made it dispensable, because it is only in relation to that final end that even the investigation of the ends of nature acquires the immediate interest that displays itself in such great measure in the wonder of them without regard to any advantage to be drawn from them. (*CPJ* 5: 458-459)

In the experience of wonder for the capacity to be moral, nature interests us in fulfilling that capacity to be moral and free. The very fact that human beings wonder at their capacity to be moral and free reveals the purposive relation that their morality has to the order of the natural world. This evidence gives a hint and motivation to bring to fruition this final end. The final end for humans, according to Kant, is to live in a civil society and in a cosmopolitan order, since these are the only conditions in which morality, and therefore freedom, are possible (*CPJ* 5: 432-433).

Wonder thus provides to Kant a *political* sign of an order destined to come. A civil constitution is the end of the historical unfolding of the moral disposition under the principle of freedom (*AP* 7:327). A cosmopolitan society, likewise, is "destined by nature" to develop (*AP* 7:331). "We observe with wonder the preservation of a species of organized natural beings, constantly working towards its destruction and yet always being protected without assuming a

higher principle" (*AP* 7:328). The fact that human beings, naturally flawed and tending towards corruption, are somehow capable of preserving the civil orders in which they live is one which necessarily fills us with wonder. This wonder must then also, given what we've seen Kant say above, strengthen the human drive to realize their moral potential. It is wonder that leads one to anticipate this possibility; a possibility of constituted republics, the only states that Kant finds to allow humans to be simultaneously free and live under laws, and a cosmopolitan society, wherein this moral possibility is a universally shared condition, reflecting the universal capacity to be moral.

For previous forms of wonder – for example, that which Hobbes directs towards the sovereign and his effects[330] – the signs which invoke wonder were purely visible; for Kant, the sign which provokes wonder is not the concretization of the visible state, but the invisible law within oneself and others. The sign which provokes *Enthusiasmus* is not the tyrannocidal violence of revolutionaries or the ravings of the *Schwärmer*, but the evidence of 1789, which shows that it might be possible for humans to live in republics; that is, under laws which they give themselves (*CF* 7:85). This wonder is not for how things are, as it was for the pre-Critical Kant, but for how they *must* be. In wondering at the capacity to be moral we are not oriented towards something which is present before our eyes, but only at something which is always an attribute of a possible future. It is therefore a wonder not for the intrinsic, but ultimately inert, natural and political harmony of the Great Chain of Being, but a wonder for the human capacity, as Hannah Arendt put it, "to forge a new chain."[331] It is a wonder for freedom, and a reconciled natural world ordered according to it.

[330] (Barker 2015).

[331] (Arendt, The Promise of Politics 2005, 126). See also (Arendt, Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy 1992, 3).

5. Enduring Wonder, From Kant to Now

In the midst of the French Revolution, one of the most astonishing, and, as evidence of the fragility of human freedom, terrifying moments of human history, wherein all orders – political, moral, religious, and social – were overthrown, Kant wrote of a wonder which was orderly, non-violent, and yet still political.[332] Kantian wonder is revolutionary in the sense that it is reconciliatory. It binds one, in the subtlest of ways, to this new yet unapproachable cosmopolitan order, which, at some imperceptible and unforeseeable point in future time might bring together the moral and natural orders.[333] Yet however distant it may appear, one can never lose the sense of it. While the Republic produced by the Revolution would be tragically fleeting, the affect which arose at the idea of a Republic, and the wonder towards a political order which could be moral, could never permanently perish. *Enthusiasmus* is a possibility for citizens of every state, as well as wonder for any human being in this world.

This chapter, like the one that precedes it, is written with an aim to understanding a modern use of wonder that is, as ever, fragile and contingent, if not in its possibility, then surely in its experience. The wonder that must be acknowledged in neo-Kantian accounts of politics is one that distributes a circuitry of moral feeling into everyday political life. This is itself a modulation of a certain kind of wonder. One can see this wonder developed from the earliest works of the 1750s to the works of the 1790s in Kant's account of the reconciliation of the moral and natural orders. And it is through participating in this reconciliation that we, according to

[332] For an exceptional study of the Jacobin argument that a sublime act of regicide would serve to unify the moral and natural orders of French society, see (Duong 2017). Even counter-revolutionaries like Joseph de Maistre described the Revolution as a great wonder in the providential history of Europe, but, unlike Kant, as an extreme, and terrifying, example of disorder (Maistre 1994).

[333] To capture the manner in which Kantian wonder suffuses the ordinary with the extraordinary, I have borrowed a phrase from (Cavell 2013).

Kant, *feel* the moral dignity of others, and thus, our freedom. Wonder was not dispelled over the course of the 'Age of Reason' but was transformed and redirected into other objects and locations in political life. With the rise of republican institutions of self-government, wonder was directed not only towards the edifice of the various institutions of the state, herein embodying the sovereignty of the institutionalized people, but also towards the citizens themselves; Each citizen, capable of rationally willing themselves into participation in a free commonwealth (*Reich*) of ends (*GM* 4:433).

A necessary component of that modern republican form of political life is that each citizen recognized each fellow citizen as capable of co-legislating with one another. To support that recognition, to see one another as capable citizens, Kant enlists wonder, *Enthusiasmus*, and the affective residue of the ancient and medieval firmament; a sense of a possible wondrous order of the world. The order here, however, is of fellow citizens. And a truly wonderful and supernatural order it is. When one takes it on faith – making space for both a ruthlessly dispassionate and often self-interested rationalism as well as a belief in one's fellows to transcend that self-interest – then a different kind of order is possible; an order of a republicanism of the spirit.[334]

It might be the case that our "unsocial socialibility" is enough to naturally bend the arc of history towards a political condition of freedom, which our capacity for the teleological judgment of our place in nature tells us must be so, but, according to Kant, nature has offered us a supplement that fortifies our providential conjecture; and that supplement is wonder. Therein nature comes to its own aid in the construction of "such a sublime form of constitution." The

[334] Here I have in mind the nostalgic vision of republicanism in (Cicero 1991). For the eighteenth-century German reception of Ciceronian republicanism, see (Zande 1995).

human will, "revered but impotent in practice" (*PP* 8:366) is thus reconciled to and necessary for the realization of the natural order. This order, spurred on by and itself a wonder, of course does not stop for Kant at the borders of a republic, but rather must grow to reach that greatest sphere of the old order, where in Kant's new order one is to finally become a citizen – a *politēs* – of the *cosmos*.[335]

[335] On "cosmopolitan right" being the culmination of the Enlightenment project, see (Pagden 2013, 370).

Chapter Three

The Whole Mystery of Commodities: Marx's Critique of Wonder

Besides, men see in heaven and here on earth
things happen, that often fill their minds with fear,
and they humble their hearts with terror of the gods.
They're crushed; they crawl on earth, because, perforce
through ignorance of causes they confer
on gods all power and kingdom over the world.
If people have learned that gods live carefree lives,
and still for all that, wonder by what means
phenomena occur, especially those
they see in heavenly zones above their heads,
then they will slip back into their old beliefs
and take on heartless masters, whom they deem
almighty; poor fools, they don't know what can be
and what cannot; yes, and what law defines
the power of things, what deep-set boundary stone;
thus with reason blinded, they err and err.

- Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, book VI, 50-67[336]

Herein lay the spring of the mechanical art and mystery of educating the reason without stooping to the cultivating of the sentiments and affections. Never wonder. By means of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, settle everything somehow, and never wonder.

- Charles Dickens, *Hard Times for These Times*

1. Feeling Order after the Revolution(s)

"They have only seen the Revolution; they must feel it." [337] So wrote Joseph de Maistre in 1796, whose self-appointed mission, according to Isaiah Berlin, was "to destroy everything which the eighteenth century had built up"[338] To Maistre, the French Revolution was an event "unique in history" by the merit that it was "radically bad" – it constituted a "*schism of being*."[339] However,

[336] (Lucretius 2011, 148).

[337] (Maistre 1994, 18).

[338] (Berlin, Introduction 1994, xiii).

[339] (Maistre 1994, 38).

at the same time that Maistre finds the Revolution – a cataclysm of regicide and hatred for tradition – to present itself as a profound negation, he also finds it to be a moment in which order was made perceptible and Providence palpable.[340] Maistre opened the text in which this attack on the Revolution appeared, *Considérations sur la France*, by turning Rousseau's famous "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains" on its head: "We are all attached to the throne of the Supreme Being by a supple chain that restrains us without enslaving us. Nothing is more admirable in the universal order of things than the action of free beings under the divine hand."[341] By this regal chain, the course of Providence has pulled the people of France forward into a moment of terror. However, those who find in the events of the 1790s only disordered and meaningless violence have failed to respond to it with the proper wonder that the event deserves. As "one of the most astonishing spectacles that humanity has ever seen" the Revolution reveals "wondrous relationships"; but "instead of being astonished, we look the other way or talk nonsense."[342] Crucially, the unfolding of the Revolution was not just to be known, but to be *felt*.

Maistre was addressing a question with which other Francophone theorists who wrote in the long wake of the French Revolution were struggling.[343] That is, what would be the sentimental effects of the disruption of social order caused by the Revolution "When Reason

[340] (Maistre 1994, 5).

[341] (Maistre 1994, 3). See also (Armenteros, The French Idea of History: Joseph de Maistre and his Heirs, 1794-1854 2011, 315).

[342] (Maistre 1994, 22 & 4).

[343] On the sentiment of reaction in de Maistre's work and that of other conservatives, see (Robin 2017). For the extremely complicated reception of de Maistre's thought from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, see the essays collected in (Armenteros and LeBrun, Joseph de Maistre and his European Readers: From Friedrich von Gentz to Isaiah Berlin 2011). On the profound influence of Maistre's philosophy of history on nineteenth century socialists, including Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonians, and Proudhon, see (Armenteros, The French Idea of History: Joseph de Maistre and his Heirs, 1794-1854 2011, 283-314). For the influence of Catholic thought on Proudhon, but also French socialism more broadly, see (Vincent 1984, 13-78).

seemed the most to assert her rights, / When most intent on making of herself / A prime Enchantress."[344] According to political economists of the nineteenth century, a key domain in which that rationalization would develop over the nineteenth century would be in the burgeoning sphere of production.[345] As the political revolution of the eighteenth century abolished feudalism and opened the doors for the development of an economy organized around the productive power of private property – capitalism – it created the conditions for the social revolution of the nineteenth century, where its effects would be felt most acutely.

The present chapter is a study of Marx's reworking of wonder, which is a crucial emotion through which order was experienced in the nineteenth century by social theorists and revolutionaries; that is, as a wonder for the social order formed by capitalist production and distribution. I argue that Marx gives us an understanding of how capitalism conditions the way the ordering of the world is felt and the conversion of that feeling into an ideological representation of the world. This conversion creates a support for the capitalistic system of private property in not just disconnected consciousness, but through conditioning an affective disposition towards the perceived economic order in our senses and passionate attachments. The historical thrust of this argument will be that we can only understand Marx's critique of political economy if we see it as emerging out of the context of sentimental concerns of the early- and mid-nineteenth century. One implication is that Marx's later writings should be reconsidered as having an affective, and not merely cognitive content.

In the political history of wonder, Marx appears at first as one who wrote both too soon and too late. He wrote significantly after the early modern philosophical fascination with marvels

[344] (Wordsworth 1815, 70).

[345] (Sewell, Jr. 1980).

and wonders which, scholars maintain, came to a close roughly at the time of Kant's writings in the mid- to late- eighteenth century.[346] And he also wrote far too early for the resurgence of interest in wonder in the 20th century, inaugurated by Martin Heidegger and followed by his students, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, and, a bit later, Jacques Derrida.[347] Marx stands at the end of a certain tradition of political thinking, which bears upon the thinking of wonder as well. As the industrial revolution and transformations of property rights changed the material conditions of possibility for political thinking, theorists such as Charles Fourier, Henri de Saint-Simon, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Karl Marx studied how those transformations fundamentally altered the way that human beings as passionate animals might become attached to one another and the world itself.

Thinking about Marx helps us to understand this moment, and about how wonder figures into it. While forms of economic production created a condition in which 'all that is solid melts into air', including one's sentimental attachments to the world and others with whom one shared it, wonder supplied a paradoxically stable form of attachment. Wonder could be directed towards experiences at the edges of the capacity for cognition – such as the perception of the mysterious and omnipresent commodity form – and could thereby be constitutively ordered to be reliably incited by the socially imbued artifacts of this new, liquid form of social existence. As this condition of social existence radically transformed the grounds for any possible political thinking, Marx is a lynchpin between, as Arendt would say, past and future thinking of the political passions. He shows how our affective disposition towards the world, crystalized in a

[346] (Bynum 1997) and (Daston and Park 1998). See also (Kareem 2014). However, for the connection in supernatural content between Marx's metaphor of capital as vampiric and the rise of the nineteenth century Gothic novel, see (Neocleous 2003).

[347] Note the selected authors in (Rubenstein 2008) and the leap from the Romantic interest in the category of the sublime to Martin Heidegger and those who followed in (Lloyd 2018).

'bourgeois' form of consciousness, betrays an inability to feel the world as it moves towards a radically transformed order. Therefore, I consider and assess a key paradox in Marx's writings: How is it that capitalism feels to us as though it is constantly destroying itself and also, at the same time, as if it will persist forever? I argue below that the answer Marx offers is that these contradictory feelings about the capitalist form of production emerge from the wonderous qualities that are built into its structure.

By connecting Marx's early and late works through this concern with wonder and sensuousness, I present a reading of Marx against that which has become predominant through the tradition of Western Marxism from György Lukács's reading of Marx through the sociology of Max Weber to the critical theory of Jürgen Habermas. Rather than seeing Marx's critique of commodity fetishism and ideology as a purely cognitive 'ideology critique', I show how Marx argued that both commodity fetishism and ideology had a real affective basis in a social order organized around commodity production, i.e. capitalism.[348] To treat Marx's critique of political economy otherwise is in danger of falling into the same position which Marx attributed to the Young Hegelians in the preface to the so-called *The German Ideology*, that they "demand to change consciousness," but "they are in no way combating the real existing world."[349] To Weber,

[348] This means, pace Habermas, that the kind of enchantment which Marx described cannot be eliminated by the "linguistification of the sacred" since it has a real and not merely cognitive basis under capitalism but only, as Marx repeatedly says, through a "negation of the negation" – revolution (Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume Two - Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason 1987, 77-111). The works in this intellectual tradition are, obviously, extensive, but the bare bones are (Lukács 1971), (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002); (Marcuse 1964); to (Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume One - Reason and the Rationalization of Society 1984) and (Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume Two - Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason 1987). For a recent monograph which takes a similar tack on critical theory, see (Chari 2015). However, as is clear below, I depart from Chari in finding much of the material for thinking about the sentiments in Marxism in Marx's (and Engels') own work. Moreover, against Adorno, I am extremely skeptical about the emancipatory potential of aesthetic experiences instigated by any work of art.

[349] (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 1975, 30). The set of Marx and Engels manuscripts of 1845 to 1846 that were gathered by others, at various times and for various purposes, under the title *The German Ideology* has an editorial and publication history inextricable from political history. Even referring to this collection as one unified collection is a fraught claim. However, for the sake of legibility, I will retain the title of *The German Ideology* for

whose writings were crucial to the formation of Western Marxism,[350] the fact that we now understand the world to be conditioned by forces which can, in principle, be perceived and mastered by calculation rather than unknowable primal forces means that the world has become disenchanted.[351] But, to Marx, how these forces appear to function can only be understood through analogy to the affective function of theological processes. The Frankfurt School has followed a path of interpreting this set of problems through the frame of consciousness, but this misunderstands something crucial of Marx's description of the 'fetishism' of commodities in capitalism. However, even though I am skeptical of this path that has predominated in Western Marxism, I am equally hesitant to fully adopt the approach of generally classified as affect theorists, who can be too prone to downplay the capacity of reason in everyday political life. [352]

According to Marx, it is not that political economists misperceive the world through their categories, but that they are following where their senses would *ordinarily* lead anyone under the conditions of capitalism.[353] If one wonders in what might seem an ordinary way at the most conspicuous external objects of a world structured by capitalism – in fact, the most wondrous part of that world, its appearance as an "immense collection of commodities" – then one creates

this collection of manuscripts below not as a unified book, which it is not, but as a common name for a collection of texts. See (Carver and Blank 2014).

[350] See (Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume One - Reason and the Rationalization of Society 1984, 143-272).

[351] (Weber 1946, 139). See also (Bennett 2001, 58-65).

[352] Specific works which center the role of affect in political economy which I have in mind here include (Bennett 2001); (Berlant 2011); (Connolly 2013); (Hardt and Negri 2009); and (Massumi 2015).

[353] For example, see (Cohen 1978, 326-344) and (Wood 2004, 112-162). Surprisingly, it is John Rawls who has one of most succinct formulations of this thesis: "They are real in that with fully normal powers of perception and inference we are taken in by the surface appearance of things. Similarly, we are taken in by the surface appearance of institutions and fail to see what is really happening beneath the surface (Rawls 2007, 342). However, all of these accounts play down the affective register.

and sustains an affective attachment to that world and its predominant forms of evaluation.[354] When one's analysis of capitalism begins with a wonder of commodities, and remains there, one reifies in thought a social system in which the social passions are misdirected towards objects rather than ones fellows and therefore sustains a form of production in which the power to dominate and the structural need to exploit is in the hands of the few who own productive capital. To do so is to succumb to capitalism's enchantment, which is, according to Marx, the predominant feeling of industrial capitalism arising in the wake of the French Revolution.

In the next section of what follows, I reconstruct the literary view of how the rise of industrial capitalism, compounded with the development of the science of political economy, created a felt condition of enchantment in early-nineteenth century Britain. Further, the political consequences of this enchantment were then incorporated into views of early socialists through their appropriation of political economy. I explore this through a brief consideration of Marx's points of engagement with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. In the third section, I reconstruct three key intellectual appropriations in Marx's work, which together shaped his framework for understanding the affective conditioning of industrial capitalism: an antipathy to wonder from Epicurus, a view of human excellence from Aristotle, and a strong sense of historicity from Hegel. The fourth section builds upon this framework to reconstruct Marx's depiction and critique of the affective conditioning of capitalism through the wondrous experience of a system of commodity production.

[354] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 125).

2. **Enchantment, Political Economy, and Socialism**

Before briefly exploring the difference between Marx's and Proudhon's engagements with political economy with regards to the passions, let us see how a few prominent literary critics analyzed the ambivalent emotional life of industrial capitalism in early-nineteenth century Britain, which was, according to Marx, the locus classicus of "the capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and forms of intercourse that correspond to it", as well as the birthplace of the science of political economy.[355] This will give us a sense of the stakes in the difference between the positions of Proudhon and Marx, and therefore, most importantly, of how Marx conceives of the social function of wonder in capitalism. We begin with Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* of 1854. In this novel, Mr. Gradgrind, an avatar of political economy, orders his students to "Never wonder" in order to inculcate into his students the worldview of 'the dismal science'[356]

For Dickens' characters, this meant that all questions were to be solved by simple and unsentimental calculations of self-interest and the deciphering of bare facts. The proper course to national prosperity could be found only through dispassionately reasoning about these bare facts, whereas the impassioned flights of imagination, such as those by the wayward children in his classroom, would only distract one from the unsentimental reality revealed by political economy. Although by the end of Dickens' didactic novel Gradgrind had found remorse for the dehumanizing effects of his cold and calculating philosophy, his exemplary student, Bitzer, tells Gradgrind that his catechism of the whole social system, which Bitzer had adopted from the teachings of Gradgrind, would proclaim that, "what you must always appeal to, is a person's

[355] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 90).

[356] (Dickens, Hard Times 2001, 41).

self-interest. It's your only hold."[357] Any other sentimental attachment is irrelevant. Bitzer's social system is that of political economy, wherein, according to Adam Smith's famous statement in *The Wealth of Nations*, "it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their self-interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity, but to their self-love."[358] By this relation, "On mutual Wants build mutual happiness: / So from the first, eternal ORDER ran, / and creature linked to creature, man to man."[359] The order this sustains is one without true fellow-feeling, according to Dickens: "political economy is a mere skeleton unless it has a little human covering and filling out, a little human bloom upon it, and a little warmth in it" – a humanity that Dickens locates in the child's affinity to wonder.[360] And it is this feeling that is absent in the conceptual apparatus of political economy, or so the readers are led to believe.

Dickens' assessment of the callous character of political economy is partly adapted from the diagnosis which Thomas Carlyle, who coined the phrase 'dismal science,'[361] started to develop in 1829 in "The Sign of the Times", the title of which inspired the title of Dickens' book.[362] In this essay, Carlyle describes a world dominated by a mechanical philosophy, where "wonder, is, on all hands, dying out; it is the sign of the uncultivated to wonder" and for the cultivated to "figure Society as a 'Machine.'"[363] However, at the same time, according to both

[357] (Dickens, Hard Times 2001, 214).

[358] (Smith 1976, 18).

[359] Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* quoted in (Taylor 2007, 181).

[360] (Dickens, On Strike 1854).

[361] (Carlyle, Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question 1849). It just so happens that this disgustingly racist text not only coined the phrase 'dismal science', but also lost Carlyle his reputation and tarnished his friendships.

[362] Dickens also "inscribed" the work to Carlyle. (Dickens, Hard Times 2001, 2).
[363] (Carlyle, Sign of the Times (1829) 1899, 75).

these literary depictions, the world of nineteenth century England as revealed by political economy was also one of enchantment.[364] It is described as one without sentiment, but its appearance reveals itself as otherwise

Dickens describes the industrial setting of *Hard Times* in the following terms: "The Fairy palaces burst into illumination, before pale morning showed the monstrous serpents of smoke trailing themselves over Coketown. A clattering of clogs upon the pavement; a rapid ringing of bells; and all the melancholy-mad elephants, polished and oiled up for the day's monotony, were at their heavy exercise again."[365] Only mystical and sentimental terminology can capture the landscape in which workers toil, even if the principles by which that world is organized are ostensibly purely calculable. The buildings and factory equipment appear as objects out of myth. Carlyle produces a similar portrait, but highlights the way that the aspirations of workers and owners are enmeshed into the affectively charged landscape through how it determines the ideas which they express and their aspirations: "The Master Worker is enchanted, for the present, like his Workhouse Workman; clamours, in vain hitherto, for a simple sort of 'Liberty': the liberty 'to buy where he finds it cheapest, to sell where he finds it dearest.'"[366] As Friedrich Engels would agree by way of affirmative citation, "the abolition of feudal servitude has made 'cash-payment the sole relation of human beings.'"[367] Most curiously, it is through this enchantment,

[364] For a similar reading of neoliberalism, see (Massumi 2015).

[365] (Dickens, Hard Times 2001, 56).

[366] (Carlyle, Past and Present (1843) 1872, 5).

[367] (Engels, The Condition of England. I. The Eighteenth Century 1975, 476). Carlyle's original text uses the much more evocative phrase, which illustrates not only a connection, but a binding, was, "cash-payment the one nexus of man to man," (Carlyle, Past and Present (1843) 1872, 146). For Engels review of Carlyle's book, in which he says that of all the English books that appeared in that year, it "is the only one which strikes a human chord, presents human relations and shows traces of a human point of view," see (Engels, The Condition of England. Past and Present by Thomas Carlyle, London 1843 1975, 444).

supported by the science of political economy, that this ghastly new form of life upheld itself. Though its appearance as enchanted, this "nexus"[368] of relations between human beings appeared as unalterable: "some baleful fiat as of Enchantment has gone forth saying, 'Touch it not, ye workers, ye master-workers, ye master-idlers; none of you can touch it, no man of you shall be better for it this is enchanted fruit!'"[369] The senses of both workers and owners were bewitched into seeing things as unchangeable and eternal. They had taken "transitory semblance for eternal fact."[370]

This ambivalence of these nineteenth century conservative critics of the new industrial world of England, captures something essential about the relation between political economy and the affective conditioning of industrial capitalism: while the new philosophy presents itself as offering a new, fully rational worldview, it is essentially connected to a world which could be described as enchanted or enthralled by wonder. Even as political economy disavows wonder, it carries an ambivalent attachment to it. Social critics up to Marx and Engels would be beguiled by this representative ambivalence, which Marx would seize in his critique of political economy. For other social theorists of the mid-nineteenth century, political economy would be adopted as a language that might help answer the widely acknowledged question of the nineteenth century: whether a social revolution was to follow the political revolutions of the eighteenth century.[371]

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[368] (Carlyle, Past and Present (1843) 1872, 146).

[369] (Carlyle, Past and Present (1843) 1872, 1).

[370] The full passage is worth sharing here: "They have become enchanted; stagger spell-bound, reeling on the brink of huge peril, because they were not wise enough. They have forgotten the right Inner True, and taken up with the Outer Sham-true. They answered the Sphinx's question wrong. Foolish men cannot answer it aright! Foolish men mistake transitory semblance for eternal fact, and go astray more and more." (Carlyle, Past and Present (1843) 1872, 7).

[371] This, we should remember, was not only in Europe, but in America as well, where William Seward proclaimed in his 1858 speech "The Irrepressible Conflict" that between the "antagonistic systems" of the Northern and Southern economies a "revolution has begun" (Seward 1858). Additionally, it is important to remember as well, that Marx and others recognized this shared Atlantic struggle, as he wrote to Abraham Lincoln, in his capacity as

Political economy would provide the concepts for what shape the revolution of the nineteenth century might take. To Marx and Engels, this ignored the ambivalent problem of enchantment.

