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Hannah Arendt and the Boundaries of the Public Sphere

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The world has changed markedly in the half a century since Hannah Arendt last inserted a blank piece of paper into her typewriter and typed the word "Judgment." Many new phenomena and changes have occurred on the political map, in the economy and technology, and in the minds of humans since that time. Some of these changes could be predicted long before their appearance, some of them emerged unexpectedly. We do not know how Arendt would react to the changes taking place in the contemporary world. However, we are confident that she would not have stayed aside silently. She was a passionate supporter of an active political life based on both, a pluralism of opinions and agonistic debates, on the one hand, and on "acting in concert," understanding and reconciliation between people, on the other. For Arendt only through the implementation of their essential plurality, can humans access and preserve their common world — which she understands as something "that is shared by many people, lies between them, separates and links them, showing itself differently to each and comprehensible."[1] Arendt was sure that our common world can exist "only to the extent that many people can talk about it and exchange their opinions and perspectives with one another, over against one another. Only in the freedom of our speaking with one another does the world, as that about which we speak, emerge in its objectivity and visibility from all sides."[2]

In the world of today, however, these fundamental elements of a healthy political life are threatened by significant transformations or even extinction. We can state with certainty that there is a crisis of politics in the modern world, resulting in the rise of the

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1. Arendt H. (2005) *The Promise of Politics* (ed. J. Kohn), New York: Schocken Books, p. 128.
2. Ibid.: 128–129.

populist far-right movements, and accompanied by crises of truth, civility, and authenticity. These new political phenomena and changes would have challenged Arendt and would have made her reconsider the limits of political discussion. We can also assess with a confidence that the public sphere has changed dramatically since Arendt's lifetime and continues to undergo significant transformations, especially since emergence of the internet and social media.

Scholars use Arendt's concepts to develop various accounts of this new public sphere, yielding sometimes divergent conclusions.

Positive accounts usually emphasize that communication and presence in the public sphere becomes more accessible through the use of the internet and social media: modern technologies provide more opportunities for us to participate in political life, thereby erasing spatial and temporal boundaries. Yochai Benkler argues that this digital transformation of the public sphere "allows individuals to reorient themselves from passive readers and listeners to potential speakers and participants in a conversation."[3] The internet and social media make it easier to access political life for non-professional political actors and for groups of the population that were often not represented in the public sphere in the past. Therefore, we can expect the formation of a more diverse and broader public sphere, compared to the one which existed in Arendt's lifetime.

However, the internet and social media have not fully justified the initially optimistic hopes of democratization and a revival of political life: in addition to the positive effect, new communication technologies have brought a number of negative points. Some features of social media communication contribute to the flourishing of harassment, mobbing and trolling, the spread of hate speech and the rejection of other opinions. At the moment, thanks to the internet and social media, people in one part of the public sphere unite and enrich our common world, in the other part they wage network wars with each other and do not want to hear the other points of view. As a result, many prefer to consort with members of communities based on similar views, consciously protecting themselves from interacting with people of other views. We notice not only the destruction of some boundaries by means of modern communicative technologies, but also the creation of new ones. These processes, taking place in the contemporary public sphere are also manifested in the increasing tendency to deny political opponents the opportunity to be adequately represented in the public space. Today, this model of political behavior is reproduced everywhere, regardless of political orientation and geographic location: in some cases, representatives of right-wing parties are marginalized and squeezed out of the public sphere, in other cases this happens to liberals or to supporters of left-wing views. As a result, the polarization and fragmentation of the public sphere, the formation of parallel communities with mutually exclusive views, are becoming ever clearer. The emergence of the internet and social media have not only increased transparency and political activism, but also made easier the manipulation and control of people, and this contributes to the blurring of the boundaries between the public and the private, between

3. Benkler Y. (2006) *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 213.

lies and truth, between politics and economy. This blurring and disappearance of boundaries in some cases, and the formation of new ones in others, requires a rethinking of our understanding of the public sphere, and the new access to the changing human conditions. Arendt's theories can provide some promising perspectives for this. For Arendt was noted not only for her brilliant analysis of totalitarianism, her rigorous research of the human condition, and famous for noticing the intrinsic link between freedom and lying in politics, but also for her "endeavor to understand social and political processes of the present through the prism of some important changes of the past."[4] However, how can all that help us to understand the political and social reality in the era of social media, "alternative facts," "fake news," "post-truths" and the dangerous self-isolation of people within their echo chambers? We do not know how Arendt would have answered this question, but we can try to analyze the political and social processes of the present from an Arendtian point of view, reconstructing it with the help of her published and unpublished writings, interviews and other material.