William Clare Roberts has recently argued in *Marx's Inferno* that the depiction of capitalism as a kind of "social hell" became a predominant trope, or a "flexible myth", among socialists and radicals in the nineteenth century.[372] In this reading of Marx, the structure of *Capital* is as a katabasis, or down-going, of the modern worker through the hell of the capitalist production process.[373] However, I believe that the trope of the capitalist order as enchanted was just as important for the intellectual background of Marx's work. And it is a trope which highlights the too-often sublimated aspect of sentimentalism in Marx's materialism.[374] One can see through reading both the works of French socialists and Marx's criticisms of them how Marx argues that the enchanted view of political economy both determines and constrains the activities of other competing sects of socialists and radicals. In essence, their sense of the world is enchanted by the eternalizing structure of the 'science' of political economy.

A central problem for French socialists in the early nineteenth century, following Rousseau and his Enlightenment interlocutors, was that of the relation between the passions and

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Corresponding Secretary for Germany of the International Working Man's Association, following the Civil War that "the workingmen of Europe feel sure that, as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working classes" and that it fell to Lincoln, "the single-minded son of the working class to lead the country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world" (Marx, Address of the International Workmen's Association to Abraham Lincoln 1937, 281). See also the preface to the first edition of volume 1 of *Capital*, (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 91 & 93) Of course, it must be stated that Marx's hopes for social revolution emerging out of American republicanism were direly overstated. On the elements of capitalist ideology within American republicanism from Jefferson to Lincoln, see (Appleby 1984) and (Foner 1995).

[372] (Roberts 2017, especially 32-33).

[373] (Roberts 2017, 40-54).

[374] It can also make better sense of the cognitive structure of commodity fetishism. The way that we feel commodities under capitalism – the form of attachment – is a function of domination. I will say more on this below.

the social order. Historian Pamela Pilbeam has gone so far as to say that the main motive behind the "total schemes" of early Utopian socialists such as Charles Fourier, the Saint-Simonians, Etienne Cabet, and Victor Considérant, "seems to have been the pursuit of 'order'" and often how a passionate creature such as human beings could be incorporated into that order.[375] In the same vein, it is also important to note, as Gareth Stedman Jones and Ian Patterson have, "that 'socialism' began as an attempt to find a successor, not to capitalism, but the Christian Church" in how it presented a vision of how the human passions could be understood and used to arrange human things into a stable order.[376] The rest of this section will focus on Marx's engagement with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, whose work was animated by an "obsessive desire for order in society" which arose from 'anarchic' economic interactions free from the interference of the state and who was one of the most influential socialist writers of the nineteenth century.[377]

Where Marx's readership during most of the nineteenth century was relatively constrained, Proudhon's was wide. In retrospect we political theorists, who generally only encounter Proudhon today in the third section of the *Communist Manifesto*, tend to think of him, if at all, as one of the many forgotten rivals of Marx's. However, the centrality of Proudhon's works for the European left was profound. Where Marx's Communist League had little to no discernible effect upon the revolutions of 1848, nor in the Paris Commune of 1871, Proudhon was an active participant of 1848 with many followers in France – along with other socialists like the Saint-Simonians, Fourierists, the Icarian followers of Étienne Cabet and Louis Blanc – and

[375] (Pilbeam 2000, 128).

[376] (Stedman Jones and Patterson, Introduction 1996, xxvi). See also (Claeys 1987, 1-33); (Sewell, Jr. 1980, 35-37); and (Vincent 1984, 11-78).

[377] (Thomas 1980, 176). On Proudhon and Marx, see (Jackson 1962); (McKay, Further Notes 2011, 64-79); (Roberts 2017); (Stedman Jones, Karl Marx 2016, 211-222); and (Thomas 1980, 175-248).

Proudhon also had a sizeable representation of adherents among the Paris Communards.[378] And like many of those socialists and radicals of the mid-nineteenth century, Proudhon viewed social transformation in Europe through the lens of the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth. His assessment of the Revolution was, as it was for most early socialists, complicated, and he defined it as driven by a "spirit of contradiction".[379] The meaning of the Revolution was an ambivalent mix of political freedom and the unfolding power of political economy: "The French Revolution was effected for industrial liberty as well as for political liberty."[380]

The revolution of 1830, which established the liberal July Monarchy of Louis-Phillippe reenacted, or, as Marx would say of 1848, "conjured", the liberal phase of the first French Revolution.[381] This regime would be the object of Proudhon's 1840 work, *What is Property?* In the conjuring of 1789, 1830 retained some elements of inequalities of the franchise and legalized a new order of private property.[382] These, as the socialists and radicals argued, both revealed themselves as contradictory to the ideals of liberty and equality. On this point, Proudhon would say that "political economy, like a heavy fog, has weighed upon France, hindering the efforts of the mind and repressing liberty."[383]

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[378] On the relationship between socialist ideologies and socialist politics in mid-nineteenth century France, see (Pilbeam 2000); (Sewell, Jr. 1980); and (Rancière 2012). Of note for this particular study is Cabet's utopian work of 1840, *Travels in Icaria*, which transmutes the early modern humanist philosophical wonder experienced by the Utopians for the order of the cosmos in Thomas More's *Utopia* for an excessive and endless expression of wonder by the explorer Lord Clarisdell for the political, economic, and social system of the Icarians. See (Cabet 2003) and (More 2016). One might say that Cabet's text exemplifies the wonder-struck attitude of its travel writing genre, which dates all the way back to Herodotus's *Histories*. See (Greenblatt 2017).

[379] (Proudhon, What is Property? 1994, 27).

[380] (Proudhon, System of Economic Contradictions 1847).

[381] See (Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte 1975, 103-106). On Marx and historical conjuring, see (Derrida 1994, 61-95).

[382] (Proudhon, What is Property? 1994, 30-31).

Yet, as Roberts has shown, Proudhon's thought on political economy is not as critical as it first appears**.** As Roberts notes, "economics is […] much like the natural sciences for Proudhon. It delineates the mechanics of the social world, telling us nothing about what we should do, but only providing parameters for what we should expect from our actions."[384] To understand how that order of human things might come to be, and its relation to the natural order of things, many early socialists, including Proudhon turned to the science of political economy. As Proudhon put it in *Confessions of a Revolutionary*, "all men are equal and free: society, by nature and design, is thus autonomous and, in other words, ungovernable. The sphere of activity of each citizen being determined by the natural division of labour and by the choice that he makes as to the work he will do, the said functions combine in such a way as to produce a harmonious effect, order resulting from the free actions of everyone: there is no need for government."[385] The problem was to align the order which prevails with the natural order of things, which could be neutrally disclosed by political economy.

Although Proudhon distinguished himself in his time in believing so firmly in a spontaneous order which would rise from mutually beneficial economic relations unrestrained by the state, he was similar to many other social observers in how he turned to political economy to explain the changing world that he saw around him. He even goes so far in the *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* of 1851 to say that "political economy is in fact the queen and ruler of this age […] It is political economy which directs everything, without appearing to do so."[386] And in saying this, he ascribed to the features of this world a natural

[383] (Proudhon, What is Property? 1994, 106).

[384] (Roberts 2017, 49-50).

[385] (Proudhon, selections from Confessions of a Revolutionary 2011, 395).

character. Historian Joyce Appleby put this process succinctly: "With the increase in free exchanges, observers began to construe the voluntary but uniform acts of market participants as elements in a natural system. The new economic relations were undirected but patterned, uncoerced but orderly, free but predictable. They began to resemble – in men's minds at least – the operations of systems in the physical universe."[387] According to Marx, Proudhon thus falls into the thinking of the political economists, who hold that "there are only two kinds of institutions…artificial and natural." And the laws which are held to be natural, those which appear to prevail under current conditions, are "eternal laws which must always govern society."[388] The natural laws of economic movement are just as eternal as the movements of the celestial bodies of the cosmos.

It would be quite natural to think that Marx was here being tendentious towards the position of his rival. However, if we look to how Proudhon explained his thoughts on the generation of order in more detail, it is clear that Marx was not far from the mark. Proudhon's thoughts on order are best captured in a work which appeared in 1843, *On the Creation of Order in Humanity* (*De la Création de l'ordre dans l'humanité*). Although Proudhon would later see the work as something of a failure in its attempt to combine Fourier's "serial method" and Auguste Comte's philosophy of history, we can see in the attempt a number of themes which remained important for Proudhon and are pertinent for the present study.[389] A long quotation from the text elaborates this position.

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[386] (Proudhon, selections from General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century 2011, 598).

[387] (Appleby 1984, 33).

[388] (Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy 1975, 174). See Charles Taylor's very similar reflections in (Taylor 2007, 176-185).

[389] (McKay, Proudhon: A Biographical Sketch 2011, 54). Many parts of the text also bear a resemblance to the clearer formulations in *The Philosophy of Progress* of 1853. It is also important to note that the following quotation

> [T]here exists a natural system of social economy, glimpsed or sensed by the legislators, who must strive to adapt their laws to it: a system that humanity fulfills each day and that I propose to recognize. Order is produced, in unorganized beings or those deprived of reason, by virtue of unconscious, blind, unerring forces, and according to laws unknown to them; — in reasoning beings, by virtue of forces that are felt and that are, for that reason, prone to deviate, and according to laws that these beings are called upon to know. In other words, the brute beings obey their laws without any understanding of them: Humanity is only organized by rational knowledge, and, if I can put it this way, by the elaboration that it makes of its own laws.[390]

Political economy provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding the natural cooperative relations of exchange which might arise with the aid of reason.[391] Therefore, it is the duty of philosophy and science to discover those natural principles to show how they may be unleashed. Although Proudhon in this work argues that science and philosophy depart from religion in that they are not based upon sentiments, but on reason, he makes a few interesting remarks in his *System of Economic Contradictions* on marvels in social and economic life.[392]

In the introduction of *System of Economic Contradictions*, Proudhon writes that "I certainly have less inclination to the marvelous than many atheists, but I cannot help thinking that the stories of miracles, prophecies, charms, etc., are but distorted accounts of the

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bears a remarkable resemblance to the opening chapter of Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* in addition to the other authors mentioned above.

[390] (Proudhon, The Creation of Order in Humanity 2018). See also (Proudhon, The Philosophy of Progress 2009, 6-7).

[391] In *The Philosophy of Progress*, Proudhon stated that "[f]or authority, for politics, I then substituted ECONOMY, a synthetic, positive idea, alone capable, in my opinion, of leading to a rational and practical conception of social order" (31).

[392] On departing from religion, Proudhon says the following: "It follows from this that Religion is by nature immobile, daydreaming, intolerant, inimical to research and study, that it has a horror of science and the novelties of progress. For, in the eyes of religion, to doubt or to philosophize is to dispose oneself willingly to soon no longer believe; to reason is to pretend to discover the secrets of God; to speculate is to abolish within oneself the sentiments of admiration and love, of innocence and obedience that are proper to the believer; it is to charge the primitive revelation with insufficiency, to weaken the aspirations of the soul towards the infinite, to liberate oneself from Providence and substitute the humble prayer of Philemon with the revolt of Prometheus" (Proudhon, The Creation of Order in Humanity 2018).

extraordinary effects produced by certain latent forces, or, as was formerly said, by occult powers."[393] What Proudhon subsequently analyzes in the text are marvels which appear from the development of economic and social forces. Throughout the text, these marvels are evoked at least 24 times. Note in the following passage the play between passion, marvels, and reason:

> And you, reader, — for without a reader there is no writer, — you are half of my work. Without you, I am only sounding brass; with the aid of your attention, I will speak marvels. Do you see this passing whirlwind called SOCIETY, from which burst forth, with startling brilliancy, lightnings, thunders, and voices? I wish to cause you to place your finger on the hidden springs which move it; but to that end you must reduce yourself at my command to a state of pure intelligence. The eyes of love and pleasure are powerless to recognize beauty in a skeleton, harmony in naked viscera, life in dark and coagulated blood: consequently the secrets of the social organism are a sealed letter to the man whose brain is beclouded by passion and prejudice. Such sublimities are unattainable except by cold and silent contemplation.[394]

For our purposes, what is most interesting about this passage is that even though Proudhon suggests in a strikingly bombastic fashion the replacement of "passion and prejudice" with "contemplation", he acknowledges that the society and the phenomena that it produces are nothing short of marvels, phenomena which are named after the emotional experience which they provoke.

This evocation of marvels in *System of Economic Contradictions* points to a central aspect of Proudhon's treatment of political economy, and central to that of other early socialists: the emotional register of capitalism.[395] This is a central aspect of the socialist analyses of the nineteenth century. It is the central theme of Charles Fourier's *The Theory of the Four*

[393] (Proudhon, System of Economic Contradictions 1847).

[394] (Proudhon, System of Economic Contradictions 1847).

[395] See also Proudhon's epistemological axiom that "all our ideas, whether intuitions or conceptions, come from the same source, the simultaneous, conjoin, adequate, and at base identical action of the senses and the understanding," (Proudhon, The Philosophy of Progress 2009, 18).

Movements of 1808, in which he argues that he presents a science to harmoniously order human society according to natural passionate attractions.[396] The Saint-Simonians attempted to do something similar in their desire to channel the social feelings of religion to the "religion of metaphysics. A metaphysics of feeling" provided by the doctrine of Saint-Simonianism.[397] By missing this sentimental aspect of Proudhon's – and other early socialists – treatment of political economy, we miss Marx's response to Proudhon on these terms. It was the science of political economy which was used as the dominant paradigm to examine the passionate attachments of human beings to one another in market relations. However, even as early socialists argued that the current arrangement of the market in capitalism misordered the passions, their use of political economy obscured the wonder towards capitalism as it currently exists that is at the core of political economy.[398] In this manner does the sensation of enchantment towards the system of commodity production enter into the social theories of the early socialists and perpetuate the dominance of workers expropriated from their labor.

This is a point which Marx would make against the 'metaphysics of political economy' in his first "Marxist" work, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (*Misère de la philosophie*) of 1847, which was written principally as a response to Proudhon's *System of Economic Contradictions* of 1846. According to Marx, Proudhon adopts the categories of bourgeois thought from the metaphysics

[396] The point is already clear from the 1808 introduction (Fourier 1996).

[397] (Bazard, Enfantin and Barrault 1972, 275, but see also 20 on social affectations).

[398] In this respect there is a surprising and great degree of continuity between the early socialists, such as Proudhon and Fourier, and neoliberals such as Friedrich Hayek in the 20th century who experience nothing short of marvel, or wonder, for what they take to be the so-called spontaneous order of the market. Friedrich Hayek himself says so much in *The Fatal Conceit*, when he calls the spontaneous order of the market "transcendent", beyond the "reach of our understanding", and "wonderful" (Hayek 1988, 72 & 84). My thanks to Kirstie McClure for suggesting this resonance of thought. And not only neoliberals maintain the enchantment of political economy, but so too do prominent theorists of affect in political theory, and, I suspect, not in the way that is intended. To Jane Bennett, "there is no vision of capitalist or noncapitalist economy today that does not include some role for the commodity form." (Bennett 2001, 113).

of political economy. These include "the division of labor, credit, money", which are themselves expressed in political economy as "fixed, immutable, eternal categories."[399] Earlier in a section on Proudhon in *The Holy Family* of 1845, Marx made a similar point. There he wrote of Proudhon's *What is Property?* that it is the "criticism of political economy from the standpoint of political economy" which would be "superseded by a criticism of political economy" in its fundamental conceptual categories.[400] By basing his analysis of society on the categories of political economy, Proudhon eternalizes those categories. When French Socialists turned to the British 'science' of political economy to understand the world which emerged in the wake of the French Revolution, they adopted for themselves a worldview which was in itself, according to British literary figures, enchanted. They had taken, as Carlyle put it, "transitory semblance for eternal fact."[401]

3. ***Nil Admirari*: Marx's Early Work**

Marx does not systematically treat wonder as such in his works. That much is clear. It was not one of his foci of analysis. However, there are a few striking examples of the emotion in his texts which deserve mentioning and draw us in to see the underlying significance of the experience of wonder in his work. These examples give us a glimpse of how Marx finds capitalism to be structured to produce both the feeling that it is destroying itself, while also seeming to be destined to last forever. The first example is in the *Communist Manifesto*. It occurs in the first section of the text, where Marx and Engels are listing the ways that the bourgeoisie, the class of private owners of productive property, has, "for exploitation, veiled by religious and political

[399] (Marx, The Poverty of Philosophy 1975, 162).

[400] (Marx and Engels, The Holy Family 1975, 31).

[401] (Carlyle, Past and Present (1843) 1872, 7).

illusions, […] substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation." In the place of human relations shrouded in sentiment it has reduced all relations to "a mere money relation", making, as we saw Engels cite Carlyle before, "cash-payment the sole relation of human beings."[402] After listing the ways that enchanted relations between human beings have been dissolved by capitalism, Marx and Engels note that the bourgeoisie "has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals." In the following paragraph, Marx and Engels conclude with the following famous sentence: "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind."[403] It is a remarkable sentence, demonstrating both the triumph of the bourgeoisie and Marx and Engels' belief that this triumph amounts to an opportunity for social science to understand how power *actually* functions in the processes of production. However, it is quite odd that Marx and Engels choose to describe the monuments of capitalism as "wonders [*Wunderwerke*]", achievements which appear as miraculous or supernatural, in that they far exceed the natural range of human capacities through the use of human cooperation, within a section of the text devoted to showing how the bourgeoisie have *eliminated* the role of the supernatural in social and economic life.

This oddity in the *Communist Manifesto* might easily be written off as a rhetorical flourish, though it seems to cut at the heart of the argument, if it didn't recur in such a similar fashion in *Capital*. There Marx again evokes the wonder of the monuments of the Egyptian pyramids, Etruscans, and ancient Asian civilizations in order to demonstrate that the cooperative power of workers that was necessary to build those wonders "has in modern society been

[402] (Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party 1975, 487); and (Engels, The Condition of England. I. The Eighteenth Century 1975, 476). Again, note Carlyle's original text (Carlyle, Past and Present (1843) 1872, 146).

[403] (Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party 1975, 487).

transferred to the capitalist."[404] This alone does not shed much light on the significance of wonder in Marx's thought. Yet there is another appearance of wonder in the text of *Capital* which might help our analysis.

> A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it is capable of satisfying human wants, or from the point that those properties are the product of human labour. It is as clear as noon-day, that man, by his industry, changes the forms of the materials furnished by Nature, in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful [*wunderlicher*] than "table-turning" ever was.[405]

Here, in the different ways that a commodity appears, we have a kernel for our analysis tying wonder to the form of the commodity in Marx's analysis: its fetish-character.

Through its appearance as a second, non-sensuous value a commodity is a wondrous and wonder-working thing. Marx no longer reserves the term "wonder" for only the greatest monuments of production, on the scale of the Pyramids of Giza, Roman Aqueducts, or the *Kölner Dom*, but claims that *all* commodities are wonderous in their fundamental relation to all other commodities. This category, exchange value, fundamental to the science of political economy going back to Aristotle, is one which, in modern capitalism, is predicated on a

[404] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1 1975, 338-339).

[405] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 81-82).

wonderous relation amongst commodities produced for the sole purpose of increasing surplus value for the owners of the means of production. What could this wondrousness mean?[406]

I propose to start at the beginning of Marx's scholarship. To better understand how Marx's deployment of the language of wonder fits into his theory of capitalism and his mature engagement with Proudhon, it is necessary to develop three elements of Marx's early thought which he never fully abandoned: first, his skepticism towards wonder; second, his assessment of human capabilities relating to sight and cognition; and, third, his rejection of sense certainty for a dialectical, historical method of analysis. To quickly develop these three elements, I will respectively touch upon Marx's writings on three important figures for his development: Epicurus, Aristotle, and Hegel. Then we will be able to return, in the following section, to Marx's later work on political economy with more tools for grasping his meaning.

a. Epicurean Enlightenment

In his doctoral dissertation, *Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* of 1841, Marx gave a high estimation of the ancient systems of Epicureanism, Stoicism, and Skepticism, calling them the "key to the true history of Greek philosophy."[407] What Marx finds in these systems, and particularly in Epicureanism, is similar to what Nietzsche found in his *Daybreak* of 1881 to be the sentiment through which the "philosopher of antiquity" approached the work of philosophy: *Nil Admirari* – wonder at nothing.[408] For these schools of thought, to

[406] Both Joshua Dienstag and Sean Monahan have suggested to me an alternative meaning of this to that which I explore below. This is that Marx's work makes the everyday *aporia* of capitalism appear as wondrous in his analysis of it, and thus proceeds from this wondering to an inquiry into the causes of this mysteriousness. Wondering, then, is a result of Marx's demonstration. While this reading is interesting in how it brings Marx's notion of wonder curiously close to that of Aristotle's, it overlooks the degree to which the 'mysteriousness' of economic life was already an evident problem for social critics of the nineteenth century before Marx's work, as Marx well knew. See (Roberts 2017, 56-103).

[407] (Marx, Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature 1975, 29-30).

[408] (Nietzsche 1997, 129).

endure wonder and strive passionately after phenomena that occur outside of oneself is to surrender oneself to forces that are beyond one's control, and therefore to endanger one's chance at living a good life. Nietzsche might have overplayed his point in this summation, but he is not far from the mark about the three major Hellenistic schools of thought, which all, in one way or another, found the passionate experience of wondering (*thaumazein* in Greek or *admiratio* in Latin) to be a threat to *ataraxia*, stillness of the soul, which was either a product of or contributed to a happy life, (*eudaimonia* or *felicitas*).[409] The affective basis of knowledge is something which gave them great trepidation, as it did early modern thinkers such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Hobbes, themselves deep readers of the Hellenistic schools.[410] Marx, in this regard, followed this early modern reading of the Hellenistic philosophy, and identified Epicurus as the "greatest representative of Greek Enlightenment" for the fact that in his thought, according to Marx, "nothing is eternal which destroys the ataraxy of individual self-consciousness."[411] To be sure, the support which Epicurean philosophy gives to modern atheism was also quite attractive to Marx. [412]However, there was more to it than that. Epicurus's philosophy of nature is constructed such that the elements of the cosmos which disturb the soul, such as the unpredictable movements of meteors, are not eternal parts of the cosmos. In this attitude towards wondering and the semblance of the world provided to the senses, we can see a foreshadowing of Marx's

[409] To prove this point with certainty would take me far too afield at this point. However, one can find in the writings of Cicero, Seneca, Lucretius, Horace, and Epicurus much evidence to support this broad conclusion.

[410] On the trepidation with the affective basis of knowledge and science by the early moderns, see (James 1997).

[411] (Marx, Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature 1975, 72).

[412] For a reading of Marx's dissertation which sees it arising out of contemporary concerns of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy, see (Fenves 1986).

attitude towards the objective illusion and the affective disposition of political economists, as well as other agents living under the conditions of capitalism, in commodity fetishism.

Marx finds in Epicurus a model of affective Enlightenment, in that he discovers a relation between the self and the world in which knowledge of the world can be achieved without sacrificing the flourishing and freedom of the self. Marx makes this point a bit more clearly in his *Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy*: "Epicurus denounces the senseless mere wondering contemplation of the celestial bodies as stultifying and fear-inspiring; he asserts the absolute freedom of mind."[413] Marx continues on this point a few pages later:

> For Epicurus the sound of his own voice drowns the thunder and blots out the lightning of the heavens of his conception. We can gather from the monotonous repetition how important Epicurus considers his new method of explanation, how intent he is to eliminate the miraculous, how he always insists on applying not one, but several explanations, giving us very frivolous examples of this in respect of everything, how he says almost outright that while he leaves nature free, he is concerned only with freedom of consciousness.[414]

Hans Blumenberg broadly concurs with Marx's interpretation of Epicurus and puts this point into more analytic language: "For Epicurus the appetite for knowledge is an important source of the affects of fear and hope that rule human life and cheat it of its potential happiness." However, Epicurus does not suggest that one should refrain from the judgments of things which cause destabilizing emotions, but demonstrate the "affective neutrality of all possible theories about the

[413] (Marx, Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy 1975, 418). The textual support for Marx's reading is primarily in the *Letter to Herodotus*, where Epicurus writes that "Those who have observed such phenomena [revolutions of celestial bodies, eclipses, etc.] but are ignorant of their nature and ultimate causes, stand in awe of them as much as if they had no knowledge of them; and their fear may well be greater if the wonderment occasioned by the observation of such phenomena fails to find an explanation in a system of ultimate causes. Hence, even if we find more than one cause for these revolutions, risings, settings, eclipses, and the like, as we did in our little treatise, we must not suppose that we have not acquired the scientific knowledge needed to contribute to our serenity and happiness. Hence we should investigate the causes of all celestial and nonperceptible phenomena by making a comparison of these with the various ways in which an analogous phenomenon takes place in our own experience" (Epicurus, Letter to Herodotus 2012, 110). See also (Epicurus, Leading Doctrines 2012, 174-176).

[414] (Marx, Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy 1975, 420).

natural phenomena that surround man and fill him with uncertainty."[415] This attitude of the self will be crucial as we later attempt to parse Marx's writings on political economy.

One can see Marx test out this attitude to argue against other contemporary German Romantic philosophers, such as Friedrich Schelling, through an interpretation of Plato. In the following passage, Marx interprets Plato's metaphysics in the *Timaeus* through the language of Hegelian dialectics. However, it presents motifs which would persist in Marx's thought.

> In expounding definite questions of morality, religion, or even natural philosophy, as in *Timaeus*, Plato sees that his negative interpretation of the Absolute is not sufficient; here it is not enough to sink everything in the one dark night in which, according to Hegel, all cows are black; at this point Plato has recourse to the positive interpretation of the Absolute, and its essential form, which has its basis in itself, is myth and allegory. Where the Absolute stands on one side, and limited positive reality on the other, and the positive must all the same be preserved, there this positive becomes the medium through which absolute light shines, the absolute light breaks up into a fabulous play of colours, and the finite, the positive, points to something other than itself, has in it a soul, to which this husk is an object of wonder; the whole world has become a world of myths. *Every shape is a riddle*. This has recurred in recent times, due to the operation of a similar law.[416]

Here Marx finds in the transcendental philosophy of Plato an antagonism towards the finite, phenomena world, which is not only opposed by the Ideas, but is evacuated of any meaning by the ideal. All that remains of the phenomena are the empty shells that are objects of wonder in how they only have value by the stamp of the ideal. [417] Below we will see Marx treating commodities in a similar manner, as social hieroglyphs which carry value by the fact that they have been stamped by the form of capitalist production, and thus trigger wonder in that curious connection. However, here as below Marx adopts an Epicurean attitude to wonder, which

[415] (Blumenberg 1983, 262).

[416] The italics are mine, (Marx, Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy 1975, 497).

[417] See also (Breckman 1999, 269).

recognizes the potential to be pulled into external phenomena by wonder towards them but strives to resist that pull. This is not to say that Marx pursues scientific inquiry in an Epicurean manner. In fact, there is much more of Aristotle and Hegel in Marx's formulation of scientific inquiry. However, it is the Epicurean attitude that prevails towards the phenomena of capitalism as they immediately appear to the senses.[418]

b. The Humanism of a German Aristotle

We now come to a more familiar dimension of the early Marx, although not less controversial: his humanism. Here we will look at a few of the capabilities which Marx attributed to human beings with special reference to Aristotle. As I mentioned in the introduction, to make my argument I obviously depart from readings of Marx by such writers as Louis Althusser who claim that there is a clear 'epistemological break' between the Humanism of the early Marx and the 'Scientism' of the later Marx.[419] The connection between the early works and the late works is a difficult question, and not one which I claim to answer or adequately address here. However, I think that any reasonable reading of Marx's work will see that there are clear points where his concerns about the dehumanizing effects of capitalism in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* are carried through to the immanent ideal of freely and fully developing one's capacities in *Capital*. Here I want to focus this question of Marx's humanism on the place of Aristotle in Marx's works, which I will address briefly to establish a few fundamental human capacities which Marx holds human beings to have. This will be important as we proceed to the works on political economy, in that it will show how some capacities are either warped or misled

[418] My thanks to William Clare Roberts for pushing me to clarify this point.

[419] For a detailed response to the Althusserian position, see (Geras 2016).

under the conditions of capitalism. A key part of this story will be the function of the emotions for human flourishing, which will be my focus in what follows.

Aristotle is a regular reference in Marx's work, in particular Aristotle's definition of man in the *Politics*. In 1843, Marx wrote that "A German Aristotle who wanted to derive his politics from our conditions would write at the top of it: 'Man is a social animal that is however completely unpolitical'".[420] In the so-called *Grundrisse* manuscripts of 1857-1858, Marx writes that "man is a ζῷον πολῑτῐκόν [zoon politikon] in the most literal sense: he is not only a social animal, but an animal that can isolate itself only within society."[421] Finally, in *Capital,* volume 1, of 1867 Marx writes that "man is, if not as Aristotle contends, a political, at all events a social animal," which he clarifies in a footnote to say that "strictly, Aristotle's definition is that man is by nature a town-citizen."[422] It is clear then, that Marx takes something central about the definition of the human being, from the early stages of his writing to the late, from Aristotle. However, he also seems to believe that there is something that is missing for human beings in contemporary society which existed for human beings in the world in which Aristotle lived; something, given the centrality of the active political life for Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, fundamental for human flourishing.

According to David Leopold's account of the young Marx's writings, "in order to flourish, the essential capacities of the individual must have developed in a healthy and vigorous manner. This is only possible in a society which satisfied not only basic physical needs…but also

[420] (Marx, Letters from the Deutsch-Französiche Jahrbücher 1975, 137).

[421] (Marx, Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1858 1975, 18).

[422] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1 1975, 331).

less basic social needs."[423] However, I would argue that Marx has a more perfectionist, and therefore more Aristotelian, view of developing human capacities than Leopold is willing to grant. The young Marx was deeply concerned with the historical and economic conditions which would make possible the development of human virtues, even if he might have expressed this through some of the language of Feuerbach: "The real, active orientation of man to himself as a species-being, or his manifestation as a real species-being (i.e., as a human being), is only possible if he really brings out all his species-powers—something which in turn is only possible through the co-operative action of all of mankind, only as the result of history."[424] Human beings are fundamentally beings who can only fully develop their capacities in active communal life, which was the *polis* for Aristotle. In the modern world, which is not organized around equitably providing the economic or social goods necessary for human beings to fully develop their capacities, human beings are still individuated by the order of society, but not to the full level of development which is possible for a member of the human species.[425]

To Aristotle, of course, the best form of life includes the time and opportunities necessary for pursuits of contemplation and theorizing.[426] As Aristotle says at the beginning of the

[423] The basic physical needs which Leopold lists are "for sustenance, warmth and shelter, certain climatic conditions, physical exercise, basic hygiene, procreation and sexual activity" and the social needs are "for recreation, culture, intellectual stimulation, artistic expression, emotional satisfaction, and aesthetic pleasure". Leopold is also careful to note that this list is in no way exhaustive (Leopold 2007, 241). On Marx and human nature, see also (Geras 2016) and (Ollman 1971).

[424] This also bears a strong resemblance to the philosophies of history of Kant and Hegel, but the notion of 'species-being' draws a direct line to Feuerbach. (Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 1975, 333).

[425] Obviously this account of Marx means that I believe that another aspect of republicanism is apparent in his writings: not only the aspect of freedom as non-domination which Roberts (2017) reads into *Capital* from the work of (Pettit 1997), but also the aspect of republicanism that views the *vita activa* as necessary for achieving the full scope of a human life. For this latter aspect, see (Pocock 2016, 49-80). However, I fully acknowledge that to substantiate this point would require a reading of both Marx's *On The Jewish Question* and *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, which I simply cannot perform here.

[426] See *Politics* , Book VII.

Metaphysics, all human beings by nature desire to know. This desire to know is felt as wonder.[427] Wondering and learning about things is a pleasurable experience, since it brings the human soul "into one's natural condition" – a state of knowledge of things.[428] Nussbaum calls this the "original joy in sorting out the world."[429] Aristotle here means 'normal' not in the sense that any human being will allow themselves to follow the passion of wonder to knowledge, but that the average *healthy* human being will proceed from wonder through inquiry towards knowledge. According to Aristotle, "it is owing to wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize", wondering first "at the obvious difficulties", those everyday *aporia* which appear to our senses, but, when we notice them, we cannot immediately understand.[430] The natural course of wonder then is to proceed from those obvious difficulties towards the grander questions, such as those about the ordering of the cosmos and the genesis of the universe. When science and philosophy provide answers to the difficulties which originally cause wonder, Aristotle holds that, in those circumstances, the passion of wonder simply ceases.

In contrast to Epicureanism and the other dominant Hellenistic schools that would arise after him, then, Aristotle found it untroubling that wonder, a passion arising from our senses, would play a large role in not only philosophy but the good life, insofar as it leads to a salubrious conclusion: knowledge. Where the Epicurean attempted to avoid wondering altogether, Aristotle found it normal and fundamentally human to be moved by this passion, as long as it ended in the

[427] Quotations from the *Metaphysics* are taken from the translation by W.D. Ross in (Aristotle, Metaphysica 2001), and the translation of the *Rhetoric* in the same volume, (Aristotle, Rhetorica 2001). (*Rhetoric* 1371a25-30).

[428] (*Rhetoric* 1369b30-35).

[429] (Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought 2003, 189).

[430] (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b10-15).

"contrary" and "better state" in which "men learn the cause".[431] Surely we can see in *The German Ideology*, for example, Marx's own delight with theory when he describes criticism as one of the many pleasurable activities which he would freely choose to do, but would not determine his social existence in a communist society.[432] Here Marx is close to Aristotle's belief, as Marx describes it, of "*theoria* as the best thing," the most pleasant and the best, "or when he admires rational pursuits as a core part of human nature."[433] Moreover, Marx believes that if suitable conditions exist for the fulfillment of human flourishing, "*sense-perception*…must be the basis of all science."[434]

However, due to the alienation humans experience under capitalism, Marx argues we cannot naively rely upon what appears to our sense-perception as the basis of science**.** "Criticism appears no longer as an end in itself, but only as a means. Its essential sentiment is indignation, its essential activity is denunciation."[435] Under capitalism, we simply cannot trust our senses. Even though a healthy society might allow the normal functioning of eyes, the sense of perception has become estranged under capitalism. The attachments that one can forms to the world and others are fundamentally conditioned by the objective relations which predominate in society. "Each of [man's] *human* relations to the world – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, observing, experiencing, wanting, acting, loving – in short, all the organs of his individual being" only manifest themselves in relation to the world, and are therefore determined

[431] (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 983a15-20).

[432] (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 1975, 47).

[433] (Marx, Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy 1975, 496).

[434] (Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 1975, 303).

[435] (Marx, Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction 1975, 177).

socially by the objective conditions of capitalism.[436] To put this in moralistic terms, "all passions and all activity must therefore be submerged in avarice."[437] What is required, in order to bring about a condition in which the senses can function normally is to transform the world itself.

> The abolition of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities, but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become, subjectively and objectively, human. The eye has become a human eye, just as its object has become a social, human object—an object made by man for man. The senses have therefore become directly in their practice theoreticians.[438]

By eliminating the private ownership of property, and therefore the alienating form of commodity production in which laborers have no ownership over their own products, one eliminates both the perception of things as owned solely by oneself as an owner and owned by another as a producer. Cartesian skepticism in social matters is brought to a historical conclusion. One perceives objects as possessed by all humans socially, and thus the world as fully human. However, in contemporary society, according to the early Marx, the senses are problematic for theory. One sees objects through the lens of 'avarice' – as possessed by oneself or another – and therefore permeated by relations of exploitation and domination. How then should human beings make sense of a world in which the senses are themselves untrustworthy? How can one know the ordering of the world and thus gain the capacity to act in it?

c. Hegel and History

The dialectic of knowing begins famously in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* with the philosophical weakness of our bare sensory knowledge of the world. According to Hegel, the

[436] (Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 1975, 299-300).

[437] (Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 1975, 309).

[438] (Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 1975, 300). On Marx's extraordinary belief that social science will no longer be necessary in communist society, see the appended concluding essay in (Cohen 1978).

certainty which occurs to us through our unmediated senses is upon reflection the "most abstract" and "poorest truth".[439] This is due to the fact that what immediately appears to our senses does not alert us to the historicity of the processes behind those phenomena. For instance, at the moment that I am writing this passage, if I were to ask myself a simple question, "What is now?" I might answer, "Now is afternoon. Yet now, as I look back upon this sentence while editing this passage, the 'now' is now night.[440] The knowing that I find in the sensuous, according to Hegel, is overburdened by the self which I carry into it in that moment, which is itself expressed in an ephemeral moment of intuition. And that intuition is no more than an artifact of a moment of the world, which contains its own tendency towards negation: this moment I know is not the moment which I had previously marked as 'now'. True knowing must engage itself in a dialectical process which is fundamentally historical and aimed towards capturing movement in its historicity.[441] Where for Hegel, this is a process, as Marx puts it, "of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking," Marx takes this as the way which theory must view the processes which take place in the material world.[442] Theory must distrust the immediate observations of the senses as potentially misleading one from the historical tendencies taking place in the world.[443]

[439] (Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit 1977, 58).

[440] (Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit 1977, 62-63).

[441] "It is clear that the dialectic of sense-certainty is nothing else but the simple history of its movement or its experience, and sense-certainty itself it nothing else but just this history" (Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit 1977, 64).

[442] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1 1975, 19).

[443] See also the appearance of Hegel in the method of political economy given in the so-called *Grundrisse*, (Marx, Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1858 1975, 38); as well as Marx's critique of Feuerbach's eternalizing model of "sensuous certainty" in *The German Ideology*, (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 1975, 39-41).

Hegel's approach to the theoretical treatment of the senses, a historically grounded dialectical approach, is carried over in his treatment, tacit and overt, of wonder. This approach is also, as I will attempt to show in the following section, shared by Marx. Let us look to how Hegel carries over his critique of sense-certainty to Aristotle's notion of wonder towards what appears to our senses leading towards philosophical thinking:

> [W]e must *abandon* mere intuition and the necessity for that lies in the fact that intelligence is, but its concept, *cognition*, whereas intuition is not yet cognitive knowledge, since intuition *as such* does not attain to the *immanent development* of the substance of the object but confines itself rather to apprehending the *not yet unfolded* substance still wrapped up in the *inessentials* of the *external* and *contingent*. Intuition is, therefore, only the beginning of cognition. It is to this position of intuition that Aristotle's saying refers, that all knowledge starts from *wonder*. For since subjective reason, as intuition, has the certainty, though only the *indeterminate certainty*, of finding its own self again in the object initially burdened with the form of unreason, the subject-matter instils into it wonder and awe. But *philosophical* thinking must rise above the standpoint of wonder. It is quite erroneous to suppose that one already genuinely knows the subject-matter when one has an *immediate* intuition of it. *Complete* cognition belongs only to the *pure conceptual reason*.[444]

Let us cut through some of the Hegelese of this passage. Mere intuition, in which we attempt to make sense of the world as it immediately appears to us through our senses, is blind to the historicity of the world. We simply do not perceive through the senses what is essential about things or the tendencies by which they develop.[445] Hegel accuses Aristotle of only working on the level of intuition in his conceptualization of wonder. Therefore, wonder burdens the subject who experiences it as an individualizing and de-historicizing passion. Although Aristotle writes that science brings wonder to its opposite, knowledge, he does not reject wonder as a response to

[444] The italics are in the text. Zusatz 449, (Hegel, Philosohpy of Mind, translated from the 1830 Edition, together with the Zusatze 2007, 183).

[445] I am suspicious here that Hegel is downplaying Aristotle's connection between discovering the causes, but that is beside the point.

appearances as a starting point for philosophical thinking. Hegel, on the other hand, argues that philosophical thinking must rise above the standpoint from which wonder occurs, the senses. "A talented historian," Hegel notes, "has before him in vivid intuition the *whole* of the conditions and events he is to describe."[446]

In his reading of Hegel, Marx finds a method of analyzing economic phenomena. The first of the *Theses on Feuerbach* gives us a clue as to what Marx would develop in the first volume of *The German Ideology*. The thesis begins by noting that "the chief defect of all previous materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that things [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensuousness are conceived only in the form of the *object, or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity*, not subjectively."[447] Further, in the fifth thesis, Marx notes that "Feuerbach, not satisfied with *abstract thinking*, wants [*sensuous*] *contemplation*; but he does not conceive sensuousness as practical, human-sensuous activity."[448] Reading these two theses together, it is clear that Marx is attacking a mode of thought which views the world apparent to the senses as inert, as an object which does not move. If one takes Hegel's dialectics seriously, this trace of sense-certainty leads one astray from actually understanding the tendencies by which the appearances of the world function. Although Marx does not use the term here, and Feuerbach does not much use it in his own writings, Marx is clearly attacking a kind of wonder towards human affairs which is immune to the historical conditioning of dynamic human activity.

[446] (Hegel, Philosohpy of Mind, translated from the 1830 Edition, together with the Zusatze 2007, 183).

[447] (Marx, Theses on Feuerbach 1975, 3).

[448] (Marx, Theses on Feuerbach 1975, 4).

In *The German* Ideology, Marx continues this attack against the position he identifies with Feuerbach:

> In the first case, the contemplation of the sensuous world, he necessarily lights on things which contradict his consciousness and feeling, which disturb the harmony he presupposes, the harmony of all parts of the sensuous world and especially of man and nature… He does not see that the sensuous world around him is not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society; and, indeed [a product] in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, and modifying its social system according to the changed needs. Even the objects of the simplest "sensuous certainty" are only given him through social development, industry and commercial intercourse.[449]

The wonder of the philosopher, even if it presupposes that it begins with what is apparent to the senses, is led away from actual processes of the human world due to an eternalizing attitude. The eternalizing feeling of the philosopher, the wonder by which Aristotle philosophizes over the eternal movements over the heavens, renders her incapable of knowing the great dialectical process of history which formed the social system at its present moment of development. Under the conditions of capitalism, this leads to the false assumption that the present order of the production will always be. Marx historicizes the conditions under which *aporia* appear to us as objects of wonder. The Aristotelian picture of a healthy passion of wonder in response to those everyday difficulties is at best severely misguided under social conditions in which flourishing is not cultivated.

These three elements of Marx's early thought will be crucial for how we analyze wonder in Marx's work on political economy and will allow us to develop strands of it which would not be immediately apparent otherwise. It is important to note that this section has not argued that

[449] (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 1975, 39).

Marx abandoned Aristotle for Epicurus, or that there is some necessary connection between the Epicurean attitude in Marx and the historicity he takes from Hegel. What I have been tracking in this section are elements of Marx's thought that bear on his analysis of wondering in capitalist society. Surely it would be wrong to say that Marx put aside Aristotle for Epicurus, since it seems rather the case that after finishing his Dissertation, Marx moved towards the materialism of Aristotle as he began to better appreciate the place of external goods in the happy life. However, it seems clear to me that Marx maintains an Epicurean attitude towards wonder at the appearances and the supposed laws of motion under conditions of capitalism, which, as a student of Hegel, he views to historically condition not only the kinds of life that are possible, but the forms of thought which might emerge.

We have from Marx's readings of Epicurus and Aristotle two opposed attitudes towards wonder which will help us to understand the curious way that Marx treats the passion in his critique of political economy and therefore also in his assessment of life under the conditions of capitalism. From Aristotle we have a model of how wonder can lead us to knowledge of the world when its apparent objects are pursued though careful inquiry. On the other hand, Epicurus provides Marx with a hesitant attitude towards the passionate dynamic of wonder which holds it to be a danger to happiness and enlightenment. In Aristotle's description of wonder we have a picture of how we might be drawn to knowledge by passion in a world which is ordered in a way that is conducive to human flourishing. And in Epicurus, an attitude for a world which is inherently troubling to our possibility of happiness. When we consider the lessons of Hegel on how our senses can mislead us when we do not give attention to the historically conditioned character of the world, we are led to lean towards the Epicurean position, even if we might be convinced by Aristotle's model of flourishing under fitting conditions. When we learn of the

conditions of capitalism which, according to Marx, orders the world with little regard for human flourishing, Marx would tell us to not lean but to leap to the Epicurean position, which he does. There might be comfort – and even a mild pleasure – in trusting the sensory basis of philosophical wonder in analyzing the world of capital. However, that wonder is a trap, which leads us to perceive the ordering of that world as eternal. Inquiry must proceed in a historical, dialectical manner to avoid being enchanted by the appearances of the world. Only in a truly human world could one's senses be trusted. For Marx, that world is one wherein the reproduction of the world is controlled by all and not the few. And that world cannot be achieved by theory emerging from wonder alone.

4. Marx's Dialectical Critique of Philosophical Wonder

Marx began his Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association of October 1864 by drawing attention to the contradiction of the so-called progress of capitalism: "It is a great fact that the misery of the working masses has not diminished from 1848 to 1864, and yet this period is unrivalled for the development of industry and the growth of its commerce."[450] The increased productive capacity which attended the growth of capitalism in the middle of the nineteenth century was accompanied by a corresponding increase in poverty. Marx drew the attention of his audience to the extremely different characterization of the moment by the British Liberal Party member and Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Ewart Gladstone. Gladstone puts aside the troubling data regarding public health in the "Sixth Report on Public Health" and the "Report of the Children's Employment Commission" in light of the massive expansion of productive capabilities in Britain, stating that "the average condition of the British labourer has improved in a degree we know to be extraordinary and unexampled in the history of any country

[450] (Marx, Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association 1978, 512).

or any age."[451] However, Gladstone was truly overtaken, according to Marx, by emotion by another curious feature of the economic life of Britain:

> [d]azzled by the 'Progress of the Nation' dancing before his eyes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer [of Britain] exclaims in wild ecstasy: "From 1842 to 1852 the taxable income of the country increased by 6 per cent; in the eight years from 1853 to 1861, it has increased from the basis taken in 1853 20 per cent! The fact is so astonishing as to be almost incredible! … This intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power," adds Mr. Gladstone, "is entirely confined to the classes of property![452]

Even as the misery of the great majority of the people increased, the power and wealth of the few expanded. Gladstone, like a caricature by Carlyle or a character by Dickens, was enchanted by the productivity of the British national economy. The facts of this expansion are treated as "so astonishing to be almost incredible!"[453] Any thought of the chance for the working class to flourish is put aside by this dazzling vision of growth.

What follows below is an analysis of why Marx thinks that the power of political economy to dazzle and astonish is tied up in the wonder of capitalism. This is the critical part to Marx's work, which worked in conjunction, as the quotations above show, with his work as a political organizer. For Marx, the world of capitalism revealed by political economy is one of enchantment: "It is an enchanted [*verzauberte*], perverted, topsy-turvy world."[454] How is that "enchanted, perverted, topsy-turvy world" suffused with wonder, and what is the attitude which Marx offers in turn? Now that we have reconstructed the preceding three elements of Marx's early 'humanist' thought, we can better understand his mature work on political economy which put him at odds with other socialist thinkers, on the relation between the passions and political

[451] Quoted in (Marx, Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association 1978, 514).

[452] (Marx, Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association 1978, 514).

[453] Ibid.

[454] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume III 1975, 817).

economy and the role of wonder therein. Here we have an image of workers desperately seeking a full, flourishing life, knowing that the world as it appears cannot be fully trusted, and therefore should restrain themselves from searching for a form of economic and political organization based on the shapes that they find in that world. According to Marx, to begin an inquiry of the proper functioning of the world from how the present world appears is to be bewitched by that appearance and to be doomed to reify its liquid contours.

We now have a place to begin to understand Marx's dialectical approach to political economy in *Capital*, which he first began to develop in his attack on Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, and we can analyze the feeling of living under capitalism as Marx portrays it. That feeling, as I noted in the introduction, is something of a paradox. The feeling produced by capitalism is, on the one hand, that of wonder for the novel products made possible by "constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and therefore the whole of society."[455] This process is one which ostensibly destroys all sentimental attachments which preceded the productive relations of capitalism and, in *Capital*, results in the displacement of workers into a 'reserve army' of disposable workers that are shed in each revolutionization of production by technological 'progress.'[456] And yet, on the other hand, the commodity form itself, when stamped on a good as mainly valuable in exchange, bestows a quality of wondrousness, according to Marx, establishing a supersensible order of things. So, while capitalism appears to continually disorder itself, there is an ever-present continuation of order, and in both these processes a pull of wonder.

[455] (Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party 1975, 487).

[456] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 781-794).

A few words on Martha Nussbaum's analysis of wonder might help show how I understand wonder to function in Marx's writings on political economy. Nussbaum has developed over the course of several books a rigorous theory of emotion as a judgment of value.[457] In it, she holds wonder to be an emotion which brings objects into view as significant – as objects with value for us – through which we attach ourselves.[458] In the sense of emotion developed by Nussbaum, one could, without too much violence to the text, think of the value theory of labor which Marx develops in *Capital* as how affective attachments to the commodity form create a self-perpetuating system which empowers the holders of capital while dominating and exploiting the rest who must work to survive by constantly bringing economic value into view as a significant attachment – the most significant, in fact, if one wishes to be able to feed oneself.[459] And in this reading of *Capital*, it is the wondrous way that commodities are valued which contributes to the attachment to them and to the perception of the commodity form as eternal. In the rest of the chapter I will substantiate this claim about wonder and value, helping to explain the apparent contradiction between two appearances of wonder in Marx's writings on political economy through evidence gathered from an all too brief reading of *Capital*, primarily the first volume, but also from the notebooks that were collected after Marx's death as volume 3. This will hopefully show how the mysteriousness of commodities actually feels.

[457] (Nussbaum, Fragility of Goodness 2001), (Nussbaum, The Therapy of Desire 1994); but primarily (Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought 2003).

[458] (Nussbaum, Upheavals of Thought 2003, 54).

[459] In no way do I want to repeat the fallacy of the idealist philosophers who Marx and Engels attacked in *The German Ideology* by holding that the effect of ideas or concepts is prior to or more powerful than the effect of material forces, like violence. Marx demolishes this case in *Capital*, particularly in Part VIII on "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation," in which he uncovers the historical development of capitalism as "written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire," (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1 1975, 706). Instead I want to explore, as I've said throughout this piece, the (less acute) felt dimensions of capitalism which Marx explores, but to which scholars have paid insufficient attention.

The story which Marx tells in *Capital* is of appearances, seeming, and objective illusion. This monumental work, which has the "ultimate aim" to "reveal the economic law of motion of modern society" begins with the appearances. "The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an 'immense collection of commodities'; the individual commodity appears as its elementary form."[460] This appearance, however, presents obvious difficulties. As Roberts has shown, Proudhon and his followers, as well as radicals in England who followed the teachings of Robert Owen, focus on these mysteries. The reasonable response of a social observer is to wonder at these apparent difficulties between the prevailing conditions and the possibility of human flourishing or freedom. This is precisely what these writers document. They find the order generated by capitalistic production to be filled with mysteries – the money mystery, the gold mystery, the paper money mystery, and others – "by means of which artful and impudent knaves have contrived to rob the laboring part of mankind."[461] They look to the relations of production and consumption and are themselves perplexed.[462] So, they look to the causes. However, as Marx shows in the first part of Capital, this is a trick that is played on workers, and more generally producers, who live under conditions of capitalistic production. To become fixated on the mysteries of production and distribution that appear "visible and dazzling to our eyes"[463] as problems to be solved through rational analysis, is to miss the fact that it is the economic system as a whole – a system which produces commodities for the accumulation of surplus value – that is the origin of the feeling of mystery. This system as a whole can only come into 'view' from an historical analysis of its movements. To view its

[460] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 125).