On the March 30th–31st 2018, the 25th International Symposium "Paths of Russia" took place in Moscow. This anniversary conference featured the workshop "Hannah Arendt on the Limits of the Permissible: Public Sphere, Pluralism and Responsibility" as its central event. The workshop drew considerable attention from both academic scholars and the wider audience, and the *Russian Sociological Review* is proud to continue the discussion on the pages of our journal. In April 2018, we invited scholars in the fields of theoretical sociology, social philosophy, intellectual history and related disciplines in the social sciences and humanities to think on the problem of the boundaries of public sphere in connection with Arendt's ideas. In the call for papers we asked: "How can politics benefit from conflict and control it? Are there any positions and ideologies to be disqualified from public debate? In what ways are individuals responsible for upholding pluralism? How should the public sphere accommodate new types of political lies? How can Arendt's vision of the political be mobilized to answer the political challenges of the present day?"

The Special Arendt's Issue is a result of this "life of the mind." Roger Berkowitz analyzes the contemporary distaste for politics — Berkowitz refers to this phenomenon as "impossible politics" — from the point of Arendt's idea of reconciliation. This idea, according to Berkowitz, is especially important today, because reconciliation can lead to political solidarity, which the modern world stays in need for. Wolfgang Heuer discusses the question of the limits of lie and its prevention analyzing the use of such modern phenomena like "post-truth" and "fake news" produced by contemporary populist movements in order to undermine the credibility of politicians and mass media. The paper argues that Arendt's ideas of freedom of expression, of enlightened criticism, and Arendt's concept of a qualitative plurality are the foundations for the defense of truth and politics. Antonia Grunenberg rethinks Arendt's reflections on lying in the political realm in the context of modern digital era. The paper focuses on Arendt's explanation of the origins, the impact,

4. Salikov A., Zhavoronkov A. (2017) The Public Realm and Revolution: Hannah Arendt between Theory and Praxis. *Estudos Ibero-Americanos*, vol. 43, no 3, p. 522.

and the ambivalence of lying in politics, and discusses the relevance of Arendt's thoughts for the understanding of the contemporary politics. John LeJeune argues that Arendt's theory provides the insight for the account of modern crises of truth, civility, and authenticity in the public sphere. The source of these crises author sees in the blurring of truth and opinion, in obscuring the public and the private in contemporary political discourse. Trevor Tchir discusses some ideas of Hannah Arendt's theory considering them as vital resources to meet the threats to pluralistic democratic action and to face the rise of populism and polarization in the media. As such a vital resource the paper recons Arendt's principle of resistance to totalitarianism and "responsibility for the world," the idea of the *sensus communis*, Arendt's imperative of factual truth-telling and her attention to the details of public. Alexey Salikov rethinks classical Habermasian approach to the phenomenon of public sphere from Arend's perspective focusing on its transformations since the emergence of social media. The paper examines the main actual changes taking place in the modern public sphere and concludes that the classical Habermasian concept of the public sphere requires a new approach. It is argued that some Arendt's ideas (self-organization through local communities, pluralism of opinions, competition in the public sphere) can be useful for elaboration of it. In his paper Anton Shablinskii conceptualizes the so-called mini-publics as the "oases of freedom" to demonstrate what type of political experience they can provide, and puts forward three conditions which are necessary for their functioning: self-selection of mini-publics, not requiring from mini-publics to render strategic decisions, different attempts of the state to include such organizations in its sphere of influence must be monitored and suppressed. The paper argues that Arendt's vision of politics is necessary to answer the most topical questions of the mini-publics theory — on the essence of mini-publics, and how they can provide citizens with the political experience in the public deliberations. The paper of Iana Lepetiukhina is devoted to the emotions in political life, how Arendt's theory discovers the influence of emotions on the concepts of public space and plurality. The paper also examines the ideas of understanding of and reconciliation with the world demonstrating their significance in Arendt's theory as the essential prerequisites for existence of plurality and public space. The author argues that emotions eliminate both of them. Stefania Fantauzzi in her paper reflects on Arendt's ideas on civil disobedience. Setting out from the Arendtian concept of the law, bringing out its relational dimension and its ties to the consensus universalis it is argued that civil disobedience can be made consistent with the spirit of the law, brought up in Arendt's essay "Civil Disobedience." Alexey Zhavoronkov investigates the issue of applicability of Hannah Arendt's ideas of tradition, nihilism and crisis of thought to the analysis of contemporary radical conservatism. Grounded on the analysis of both Arendt's essays of the 1940s and 1950s, and the historical and modern forms of conservatism, the author explores the question why Arendt is important to the understanding of contemporary pseudo-conservatism, and explains why it is better to consider the crisis of judgement, tradition and dialogue in the public sphere in the broader Arendtian perspective. Artur Tretyak dedicates his reasoning to the Arendt's influence on Italian political philosopher Paolo Virno. The paper argues that Virno suggested revising and redefining