[461] (Cobbett 1818) quoted in (Roberts 2017, 70).

[462] See (Roberts 2017, 70-78).

[463] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 187).

movements as *eternal* is to terrify oneself in the same way that Epicurus sought to avoid being terrified by the movements of the cosmos.

What then is the *sensuous* basis of the domination of capital through the ideology of political economy? Further, how does ideology *affect* the body? It does so through wonder, and not through some purely cognitive structure of commodity fetishism. Commodities and products of the enchanted, dominated structure of the social world do not go untouched by this enchantment. The way that we feel commodities under capitalism – the social form of attachment – is a function of domination. Commodities are the physical embodiment of the ordering of the social world into those who labor to create commodities, and those who own the surplus value from selling those commodities. More than that, they are the primary physical objects which one encounters in the world fabricated by capitalist production. Commodities are what one perceives when one looks upon a world given form by capitalism. However, the form of the commodity mysteriously evokes numerous other phenomena:

> A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. [464]

Marx pays close attention in this passage to the physiological phenomenon of sight. And for good reason. What he is analyzing here is the point at which the social world touches the mind

[464] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1 1975, 82-83).

through the senses, and how those senses and the social passions maintain the structure of that world.

> But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things qua commodities, and the value relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things.[465]

Crucially here, Marx shows commodities and the imagined relations between them take the place of the social relations between active, productive human beings. For one such as Marx who was a reader of the sentimentalist texts of the early socialists, and the Enlightenment philosophers who preceded them, the claim that social relations assume relations between objects is not something to suggest lightly. It is a strong suggestion that the social passions, which were intense objects of study just as much for Adam Smith as for Charles Fourier, are redirected towards inert, inactive objects – entities without *energeia* of their own. The 'calm passions' of *doux commerce* not only displace non-economic social passions, but redirect passions towards 'socialized' things.[466] And this is accomplished in the normal functioning of the eyes following that which pulls them to wonder, and thereby leading them to feel things to be as they aren't.

Marx has harsh words for the economists who view things in this manner. However, he does not say that they are *wrong* to view *appearances* in this manner. In fact, this is the normal way that one would view appearances. However, this normal viewing of things elicits an affective response which is geared towards social, human things, rather than towards inert,

[465] Ibid.

[466] (Hirschman 1977).

merely physical objects. What is needed is a different approach which treats the appearances differently – historically and dialectically:

> There it will be seen what the philistine's and vulgar economist's *way of looking at things* stems from, namely, from the fact that it is only the direct *form of manifestation* of relations that is reflected in their brains and not their *inner connection*. Incidentally, if the latter were the case what need would there be of *science*.[467]

The inner connection of things, according to Marx, can only be found when one historically studies the manner in which things have appeared and developed, often out of seemingly opposite things. To Marx, political economists, particularly of the mid-nineteenth century, have made the fatal error of basing their science on what their senses uncritically tell them. Marx's harshest assessment is perhaps aimed at Edmund Burke who perfectly encapsulated the eternalizing passion of political economy in writing that "the laws of commerce are the laws of Nature, and therefore the laws of God."[468]

Of course, Marx acknowledges the massive advancements which figures of classical political economy such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo offered in understanding the shape of capitalism:

> It is the great merit of classical economy to have destroyed this false appearance and illusion, this mutual independence and ossification of the various social elements of wealth, this personification of things and conversion of production relations into entities, this religion of everyday life.[469]

However, despite the scientific advancements of some of the greatest luminaries of classical political economy, the objective sensory order of capitalism – felt by any agent who moves

[467] Letter from Marx to Engels, June 27, 1867, quoted in Ernest Mandel's introduction to (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1 1975, 19 n.11).

[468] (Burke 1800, 31-32) quoted in (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 926).

[469] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume III 1975, 817).

within it – reproduces the feeling of enchantment of that order. It is a "sanctification of ordinary life."[470] Ultimately, this causes, by a regular functioning of the senses, the spokesman of political economy to be a mouthpiece for those who dominate through the ownership of productive property. To Marx, the normal functioning of wonder in a world structured by capitalism will lead one to become a functionary.

> Nevertheless even the best spokesmen of classical economy remain more or less in the grip of the world of illusion which their criticism had dissolved, as cannot be otherwise from a bourgeois standpoint, and thus they all fall more or less into inconsistencies, half-truths and unsolved contradictions. On the other hand, it is just as natural for the actual agents of production to feel completely at home in these estranged and irrational forms of capital — interest, land — rent, labour — wages, since these are precisely the forms of illusion in which they move about and find their daily occupation. It is therefore just as natural that vulgar political economy, which is no more than a didactic, more or less dogmatic, translation of everyday conceptions of the actual agents of production, and which arranges them in a certain rational order, should see precisely in this trinity, which is devoid of all inner connection, the natural and indubitable lofty basis for its shallow pompousness. This formula simultaneously corresponds to the interests of the ruling classes by proclaiming the physical necessity and eternal justification of their sources of revenue and elevating them to a dogma.[471]

And with the aid of these justifications, the historical movement which determines the structure of domination in society persists through the wonder by which agents enmeshed in capitalist society hold to the illusory world that capitalism conjures. Political economy takes this wondrous viewpoint as common sense, and uses this common sense as a starting point, thereby aiding in the persistence of the capitalist form. More than just persist, "under the capitalist mode of production and in the case of capital, which forms its dominant category, its determining production relation, this enchanted and perverted world develops still more."[472] The feeling of

[470] (Taylor 2007, 179).

[471] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume III 1975, 817).

[472] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume III 1975, 813-814).

enchantment and domination feed upon one another in capitalism, sustaining one another as built into the sensorial order of the world.

Even as the world produced by capitalism appears as a nightmare – a social hell, as social critics of the nineteenth century put it[473] – the passionate way that it was perceived due to the objective reality of commodity production made it *feel* enchanted and eternal. Marxian dialectics approaches matters in a different matter: historically. To Marxist dialectics, to use a phrase by Lukács, "the inherent meaning of reality shines forth with an ever more resplendent light, the meaning of the process is embedded ever more deeply in day to day events, and totality permeates the spatio-temporal character of phenomena."[474] This metaphorical light is that of the historical processes behind economic phenomena which give rise to the epiphenomenal categories of political economy.

Before moving to the conclusion, it might do well to briefly dwell on what it means when Marx calls the enchantment of the world by capitalist categories and ways of thought a "religion of everyday life."[475] Religion is a substantial theme in Marx's thought, and not one we can fully explore here. However, if we look to the way that natural religion functions in *The German Ideology*, we find an analogue to the sensory order of capitalism. There Marx, the student of Epicurus who denied the involvement of the gods in the world, describes natural religion as arising from "consciousness of nature, which first confronts men as a completely alien, all-powerful and unassailable force, with which men's relations are purely animal and by which they

[473] (Roberts 2017, 32-40).

[474] (Lukács 1971, 23).

[475] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume III 1975, 817).

are overawed like beasts."[476] This is a response that Marx finds to be a quite ordinary sensory response to an ordering of the world over which humans have no control. Awe towards an alien world is a natural response of human beings. It is a response which will only end, according to Marx, through "an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common," who have the capacity to control and master the powers which have "till now overawed and ruled men as powers completely alien to them."[477] Only communism, political action responding to and encouraging the movement of history, can end it. By adopting an Epicurean attitude towards the alien powers of the world which might give rise to wonder, the eyes of the dialectician are drawn away from the field of vision and towards historical study. The enchanted world of capitalism as it is, "stultifying and fear-inspiring", is not hospitable for "mere wondering contemplation" if one hopes to ever escape it.[478]

5. The Whole Mystery of Commodities

> "The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy, that surrounds the products of labor on the basis of commodity production, vanishes therefore as soon as we come to other forms of production."[479]

Early socialists such as Proudhon, according to Marx, fail to envision a future in which human sociality may fully come into existence. By expressing their visions of social organization through the categories of political economy, however critically, their social philosophy remains enchanted in the terms of the present and is therefore anti-social. It is only through a dialectical analysis of the categories of political economy that one can anticipate a future realization of a

[476] (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 1975, 44).

[477] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 171) and (Marx and Engels, The German Ideology 1975, 51-52).

[478] (Marx, Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy 1975, 418).

[479] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 169).

socialized humanity, and thus of a humanity which can, so to speak, see things clearly; of a humanity which judges value in a human way, or, to use Martha Nussbaum's definition of emotion, is no longer dominated by alien forms of emotion, but free to experience emotions which will guide them towards flourishing. When we wonder at the appearances around us, we tend to reify, in thought and practice, the categories which are presented to us to make sense of those appearances. The mode in which the objects of the world have been produced conditions our affective reception of those objects, and our sense of the proper ordering of the world. Those who experience admiring wonder at the productive order of the world will strive, albeit in profoundly varying ways, to reify that order of the world. The feeling of mysteriousness towards commodities remains a form of domination. The world of capital is indeed wonderous, but to wonder at it is to fall into a trap.

We moderns are creatures who dwell in a material world of our own making, stamped by the commodity form of capitalist production. Therefore, our senses, and our passions incited by them, are conditioned by those forms, since our reason has no other source for perceiving the world but our senses. In a similar manner, modern workers' sensory experience of things produced under conditions of domination may sustain a mode of evaluation which attaches them to their own domination. Even as capitalism necessarily constantly transforms itself and expends laborers as disposable, agents living under capitalism eternalize it by their emotional attachment to its form.

However, Marx's theorization cannot take the place of political action which responds to historical conditions. Relying in part on the old philosophical distinction of appearance and reality, Marx's critical theory is in part a technique of debunking. However, only seeing in Marx a cognitive approach to political economy is to accuse him of one of the main errors that he

attributes to the German ideologists: that life is an affair of the brain but not the body. For Marx as for Aristotle, life consists in action. Even though Marx holds to an Aristotelian view of flourishing, the emotional attitude that he suggests towards the appearances of the world is Epicurean. Our senses and the passions which rise from them, including wonder, might aid us to pleasurably find our way in a trustworthy cosmos. However, in a world produced through domination, our senses and emotions are not to be trusted. To admire is to be subjected to an alien power, for both Epicurus and for Marx. Theory must go beneath the appearances to find the tendencies which order the world towards domination.

Marx, like more literary social critics such as Carlyle or Dickens, finds a nineteenth century world which is both enchanted and resistant to wonder. However, the resistance to wonder in Marx's view belongs to Marx himself. To wonder in this enchanted world is to repeat the enchantment with little difference. Theory will not transform the order of the world. Marx admitted that his work could neither "leap over the natural phases of [economic] development nor remove them by decree."[480] Instead, he viewed theory as at best a kind of Socratic midwifery which could, in addition to aborting the corrupt *doxai* of political economy, "shorten and lessen the birth-pangs" of a new world.[481] Power ultimately belongs to action.

[480] (Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy 1976, 92).

[481] Ibid.

Chapter Four

Thinking Out of Order: Arendt and Political Wonder

"The name of the philosopher, then, will be reserved for those whose affections are set, in every case, on the reality." – Plato, The Republic V, 480[482]

"When you were blind / You touch things for their shape / Have faith in wordless knowledge" – Bill Callahan

1. Seeing the World as it Isn't in the Twentieth Century

The narrator of Samuel Beckett's modernist classic of 1953, *The Unnammable*, tells us little concrete about who he is, what he is, or, to tell truth, what sort of story, if any, he is narrating; but he does tell us something about his condition as an observer: "I, of whom I know nothing, I know that my eyes are open, because of the tears that pour from them ceaselessly."[483] To the political theorist, or really any observer of the twentieth century, which was, as George Kateb rightly put it, "the morally worst century so far", one cannot help but adopt a similar attitude to that of Beckett's narrator if one allows oneself to *endure* the reality of the twentieth century and its horrors.[484] According to Hannah Arendt's biographer, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, this is similar to how Arendt endured the subject of her first major book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: "The emotional power of the book Hannah Arendt started to write in 1945 and 1946…came from her ability to sustain – through four years of intense effort and over five hundred dense, difficult pages – a deep, agonized "Ach!" before the deeds of infamy she analyzed."[485] And it was this

[482] (Plato 1945, 189).

[483] (Beckett 1997, 346).

[484] (Kateb, Human Dignity 2011, 85) cited in (Strong 2012, 326).

[485] (Young-Bruehl 1982, 199-200). Arendt's close friend, Mary McCarthy, gives us more detail on what this might mean: "This power of being seized and worked upon, often with a start, widened eyes, "Ach!" (before a picture, a

sort of willingness to suffer shock that Arendt also appreciated in her friends, saying that what set Mary McCarthy apart from other satirical writers was that she wrote "from the viewpoint and with the amazement of a child who [has] discovered that the Emperor [had] no clothes" and that Randall Jarrell wrote as one who finds "to his everlasting surprise [the world] was as it was."[486] And, most significantly for this chapter, Arendt finds the central concern of the writings of her friend Walter Benjamin contained in the statement: "What seems paradoxical about everything that is justly called beautiful is the fact that it appears"; that is, a concern with "the wonder of appearance."[487]

To exhibit θαυμάζειν, or wonder – a shocked, but affirmative admiration[488] – towards the events of the twentieth century is itself something of a paradox. It is quite natural to be shocked at the world events of the twentieth century. But to affirmatively admire those events would seem to require nothing short of a theodicy. Indeed, in her 1954 lecture entitled "Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought," Arendt argued that contemporary Catholic philosophers,

work of architecture, some deed of infamy), set her apart from the rest of us like a high electrical charge. And there was the vibrant, springy, dark, short hair, never fully gray, that sometimes from sheer force of energy appeared to stand bolt upright on her head" (McCarthy 1976).

[486] (Young-Bruehl 1982, 197 & 198).

[487] (Arendt, Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940 1968, 164).

[488] In what follows, wonder will be used to translate the term θαυμάζειν (*thaumazein*) even though Arendt translates it in a few different ways throughout her career, as the word 'wonder' is always at least a part of Arendt's translation of the term, even as Arendt differentiates a few different meanings of the term for the ancient Greeks in her own philosophy. The explicit translations which I have been able to find include "shocked wonder at everything that is" (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 302); "surprised wonder at everything that is as it is" (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 115); "the wonder at that which is at it is" (Arendt, Socrates 2005, 32); "the wonder at what is as it is" in (Arendt, Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought 1994, 445); and in (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 121); and (Arendt, Heidegger at Eighty 2018, 425) merely "wonder". It is likely that in these later texts Arendt uses only "wonder" to translate θαυμάζειν, since by that stage of her thinking she recognizes the differences between wonder as it is experienced by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – not to mention Herodotus – and sought to "dismantle" those different experiences of wonder as "thought fragments." On "dismantling and "thought fragments", see (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 212) and (Arendt, Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940 1968, 205-206). These different genres of wonder will be briefly explored below.

French existentialists, and German philosophers not only share as a background experience "the sheer horror of contemporary political events," but also a "refusal to own up to" it.[489] According to Arendt, this refusal to own up to and philosophically analyze the background experience of sheer horror is quite similar to the original sin of philosophy: "the traditional refusal to grant the realm of human affairs that *thaumazein*, that wonder at what is as it is, which, according to Plato and Aristotle, is at the beginning of philosophy."[490] However, without "an original experience of *thaumazein*" towards the realm of human affairs, no "authentic political philosophy" could arise.[491]

The problem which this chapter analyzes is the seeming contradiction between philosophy and politics: that philosophy recoils from wondering at the deeds and events of human activity, and yet that no "authentic political philosophy" could exist without the wonder of those sights and the contemplation of them. To Arendt, the traditional mode of *Theōria*, or contemplation, culminated in a state of absolute speechlessness and quiet, which recoiled from the noisiness of human activities, and a beholding of absolute truth set in a 'reality' apart from the realm of appearances of those disturbingly rambunctious activities. However, the beginning point which Arendt takes for political theory is that "appearance – something that is seen and heard by others as well as by ourselves – constitutes reality."[492] The background of Greek experience belies this fact in that *Theoria* was for the ancient Greeks a set cultural practices –

[489] (Arendt, Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought 1994, 444-445).

[490] (Arendt, Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought 1994, 445). Arendt alternates between spelling θαυμάζειν as *thaumadzein* and *thaumazein*. For the sake of consistency, I retain the spelling as *thaumazein* in this chapter.

[491] (Arendt, Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought 1994, 445).

[492] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 50). For an exploration of the "sense of reality" in Arendt and a study of it in contemporary politics, see (Curtis 1999).

including the pilgrimage to religious sanctuaries, the visitation of foreign city-states, or viewing of religious festivals – before it was a quiet philosophical activity.[493] As Arendt knew, "Greek 'theory' is the prolongation, and Greek philosophy the conceptualization, of this initial wonder" at that which appears to us.[494] In a decisive way, "*Theōria*, in fact, is only another word for *thaumazein*".[495] Therefore, analyzing Arendt's writings on wonder – wherein she dismantles the traditional model – will help us to understand the surprisingly intimate relation between the life of the mind and the life of action in her writings and in general.

This chapter is an analysis of wonder in the political thought of Hannah Arendt as written in an historical moment, as was the case in the other chapters, in which it was no longer clear how a feeling of wonder should be politically meaningful. I argue that Arendt both offers a model for the experience of wonder by political theorists towards the field of political contestation, as contrasted to the wonder experienced by traditional philosophy, as well as describes a way that wonder can be institutionalized in human affairs to give the critical attention necessary to sustain the spaces of political freedom. To Arendt, wonder and the thinking stemming from it are coeval with political life, as they are both impassioned experiences of the new. However, Arendt breaks from the traditional attitude of philosophers, including the authors in the preceding chapters, who subsume the wonder towards political phenomena under the search for knowledge or truth, and which seeks meaning through some object external to the

[493] On Greek *theoria*, see (Euben 1990, 50-51) and (Nightingale 2004, 40-71). The inversion which Plato performs in the *Republic*, from the opening trip to the Piraeus for the religious festival of the Thracians to the formulation of philosophical theory, is paradigmatic.

[494] The quotation is from (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 115). To Arendt that the "passion for seeing" was "the basic Greek attitude to the world seem[ed to her] too obvious to require documentation" (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 130).

[495] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 302).

world apparent to the senses, whether it be a supersensible 'ideal' or some transcendent narrative of history. Rather, political theory as an activity of wondering must be, in the formulation of Wendy Brown, a meaning making enterprise which struggles to make sense of the wondrous events and deeds of political life.[496]

This argument is framed historically through Arendt's break from German philosophy and her critique of the major political ideologies of the mid-twentieth century. In both cases, Arendt finds a refusal to see and endure, in the sense of *pathos*, the activities of human affairs. Against this background of a refusal to endure wonder, Arendt dismantles the different kinds of responses to wonder by examining *thaumazein* in ancient Greek thought, particularly that of Aristotle, Plato, the ancient historians and poets, and, finally, Socrates.[497] From all these responses, Arendt excavates a way to respond to wonder in search of understanding, as opposed to philosophical truth or absolute knowledge. Once we clearly grasp the full import of Arendt's writing on wonder, we will not only better understand the fraught relation between political philosophy and politics, but also add to our understanding of how secularization has affected the role of emotions in how we experience and evaluate political life. This historically grounded analysis of wonder in Arendt's political thought will also provide a way to explore Arendt's often overlooked perspective on the involvement of emotions in politics, allowing us to see Arendt's place in the history of the emotions in political thought. It does so through untangling the activities of vision and contemplation in their relation to passion.

[496] According to Brown, "insofar as theory imbues contingent or unconscious events, phenomena, or formations with meaning and with location in a world of theoretical meaning, theory is a sense-making enterprise of that which often makes no sense, of that which may be inchoate, unsystematized, inarticulate," (Brown 2002, 574).

[497] On wonder in ancient Greek thought in general, see (Hunzinger, Wonder 2015).

What then is the meaning of 'vision' for political theorists today, particularly for those theorists who take inspiration from Arendt's works? Do they share the same problem that Arendt identified in traditional philosophy, that it turns away from wondering at the world in favor of speechless contemplation? According to Sheldon Wolin's classic formulation, "political philosophy constitutes a form of 'seeing' political phenomena" as a vision.[498] To Wolin, a 'vision' means both a descriptive report and also a semi-poetic vision which relies upon the imagination to both fill in the details and also suggest an order which is not fully present, but is "a projection of the political order into a time that is yet to be."[499] If this is so, then 'vision' for political theorists is both concerned with the world as we find it, and the world as we imagine it to be. It would seem that political theory is caught in the same paradox of wondering about the world, but of ultimately turning to fabricated ideas to make sense of it.

Recently, Tracey B. Strong has argued in his 2012 book, *Politics Without Vision: Thinking without a Bannister in the Twentieth Century* that the major political thinkers of the twentieth century wrote without any reliance on a comprehensive vision provided by the poetic imagination. His book is therefore focused on "precisely those figures who reject the need for, and the possibility of, a 'vision.'"[500] If there is a 'hero' of the book, it is certainly Hannah Arendt, who is the focus of the penultimate chapter and supplies the German phrase "*Denken ohne Geländer"* – translated into English – for the second half of the title.[501] However, it is quite

[498] (Wolin, Politics and Vision 2004, 17).

[499] (Wolin, Politics and Vision 2004, 20). See also (Wolin, Political Theory as a Vocation 1969).

[500] (Strong 2012, 7).

[501] The metaphor was one which Arendt, ironically, "never published but kept for [herself]" and only came to public knowledge through her mentioning it during a conference in 1972 on "The Work of Hannah Arendt" subsequently published in a few anthologies, most recently as (Arendt, Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt 2018, 473).

odd to find Strong's discussion of *thaumazein* – for Arendt the *pathos* by which we experience the world in thought – to beso short and dismissive. According to Strong's reading, Arendt finds philosophical wonder to be a problem, one most paradigmatically embodied in the example of Heidegger's excessive wondering leading him to blunder his way into supporting Nazism. In this truncated reading of wonder in Arendt's thought, Strong is in the company of many others who principally think of Arendt's writings on wonder as more or less an argument with Heidegger over the appreciation of the public life over the philosophic.[502] Even though Arendt's arguments with Heidegger, principally in "Martin Heidegger at 80" and less overtly in "Philosophy and Politics", were important occasions for Arendt's reflections on the wonder of political life, they in no way are the sum of those reflections. While certainly not *wrong* to focus on these texts, focusing on them exclusively leads to misleading conclusions, such as that wondering always concludes in speechlessness as it does for Plato and Heidegger. Socrates, to take the most obvious example, had *a lot* to say after his bouts of *thaumazein*. Therefore, if we take Arendt's texts on Heidegger as the sum of Arendt's thought on wonder, we are left with a profoundly misleading portrait of the relation between the life of the mind and the active life, and therefore of political theory. In those texts Arendt is critical of *one kind* of response to wonder, which is a fundamental capacity of the human condition and not subsumable to any one kind of response or interpretation. It overlooks the central role of *passionate thinking* in Arendt's writings on politics.

[502] See especially (Dolan 2000, 268-270); (Lloyd 2018, 120-139); (Rubenstein 2008, 20-24); (Strong 2012, 329-331); and (Taminiaux 1997, 168-198). Kateb's reflections on Arendt and wonder are very interesting in not only looking beyond the Arendt/Heidegger relation, but also in how he insists on a unitary view of wonder by seeing it, in composite with gratitude, as the "substratum of Arendt's thought on the human and individual", in (Kateb, Hannah Arendt 1983, 165-166). In fact, Arendt's turning from the gratitude of the "Concluding Remarks" in the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* to a systematic analysis and 'dismantling' of wonder after the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, as we'll explore below, makes this idea of a 'composite feeling' a little awkward.

As such, this chapter takes seriously the many ways in which wonder, the *pathos* of thought, appears in Arendt's texts. Accordingly, the reading of Arendt that this chapter offers brings her writings surprisingly close to the texts of affect theory, with its emphasis on the "visceral register" of theory, than readers of Arendt are accustomed to acknowledge.[503] However, it still takes seriously the fact that, as Linda M.G. Zerilli has noted, "affect and cognition are not two different systems, but radically entangled."[504] In Arendt's account of wonder, we can see the political valence of that entanglement of affect and cognition.[505] Put another way, we can see an account of affect which is not debilitating to thinking, but binds it to political life.

Arendt's place is in this dissertation is rightly at the end; a conclusion to a history of treating wonder in politics in terms of knowledge rather than meaning. Like the theorists in previous chapters of this dissertation, Arendt takes up the problem of making sense of the new phenomena of the modern world, and also, like those previous theorists, turns back to the thought of antiquity for aid in that endeavor. In the second section of this chapter, I track the dismantling of ancient Greek thought which Arendt conducted to sort through the modern paradoxes of contemplation and 'History,' which she found to plague the modern thinkers of her own moment,

[503] For an assessment of the predominant reading of Arendt as opposed to the passions, as well as a sustained rejoinder to that reading with a focus on anger and courage, see (Degerman 2019). On the "visceral register" of political thinking in theorists of affect, see especially (Connolly, Why I am not a secularist 1999, 11, 24, 27, 32, & 35); and (Connolly, Neuropolitics 2002, 106-107, 128-129, 136, & 142).

[504] (Zerilli, A Democratic Theory of Judgment 2016, 261). The chapter of Zerilli's *A Democratic Theory of Judgment* on affect theory was originally published as (Zerilli, The Turn to Affect and the Problem of Judgment 2015).

[505] I will also note here that the second section of this chapter will make clear why Arendtians such as Zerilli are often perplexed to find that Arendt rejected any productive role for the imagination, (Zerilli, "We Feel Our Freedom": Imagination and Judgment in the Thought of Hannah Arendt 2005, 163-164). I will show that, for Arendt, the productive use of the imagination, which here Zerilli shares with affect theorists such as Brian Massumi, imperils theory into falling into ideology. See (Massumi 2002, 12-13). At the risk of being impertinent, to argue for a productive role of the imagination, rather than a "kind of imagination, which actually is understanding," (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994, 323), is to offer a quasi-Arendtian substitution of making for acting.

especially Martin Heidegger. I show how Arendt found in the writings of ancient historians an approach to wonder which dissolved some of these paradoxes of modern philosophy which led it to turn to grand narratives of History to bestow meaning upon politics. In the third section, I explore the function of wonder in Arendt's political theory, particularly as it is developed in *The Human Condition*, as guiding it as a 'meaning-making enterprise.' Here I show how Arendt took up the task of approaching political phenomena with a passion of wonder. In the fourth section, I show how Arendt's writings on wonder explore the intimate relation of the life of the mind and the active life in the contemporary world. Action and thinking may not be the same kinds of activity, but they need one another; and the passion of wonder is the medium tethering them together. Here we can also see how Arendt addresses the temporal dimension of wonder, which bestows upon a perceived object a permanence in time that may serve as the basis for a stable ordering of the world. To Arendt, the fact that wonder is a *pathos* means not only that it is a feeling which crosses the boundaries between, metaphorically speaking, the mind and the heart, but it is something which is *endured* in time. I then conclude by reflecting on the contemporary urgency of Arendt's mode of wondering.

2. Goodbye to All That: Arendt and German Philosophy

During a conversation with Gunther Gaus in 1964, Arendt noted with finality that "I have said good-bye to philosophy once and for all"[506] This was a long journey from philosophy to political theory, but it began in earnest when Arendt was forced to emigrate from Germany in 1933, at which point political "indifference was no longer possible." From then on, she started to think

[506] (Arendt, "What Remains? The Language Remains": A Conversation with Günter Gaus 1994, 2). This statement might appear to become untenable with Arendt's work on *The Life of the Mind* in the later part of her authorship. However, if one hears her remark as 'being done' with a certain tradition of philosophy, which views 'Man' in the singular, and views thinking as fundamentally opposed to politics, then her remark would hold true to the end of her life.

about politics systematically.[507] She would not have left it 'once and for all' until after she reexamined the tradition of political thought during her research following the initial publication of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. As was clear to any reader of the first edition of *Origins*, the analysis of Stalinism in the Soviet Union was slim at best. This was not lost on Arendt, and in 1952 she successfully proposed a book project for a Guggenheim Fellowship on the "Totalitarian Elements in Marxism" which was subsequently retitled as "Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought." However, as Arendt recognized, to connect totalitarianism in some fashion to Marx was to condemn the tradition of political thought itself. As Margaret Canovan wrote, "Arendt's question for the sources of Marxist totalitarianism led her right back to the beginnings of Western political thought" and thus she needed to work her way through the entire canon from Plato to Hegel."[508] Through this study, Arendt came to the conclusion that "as an ideology, Marxism is doubtless the only link that binds the totalitarian form of government directly to that tradition."[509] The key link, which this section will explore, is the turning to history to bestow meaning upon the field of human activities. It was not just philosophy, but German philosophy in particular to which Arendt said goodbye and the one strand of German philosophy which Arendt left most vocally was that of the historicism which ran from Hegel to

[507] (Arendt, "What Remains? The Language Remains": A Conversation with Günter Gaus 1994, 4); but see also (Arendt, The Eichmann Controversy: A Letter to Gershom Scholem 2007, 466).

[508] (Canovan, Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought 1992, 64 & 66-67). On the Marx project, see (Canovan, Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought 1992, 63-98); (Kohn 2005); and (Weisman 2014). Although much of the work from the Marx project was printed as "Ideology and Terror" in a subsequent edition of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, essays in *Between Past and Future*, and *On Revolution* crucial excerpts from, and lectures related to, the project have recently been published as (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994); (Arendt, The Promise of Politics 2005); (Arendt, Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought 2018); and (Arendt, The Great Tradition 2018). It is now available in one volume as (Arendt, The Modern Challenge to Tradition: Fragmente eines Buchs 2018).

[509] (Arendt, Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought 2018, 7).

Heidegger.[510] Like many of her generation brought up in German philosophy, including Leo Strauss and Karl Löwith, Arendt found the historicism of German philosophy to cloud important philosophical questions in obscurity, which was a continuation of the old philosophical practice, going back to Plato and Aristotle, to find the meaning of politics in a location other than in politics itself. [511] Although Heidegger attempted to return philosophy to question the meaning of human existence, even he ultimately determined the answer to that question through a grand historical narrative. The effect of this, as Arendt would later argue, would be to lead philosophy away from any genuine wonder towards human activities.

a. From German Historicism…

Arendt came to this grand evaluation of philosophy and wonder while revising her understanding of ideology after her initial assessment of it in the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.[512] In modern ideologies, Arendt would find the culmination of the traditional refusal of political philosophy to attend with wonder human actions and events. As Arendt would decide while undertaking this research, the problem of ideology, particularly in its Marxist formulation, was one rooted in the fundamental problems of the Western tradition of philosophy. It was also one which was rooted in a modulated form of wonder experienced by a figure she would come to call *homo faber* in works such as *The Human Condition*. In the first edition of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt ends the text with the subsequently replaced "Concluding Remarks" in which she opposes the dominance in totalitarian states by ideologies, which are

[510] Arendt: "If I can be said to 'have come from anywhere,' it is from the tradition of German philosophy," (Arendt, The Eichmann Controversy: A Letter to Gershom Scholem 2007, 466).

[511] On historicism: for Strauss, see especially (Strauss, Natural Right and History 1953); and (Strauss, Political Philosophy and History 1959). For Löwith, see (Löwith 1949).

[512] On the deep changes between different editions of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, see (Tsao, The Three Phases of Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism 2002).

built on a distrust and resentment of all things given, against a "fundamental gratitude for the few elementary things that are invariably given us, such as life itself, the existence of man and the world." In politics, "gratitude emphasizes that we are not alone in the world."[513]

In contrast to gratitude, ideology is depicted as a technique of totalitarian regimes to replace common sense with a kind of supersense. "Over and above the senselessness of totalitarian society is enthroned the ridiculous supersense of its ideological superstition."[514] Even though the world as it presents itself to the senses regularly disproves the ridiculous 'logicality' of ideology, ideologists claim to have the "key to history," or the "solution to the riddles of the universe."[515] No matter how much one questions those who are seized by an ideology, one could never disabuse them of their attachment to their supposed keys and solutions. This supersense then is made to take the place of the senses, in the fact that totalitarianism aims to entirely remake the world according to its logical system. The passionate attitude towards the world is then a "contempt for factuality" – for all things that are given in the world by nature rather than made by man.[516] This will likely strike readers of *The Human Condition* as very familiar, in that it resonates with arguments that Arendt makes in the chapter on the "Traditional Substitution of Making for Acting" in that text.[517] However, before making those arguments Arendt would

[513] (Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 1951, 438). On gratitude in Arendt's thought generally, see (Kateb, Hannah Arendt 1983, 165-169). On gratitude in the first edition of *Origins* and its subsequent absence, see (Tsao, Arendt's Augustine 2010, 45-50).

[514] (Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 1951, 431).

[515] (Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 1951, 431).

[516] (Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 1951, 432).

[517] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 220-230).

undergo a significant shift in her thinking by tying ideology to modern problems of historical thinking endemic to the tradition of philosophy, particularly in the German strand.[518]

This shift would start most notably in "Ideology and Terror," given first as a lecture in the summer of 1952 in Heidelberg, then published in a *Festschrift* for Karl Jaspers in February 1953, subsequently revised and expanded for publication in *The Review of Politics* in 1953, and finally replacing the "Concluding Remarks' in later editions of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, starting with the 1955 German edition.[519] In "Ideology and Terror," Arendt defines ideology as "quite literally what its name indicates: it is the *logic of an idea*." She then follows this definition with a near restatement of a sentiment from the "Concluding Remarks," that "ideologies pretend to know the mysteries of the whole historical process – the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future – because of the logic inherent in their respective ideas." This more or less rephrases a few passages from the previous conclusion to *Origins*. Yet after this near restatement, Arendt makes two rather strange claims, which introduce new dimensions to ideology. The first is that "ideologies are never interested in the miracle of being."[520] The second is that "the 'idea' of ideology is neither the eternal essence grasped by the eyes of the mind nor the regulator of reason – as it was from Plato to Kant – but has become an instrument of explanation."[521] This coupling of claims appears as something of a *non sequitur* in

[518] (Arendt, The Eichmann Controversy: A Letter to Gershom Scholem 2007, 466).

[519] See (Tsao, The Three Phases of Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism 2002, 604); as well as (Arendt, Ideologie und Terror 1953); (Arendt, Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government 1953); and (Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 1968).

[520] (Arendt, Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government 1953, 316).

[521] (Arendt, Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government 1953, 316). These two sentences do not appear in the version of the text in the Jaspers *Festschrift*, (Arendt, Ideologie und Terror 1953). It is possible, but by no means certain, that they were added in response to some of Jaspers' critique of the original essay in his letter to Arendt of April 3, 1953. See (Arendt and Jaspers, Hannah Arendt Karl Jaspers Correspondence 1926-1969 1992, 208).

the text. Of course, it makes sense that Arendt would describe the historicality of the logic of ideology, given what she had written in *Origins* about the emphasis in totalitarian ideologies on movement. But from what is Arendt distinguishing ideology? What would it mean to be "interested in the miracle of being" or to grasp an eternal essence by the eyes of the mind?

These phrases really only make sense when considered alongside Arendt's reflections in the last chapter of *The Human Condition*, "The *Vita Activa* and the Modern Age," on contemplation, "the beholding of something."[522] Here Arendt notes that there are two kinds of contemplation, both of which are rooted in the thought of Plato and Aristotle. The first was the "speechless state of contemplation" which both Plato and Aristotle took to be the end of philosophy.[523] This begins in *thaumazein*, which Arendt calls here the "shocked wonder at the miracle of being," and 'rises' up to the contemplation of truth.[524] The second kind of contemplation is the use of "the inner eye" to behold "the shape of the model according to which [one] fabricates his object."[525] Reading "Ideology and Terror" in light of this, it appears that Arendt believed that ideology functioned in a way similar enough to philosophical contemplation that it required some subtle distinctions. It was important to Arendt to note that, first, ideology did not begin in wonder of the miracle of being and, second, the 'idea' which the ideologist beholds was not that of Plato or Kant, but the logic of historical movement, a process. However, ideology did rely on the experience of wondrously beholding some kind of absolute standard set apart from the world of the senses which could then be used as a rule to regulate one's actions. In

[522] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 301).

[523] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 302).

[524] Wonder is described as a response to the "miracle of being" on (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 303).

[525] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 302).

this reliance, modern ideologies, particularly Marxism, share a trace of the tradition of Western philosophy.

Arendt argues that through this trace from the tradition of Western philosophy, "modern ideologies" are "fitted to immunize man's soul against the shocking impact of reality."[526] Since the spectacle of the triumph and tragedy of the French Revolution, the modern tradition of political philosophy, most famously embodied in the writings of Hegel, has been filled with a "feeling of awe and wonder at the power of history itself" which is exerted through "the force of history and historical necessity."[527] In contrast to the view of the first edition of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt now views ideology as cutting off human beings from their sense of the world as it is given, let alone any extreme experience of the world as shocking or admirable.

It is not gratitude that Arendt now opposes to ideology but wonder of the world. To show gratitude requires no thinking, whereas shock and interest spur one to think. And in gratitude, we need not ponder the meaning of the things we appreciate, we need merely appreciate them. What is important here is not that the ideologists, namely the totalitarian rulers Hitler and Stalin, had any new 'ideas', but that they made the 'stringent logicality" of ideological reasoning permeate the entire regime.[528] While the content of the ideology of Nazism in racism bore no resemblance to the main strands of the Western tradition of political thought, the content of Stalinist ideology was related, in however corrupt a form, to central strands of the tradition of philosophy with its centering of History. And these strands were resistant to wondering about the meaning of things apparent to the senses.

[526] (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 135).

[527] (Arendt, On Revolution 1963, 43).

[528] (Tsao, The Three Phases of Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism 2002, 606).

This centering of History is the legacy of Hegel, who after the French Revolution introduced into the realm of human affairs the "old absolute of the philosophers" in the new form of a historical process.[529] The dichotomy which Plato and Aristotle held between "seeing the truth in solitude and remoteness and being caught in the relationships and relativities of human affairs" was thereby retained but overturned by Hegel, by claiming that the absolute revealed itself historically.[530] However, to Hegel the effect of the absolute was still meant to be the same: to replace the quest for meaning with the desire to know the truth. It was meant to "impose absolute standards on a realm which is made up of human affairs and relations."[531]

This, according to Arendt, is a reformulation of Aristotle's interpretation of the beginning of philosophy which Plato identified as wonder in his *Theaetetus*. In *Theaetetus* 155d, Plato wrote that "wonder is what the philosopher endures most; for there is no other beginning [ἀρχὴ] of philosophy."[532] Both Plato and Aristotle would take it as axiomatic that the *pathos* of speechless wonder was the beginning of philosophy. However, although Aristotle follows Plato in finding that the end of philosophy is a kind of speechless wonder, beholding ultimate truth for Plato and pure vision (*νοῦς*) for Aristotle, the interpretation that the two have of this path is quite different.[533] For Plato, wonder is the true ἀρχὴ, which, Arendt points out, means both beginning and guiding principle. It is both the feeling which is at the origin of philosophizing as well as the

[529] (Arendt, On Revolution 1963, 42).

[530] (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 115). This passage was originally in (Arendt, Tradition and the Modern Age 1954, 74), but was relocated to "What is Authority?" in *Between Past and Future* to flesh out the "original philosophical experiences underlying the doctrine of ideas" which Arendt left open in (Arendt, What Was Authority? 1958, 93).

[531] (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 132). See also (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 457).

[532] This is Arendt's translation in (Arendt, Socrates 2005, 32). The Greek is "μάλα γὰρ φιλοσόφου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν: οὐ γὰρ ἄλλη ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας ἢ αὕτη."

[533] (Arendt, The Concept of History 2006, 47).

feeling which always guides it. Politically speaking, Platonic wonder is blinding and disorienting to all those who experience it, since the field of human activities appears dim after beholding the light of the ideas.[534] The "subjective act of vision…takes precedence over objective truth."[535]

For Aristotle, Platonic wonder is no longer a principle, but merely a beginning.[536] According to Aristotle, "all men by nature desire to know" and take pleasure in exploring the sights presented to the senses.[537] Wonder thus becomes "mere astonishment or puzzlement [*aporein*]" by which humans feel their lack of knowledge.[538] When one "learns the cause" of things, wonder comes to an end in "the better state."[539] The object of wonder is an object of desire, and desiring wonder comes to an end when one knows.[540] The subsumption of wonder under the 'desire to know' puts philosophy on the path of a "continuous flight from wonder."[541] And it is this interpretation of wonder which becomes dominant in the tradition of philosophy.[542] In this Aristotelian interpretation, the quest for meaning which begins with wonder is subsumed in the desire to know. By this Aristotle "becomes the founder of impractical' science, which in

[534] See (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 466 & 468). Arendt notes that this interpretation of Plato's Allegory of the Cave from the *Republic* is based on the reading by Heidegger in (Heidegger, Plato's Doctrine of Truth (1931/32, 1940) 1998).

[535] (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 112n.16).

[536] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 114).

[537] (Aristotle, Metaphysica 2001, 980a).

[538] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 114).

[539] (Aristotle, Metaphysica 2001, 983a).

[540] (Aristotle, Rhetorica 2001, 1371a).

[541] Arendt quoting Albert Einstein in (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 137).

[542] (Rubenstein 2008, 12-17).

the end proved so extraordinarily and disastrously practical."[543] This happened when Marx 'overturned' Hegel by applying the laws of historical necessity to the course of human affairs, and in doing so making knowledge not just subsume, but utterly replace the meaning of practical affairs.[544]

Yet, to Plato wonder merely implied the need to think. In Arendt's hands the interpretation of wonder by Plato is roughly as follows. One is forced to wonder at something ordinary that suddenly appears as extraordinary. Next, one confirms that admiring wonder by breaking out into affirming speech about what one observes. In the course of this experience, one is made aware of some harmonious order beyond the world.[545] Although the Aristotelian path of wondering became more common in science and philosophy, Arendt notes that there have been examples of this kind of Platonic wonder throughout the past few centuries, including by Coleridge, Leibniz, and Schelling. And it "was revived in our own time" by Martin Heidegger.[546]

In Arendt's 1969 text "Heidegger at 80" she examines Heidegger's revival of Platonic wonder, and its political imbecility.[547] She started her remarks by describing the reputation which Heidegger maintained for exhibiting and teaching thinking as a *pathos*:

> What was experienced was that thinking as pure activity – and this means impelled neither by the thirst for knowledge nor by the drive for cognition – can become a passion which not so much rules and oppresses all other capacities and gifts, as it

[543] The German text is "[…] *und wird zum Begründer der "unpraktischen" Wissenschaft, die sich dann am Ende so ausserordentlich und verhangnisvoll praktisch erwies. Mann beginnt zu forschen, eben zu philosophieren, um der Unwissenheit zu entfliehen. Die Unwissenheit, der man nicht entfliehen kann und die sich im - philosophische und einsamen - thaumazein" äußert, ist auber dieselbe die sich im politischen und handelnden "doxa" äußert*," in (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 432).

[544] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 139).

[545] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 143).

[546] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 145).

[547] See here (Taminiaux 1997, 168-198) and (Rubenstein 2008, 20-24).

> orders them and prevails through them. We are so accustomed to the old opposition of reason versus passion, spirit versus life, that the idea of a *passionate* thinking, in which thinking and being alive become one, takes us aback.[548]

This passionate thinking manifested itself to others as a "digging activity" in which Heidegger "penetrates to the depths" and remains there.[549] From this point, Arendt notes explicitly that Heidegger follows Plato in "wondering at the simple" which is a part of everyday life, but that he goes far beyond Plato in "taking up and accepting this wondering as one's abode."[550] In taking wondering as an abode, Heidegger extracts himself from the field of human affairs without, like Plato, finding and admiring some harmonious order giving form to the world, such as that expressed in the Ideas. Rather, Heidegger's wondering is a continual burrowing and seeking without end. Arendt then recalls the tale told by Socrates in the *Theaetetus* of the Thracian peasant girl, who observed with laughter the sight of Thales, who stumbled into a well while his view was turned upwards to wonder at the stars. The point of Arendt's telling of the tale is, obviously, that Heidegger's taking up wondering *of the Platonic kind* as his exclusive activity, cut himself off from thinking about things that actually happen, and led him into practical disaster.[551] In his winter 1924-1925 lecture course on *Plato's Sophist*, which Arendt attended, Heidegger notes that both *thaumazein* and *aporein* are at the beginning of philosophy; both wondering and puzzling over difficulties through which one cannot see a way out.[552] To Arendt,

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[548] (Arendt, Heidegger at Eighty 2018, 423).

[549] (Arendt, Heidegger at Eighty 2018, 422).

[550] Heidegger quoted in (Arendt, Heidegger at Eighty 2018, 426). See also (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 730).

[551] As Heidegger surely did. It is most certainly not my interest to explore here the reasons for Heidegger's joining the Nazi party, or whether his Nazism was more than a bumbling error and close to the center of his thought. However, given the recent publication of the *Black Notebooks*, which made Heidegger's antisemitism quite explicit, I would say that we should save ourselves from error by approaching Heidegger's works with skepticism, at our most generous, and dismissal, at our most prudent. Nevertheless, to continue the analysis of wonder in Arendt's thought, I will dwell on Heidegger's thought.

[552] (Heidegger, Plato's Sophist 1997, 86-88).

Heidegger adopted *aporein* as his dwelling place just as much as *thaumazein*. In this sense, the "true story of Heidegger the fox" is, politically speaking, that by taking wondering as his abode he "built a trap as his burrow."[553]

Arendt would find that Heidegger's mode of wonder, as well as his notion of history, would both be severely lacking, and would remain caught in the same philosophical conundrums of the age. In their discussion of Heidegger's philosophy in their letters of 1952, Arendt and her husband Heinrich Blücher "agreed that the weakest point was his concept of historicity" and for her own part Arendt called it "pitiful".[554] For Arendt, this notion of historicity makes the thinker more "sensitive to general trends of the time" but it still holds to the fallacy of thinking that events and thoughts are the same, and that there is no struggle for meaning in comprehending events. Therefore "it never reaches but always misses the center of politics – man as an acting being." [555] It still devalues the realm of human affairs and fails to retain a capacity to wonder at the things that people do, which are always unpredictable and appear at first without the fullness of meaning.[556]

Here Arendt finds in her friend Walter Benjamin an example of what she was unable to find in Heidegger, whose wonder led him to take up residence in a Platonic stillness of thought and thereby underappreciated actions and events. Benjamin's wonder, on the other hand, was concerned with "directly, actually demonstrable concrete facts, with single events and

[553] (Arendt, Heidegger the Fox 1994, 361).

[554] (Young-Bruehl 1982, 302); and (Arendt and Blücher, Within Four Walls 1996, 188). For Heidegger's early subsumption of the quest for the "meaning of being" under historicism, see (Heidegger, Being and Time 1962, 435). For his later subsumption of meaning under the historicized "truth of being," see (Heidegger, On Time and Being 1972, 9).

[555] (Arendt, Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought 1994, 433).

[556] (Arendt, Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought 1994, 445).

occurrences whose 'significance' is manifest" rather than based in a non-appearing theory or idea.[557] As Benjamin wrote in thesis VIII of "On the Concept of History," "The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are 'still' possible in the twentieth century is *not* philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge – unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable."[558] Here Benjamin ruthlessly rejects the approach to thinking which begins with a wonder for an image of linear History. Where Heidegger was unable to be amazed by the events of his own century due to his wondering about a history of thinking, Benjamin's model of history compels one to amazement towards the events that appear from out of that history and he is aimed at the apprehension of the significance of those events. To Benjamin, all "historicism offers the 'eternal' image of the past" whereas his manner of historical thinking is always concerned to "blast a specific era out of the homogenous course of history" and a "life out of the era, a specific work out of the lifework."[559]

As Arendt wrote in a 1954 lecture which she gave at Notre Dame University, "if philosophers, despite their necessary estrangement from the everyday life of human affairs, were ever to arrive at a true political philosophy, they would have to make the plurality of man, out of which arises the whole realm of human affairs – in its grandeur and misery – the object of their *thaumazein*."[560] And what "profoundly fascinated Benjamin from the beginning was never an idea, it was always a phenomenon."[561] Benjamin's concern was with the "wonder of

[557] (Arendt, Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940 1968, 164).

[558] (Benjamin 2003, 392).

[559] (Benjamin 2003, 396).

[560] (Arendt, Philosophy and Politics 1990, 103); and (Arendt, Socrates 2005, 38). On the original writing of the text, see (Arendt, Philosophy and Politics 1990, 73). I will have more to say in the fourth section about the importance of reading this text in the original setting.

[561] (Arendt, Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940 1968, 164).

appearance."[562] In directing his wonder not towards ideas, but the beauty of how everyday things appear, Benjamin points to a path which it had seemed that Plato and Aristotle foreclosed.[563]

b. …to Ancient Greek History

Following Benjamin's lead in wondering at phenomena and rejecting the modern use of history to solve the question of meaning, Arendt would turn to the relation between wonder and history in ancient Greek thought before Aristotle and before Plato. This would allow her to dismantle some of the contradictions of modern history and wonder, which she found to be so pernicious. It was in the same month that "Ideology and Terror" was published in *The Review of Politics* that Arendt first wrote in her *Denktagebuch* about wonder. She did so, tellingly, in a discussion of how the ancient Greeks, particularly historians, assumed that in the immediate perception of things – most strongly felt in wonder – that the meaning of things would be immediately apparent:

> If one assumes, as the Greeks did with wonder, that the meaning of the sensible is immediately manifest – and here the world of sculptures is the most glorious proof – then our whole problem of subjective or objective historiography or the crazy conundrum of facts and meaning is omitted, whereby meaning supposedly is that which I attribute to facts. Then the problem of selection will be dashed, because only "the selected", namely, "*what makes sense*," will be handed down. This is the historiography of Thucydides. It is "objective" and yet has proven to neglect many facts, because these problems could not be discussed at all. Facts are not history, and "interpretation" is not history. Only when the context of the event in which everything originally revealed its meaning has been destroyed, does the modern "problem of history " arise. Besides, there is, and has always been, the lament that what happens to man and what he does may not have meaning. "*Vanitas vanitatum*" *vanishes*.[564]

[562] (Arendt, Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940 1968, 164).

[563] On this point, see (Markell, Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of The Human Condition 2011, 31, 40-41n.21). See also (Arendt, The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Its Political Significance 2006, 211) where Arendt makes the difference between Platonic and Aristotelian wonder as "speechless beholding" and "love of beauty" explicit.