the key concepts of Arendt's political philosophy in terms of Karl Marx's theory. The issue comes to its end with Anastasia Kalk's review on Richard J. Bernstein's book *Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?* (2018). Bernstein's book is a valuable and compact but comprehensive introduction to Arendt's political philosophy.

Ханна Арендт и границы публичной сферы

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Impossible Politics

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The Russian-American journalist Masha Gessen has been developing an argument about the impossibility of politics in an age of rising authoritarianism. Gessen turns to Hannah Arendt to articulate the phenomenon of freedom in belonging to a movement fighting for freedom. This freedom is what Arendt calls the "treasure" of the public space where people act together. However, the passionate bonds that emerge amidst communal freedom are often intolerant. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, the American town governments may have been the locus of American freedom, but they were also coarse and opposed to civilized restraints. There is always a desire on the part of elites, Tocqueville argues, to restrict the freedoms of the townships in the name of civilization. What bothers Gessen about our political moment is that large political movements have come to act like tiny resistance cells. The Women's March, for example, imposes an ideological purity on its members and leaders, so that anyone who trades in antisemitism in their private life must be excluded. Donald Trump's supporters and many liberal groups enforce ideological conformity, so that those who might be environmentalists or those who reject identity politics are excluded and denounced. All we have left, Gessen argues, is a politics of denunciation. In such a situation, no politics is possible. In this talk, I turn to Arendt to ask what it would mean to imagine a politics amidst the impossibility of politics?

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, freedom of speech, agonistic politics, liberalism, democracy, public space, Masha Gessen

I have been thinking, over the last couple of years, about the idea of reconciliation in Hannah Arendt's work. The idea is taken up, explicitly or implicitly and to varying degrees, in almost all of Arendt's work, originating as early as her *Denktagebuch*, an unpublished piece of writing she began shortly after coming back to the US from Germany in 1950 (Arendt, 2002).

Arendt's notion of reconciliation is central to her understanding of political judgment. Reconciliation, she argues, can help lead to political solidarity at a time when traditional ways of creating solidarity — through religion, customs, norms and traditions — have broken down. For Arendt, a person's ability to reconcile themselves to the harsh and even evil realities of the world requires — in a world without tradition — an affirmative act of political solidarity. Such affirmative acts of reconciliation are political; they require an

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affirmation of the public world, one that will embrace a particular vision how we can live together.

This political activity of reconciliation is important amidst the anti-political tenor of our age. We increasingly hate politics because politics is dangerous, so we concede to a technocratic, elite and scientifically "clean" politics — what might be called an administrative "anti-politics." This contemporary distaste for politics — I call it "impossible politics" — is the focus of my argument. By avoiding the hard questions of politics and turning instead to technocratic and administrative solutions, we think we limit the dangers of violent and disruptive political disagreement. Indeed, there is a hope that we will discover common truths that will allow us to live together in peace.

I am skeptical of such an anti-politics. Today, I'd like to discuss one example of the failure of such an anti-politics. The example of impossible politics I'd like to discuss today is Louis Farrakhan's speech on Savior's day in Chicago in March 2018. Farrakhan, the leader of a black-nationalist group called The Nation of Islam, is renowned for being anti-Semitic, anti-gay, anti-white, and racist. During his speech Farrakhan said, "the powerful Jews are my enemy." He also said, "white folks are going down. And Satan is going down. And Farrakhan, by God's grace, has pulled the cover off that Satanic Jew and I'm here to say your time is up, your world is through." Still more, he insisted that the Jews' grip on the media makes them responsible for all the filth and degenerate behavior that Hollywood is putting out; he called Jews the mother and father of apartheid (Tatu, 2018).

One liberal's response to this black-nationalist rally struck me in particular. Tamika Mallory is one of the three leaders of the Women's March on Washington, an anti-Trump protest that happened the day after he was inaugurated. Mallory not only attended Farrakhan's rally, but she publicly defends her association with him (Matthews, 2018). In fact, she captions a picture of the two of them on her Instagram account: "definitely the GOAT" (Mallory, 2017). Someone had to tell me what "GOAT" means, of course: "Greatest of All Time." Here, we have a situation where a liberal and very progressive feminist leader publicly praises a Nation of Islam anti-Semite. How can that be?

Not surprisingly, Mallory's post led to an outcry; the Women's March leadership had to decide how to react. Should they retract or maintain their support for her? (Katz, 2018). After five days of conversations with queer, trans, Jewish, and black members of the movement — a period of time described by Women's March leaders as an attempt to "create space for understanding and healing" (Gessen, 2018) — a statement was released that denounced anti-Semitism, but the statement was without mention of Farrakhan or Mallory.

I commend the Women's March leadership for having such conversations. We need to have these difficult, nuanced conversations about what and who we stand by, why we give our support, and when we should not. Yet many Americans considered this incident between the Women's March, Mallory, and Farrakhan unambiguously outrageous. The Women's March was condemned for not distancing itself forcefully enough from Mallory's support of Farrakhan, and Mallory was condemned for not distancing herself forcefully enough from Farrakhan's anti-Semitism. Many Americans asked not only whether

Farrakhan should be allowed to speak in certain venues, but also whether any degree of support for a point of view such as his is *automatically* condemnable.

The desire to limit Farrakhan's speech is part and parcel of a trend to limit what is considered acceptable speech. On college campuses, and beyond, conservative speakers are being prevented from speaking at liberal university campuses. The Farrakhan controversy seeks to shut down a liberal antisemite. In both instances, the effort is to shut down political opinions that are said to be outside the pale of respectable debate. It is my contention that the restriction on public speaking and the way in which people are condemned by association with controversial figures are part of a widespread attack on politics — an attack that emerges from a fear of politics. My argument has three aspects.

First, I want to explore why this intolerance of plurality exists. There is an incredible fear of plurality not only in the United States, but around the world. In spite of the embrace of diversity, there is a fear of real plurality. This fear of plurality is also a fear about a new, unpredictable and dangerous world that began to emerge after the end of the Cold War. People are scared, and there is a pervasive sense of Post-modern doubt tearing at the faith people have traditionally had in the ability of rational discussion to reveal the truth. When there is no faith in truth — whether revealed by God or deduced through reason — then plurality does not necessarily resolve into a coherent unity. Increasingly, there is a general lack of conviction in the stability of the present and waning hope for the future.

One way in which this contemporary fear of plurality manifests itself is as "trauma": opposing and offensive opinions are said to be traumatic. For example, I'm Jewish, and when Farrakhan says that Jews are devils, I can hear that, but the remark is not going to kill me. Might it incite violence? Maybe, but once we go down the road of limiting all speech that might incite violence, we will have little speech left to protect. And yet there are many Americans who would consider Farrakhan's remark offensive to such an extent that it becomes comparable to a physical attack. In hearing the claim that Jews are devils, I may be triggered to recall my relatives lost in the Holocaust; or I may recall an antisemitic incident from my youth. Such a trigger can lead to physical consequences. For this reason, the claim that such words are traumatic leads to a medicalized discourse on censorship in the name of safety.

Trauma is a real medical term. When you are traumatized, you cannot process something and you lose your ability to function. The word has taken on a new meaning. In today's politics it means: "I cannot listen to this conversation." In light of these "traumatic" reasons for not permitting offensive conversations, a question about the value of plurality is all the more pressing — we need to ask ourselves why plurality matters. Why do we have to hear from the enemy? Why do we have to hear from the people who make us feel uncomfortable?