[564] The translations of passages from the *Denktagebuch* are mine unless otherwise indicated, such as here, where I benefitted greatly from the help of Alexander Lange. The original text for this quotation is: „*Nimmt man an, wie die Griechen staunend taten, dass sich der Sinn im Sinnlichen unmittelbar zeige - und hierfür ist die Skulpturenwelt*

Ancient Greek historiography, according to this reading, thought that in wonder the meaning of the sensible was directly manifest. It is only when the context shatters that the historical problem becomes meaningful; that is, that history can have a role in determining the meaning of an event rather than history cataloguing the chronicling the apparent meaning of wondrous events. This happens only after the context of the event has passed away. And this is not to say that the *causes* of the events recorded by history will be immediately apparent or that we may have precise *knowledge* of things without investigation, which Thucydides would certainly never believe. Rather, it is to say that when the great and wondrous deeds are laid out before us by the diligent historian, their *meaning* will be immediately apparent. In modernity this relation between meaning and context is inevitably shattered, since doubting the appearances is the beginning of thinking for moderns in the same way that wonder is for the ancients.[565] The destruction of the context of meaning which Arendt describes resonates strongly with the point in the Act 1, scene 4 of Goethe's *Faust* which might have been on Arendt's mind. After Faust declares that he "curse the glare of mere appearance / that presses hard on our senses" the chorus cries out "Woe! Woe! / You have destroyed / the beautiful world / with a heavy fist. / It falls, it is shattered. / Smashed by a demigod's fist."[566] The historicism of German philosophy adopts this distant

*herrlichster Beweis -, so entfällt unser ganzes Problem von subjektiver oder objektiver Geschichtsschreibung oder die verrückte Vexierfrage von Fakten und Bedeutung, wobei Bedeutung angeblich das ist, was ich den Fakten unterschiebe. Dann wird auch das Problem der Selektion zunichte, weil überhaupt nur "Ausgewähltes", nämlich das, "*what makes sense*", überliefert wird. Dies ist die Geschichtsschreibung des Thukydides'. Sie ist "objektiv" und vernachlässigt doch erwiesenermaßen viele Fakten, weil diese Problem gar nicht zur Diskussion stehen konnten. Fakten sind nicht Geschichte, und "Sinngebung" ist nicht Geschichte. Erst wenn wir den Geschehniszusammenhang, in welchem alles seinen Sinn ursprünglich offenbarte, zerschlagen haben, entsteht das moderne "Geschichtsproblem". Daneben gibt es, and hat es immer gegeben, die Klage, dass das, was dem Menschen geschieht und was er tut, vielleicht keinen Sinn habe. "Vanitas vanitatum"* vanishes." (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 405).

[565] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 272)

[566] "*Verflucht das Blenden der Erscheinung, / die sich an unsere Sinne dränget!*" and "*Weh! weh! / Du hast sie zerstört, / Die schöne Welt, / Mit mächtiger Faust; / Sie stürzt, sie zerfällt!*" in (Goethe 1985, 98 & 100). One finds similar references to this passage from *Faust* in other scholars from Germany of Arendt's generation. See for

attitude to the deeds and events of the world. Although it starts from the premise of history, it does so in a way completely alienated from the *meaning* of deeds and events as they appeared in their own light, rather than in the light cast by History.

Arendt first recorded Plato's and Aristotle's interpretations of wonder in two consecutive notes in her *Denktagebuch* from September 1953, shortly after the note cited above.[567] The note which immediately follows those on Plato and Aristotle is a quotation and translation of the first sentence of Herodotus's *Histories*: "This is the demonstration of investigation of Herodotus, in order that neither what arose from man in time disappears again, nor the great and wonderful (μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά) works of both the Hellenes and the barbarians remain inglorious…"[568] Arendt goes on to interpret Herodotus's manner of historical inquiry: "History is a) what has been investigated [*erkundet worden ist*] b) that which has its origin in men, c.) so that what has arisen does not disappear again, d. and that which was great did not remain without praise."[569] This notion of historical inquiry as concerned with the μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά deeds of human

example (Strauss, Cohen's Analysis of Spinoza's Bible Science 2002). For another without the explicit citation of Goethe, but a very similar sentiment on the ancient Greeks, see (Voegelin 1952, 71). It is interesting to note here Voegelin's reliance on Hans Jonas for his critique of modern Gnosticism, since it seems that, in her insistence on the need to redirect focus away from knowledge and towards meaning, Arendt is just as likely to have been affected by the writings of Jonas, her lifelong friend. See Jonas's note on Goethe's Faust as a modern gnostic parable in (Jonas 1963, 111).

[567] (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 430-434).

[568] Arendt's German translation is "*Diese Aufzeigung der Erkundung ist Herodots, damit weder das, was aus den Menschen in der Zeit entstanden, wieder verschwinde, noch die großen und wunderbaren Werken sowohl der Hellenen wie die Barbaren ruhmlos verblieben*," (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 433). A common English translation has it as "Herodotus of Halicarnassus here displays his inquiry, so that human achievements may not become forgotten in time, and great and wondrous (μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά) deeds – some displayed by Greeks, some by barbarians may not be without their glory," (Herodotus 1972, 3). On Herodotus and wonder, see (Greenblatt 2017, 122-128); (Hunzinger, La notion de thôma chez Herodote 1995); (Kirkland 2018, 310-312); and (Priestley 2014, 51-108). My thanks to Bryant Kirkland for our conversation and his guidance on Herodotean wonder.

[569] In German, "*Geschichte ist a. was erkundet worden ist, b. das, was seinen Ursprung in Menschen hat, c. damit, wasenstanden ist, nicht wieder vergehe, d. und das, was groß war, nicht ungerühmt bleibe*," (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 433).

affairs would provide a way out of the various traps that the twentieth century fell into when it refused to endure in thought the field of human affairs– traps such as ideology (totalitarianism), the 'scientific' study of politics (following Aristotle), or the tradition of political philosophy's wonder towards ideas (following Plato). It would be a practice which Arendt turned to in "The Concept of History" and "Understanding and Politics," where Arendt notes that Herodotus is not only the 'father of history', but that history as we understand it only exists since Herodotus.[570] And although Arendt turns to Aristotle's *Poetics* to make sense of action in *The Human Condition*, she does so through the historical lens of Herodotus, which is concerned with preserving the glory of wondrous deeds which "deserve to be, and, at least to a degree, are at home in everlastingness" through that preservation by historical inquiry.[571] It is thus in the backwards glance of the historian that the full *meaning* of historical deeds and events may be revealed, rather than some *truth* which manifests itself from behind the backs of the agents engaged in those deeds and events.[572]

Herodotus here exemplifies the central pre-philosophical assumption of the Ancient Greeks which Arendt notes in *The Life of the Mind:* that all people have a "passion for seeing" and that it is "in the power of the spectator" to bestow a kind of immortality upon human beings through recognizing the wondrousness and greatness of their deeds.[573] In turning to the ancient historians, Arendt thus turns to the experience and political importance of wonder prior to the legacies of Plato and Aristotle. In Aristotle's description of wonder in his *Metaphysics*, there is an aside which makes more sense when we think of the chronological priority of the Herodotean

[570] (Arendt, The Concept of History 2006, 40 & 64); and (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994, 319).

[571] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 19, but see 181-192).

[572] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 192).

[573] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 130 & 131). See also (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 17-21).

understanding of wonder to the philosophical understanding. Aristotle writes that "even the lover of stories is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for a story (μῦθος) is composed of wonders."[574] Following Plato, Aristotle distinguishes the philosopher from those who "love seeing for its own sake" in their capacity to *endure* wonder; yet, in this aside, following from the delight of seeing he notes at the beginning of *Metaphysics*, Aristotle recognizes this pre-philosophical background from which he and Plato depart.[575] Stories are composed of wonders, since they are written by historians who aim to preserve those human deeds and events which incite wonder.

This tendency of ancient history to preserve the "great and wondrous" is not limited to Herodotus, but includes, despite his reluctance to include more wondrous material of a mythical past in his *History*, Thucydides, who thought that the greatness of the Peloponnesian War made it more worthy of remembrance and wonder (*thaumazonton*) than any other war in the past.[576] This tendency continued in the writings of the Greek-speaking historian of Rome, Polybius, who wrote that the history of Rome, particularly in its wars against Carthage, was an extraordinary and great spectacle (παράδοξον καὶ μέγα… θεώρημα).[577] Livy, certainly influenced by Polybius, wrote that "in history you have a record of the infinite variety of human experience plainly set out for all to see", which includes both "examples and warnings."[578] Following from this notion of the didactic possibility of history, Plutarch noted in his "Pericles" that in reading the "acts of virtues" of history, "admiration [θαυμάσαι] and liking of the thing done" is followed by a "strong

[574] (Aristotle, Metaphysica 2001, 982b). See also (Aristotle, Rhetorica 2001, 1371b10-11). For a reading of Aristotle's engagement with Herodotus, particularly in Aristotle's biological works, see (Priestley 2014, 68-75).

[575] (Arendt, Socrates 2005, 31).

[576] See (Thucydides 1919, 1.1.1 & 1.21.2). On Thucydides and Herodotean wonder, see (Priestley 2014, 61-68)

[577] See the translation in (Polybius 2010, 3). Also see Polybius's celebration of the "wonderful" "spectacle" of Roman funeral proceedings, which accomplish a similar task to that of the historian, (Polybius 2010, 409-410).

[578] (Livy 2002, 30).

desire of doing the like."[579] And even Homer, whose poetic account of the great deeds of the Trojan War surely inspired Herodotus's account of the Persian War, was concerned with preserving the great and wondrous.[580] By following this path of the ancient historians, opened up by Benjamin, Arendt finds a way out of the legacies of Plato and Aristotle which find the meaning of politics in a location other than in politics itself. In doing so, she redirects political inquiry towards the wonders of the field of human affairs.

3. Wonders and Miracles: The Passion of Political Theory

Arendt once gently scolded a student on their term paper, by writing that, "[You accept] the old, well-worn opposition of passion to reason. But it would be unfair to charge you with this, since it is so deep in the Anglo-Saxon tradition and everything you were taught."[581] To take up the place of wonder – the *pathos* of thinking – in Arendt's political writings, we must necessarily trouble this old, well-worn opposition. We must investigate what it means to approach the field of human affairs with a passionate thinking: to observe with wonder the plurality of human activity and, in a sense, to endure it. To do that we must reconstruct Arendt's reflections on the passions. Doing so will help us to understand how the political thought of Hannah Arendt is animated by a *pathos* of wonder and will also help us to understand why it matters.

[579] Line 1.4 in (Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives 2001, 201). See also Plutarch's fascinating *Table Talk*, "On those who are said to cast an evil eye", in which Plutarch, through the Roman character Mestrius Florus, defends maintaining wonder towards things by refraining from seeking the 'logic' by which they appear, (Plutarch, Table Talk V 1969, 419). In the light of Arendt's attack on the logicality of ideology which turns it away from the 'miracle of being', this is of great interest to us. My thanks to Bryant Kirkland for pointing me to this text.

[580] Arendt groups ancient poets with historians apart from the philosophers in this regard. See (Arendt, The Concept of History 2006, 47).

[581] Arendt in (Young-Bruehl 1982, 529).

In a 1959 lecture given upon receiving the Lessing Prize from the Free City of Hamburg, Arendt recalled Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's account of "tragic pleasure."[582] And she appeared in her recollection of it to find some truth in this account's depiction of pleasure and passion. Pleasure is "fundamentally the intensified awareness of reality, [which] springs from a passionate openness to the world and love of it."[583] In this interpretation, the closer to reality that a passion brings us, the more pleasurable it will be. The sensation of the world itself is a pleasurable one. Thus, under this interpretation, anger is a positive, or pleasurable, passion and hope is a negative one, for in anger one "reveals and exposes the world" and in hope "the soul overleaps it."[584] This interpretation would also find the tears which Odysseus sheds in the episode in the *Odyssey* when he hears his tale told back to him to be shed in a tragic pleasure, for Odysseus's own reality is confirmed in the story which he hears. The sheer occurrence of his life is transformed into a story, through which he can encounter not only his deeds, but their meaning in the "tears of remembrance."[585] Although passions might arise in the darkness of the soul, which is a "more or less chaotic welter of happenings which we do not enact but suffer", human beings can *choose* how they want to appear.[586] And this is often done in order to please oneself, or "to persuade others to be pleased with what pleases us."[587] We can choose, in this sense, the passions which inspire our actions as a principle. This is opposed to the modern approach to the

[582] (Curtis 1999, 7-10). For a sustained reading of Arendt's engagement with ancient tragedy, see (Pirro 2001).

[583] (Arendt, On Humanity in Dark Times 1968, 6 & 20-21). See also Arendt's definition of passion in (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 525-526).

[584] (Arendt, On Humanity in Dark Times 1968, 6).

[585] (Arendt, The Concept of History 2006, 45); but see also (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 132). In (Arendt, On Humanity in Dark Times 1968, 20) and (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 181) describes also William Faulkner's *A Fable* in these terms. See (Markell, Anonymous glory 2017).

[586] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 72).

[587] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 36).

passions of man, which views them under the paradigm of intimacy, and results in "the radical subjectivism of his emotional life."[588] In the modern approach, the proper place for the passions is in private life, sheltered from the corrupting influences of society. The immediacy which the passions designate are too dangerous for an isolated self to suffer except in relation to the very few people that one trusts enough to suffer. However, in the tragic as opposed to the modern approach to the passions, suffering coincides with doing things in the world – passion is fundamentally public.

The Isak Dinesen epigraph to the "Action" chapter, that "all sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them," makes this explicit. Hearing a story of oneself or one's world turns one's sorrows into something which one can *endure* (*pathos*) and encounter as one's own reality. Thus, stories not only allow us to endure our pains, but also to take pleasure in them. This might help us to make sense of the rather odd statement in *The Human Condition,* where Arendt claims that pain is "the most intense feeling we know of," but that it is also an experience that "deprives us of our feeling for reality."[589] Or it might explain the story of Demosthenes which Arendt relates: "A man once approached Demosthenes and related how terribly he'd been beaten. 'But you,' said Demosthenes, 'suffered nothing of what you tell me.' Whereupon the other raised his voice and cried out, 'I suffered nothing!' 'Now,' said Demosthenes, 'I hear the voice of somebody who was injured and who suffered.'"[590] The telling and enduring of the story transforms private feelings into a passion by which one gains a sense of reality. If all this is true, then wondering, in which we endure the shock of the world in thought,

[588] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 39).

[589] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 50-51). See (Degerman 2019) on the unreality of compassion [*Mitleid*], and therefore Arendt's rejection of it.

[590] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 26n.8).

is the quintessence of tragic pleasure. In wondering we are brought to our "natural condition" which is, for Aristotle, taking part in political life.[591]

The sense of reality is in fact implied in the title of Arendt's most famous work of political theory, *The Human Condition*. However, showing how this title indicates how human beings *endure* the world in thought will take some unpacking. In the first chapter of the book, also titled "The Human Condition", one of the most important paragraphs for understanding the book occurs, and it begins with the sentence "the human condition comprehends more than the conditions under which life has been given to man."[592] It is the paragraph before the one which distinguishes Arendt's notion of 'the human condition' from that of 'human nature.' The *knowledge* of the fundamental essence of human nature is something which Arendt notes will always elude us, since it only can treat individually unique and unpredictable human beings as a "what" rather than each of them a "who". It would, according to Arendt, take some supernatural figure such as a god to 'know' human nature.[593] The conditioning of human beings, on the other hand, is a question of meaning that causes us to *think* rather than to *know*. This is more or less familiar to readers of Arendt, but the preceding paragraph that explicates Arendt's term 'the human condition' is still rather strange. Showing its difference from 'human nature' is necessary but not sufficient to explain what it means.

[591] This fact is underscored by Aristotle's discussion of wonder in the *Rhetoric*, which takes place in the consideration of pleasure. He writes that "Learning things and wondering at things are also pleasant as a rule; wondering implies the desire of learning, so that the object of wonder is also an object of desire; while in learning one is brought into one's natural condition.," (Aristotle, Rhetorica 2001, 1371a31-35). Arendt recorded this passage with an exclamation point in her *Denktagebuch* in August 1953, between the above cited passage on ancient history and the quotations on wonder in Herodotus, Plato, and Aristotle, (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 413).

[592] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 9).

[593] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 10).

The human condition is the sum of all the conditions of human existence. Here we need to think about condition less as a set of circumstances, but as conditioning. For Arendt, Human beings are conditioned in the fact that they are *affected* by everything which they encounter: "The impact of the world's reality upon human existence is felt and received as a conditioning force."[594] A look at the German translation of Arendt's text will help us to explore this point. In 1960, Arendt translated *The Human Condition* into German as *Vita activa: oder Vom tätigen Leben*. The translation was not only a translation, but contains, as Roy T. Tsao notes in an exceptional article, a "large number of small but significant departures from the original, mostly in the form of discreet, clarifying additions."[595] The way that Arendt translates the phrase 'the human condition' is itself a crucial clarification across the editions of the text. Although the title of the section in which the paragraph under consideration occurs in the German translation, "Vita activa und Condition humaine", is quite similar to that of the English text, "Vita Activa and the Human Condition" by taking the almost identical French translation of the phrase 'the human condition,' the German title of the first chapter of the book is a little odd: "Die menchliche Bedingtheit." According to Arendt, "die Condition humaine," is "die menscliche Bedingtheit im Ganzen."[596] Although one *could* translate "die menschliche Bedingtheit im Ganzen" as "the entire human condition," why would Arendt say that the human condition is the whole human condition? Something is going on here.

In "Das Ding", or "The Thing," Heidegger explores the relation between thinking (*Denken*) and things (*die Dinge*). He writes, "in the strict sense of the German word *bedingt*, we

[594] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 9).

[595] (Tsao, Arendt against Athens: Rereading the Human Condition 2002, 100).

[596] (Arendt, Vita activa: oder Vom tätigen Leben 1967, 18).

are the be-thinged, the conditioned ones."[597] A thing is "anything that in any way bears upon men, concerns them, and that accordingly is a matter for discourse."[598] In Arendt's copy of the text, which Heidegger sent her, she underlined the words "Wir haben die Annmaβung alles Unbedingten hinter uns gelassen," which is translated in the English publication as "We have left behind us the presumption of all unconditionedness."[599] The human condition is the manner in which human beings are *affected* by the things of the world – by the activities of human beings and the objects created by those activities. Working with the tragic understanding of the passions, we could say that "die menschiche Bedingtheit" is to be impassioned by the reality of the world. "Die Condition humaine" is the manner in which the sum total of the things of the world appear to us and affect us; and how they affect us through their manner of appearance to us.

If we read carefully the first chapter of *The Human Condition*, particularly in a way that reads it in light of the clarifications of Arendt's German translation of the text, we see a text which would be right at home on a bookshelf beside much of contemporary Affect Theory. However, *The Human Condition* would be at home as a text which not only explicates the substratum of human passions and affects which are constitutive of human life on earth, but as one which *endures* that substratum of conditioning in thought – as a book of wonders. If wonder is the *pathos* of thought, then to *think* about the human condition is to wonder about the appearances of the world. When we look to Arendt's writings around and about *The Human* Condition, we can see that it is not inaccurate to see a kind of wonder as the fundamental

[597] (Heidegger, The Thing 1971, 181).

[598] (Heidegger, The Thing 1971, 174).

[599] Arendt's copy is held at the Arendt Library at Bard College, (Heidegger, Das Ding 1954, 53); and (Heidegger, The Thing 1971, 181).

experience of the book. In 1972, when working on *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt reflected on the viewpoint of *The Human Condition*. "The main flaw and mistake of *The Human Condition* is the following: I still was looking at what the tradition calls *vita activa* from the viewpoint of the *vita contemplativa*, without ever saying anything real about the *vita contemplativa*."[600] In "The Concept of History" of 1958, appearing in the *Partisan Review* during the same year in which *The Human Condition* was published, Arendt identified the "capacity for thought and wonder in contemplation" in the same sentence that she noted the capacities of *homo faber* and the human *animal laborans*.[601] Therefore, Arendt wrote *The Human Condition* to not only to "think what we are doing", but to wonder at those activities.[602] To think what we are doing is to bring out, by wondering, the uncanny oddity of our usual sense of ordinary things. It forces us to think of the strangeness of the most ordinary terms which we use to describe political life – terms such as labor, work, and action – not to find the 'truth' or 'essence' of those terms, but to preserve the meaning of political life.[603]

From the very first page *The Human Condition* is a book of wonders. It begins with an analysis of the launching of Sputnik into the heavens in 1957. In the same way that Kant found the feelings that the French Revolution aroused in spectators most interesting in *Conflict of the Faculties*, Arendt places at the heart of her analysis the feelings that the launching of Sputnik incited. If one looked to the pages of the *New Yorker* in 1956, one would read the words of an

[600] (Arendt, Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt 2018, 446).

[601] (Arendt, The Modern Concept of History 1958, 589). The essay would be revised and reprinted in *Between Past and Future* with the pertinent quotation appearing at (Arendt, The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern 2006, 62).

[602] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 5).

[603] For an exceptional reading of the reading of the relation between those terms in Arendt's thought, see (Markell, Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of The Human Condition 2011).

American scientist working on a competing satellite project written in terms similar to Kant's wonder for the 'starry heavens above': "Contemplate the satellite and you inevitably think about it in terms of yourself – that is, of your destiny, and of the transience of life. I've lived with it for almost three years now, and it still excited great curiosity in me – a curiosity that is both intellectual and spiritual."[604] This launching is certainly, according to Arendt's fundamental analysis of human capabilities, an unrivaled example of a 'great and wondrous deed' by those "few who still know what it means to act" since, through Sputnik, scientists demonstrated their ability to act into nature.[605] And this deed is surely a most significant wonder to behold, and an event "second in importance to no other."[606] This significance is primarily in the *feeling* which the event causes in those that witness it: a relief that it might be possible to escape the human condition of life on earth. The wonder which is experienced towards Sputnik is in the end not that of an admiration for the order of the world, but for the fact that human beings might alienate themselves from not only the world, but the earth, and take up a dwelling in the cosmos.

This event, however, is not a major part of the book beyond its appearance in the prologue. The events which are subjected to historical analysis in the book are the "three great events" which Arendt notes to stand at the threshold of the modern age and to determine its character through the processes which they unleashed: the discovery of America, the Reformation, and the invention of the telescope.[607] To understand the condition of world – and ultimately earth – alienation in the modern world, Arendt explores how these three great events

[604] The quotation is by Hugh Odishaw and appears in (Lang, Earth Satellite 1959, 447), first published as (Lang, Earth Satellite No. 1 1957).

[605] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 324).

[606] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 1).

[607] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 248).

started processes determinative of the modern age which could culminate in a condition in which man not only would want to escape from the world, but also, as the response to Sputnik demonstrates to Arendt, the earth itself.

In "Politics and Understanding", Arendt writes that "whenever an event occurs that is great enough to illuminate its own past, history comes into being."[608] In a general sense, then, history came into being when Herodotus recorded in his *Histories* how "the Greek past became history through the light shed on it by the Persian Wars."[609] The event of the Persian Wars revealed to the historian beginnings which culminated in that event. The gaze of the historian crystallizes these structures after the detection of the significance of the unexpectedly new.[610] Thus, the event is great in the sense that it demands the attention of the historian, and wondrous in the sense that its novelty shines across historical time.[611] However, one must not search for some sort of deep causality of events on a "deeper" strata, as that would extinguish the "light history itself offer."[612] As Plutarch wrote in one of his *Table Talks*, "the man who demands to see the logic (λόγος) of each and every thing destroys the wonder in all things."[613] Thus Arendt traces the events at the beginning of the modern age, now shown to the historian as beginnings, to better understand the most significant event of the modern world, the launching of Sputnik and its response in its observers, more significant even than the splitting of the atom. However, it is

[608] (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994, 319).

[609] (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994, 319).

[610] Arendt's account of the crystallization which occurs through the remembrance of the historian (Arendt, A Reply to Eric Voegelin 1994, 403) is surely also indebted to Benjamin. See especially (Benhabib 1990); (Herzog 2000); and (Hill 1979).

[611] (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994, 320).

[612] (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994, 319).

[613] (Plutarch, Table Talk V 1969, 419).

Arendt's account of action for which she is most notable as a political theorist; action which she describes most consistently as appearing to its observers as a miracle.[614]

As Margaret Canovan rightly notes, Arendt is "preeminently the theorist of beginnings" in that "reflections on the human capacity to start something new pervade her thinking."[615] This is primarily identified with political action, but Arendt also notes that initiative – starting something new – "is inherent in all activities."[616] However, whenever activity appears to us as new, it always appears against a background of sheer happenings. It "bursts into the context of predictable processes as something unexpected, unpredictable, and ultimately causally inexplicable – just like a miracle."[617] This "amazing and mysterious talent for working miracles" is called action.[618] Indeed, Arendt makes a special point to identify the miraculous quality of action in every text in which she subjects the capacity to analysis.[619] Given the entwined etymologies of 'miracle' and 'wonder,' it would make sense that they should be tied in Arendt's thought on action.[620] And we need not speculate on this matter, since in Arendt's German

[614] For a particularly interesting interpretation of this from the perspective of political theology, see (Honig 2009).

[615] (Canovan, Introduction 1998, vii).

[616] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 9).

[617] (Arendt, The Promise of Politics 2005, 112). In a particularly helpful definition, Kant writes that miracles "are events in the world the operating laws of whose causes are, and must remain, absolutely unknown to us," (Kant 1960, 80).

[618] (Arendt, The Promise of Politics 2005, 113).

[619] See (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 178, 236, & 247); (Arendt, What is Freedom? 2006, 166-169); and (Arendt, The Promise of Politics 2005, 111-114).

[620] The precise origin of the Germanic word 'wonder' is mysterious. However, both 'wonder' and the Latinate 'admiration' are both used to translate the Greek *thaumazein*. 'Miracle' is rooted in the Latin word '*miracula'*, or a seen and admired thing. For a brief but rich exploration of the entwined etymologies, see (Daston and Park 1998, 16).

translation of *The Human Condition*, she consistently translates miracle as "*Wunder*."[621] To endure wonder is then, in some sense, to bear in thought the 'glad tidings' of action.