My favorite quote from John Stuart Mill is near the end of his second essay *On Liberty* where he writes: "Both teachers and learners go to sleep at their post, as soon as there is no enemy in the field" (Mill, 2002: 35). You cannot be a good thinker if you do not confront your enemy. Even reading your enemy is not good enough because you can always

just dismiss them; for that reason, the value of a face-to-face dialogue with someone who fundamentally disagrees with you is the only way to get a better understanding of your own position and of the situation at hand. For Mill, progress means striving for better ideas, but it seems to me that the contemporary fear of plurality underlying trauma rhetoric shows that Mill's view of progress does not resonate anymore.

The thinker who I find most helpful in understanding why plurality matters is Hannah Arendt. Arendt believes that debate constitutes the very essence of political life. In her essay "Introduction into Politics" she writes: "Politics is based on the fact of human plurality. . . . Politics deals with the coexistence and association of different men. Men organize themselves politically according to certain essential commonalities found within or abstracted from an absolute chaos of differences" (Arendt, 2005: 93). What is human plurality? There is an infinite plurality: every single one of us is unique for Arendt, and to the extent that we have a private life, we should all think differently and have a unique perspective on the world. Insofar as we organize ourselves politically and come together, we have to do it with the inevitability of our differences in mind — we have to find our commonalities amidst difference. For Arendt, the world people share comes about without rejecting the chaos of differences, for difference is essentially what makes us human.

Arendt's defense of the freedom of speech, unlike Mill's, is not based on progress or truth but on the idea of plurality. She writes, "[W]e know from experience that no one can adequately grasp the objective world in its full reality all on his own . . ."(Arendt, 2005: 128). This inability to see the objective world, and the need to talk to other people because of that inability, are absolutely essential to Arendt's understanding of what it means to think. Free speech means that we will always hear other opinions and other perspectives — making free speech the foundation of expansive and correct thinking about the world. Arendt wrote, "Only in the freedom of our speaking with one another does the world, as that about which we speak, emerge in its objectivity and visibility from all sides" (Arendt, 2005: 128–129). To put it in Mill's terms, we need the enemy in order to understand a world conditioned both by subjectivity and plurality. The first point I want to make is that we need to hear enemies; we need plurality so that we might preserve the very possibility of knowing our common world.

An article written in the *New Yorker* by Masha Gessen was another reason why I was prompted to discuss Mallory, Farrakhan, and the Women's March. According to Gessen's article, the Mallory controversy parallels the recent poisoning of Sergey Skripal and his daughter in England because both cases raise the issue of an unambiguous point of resistance. For Gessen, a state that practices political murder — as did Russia — is a clear, unadulterated evil. Gessen argues that when you are staring this kind of evil in the face a person's "options crystallize." In other words, Gessen believes that it is plain and simple that such an evil regime as Russia merits resistance.

Thankfully, Gessen then turns to Hannah Arendt to recall that politics cannot exist when things are so easily black-and-white: "That sense of mission [against unadulterated evil] is a symptom of the disappearance of politics." Politics disappears in Russia because of the need to respond to evil with a one-sided and overly simple opposition. Politics, for

Arendt, is an engagement of multiple and nuanced opinions; and it is politics that the imagination of an unadulterated evil regime negates.

For Gessen, Farrakhan's bigotry threatens to present a similarly one-sided situation. Farrakhan is also simply evil and thus demands an anti-political response: "It's hard, if not impossible, to make the case for compromise with — or in any way involving — Farrakhan. No politics is possible here" (Gessen, 2018). In Russia and in response to Farrakhan, Gessen argues that the emergence of simplistically evil opinions negates the field of politics.

Within this context of confronting evil and the dissolution of politics, Gessen argues that it is possible to criticize the Women's March for not disavowing Farrakhan; as long as Tamika Mallory or any of the leaders of the Women's March are associated with a vicious bigot like Farrakhan, the entire organization risks being de-legitimated. Gessen goes on to say that there's an "oddly satisfying" idea that we feel morally superior: we say, oh well, you know the Women's March won't criticize Farrakhan; but we will and therefore we feel pretty good about ourselves. This feeling of righteousness is a familiar one, Gessen admits. As someone raised in Russia, Gessen feels righteous in her feeling about the government, she embraces this righteousness and says it is a great sense of righteous power to feel superior, to know my enemy is wrong. Gessen argues that we should condemn the Women's March, Tamika Mallory, and Louis Farrakhan, just as we should condemn the Russian government.

To her credit, Gessen complicates her argument. An important tenet of this dissolution of politics in the face of evil is the way the loss of politics is empowering both sides. The simplistically evil regime or person asserts their power. And when you are staring unadulterated evil in the face, it is easy to feel morally superior. Instead of the Arendtian claim that politics is about opinion, the injection of evil into the discourse replaces politics with the certainty of moral rectitude.

To articulate this anti-political moral empowerment, Gessen cites Arendt's description of private citizens who joined the French Resistance in *Between Past and Future*. These citizens, because they had been mobilized toward such an unambiguous cause in opposition to the Nazis, were no longer plagued by feelings of insincerity or of being "carping, suspicious actors of life" — they had "found" themselves, in and through the Resistance. In the action, the camaraderie, the brotherhood of the movement, a person could strip off the different masks he wore to protect himself in private society. These challengers to the status quo, to the Nazis, "had taken the initiative upon themselves and therefore without knowing or even noticing . . . had begun to create that public space between themselves where freedom could appear," to quote from the same passage of Arendt's which Gessen cites (Arendt, 2006: 4–5). Amidst the apolitical realm of the Resistance, a certain freedom to act emerges, one that is deeply connected to Arendt's understanding of political freedom.

What Arendt is discussing here and what Gessen finds important, is that it is in the cells of the resistance, in that places where we are so comfortable that we strip off the masks and know ourselves, that we begin to act in complete freedom, as who we truly are.

As individuals in our plurality we can enter the public space. This freedom to be who we are, to be unique, is what Arendt calls the treasure of the Resistance.

It is the treasure of the public happiness and public life of being able to be yourself in public. Gessen is attracted to this and she says that maybe she was wrong. Maybe it is good that Tamika Mallory, the Women's March, Louis Farrakhan and the Russian state can be who they are, be free. Maybe we should not expel them from the public space and the public discourse. She appears to have reversed her position. Gessen continues: Arendt says that freedom is not free will but the freedom to act in concert. Freedom is political freedom, and such freedom for small groups is the freedom of politics. At some point she seems to conclude that politics is good, actually we like politics: talking, discussing, arguing, persuading and even hating each other are all politics. Politics, she says, quoting Bismarck, is "the art of compromise," "the art of the possible," the attainable, the next best. Following this approach, we do not worry about evil, we say "let us get the best we can."

It seems that Gessen adopts the Arendtian spirit and embraces the idea of agonistic politics. But then she flips again and says: "But is compromise possible with a bigot? Can someone who won't denounce a bigot be acceptable as the "next best?" And here's her answer: "It's hard, if not impossible, to make the case for compromise with — or in any way involving — Farrakhan. No politics is possible here." Gessen says that she understands Arendt's admiration for politics, but we cannot do politics anymore. We cannot allow bigots. We cannot allow tyrants. We cannot allow people who violate the norms that we think govern society. Thus, she accepts the idea that no politics are possible anymore.

I find Gessen's fatalism about the possibility of politics today troubling because it abandons Arendt's faith in politics, in newness, in radical regeneration and revolution; these are, in my opinion, the true essence of what it means to do politics. Gessen's lack of confidence in contemporary politics also led her to criticize my choice of speakers at the Hannah Arendt Center's annual fall conference at Bard College. In another *New Yorker* article, she explains how I crossed the line from where political comprise is possible and wound up endorsing bigotry (Gessen, 2017).

Gessen and others on the left recoil from conversation today, and it is not just a matter of being personally offended. Gessen's position is today's Zeitgeist: the norm for most academics' and intellectuals' thinking about danger in politics today. David Brooks, a center-right conservative and columnist for the *New York Times*, recently wrote a piece in which he says that we need more politics in response to today's political climate: we need the messiness and limitation of political compromise, but what we do not need are those whose position would appear to be "anti-political" — those who are populist, by his description. Populists are people who cannot participate in politics because they are uneducated and/or dangerous; we have to reject them because they do not believe in political expertise or tradition (Brooks, 2016). That is exactly Masha Gessen's argument: We like politics but not *those* politics.

I am getting to the argument I actually want to make, and this is where I find Arendt's thinking most applicable. The root of Gessen's and Brooks' and so many people's fear of politics today is in the rise of a technocratic government-bureaucracy. In one of her es-

says in *The Crises of the Republic* Arendt says that one of the great dangers for modern democracy is the entry of problem solvers into politics (Arendt, 1972). I think she is right.