However, one must ask why Arendt uses the term 'miracle' for action and not wonder? I believe that there are at least two strong explanations. The first is the generality of wonder, especially under the philosophical interpretation. One wonders at a totality, whether one call it the *kosmos*, being, the world, or the human condition. Wonder is a shocked wonder, but to Arendt it is "the shocked wonder at the miracle of being"[622] The 'miracle' of action, on the other hand, is always a particular deed, even if it is not always limited to the action of a single doer.[623] What strikes us about action is not only its novelty, but its particularity. However, the second reason that Arendt uses 'miracle' rather than 'wonder' is a little less apparent than the first. It seems to me that Arendt is here drawing on the pre-philosophical assumption of the Greeks, which she notes in *The Human Condition*, "The Concept of History," and later in *The Life of the Mind*: that there is something of the divine which is conferred upon human beings when they are the subject of admiration.[624] By using 'miracle' in this sense, Arendt bypasses the philosophical baggage of wonder, which has been its inheritance since Plato used this pre-philosophical assumption of the Greeks to his advantage in the 'Allegory of the Cave' to bestow a kind of everlasting divinity upon ideas of the mind. In seeing deeds as miracles – as worthy of a certain

[621] (Arendt, Vita activa: oder Vom tätigen Leben 1967, 217, 301, & 317).

[622] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 302). See also (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 558).

[623] I would also speculate that the term 'miracle' is used rather than 'wonder' in order to create some distance between the perception of it and thinking in order to draw it closer to judgment. The reason for this is in Arendt's insistence that when confronted with a particular which we cannot subsume under a concept or a rule, we are called to judge reflectively, (Arendt, Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy 1992). However, since we do not have Arendt's fully composed reflections on the relation between thinking and judging, all we can do is speculate.

[624] See (Arendt, The Concept of History 2006, 47); (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 17-21); and (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 129-130).

kind of wonder which is owed to divinity– we *feel* that they deserve to last beyond their fleeting moment.[625] In suffering the reality of others, we preserve for them that reality.

In seeing this side of action, the side which emphasizes the meaning of suffering others, we can see that Arendt's writings on action are just as much about *pathos* as they are about *prattein*. By saturating her writings on action, which to Arendt is the enactment of freedom, with a clear concern with how it must be suffered, Arendt clearly stakes a claim: if we will not suffer one another, we shall not be free; and if we do not suffer the recognition of our actions offered to us by others, our freedom will be without meaning. It makes complete sense that Arendt's preferred title for her book of wondering, *The Human Condition,* was *Amor Mundi*, or love of the world.[626] Wonder is, in a sense, a kind of love. "The very fact of appearance – the urge to appear – shows a claim for recognition and praise. All that appears wants to be seen and recognized and praised. The highest form of recognition is love: *volo* ut sis [I will that you should be]. – The wonder implies affirmation."[627] Sometimes love is deluded or missed the mark. Or sometimes it turns itself over in us and leads us to see things as they aren't but how we imagine them to be. However, if we allow ourselves wonder and gratitude for the world and the people with whom we share it, we make ourselves open for surprise and novelty and a sustained dedication that demands our attention and common efforts for that which is or even might be. It demands that we allow the novelty of it to beckon our acknowledgement and support. And, in moments of

[625] It has also been suggested that 'miracles' are more likely to be relayed in words, whereas 'wonders' are received in sight or images. Indeed, this is reflected in Arendt's reference to the 'glad tidings' of the Gospels, as well as the miraculous powers of forgiveness and promising, (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 245 & 246); and (Arendt, What is Freedom? 2006, 166). However, the issues here are in the etymological root of 'miracle' in seeing as well as in Arendt's insistence on the intertwinement of action and speech.

[626] (Young-Bruehl 1982, 324). See also (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 522 & 523).

[627] (Arendt, Denktagebuch 2002, 748).

danger, defense. Our love of the world keeps itself from being calcified when it is enlivened by the unavoidable novelty of events of the world through our openness to wonder. Political theory must remain not only attentive to the world, but must affirm it, even when desiring to change it. Doing so reflects the fundamental worldliness of political theory.

4. Novus Ordo Saeclorum: Wonder and Political Time

According to Arendt, the tragedy of the American Revolution, or at least one of the tragedies, is that the foundational moment of the Constitution became an object of worship – a great deed worthy of remembrance – which foreclosed the space of freedom it meant to open. Indeed, it is a tragedy similar to that of the 'Greek Solution' to the "futility of action and speech", that "without assistance from others, those who acted [would not] be able to establish together the everlasting remembrance of their good and bad deeds, to inspire admiration in the present and in future ages."[628] This 'Greek Solution' is captured for Arendt in the Funeral Oration of Pericles, who claimed that he and his fellow Athenians, "shall be the wonder not only of the men of today but of after times; we shall need no Homer to sing our praise nor any other poet whose verses may perhaps delight for the moment but whose presentation of the facts will be discredited by the truth."[629] To Arendt, this "supreme confidence" that Athenians could both "enact *and* save their greatness" in action has been forever after read with the knowledge that Pericles' words were spoken when the freedom of Athens was at the beginning of the end.[630] Greatness can only lie in

[628] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 197). On Arendt's problematization rather than valorization of the 'Greek Solution', see (Tsao, Arendt against Athens: Rereading the Human Condition 2002).

[629] (Thucydides 1919, 331).

[630] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 205).

the performance itself, and "neither in its motivation nor achievement."[631] In the same way, the American revolution is seen as a monument of wondrous, noble deeds, but not as opening a space, according to Arendt, in which others could continue to appear in the same shining glory. Instead it foreclosed it as soon as it was opened. In doing so the 'Founders' created a republic whose citizens hold the "miracle of permanence" of the founding moment in reverence but have grown distant to the freedom which they venerate.[632] Must then the affirmation of wonder always culminate in reverence, even when it begins in wonder towards a political event?

In Arendt's analysis of the American and French Revolutions, she finds that the "problem of the absolute" is inherent in the revolutionary event.[633] This problem was that revolutionaries could not help themselves from seeking some external, unqualified, and independent source of authority for their new institutions of freedom – an absolute. It was a problem which sent them searching for some principle of order only perceptible by the contemplation of the mind, analogous to the Ideas of Plato, which was 'beyond' their new revolutionary spaces of freedom. In France, this problem manifested itself in the tragic turning of the Revolution towards despotic dictatorships. However, Arendt argues that we would be wrong to find that this "problem of the absolute" is merely an unfortunate inheritance of the French revolutionaries from the antecedent absolute monarchy. Rather, the need for an absolute was also evident in the experiences of the American Revolution, where there was a need to both break the vicious circle of law-making by an to appeal to some 'higher law' as well as solve the problem of how to establish a new foundation which might have some stability and permanence to it. What solved these problems

[631] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 206).

[632] (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 127).

[633] (Arendt, On Revolution 1963, 149).

for the Americans, according to Arendt, was contained in "the act of foundation itself."[634] It was not so much the Constitution from which the stability and authority of the American Republic derived, but from its beginning. However, the Constitution almost immediately came to be treated religiously as an object of "blind worship" with "sanctimonious reverence."[635] The founding, embedded in the Constitution, became a source of authority akin to the absolute ideas of Plato, who set them apart from political reality as things to admiringly behold**.** "For the beginning (ἀρχή), because it contains its own principle, is also a god who, as long he as dwells among men, as long as inspires their deeds, saves everything."[636] And this founding deed, admired as quasi-divine, was insufficient to sustain the revolutionary spirit of public freedom.

The challenge which Arendt confronts here is, as Patchen Markell has called it in a different setting, an "erosion of the contexts in which events call for responses and, thus, in which it makes sense to act at all."[637] If one takes the wondrousness of an event as demanding reverence, then it would seem utterly inappropriate to respond to it. Correspondingly, if one takes the origin of a political space to be an act of semi-divine authority, then any alteration of the contours of that space would be sacrilege. What is needed here, it to think of the beginning as a moment which calls for a response; the political space must be *felt* as a domain wherein the extraordinary is ordinary and *vice versa*. Maintaining these contexts is not an effort for single individuals. Rather, as constellations, they are sustained only as a fragile, intangible web of

[634] (Arendt, On Revolution 1963, 188).

[635] (Arendt, On Revolution 1963, 191, 196, & 225).

[636] The quote is a translation of Plato's *Laws* (775), which Arendt uses in (Arendt, On Revolution 1963, 205); and (Arendt, Heidegger at Eighty 2018, 419), as well as elsewhere.

[637] (Markell, The Rule of the People: Arendt, Archê, and Democracy 2010, 66), see also (Klein 2014).

human relations: from the doers to the sufferer, from the sufferer to the spectator, and from the spectator transformed into another doer to the sufferer, and so on.

In a similar fashion, during the modern age, events and deeds suffer a similar fate. Events "lose their significance, that is, their capacity to illuminate historical time."[638] Deeds become futile and are seen less under the criteria of deserving "public admiration" so much as "monetary reward": "the futility of public admiration, which daily is consumed in ever greater quantities, on the contrary is such that monetary reward, one of the most futile things there is, can become more 'objective' and more real."[639] Once the view becomes dominant in society that monetary reward and success is the only point of respectability, there is no longer any meaning left to the common world. It becomes like a monoculture crop, easily devastated by pestilence or, effectually the same, it becomes like a gene pool which has completely lost its diversity and is already essentially extinct. This is precisely what Arendt indicates in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* of the susceptibility of "respectable European society" to total moral collapse under the Nazi rule. Regarding his willingly becoming a 'joiner' of the Nazi movement, Adolf Eichmann said of Hitler that "his success alone proved to me that I should subordinate myself to this man." In this, Arendt writes, "his conscience spoke with a 'respectable voice,' with the voice of respectable society around him."[640] One can see something similar in the present day when, for example, the popular press turns to CEOs of major companies for their opinion on any matter besides increasing profit for stockholders. Moreover, Eichmann represented to Arendt the final culmination of the tendency to repeat "word for word the same stock phrases and self-invented

[638] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 43).

[639] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 56-57).

[640] (Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem 1964, 125-126).

clichés" that have the effect of "protecting us from reality" and "any claim on our thinking attention that all events and facts make by virtue of their existence."[641] That is, Eichmann no longer allowed himself to respond to any claim of reality upon him and it endure that claim in thought. He had anesthetized himself, as is quite natural under conditions of 'the social,' against wondering.

The rise of the social, in this regard, diminishes the spaces towards which the sense-making activity of wondering is ordinarily directed. These are spaces in which it simply doesn't matter if deed accompanies action – that we mean what we say – but only that one is 'successful.' This effect permeates all aspects of everyday affairs so that "the ubiquitous functionalization of modern society has deprived [life] of one of its most elementary characteristics – the instilling of wonder at that which is as it is."[642] And as there are no contexts in which events and deeds can appear and be appreciated as wondrous, they cannot be examined for the purpose of understanding their meaning. "Everything" under this condition "exists in an opaque, meaningless thereness which spreads obfuscation and causes disgust."[643] We can take no pleasure in our appreciation of public life. It is, in all senses of the term, dull.

It is likely no coincidence that Athenian philosophy flourished at a time of declining public freedom – a time in which there was a space for things to appear publicly as objects of surprise, admiration, and wonder. The enactment of public freedom depends on thinking for its meaning, and thinking depends on public freedom for its appearance as speech, which it needs

[641] (Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem 1964, 49); and (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 4).

[642] (Arendt, Tradition and the Modern Age 2006, 40). Originally published in *Partisan Review* as (Arendt, Tradition and the Modern Age 1954).

[643] (Arendt, Men in Dark Times 1968, viii).

"to be activated at all."[644] For this reason, thought is only possible as an activity, as opposed to a merely subjective experience, when "men live under conditions of political freedom."[645] Action and thinking may not be the same activities, but they need one another; and the passion of wonder is the medium tethering them together. It is only when a space of public freedom has ossified that wondering appears to us as 'philosophic' and futile, rather than an everyday activity of a free, thinking people. The quest for meaning which begins with wonder is as fragile and potentially futile as action. Although thinking is most likely coextensive with human life, for it to appear in the world in a manner similar to that of Socrates, it requires a space – a space in which sensibilities are open to being regularly disordered – in which the "pillars of truth" are not also the stultifying "pillars of order."[646] "Thinking is out of order because the quest for meaning produces no end result that will survive the activity, that will make sense after the activity has come to its end."[647]

Indeed, it is Socrates to whom Arendt turns for a model of wondering citizenship due to his example as one who wonders about meaning without the need of an absolute or the tendency to reverence as well as his willingness to engage others in the public space of the *agora*.[648] It is, in a way, unfortunate that the essay which first appeared in *Social Research* in 1990 as "Philosophy and Politics" and in *The Promise of Politics* in 2005 as "Socrates" appeared in the form in which it did. In truth, the essay which appeared in these places was a part of a lecture

[644] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 121).

[645] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 324).

[646] (Arendt, On Humanity in Dark Times 1968, 10). Compare to (Rancière, Disagreement 2004).

[647] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 123).

[648] For readings of Arendt presenting a kind of Socratic citizenship in her political theory, see (Villa, Socratic Citizenship 2001) and (Villa, Politics, Philosophy, Terror 1999). Arendt's lectures are available online at the Hannah Arendt Papers at the Library of Congress. On wondering as an active, rhetorical practice, see (Covino 1988).

series from 1954 titled: "Philosophy and Politics: the Problem of Action and Thought after the French Revolution."[649] By setting apart the third of the lectures, which was focused on Socrates, it makes it seem as if this text is solely concerned with finding in the abstract a mode of philosophy which is compatible with politics, rather than concerned with reconciling thought and action in contemporary republics. In fact, the other lectures from this series were used as material that would ultimately appear in *On Revolution*. Thus, it is only right to think of Arendt's interpretation of Socrates in the context of the problem of the maintaining the spaces freedom in modern republics.

For Arendt, what sets Socrates apart from his fellow citizens isn't what he possesses – or what he beholds – but rather what he doesn't have: Socrates is the one who only knows that he does not know. He has no absolutes or rules of conduct to offer his fellow Athenians. During his *Apology* he even tells his jury that he has no teaching (33b). He has no access to the mysteries of the universe or an 'idea' of the 'logic' of history. Instead, his "distinction from his fellow citizens is not that he possesses any special truth from which the multitude is excluded, but that he remains always ready to endure the *pathos* of wonder and thereby avoid the dogmatism of mere opinion holders."[650] Yet after his experience of the *pathos* of wonder – which often left him standing utterly still in the *agora* – he would always return to the world in speech.[651] In this he experienced wonder in a way completely different from that of Plato and Aristotle's interpretations, which both end in a kind of speechlessness. Upon returning from his shock of wonder, Socrates's speech would take the form of questions; questions which would seek, as

[649] See the preface of (Arendt, Philosophy and Politics 1990, 73).

[650] (Arendt, Socrates 2005, 36).

[651] (Arendt, Socrates 2005, 33).

Arendt would say, "meaning, which we originate in the process of living insofar as we reconcile ourselves to what we do and what we suffer."[652] This wondering produces no final results, and always seems to end in *aporia*. Beginning from the presupposition that he had no knowledge, he would always end with the conclusion that "I have failed utterly to discover what it is."[653]

Thought and action are by themselves futile, yet their union is the only basis for any possibility of meaning in politics. Accordingly, even though Arendt might think that those who act "know not what they do," we should not see Arendtian action as thoughtless. We should not only have Pericles, or characters from Sophoclean tragedies, as our paradigmatic figures of Arendtian politics. Socrates in the *agora* is perhaps even more appropriate. From this perspective, the degree to which political spaces have occasions for questioning – and power granted to the questioners to respond to the answerers – is the degree to which those spaces are free. The Prime Minister's Question Time in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom is one favorable example.

If the wonder of the ancient historians might seem to us too self-assured in always directly revealing the meaning of the "great and wondrous deeds" which they remember, then the wonder of Socrates must strike us as absolutely humble in taking meaning as a problem which he is simply unable to permanently solve. However, together they are essential activities for sustaining political life. If historians did not provide for the public a record of deeds and events which are worth wondering over, then the Socratic kind of wondering would only concern itself with trifles. If there were no 'objectivity' to our wondering, then thinking would always be an anatomized, rather than truly public activity. For Socrates, "admiring wonder at just or

[652] (Arendt, Understanding and Politics 1994, 309).

[653] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 165).

courageous deeds seen by the eyes of the body gives birth to such questions as What is courage? What is Justice?" The basic Socratic question is "what do we *mean* when we use this class of words, later called "concepts"?" The inquiries which arise out of this are never resolved, but always leave Socrates open to return to wondering, to return to the marvelous – even if terrible – deeds of his fellows to understand what they could possibly mean.[654] In this way, Socratic wondering is the opposite of the socialized thoughtlessness of an Eichmann, whose clichés insulated him against the "words and the presence of others, and hence against reality as such."[655] Socrates desperately sought to connect meaning between the deeds and words of his fellow Athenians, and his quest for meaning leads him to endlessly examine the opinions of his fellow citizens. He would find the intent of his fellow Athenians endlessly beguiled by misleading understandings of words, and that they desperately needed the jolt of his questioning to begin the quest for meaning on their own. As a collective, public practice, one way to summarize the basic line of questioning which Socrates put to his fellow citizens might be, 'Must we mean what we say?'[656]

Although Arendt does not say so explicitly, I believe that we can fruitfully consider the problems of the absolute and of reverence for action in the light of the Socratic model of the wondering citizen. One such as Socrates will be quick to *endure* the miracle of action. New beginnings with be apparent to her, as she will be "ready to endure the *pathos* of wonder." However, she will endure the ἀρχή of action like Socrates – questioningly. She will observe it,

[654] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 166).

[655] (Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem 1964, 49).

[656] The activities of Arendt's Socrates are quite close to that of Cavellian ordinary language philosophy. See (Cavell, Must we mean what we say? 2002); (Cavell, The Claim of Reason 1979); and (Norris 2017, especially 5-6, 38-39, 46, & 139).

feel the reality of it, and question the meaning of it. However, she will also go beyond Socrates to respond to it in kind with action. Socrates to us represents an example of the activity of wondering in a free society, but still represents only one kind of activity. In this manner, she will have unified in her "person two apparently contradictory passions, for thinking and acting."[657] This implies that the miracle of action will be endured not with stultifying, reverent awe, but with the active questioning which is appropriate for political life. One must admit, in this respect, that there was some merit to the charge against Socrates for impiety, since there was no matter about which he was unwilling to wonder. A practice of questioning citizenship might help us to think about how the two different aspects of action, *archein* and *prattein*, might coincide.[658] Political action which appears to us as new (*archein*) makes a demand on us to respond to it by passionately seeking the meaning of it. There is no absolute sovereign or ancient document that can endure without question a passionately wondering citizenry. In an epistemological sense, a practice of political wondering is a practice of equals.[659] Through our wondering we may then estimate whether new beginnings (*arche*) *should* be carried through (*prattein*).[660]

For the preservation of a space in which *archein* and *prattein* coincide – where ruling and being ruled are not forms of domination of one group over another, but of beginnings emerging out of the chains of ongoing events – we must allow ourselves to be shocked into acknowledging the new beginnings which occur all the time in order to be able to respond to them.[661] We must

[657] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 167).

[658] On *archein* and *prattein*, see (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 189 & 222-223); (Arendt, What is Freedom? 2006, 164); (Arendt, The Promise of Politics 2005, 45-46); and (Arendt, On Revolution 1963, 205).

[659] (Rancière, The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation 1991).

[660] As this last sentence is meant to indicate, this interpretation of wondering citizenship is meant to compliment the model of democratic judgment offered in (Zerilli, A Democratic Theory of Judgment 2016).

[661] (Markell, The Rule of the People: Arendt, Archê, and Democracy 2010).

forgo the Platonic model of "identification of knowledge with command and rulership and action with obedience with execution" which replaces wondering about that which appears with beholding some measure, whether it is some version of Plato's paradigm (παράδειγμα) of *Kallipolis* or a historical scheme of ideology.[662] To be free, we must maintain spaces where we may expect the shock of finding disorder in order, and, for better or worse, endure new beginnings in time. In this respect, even in political orders conducive to its appearance, thinking is always out of order.

5. Wonder for the World

Of all the theorists surveyed in this dissertation, Arendt is the most resolute in acknowledging wonder as a problem for modern political thought. In response to experiences of new institutions and ways of being in the world, modern thinkers have suggested that wonder is intertwined with the new orders of modernity congealed in the state, the universal capacity of freedom, and the market economy. Each of these thinkers have reached back into ancient thought to help make sense of these new experiences, whether they be the ancient historians, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, or the Stoics. Of these modern thinkers, Arendt stands apart. As she would write in *The Life of the Mind*, she joined the company of "those who for some time now have been attempting to dismantle metaphysics, and philosophy with all its categories, as we have known them from their beginning in Greece until today."[663] As Hobbes, Kant, and Marx each in their own ways found themselves more tethered to the past as they attempted to grasp the present in

[662] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 225); and (Plato 1945, 592b). Although it is not the focus of this chapter, I hope that I have shown above that the transformation of wonder by Plato is the *pathetic* side to the loss of the connection between *archein* and *prattein* explored by Arendt in *The Human Condition* as well as in other places. See also, (Arendt, What is Authority? 2006, 115), where Arendt claims that the capacity to endure and remain devoted to a prolonged feeling of θαυμάζειν, subordinating action to thought, is what Plato, and the tradition that followed him, held to be the principle of rulership. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt calls this "the supreme criterion of fitness for ruling others…in the aristocratic tradition of the West," (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 224).

[663] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 212).

thought, Arendt tested the tensile strength of those ties, and saw what resonance they might have when plucked. As such, she offers not so much a prescriptive account of wonder, but descriptive, so to speak. There is no single 'proper' experience of wonder for Arendt, even if there might be some primordial description of it as a historical experience which we might draw from the etymologically originary uses of *thauma*, *mira*, or, most mysterious of all, *wunder*. However, Arendt acknowledges that human beings will wonder and think about an unpredictable variety of things and will continue to do so as long as they dwell on the earth, for "the capacity for wonder and thought" is a fundamental capacity of the human condition.[664]

Arendt turns to Ancient Greek thought to examine the possibilities of wonder, and how those different genres of responses to it have persisted throughout the tradition of Western thought. Yet that tradition, insofar as it ever existed, is broken, as Arendt continually remarks. It offers itself to us in the present as "rich and strange" "thought fragments", from which we may learn the range of human capacities and experiences.[665] Yet it will not teach us of any proper functioning of our capacities, or, even less, 'what is to be done.'[666] "Our inheritance was left to us by no testament."[667] Insofar as political theorists are guided towards finding meaning in the tragic arena of politics, they must allow themselves to wonder. To do so, they must, metaphorically speaking, first direct the entirety of their attention to the phenomena of practical affairs, and, second, search within them for meaning. The modes of wondering which Arendt is

[664] (Arendt, The Concept of History 2006, 62).

[665] (Arendt, Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940 1968, 206) and (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 212). The phrase "rich and strange" is from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a play absolutely obsessed with the experience of wonder.
[666] (Arendt, Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940 1968, 205-206). See also (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 212) and (Benhabib 1990).

[667] The original text, *"Notre heritage n'est précédé d'aucun testament*" by René Char and this translation are found in (Arendt, Preface: The Gap Between Past and Future 2006, 3).

most desperate to recover from the ancients are not the scientistic wonder of Aristotle, or the virtue-bound wonder of the Stoics, but rather a delicate balance of the meaning-directed wonderings of the ancient historians for the 'great and wondrous' deeds and events of human affairs and the aporetic wonder of Socrates. Political theorists must carefully draw themselves towards the unexpected, incredible events of the present, while also retaining the Socratic refusal of the dangerous, and usually incorrect, assumption that we will immediately understand the significance and meaning of what is happening. This is not the *Epoché* of the Stoics, a withholding of judgement as to certainty, but the Socratic bafflement at the ceaselessly aporetic, slipperiness of meaning which occurs whenever we attempt to meaningfully say something about the world as it presents itself to us.

Even though the grace of universals might have left political theory, the needful quest of the general is imperative. The world, if not experienced as a *pathos*, as something worthy to be suffered in thought, will not forever suffer us. As I finish these pages, the condition could not be more dire, or impassioned thought more needful. The gigantic catastrophes of the earth brought on by climate change open up not so much a perceptual gap between the potential political orders of the world and an order in which human flourishing is possible, but a gaping, screaming chasm, which, if we do not have the intellectual courage to experience in wonder, will swallow us whole. "The earth is the very quintessence of the human condition, and earthly nature, for all we know, may be unique in providing human beings with a habitat in which they can move or breath without artifice."[668] That "quintessence", that there should be a world in which there might be human things, in whatever ordering that they may take, is still a great wonder. That this

[668] (Arendt, The Human Condition 1958, 2). For an exciting new reading on the political significance of the earth for Arendt, see (Ephraim 2017, 34-67).

condition might soon end, should be a wonder as well. Wonder might not help us to prevent disasters, but it will force us to try to understand them. To not respond would then be thoughtless.

Conclusion

Politics and Wondering: From the Rainbow to the Tempest

> Marveling, thus, at his goodness and prudence, the Roman people yielded to his every decision.
>
> - Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*

> My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
> Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
>
> - Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandias*

1. An Ethic of Political Wondering?

Wonder is a passion implicated in power. Whether it should be towards the sovereign state, the dream of a world ordered accorded to freedom, the overwhelming inundation of new commodities produced by capitalism, or political action as such, wonder attaches us to a particular ordering of the world. In modernity, wonder is incorporated into the 'brave new world' that is primarily ordered according to human initiative. In the preceding chapters, we saw theorists follow various paths to turn their gaze away from the events and deeds of men and women. In the penultimate chapter, we saw Arendt repudiate that choice. Rather than turn her gaze towards the gigantic structure of the modern state, the unseen capacity for freedom, or the process of production, Arendt finds the field of human affairs to be worthy of wonder, and recovers from the roots of western thinking some forgotten resources for making sense of that underexplored path of wonder.

Additionally, Arendt analyzes the temporal dimension of wonder, which bestows upon a perceived object a permanence in time that may serve as the basis of a reliable ordering of the world. This had been an effect of the use of wonder by previous theorists, but Arendt allows us to see this effect more clearly. To Arendt, the fact that wonder is a *pathos* means not only that it

is a feeling which crosses the boundaries between, metaphorically speaking, the mind and the heart, but it is something which is *endured* in time. However, Arendt was not alone in recognizing this temporal dimension to political wonder. Previous theorists also responded to the precarity of secular time by transferring wonder from the sense of the world as divinely ordered to new phenomena in political life in order to 'reoccupy' the need for a sense of order. Thus Hobbes found the wonder towards the sovereign to create an enduring sense of statist order; Kant found the wonder towards the capacity for freedom to create an enduring resource for the republican project; and Marx found the wonder for commodities and their production to create a feeling that capitalism would endure, no matter what internal contradictions it might contain. In the preceding chapter, I showed that Arendt 'dismantles' the connection between wonder and endurance in time to show the root it has in experiencing the unexpected novelty of deeds and events. By doing so, Arendt helps us better understand the temporal aspect of the previous treatments of wonder. And in that root, Arendt finds a sensorial basis for meaning in politics. In the modern history of political wonder Arendt appears less as one whose project is concerned with a prescriptive project of order, and more as one who implores us to think about how our suffering of the world engenders how we construct meaning within it.

However, there is a lingering issue in Arendt's account of wonder, which is revealed by the fact that the problem which led her to reconsider wonder was the historical task of understanding evil. It is also a significant issue for the rest of the theorists in this dissertation: whether wondering has any moral content. In 1945, Arendt proclaimed that "the problem of evil will be the fundamental question of postwar intellectual life in Europe."[669] In *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt confronts this problem of the radical evil of totalitarianism, which not

[669] (Arendt, Nightmare and Flight 1994, 134).

only systematically destroys human life, but attempts to destroy "the fact of existence itself."[670] Totalitarianism as a 'novel form of government' is a monstrous horror, yet "'dwelling on horrors' would seem indispensable for the understanding of totalitarianism."[671] Indeed, Arendt made the point emphatically in 1954, that "the speechless horror at what man may do and what the world may become is in many ways related to the speechless wonder of gratitude from which the questions of philosophy spring."[672] The problem of evil and its relation to wonder would remain a conundrum for Arendt even after she altered her assessment of totalitarian crimes from 'radical' to 'banal.' "Evil", she would say, "is never 'radical,' that it is only extreme, and that it possesses neither depth nor any demonic possession."[673] It appears to me that in the course of searching for the meaning of the evils of totalitarianism, that Arendt held more closely to her understanding of wonder in politics: that wonder must remain on the level of appearance and interrogate the meaning of deeds. To assume that something which appears is supernatural, and beyond the powers of comprehension, is to cut short thinking.

Wonder is then implicated in Arendt's greatest controversy: her account of Adolf Eichmann as not a superhuman monster, but a fool who didn't allow himself to think about what he was doing – a guilty and responsible fool, but a fool, nonetheless. Quite reasonably, this deeply offended many by apparently exculpating Eichmann of his monstrousness and trivializing the horror of the Holocaust.[674] But isn't there something deeply troubling from the beginning

[670] (Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 1968, 442-443).

[671] (Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism 1968, 441).

[672] (Arendt, Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought 1994, 445).

[673] (Arendt, The Eichmann Controversy: A Letter to Gershom Scholem 2007, 471).

[674] Writings from the controversy, which remains no less controversial today (Aharony 2019), over Arendt's coverage of Eichmann's trial, and studies of the controversy are seemingly endless. A few of those studies include (Berkowitz 2013); (Golan and Misemer 2017); (Lipstadt 2010); and (Stangneth 2014).

about thinking about the evil of totalitarianism in a similar manner to how Herodotus wrote about the Ancient Greeks and Persians in their wars against one another – certainly not as glorious for Arendt, but as a novel wonder to be understood?[675] Here Arendt's controversy brings to light a central problem of wonder, and perhaps exaggerates it. That problem is in the fact that when we perceive something in wonder, we can value objects without moral evaluation. Consider how Hobbes shows that the wonder for state, which Nietzsche rightly called the "coldest of all cold monsters,"[676] does not require that we think of the Leviathan as supremely good, but only as sovereign; how Marx relentlessly shows how the wonder of the commodity form that structures capitalism displaces or confuses questions of whether capitalism is truly conducive to the flourishing of those who live under it; or even how Kant's wonder at the possibility of universal freedom could realize itself historically as "the fury of destruction," according to Hegel,[677] in such as events as The Terror during the French Revolution. It is not my intention to resolve the Eichmann controversy, but rather to acknowledge the moral problem of wondering which the controversy brings to light. It is a problem that it is perhaps impossible to resolve but must be acknowledged if we are to cope with the tensions of wondering in modernity.

These tensions have occurred to others. In Martha C. Nussbaum's theory of the passions as moral evaluations, "wonder is exceptional: the intensity of my wonder seems proportional only to the value that I see in the object, not to its value for me in my scheme of goals or

[675] My thanks to Joshua Dienstag for pressing me to bring these concerns to the forefront of this conclusion. See also Arendt's rejection of seeking historical 'causes' of totalitarianism in her work in (Arendt, Totalitarianism 2018, 157). My thanks to Kirstie McClure for drawing my attention to this passage.

[676] (Nietzsche 1966, 48).

[677] (Hegel 1977, 359).

ends."[678] The moral theory which Nussbaum offers is *eudaimonistic*, which means that it is concerned chiefly with the achievement of human flourishing.[679] Within the structure of this ethical theory to say that wonder doesn't value an object with regards to one's own scheme of goals or ends is to say that it is experienced in an amoral sense. As Descartes wrote, wondering "is focused not on good or bad but only on the knowledge of the thing that has given rise to it."[680] In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the greatness of Satan is depicted as sublime, but certainly not as good.[681] In wondering we find significance in objects, but we do so without necessarily evaluating the moral quality of the object. William Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, provides another extreme example. The character Miranda had lived out nearly her entire life on an island populated only by herself, her father, and two inhuman creatures, Ariel and Caliban. After her father caused a storm that shipwrecked a ship with a handful of men onto the shores of the island, Miranda came into contact with more humans than just her father. When she encounters a group of these men, she is astounded by so many new people: "O, wonder! / How many goodly creatures are there here! / How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, / That has such people in't!" To this her father responds, "'Tis new to thee."[682] What Miranda did not know was that these "goodly creatures" were in fact responsible for why she and her father were stranded on this island in the first place. Prospero points out that the novelty of these men to Miranda, and her ignorance as to how they fit into the possibility of her happiness, gives her a completely

[678] (Nussbaum 2003, 56n57).

[679] (Nussbaum 2003, 31-33).

[680] (Descartes 2015, 224).

[681] See (Burke 1990, 57). For a political reading of Burke's notion of the sublime, see (Frank 2014).

[682] Act V, Scene 1, (Shakespeare 1959, 78).

misleading understanding of them. Wonder, in this instance, utterly misses the moral quality of the object.

Arendt is aware of these problems and provides an answer to them.[683] Whether the answer is adequate, is another issue. When Arendt saw Eichmann on trial she found that "the deeds were monstrous, but the doer – at least the very effective one on trial – was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous."[684] What she found remarkable about the man was not "stupidity but *thoughtlessness*."[685] Arendt wonders at one who evidently never took part in wondering. From this point she asked whether this "activity could be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even actually 'condition' them against it?"[686] The answer that she finds is what she calls the "two-in-one" – the fact that whenever we stop to think about a matter, we engage in an inner dialogue with ourselves. We experientially split into a duality. To wonder, in this sense, is to ask oneself questions and to attempt to answer them honestly. "The only criterion," according to Arendt, "of Socratic thinking is agreement, to be consistent with oneself."[687] The point for Arendt is that thinking might keep us from doing things that we couldn't accept in a friend. For that is what the other in one's silent dialogue must be to keep the dialogue going: a friend. Arendt's answer to the 'banality' of Eichmann is then a

[683] This is the answer we have given the fact that the third part of *The Life of the Mind*, on the faculty of judgment, was never completed. Thinking and judging are intricated connected for Arendt, especially in the way that one decides on how to act on the wonders that one experiences in thought. What Arendt would have written in *Judging* would have certainly been pertinent to untangling the moral problems of wonder. The following is based on the section of *Thinking* called "The two-in-one" (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 179-193) which appeared in an earlier form as (Arendt, Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture 1971).

[684] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 4).

[685] Ibid.

[686] Ibid., 5.

[687] Ibid., 186.

'depth' of internal dialogue – an opening to wonder about things in silent discourse with oneself, with the moral demand that one be able to live with oneself and one's deeds. Eichmann's refusal to think what he was doing shows what can happen if one is unwilling to confront evil in thought: one might commit it.

In the introduction I responded to the question of whether it is good that we wonder by saying that wondering is simply something that we do. It is a fact with which we can live well or poorly. I stated my aspirational faith in the capacity of citizens for a more reflective sense of wonder, which might express itself through a thoughtful responsiveness and a bit of cunning. I would add that, given that in modernity political wonder is mostly directed towards objects which are the artifacts of human freedom, bringing wonder under our own reflective control is to further complete the 'unfinished project of modernity.'[688] Wonder is a passion – it is something that happens to us. But we can develop an ethic in how we cope with it. According to Arendt, when "everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because their refusal to join is conspicuous and becomes a kind of action."[689] To translate this into the terms which I've been using in this dissertation, wonder presses upon us certain views of things that correspond to the orders that they represent, but, if we activate our wonder as thought, we can choose to extricate ourselves from those orders. We can say no. What happens next, of course, is anyone's guess.

Given the condition of modernity as being a result of human initiative, we might revise Arendt's answer to the problem of wonder. We should instead ask ourselves: could I live with

[688] See (Habermas, Modernity versus Postmodernity 1981), (Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity 1995), and the essays in (d'Entreves and Benhabib 1997).

[689] (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 192).

myself if this world, the wonder that it is, were ordered as it is by my hands? Of course, every time when we act our individual designs fall to pieces in our hands, but that by no means diminishes the fact that the world is nothing more than the cumulative effect of all our designs. In the same way that courage is simply a manner of coping with fear, there might be a virtuous way to cope with wonder. To Arendt, it involves a silent dialogue with oneself that can only continue as long as you can live with yourself. If we were to consider political wonder within the framework of a virtue ethics, we might say that the deficiency of wonder is thoughtlessness and the excess to be endlessly baffled. The mean, then, would be to puzzle over the significance of those things which elude one's grasp in search of a full, flourishing life, but to not forget to also live. Rather than venerate those things that strike us as great, we would question what significance that supposed greatness has for our own collective happiness. Rather than venerating human institutions as hallowed or natural, we would question the purpose that they serve and whether that purpose is conducive to our flourishing. When we think of wonders in this critical manner, we might allow ourselves to recognize the difference between wonders and calamities.

2. From the Rainbow to the Tempest

At the end of the previous chapter, I ended with some rather abrupt musings on the significance of wondering for confronting climate change, especially in light of Arendt's analysis of political wonder. To end this dissertation, I want to briefly reconsider the relation between wonder and nature given the political conditions of modernity. Classically, the rainbow has been the natural event which most draws our wonder. According to Philip Fisher, "the rainbow is a central instance of the aesthetics of wonder."[690] As I noted in the introduction, in the biblical tradition,

[690] (Fisher 2003, 33).

the rainbow was sent by God to mark the end of the Flood and to signify God's covenant to never again destroy the earth in such a deluge. The wonder of the rainbow, in this sense, is a wonder of an earth blessed by the divine as a place fit for humans to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth."[691] However, if we return to Hesiod's genealogy of the god Thaumas (wonder), we can see that the ancient Greeks wisely not only called Iris, the goddess of the rainbow, his daughter, but also the Harpies, "who race with the gusts of the wind and the birds on swift wings, for they hurl on high."[692] To the ancient Greeks, the harpies were the spirits of storms, who were often tasked with snatching humans and carrying them off to the underworld.[693] Both the delightfully admirable rainbow and the terrors of the storm were emblematic of wonder for the ancient Greeks, and both shows a form of communication between humans and the supernatural. In light of the horrors of climate change, perhaps it is appropriate to consider a different natural phenomenon to encapsulate the wonder towards the natural world. The sights of melting icecaps, raging wildfires, drought-desiccated landscapes, and unprecedented hurricanes caused and intensified by climate change have perhaps made the spirits of the storm more appropriate. Perhaps we should shift our lens from the sign of the rainbow to that of the tempest.

In these last few pages I would like to dwell further on William Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, which of all Shakespeare's plays – and perhaps of all literary works – is the one most

[691] *Genesis* 9:9.

[692] (Hesiod, Theogony 1988, 11). See here (Rubenstein, Strange Wonder: The Closure of Metaphysics and the Opening of Awe 2008, 11-12); and (Vasalou, Wonder: A Grammar 2015, 60-61).

[693] See Homer, *Odyssey*, book XX, lines 66 & 77, (Homer 1854, 320). For the depiction of the harpies as foul, fearsome, and terrible in appearance and not only in their divine role, see Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book III, lines 243-318, (Virgil 2005, 60-62).

concerned with wonder.[694] However, I before I being to dwell on the metaphor of the tempest and Shakespeare's play of the same title I want to bring to the foreground the fact that the year in which Shakespeare is believed to have started writing *The Tempest* has also been recently suggested as the first year of the Anthropocene.[695] The concept of the Anthropocene epoch, the age of humans, was originally suggested by Eugene Stoermer in the 1980s to capture the ecological effect of human beings on the earth and the concept has risen in prominence rapidly in the 2000s.[696] According to Jedediah Purdy, "the Anthropocene finds its most radical expression in our acknowledgement that the familiar divide between people and the natural world is no longer useful or accurate."[697] The order of nature then is also subject in a material sense to the political condition of modernity which I outlined in the introduction to this dissertation – that all order is understood as constituted primarily by human initiative. Marking the beginning of the Anthropocene at 1610 implies, according to the scientists who suggested this year,

> that colonialism, global trade and coal brought about the Anthropocene. Broadly, this highlights social concerns, particularly the unequal power relationships between different groups of people, economic growth, the impacts of globalized trade, and the current reliance on fossil fuels.[698]

The Tempest is a remarkable text for our purposes, not only in how it reflects on how wonder is a technique of power, but also in how it reflects on the involvement of wonder in undercurrents of modernity – domination, inequality, and economic exploitation – which are displaced from view

[694] On wonder in *The Tempest*, see (A. M. Cohen 2012, 9-16); and (Fisher, Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences 2003). On wonder in Shakespeare's plays more generally see also (Bishop 1996); and (Cunningham 1951).

[695] (Lewis and Maslin 2015).

[696] (Purdy, After Nature 2015, 1).

[697] (Purdy, After Nature 2015, 2).

[698] (Lewis and Maslin 2015, 177).

by techniques of wonder in the preceding chapters. And it reflects on all of this from the threshold of the epoch in which nature itself is predominantly determined by human activity. The image of modernity which the play suggests is not simply one in which political space is carved out of nature by human initiative, but one in which wonder politicizes nature itself.

If one were so inclined, one could boil the plot of *The Tempest* down to say that a formerly deposed Italian duke maintains power on an island by, and then successfully mounts a coup to regain his power through, the effects of his wondrous control over natural phenomena. To give a bit more detail of the plot, the play is named after a storm which Prospero, the deposed Duke of Milan, conjures to shipwreck those who exiled him to his island and to engineer a plot that would return him to power.[699] Those who were on the ship included the King of Naples, the son of the King, the King's councilor who saved Prospero from an even worse fate, the son of the King, and Prospero's brother, who usurped him as the Duke of Milan. Prospero's rule as duke was usurped by his brother, as Prospero neglected worldly ends, according to his own telling, for "the bettering of the mind" which made him "reputed / in dignity, and for the liberal arts" but susceptible to the plots of one so nefarious as his brother.[700] Prospero's humanistic learning failed him in Milan, but would come to bring him great power on the island.

Prospero is not alone on the island, but is there with his daughter, Miranda, and two others. The first of the others is Caliban, a deformed creature who is the son of the previous ruler of the island, and the second is Ariel, a spirit of the air. Both of them are subjected to Prospero,

[699] Of interest on this point are Arendt's reflections on the turn in late antiquity to thinking of the joys of spectatorship as being due to being able to observe the travails of life, like a shipwreck, from a secure shore or haven in (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 139-141). See also Hans Blumenberg's account of this 'existential metaphor' in (Blumenberg, Shipwreck with Spectator 1996), an account to which Arendt acknowledges a debt, (Arendt, Thinking 1978, 233n.39).

[700] Act I, Scene 2, (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 9).

and Caliban sees Prospero's power as based in his books, the symbol of Prospero's humanistic learning.[701] Their characters have given rise to interpretations, such as in Aimé Césaire's retelling, *Une Tempête*, as two responses to the condition of colonization; collaboration in the case of Ariel and resistance in Caliban, whose name bears a striking resemblance to both Carib and cannibal, demonstrating that this character is a literary reflection by Shakespeare of the relations between the peoples of the Old and New Worlds.[702] By the conjurings of Prospero, primarily through the aid of Ariel, Prospero is able to regain the Dukedom of Milan. The story concludes with Prospero setting Ariel free, abandoning his magic charms, and leaving the island with Miranda, who has married the son of the King of Naples, thereby solidifying Prospero's return with a powerful alliance.

The prevalence of wonder in the play is too rich and polyvalent to discuss in detail here. But it is clear that wonder is a technique of power in the employ of Prospero, "who is a *Thaumaturge,* a producer of wonders," that regains his power through wonders beyond that of the eponymous tempest.[703] Ariel is not only an airy spirit who conjure the tempest, but he also appears later in the play to the conspirators against Prospero "like a harpy" to terrify them into guilt.[704] After the success of Ariel's appearance to the conspirators, Prospero remarks to himself that "my high charms work, / And these, mine enemies, are all knit up / In their distractions; they are now in my power."[705] Yet the power of Prospero's wonders do not end with Ariel, but also

[701] Act III, Scene 2, (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 53).

[702] Caliban has been an extremely rich character for thinking about the processes of racialization and colonization. For two prominent examples, see (Federici 2014); and (Henry 2000).

[703] (Fisher, Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences 2003, 14).

[704] Act III. Scene 3, (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 58).

[705] Act III, Scene 3, (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 59).

include the way that he includes his daughter in his political machinations. His daughter's name, Miranda, is the feminine form of the Latin *mirandus*, meaning 'worthy of wonder.' And we see Miranda not only wondering at the new people who arrive on the island, but also as an object of wonder to the son of the King of Naples, Ferdinand, who exclaims "O you wonder" upon meeting her.[706] Ferdinand and Miranda accede to the designs of Prospero, fall in love, and Prospero marks their union with a play of spirits, including Iris, the spirit of the rainbow. In the end, Prospero sets Ariel free, proclaiming "my charms are all o'erthrown, / and what strength I have my own", which appears to fulfill his promise to "break [his] staff" and "drown [his] book" to abjure the magic of his island kingdom.[707] The magic of humanist learning is set aside for the worldly art of politics as he prepares to resume him place in Milan.

We think of modernity as if Prospero really did put away his magic: that his mysticism was replaced with reasonable statecraft in his return to Milan; that the hierarchical order of the island is replaced with universal freedom and equality revealed to reason; and that the political economy of modernity replaces the early colonial exploitation of the island with the equal cooperation of the market. Yet, as we've seen, that is simply not the case. We've seen since the first chapter, not only statecraft, but politics in general is infused with wonder in modernity. Prospero brought his wonders. Even more, the wonders can, for better or worse, confuse our evaluation of the domination, inequality, and exploitation which still too often pattern modern political life. If we are to make sense of the wonders of modernity and their dangers, we must not follow Prospero in putting aside the humanist texts. To do would be to bear the conjurings of

[706] Act I, Scene 2, (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 23).

[707] Epilogue (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 83); and Act V, Scene 1, (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 73).

modernity without any knowledge of them. If anything, this is the option against which the humanist spirit of this dissertation has contended.

The wonders of *The Tempest* are also striking in how they show how what is initially perceived as a wonder of nature, can in fact be a wonder of humanity. This is not only true of the magic of Ariel, but also of how Caliban is depicted as both natural and a curiosity. Such a depiction is used by Prospero, and others, as the legitimation of his domination, mirroring the colonial history of Western empires. In this, the play is significant in aiding us in thinking about wonder in the natural world, given the modern politics of wonder. Take, for example, this passage from an article, selected almost at random, published in May 2019 in the *New York Magazine*:

> In the mythology of Los Angeles, fires are an eternal feature of the landscape — more permanent than any human settlement and an intimation that the city and its people remain rugged, no matter how comfortably plastic and protected life in its wealthy canyon sprawl might seem. But in a time of environmental panic, last year's fires played more like a portent of something new, even an End of Days. The same resident of Inglewood or West Hollywood or Culver City who might once have looked up from his driveway to see the same smoke plume suspended above the city's flatlands or driven past the same flickering flames along the 405 and thought, California, now sees them and thinks, Climate change.[708]

What was once seen in nature as eternal, or at least moving at a temporality that was geological rather than human, now moves in sync with human activity. The temporality of wonder is here stark. The natural world is moving at a speed determined in part by the interference of human action.[709] *The* Tempest imitates this synchronicity of human and natural time in the unity of time in the play: the actions depicted in the play are meant to take as long as the performance of the play itself. Secular time is also the time of the natural world. The calamitous difficulties that this

[708] (Wallace-Wells 2019).

[709] (Plumer 2019).

presents are indeed a marvel. Moreover, humans now see wondrous portents in natural signs of a terrible, brave new world to come. This is the case even in the most privileged parts of the globe, like Los Angeles. It is the case that to "a large extent the future of the only place where life is known to exist is being determined by the actions of humans. Yet, the power that humans wield is unlike any other force of nature, because it is reflexive and therefore can be used, withdrawn or modified."[710] Yet, as long as we fail to wonder about it, we let that movement intensify without significance. Wondering about the fact that the natural world, for better or worse, confronts us as a wonder in the modern sense, gives us a chance to order it in such a way that it might endure.

How then might thinking about wonder be significant for ecological thinking? I may *know* – as much as one can know these sorts of things – that global temperatures "are on course for a 3-5 degrees (5.4-9.0 degrees Fahrenheit) rise this century," but that knowledge doesn't *mean* anything until I endure the sheer horror of it, which leads one to such questions as "What is necessary for a flourishing life?" or "Can an ostensibly democratic people save itself from its own desires?" which have no final, knowable answers. But they are utterly foundational questions for political theory.[711] In this sense, although the new phenomena of the political world may perplex us, we cannot turn away from them and lose a sense of their significance for us. Given that the wondrous order of modernity touches upon every domain necessary for any possibility of flourishing, questioning is a matter of grave priority.

To extend the metaphor, modernity itself confronts us as a tempest. Its movements terrible, but wondrous to behold; its movements overpowering and self-reinforcing; and its

[710] (Lewis and Maslin 2015, 178).

[711] (Miles 2018).

global scope expanding seemingly without end. The metaphor which Arendt uses for certain movements of modernity – those which isolate and terrify subjects into political formations in which they have no freedom at all – is the sandstorm.[712] There is some truth to this. However, if we should have any hope of managing the storm of our own conjuring, with its all encompassing and seemingly endless movements, we must remember that its origin was in nothing more than clever moments of conjuring. The tempest we confront is of our own making. Today, when we see a hurricane, we partly see ourselves. About that we can still wonder. It is a mistake to see ourselves as being in the condition Miranda, who cried out at the tempest, "Had I been a god of power, I would / Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere / It should the good ship so have swallowed and / The frightening souls within her."[713] We cry this out if we fail to acknowledge that the wonders we see are our own. Our powers are those of Prospero, insofar as we control the powers of the state and the economic order. In our failure to acknowledge ourselves and our powers in our wonders we weep where we could act. Given the fact of the Anthropocene, we might acknowledge that wonder towards nature should include in it a feeling of responsibility for a natural world which does not confront us untouched, but as formed by human initiative. Any response to this wonder will be political and contentious, but so it must be.[714]

[712] (Arendt, The Promise of Politics 2005, 201-204).

[713] Act I, Scene 2, (Shakespeare, The Tempest 1959, 6).

[714] Purdy stages a potential democratic Anthropocene against the already incipient neoliberal alternative: "The politics of the Anthropocene will be either democratic or horrible. That alternative is no guarantee that a democratic Anthropocene would be decorous, pleasant, or admirable, but only that it would be a shared effort to shape our more-than-human future with human hands," (Purdy, The New Nature 2016).

Appendix - Abbreviations of Works

Kant

AP	Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View (1798)
CPR	Critique of Practical Reason (1788)
A/B	*Critique of Pure Reason*
CPJ	*Critique of the Power of Judgment*
DS	Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics (1766)
EM	Essay on the Maladies of the Head (1764)
GM	Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals (1785)
IUH	Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim (1784)
OBS	Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime (1764)
ONA	On a Newly Arisen Superior Tone in Philosophy
OCS	On the common saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice (1793)
OE	Other Exaltations
R	Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason (1793)
CF	The Conflict of the Faculties (1798)
MM	The Metaphysics of Morals (1797)
OPA	The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God (1763)
Q	The Question, Whether the Earth is Ageing, Considered from a Physical Point of View (1754)
PP	Toward Perpetual Peace (1795)
UNH	Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens or Essay on the Constitution and the Mechanical Origin of the Whole Universe (1755)
OT	What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking (1786)

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