The great moment when this meld between academics and politics happened was during President John F. Kennedy's 1962 commencement address at Yale. In the address, he proclaimed that all the big questions of politics are over — those questions that "divided the nation," like issues surrounding the national bank, the disposal of public lands, nullification or unification, freedom or slavery, gold or silver. He said, "Today these old sweeping issues very largely have disappeared. The central domestic issues of our time are more subtle and less simple. They relate not to basic clashes of philosophy or ideology but to ways and means of reaching common goals — to research for sophisticated solutions to complex and obstinate issues" (Kennedy, 1962). Kennedy exuded a confidence that major political questions were behind us, that the political problems have transformed into administrative and executive problems. Of course, this was a terribly ill-timed speech, because we quickly ran into the Vietnam War, the Cold War, 60s counterculture, the Civil Rights Movement, the Reagan Revolution, the Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, and Donald Trump.

In spite of being so unbelievably wrong, Kennedy's insistence that the kind of problems we face today are those that demand "subtle challenges for which technical answers, not political answers, must be provided" sounds incredibly familiar. This point of view represents the same kind of elitism that Gessen and Brooks embrace: a faith in the certainty of expert knowledge as opposed to the messiness of politics.

This technocratic faith, this hatred of politics, this anti-politics has led to four misconceptions we need to confront if we are to re-invigorate politics today. The first misconception is that democracy, by its very nature, is liberal. This is a misconception populist movements bring to light. Liberalism originates in freedom from oppression, whether it be the oppression of tyrants, aristocrats, oligarchs or the democratic majority. Liberalism speaks the language of civil and human rights, and the nobility of the liberal tradition is that it recognizes that human beings and political citizens possess certain natural and political rights that are crucial to the thriving of human dignity.

Against the liberal tradition of plurality and individual rights, the democratic tradition has its foundation in the power and equality of the people. As Alexis de Tocqueville says in his book *Democracy in America*, democracy is about the "equality of conditions." No one has the traditional political, or God-given right to rule over me (Tocqueville, 1987: 3–6). This may sound like liberalism in its elevation of the right over the good, but the fact, which is too often overlooked, is that liberal and democratic traditions are generally opposed to one another: liberalism in the name of liberty must oppose and suppress the coarser elements of democratic freedom.

In one of the most important parts of Tocqueville's book he says that the spirit of freedom in America is in its many townships. In the section of *Democracy in America* where Tocqueville explains his fascination with and advocacy of townships, he identifies a certain tension between the nation as a mode of being in a society constituted by "great political assemblies . . . for the direction of affairs" versus the less official way that

men organically come together in townships. In fact, he explicitly states this tension as a matter of education, insisting a town whose people are more "intelligent" will have more difficulty establishing its independence. He writes, "A highly civilized society," — which is another way that Tocqueville describes a highly educated society — "can hardly tolerate a local independence, is disgusted at its numerous blunders, and is apt to despair of success before the experiment is completed" (Tocqueville, 1987: 60). Townships are coarse and prejudiced; they can be racist, sexist and religiously-inspired, so that civilized, liberal people are always upset and embarrassed by the coarseness of townships. And yet, for Tocqueville, freedom exists *only* in the townships. When liberalism and democracy are teased apart, it is possible to see how the particularly liberal idea of democracy compromises our understanding of what democracy *actually* is. We can see how that liberal idea of democracy is contributing to the rise of right and left-wing populist parties today.

A second misconception exposed by today's anti-political fervor is that modern representative democracy is individualist and cosmopolitan, and that it is endangered by collectivist nationalism. Politics, as Arendt reminds us, "deals with the coexistence and association of different men" (Arendt, 2005: 93). Insofar as the political eliteshave defined politics as the pursuit of individual interests, they either ignore or reject the political need to mobilize passions and create collective forms of identification. Elite and technocratic democratic politicians recoil from arguments about rootedness, belonging, and fundamental questions about how to organize our common world. Technocratic democracy forgets that politics must not only feed the people bread, but also must inspire and give them meaning. For Arendt, politics is about the coming together around stories that give meaning to human lives.

Especially in the modern age when religious and traditional explanations of collective purpose have lost their public impact, it is natural that large numbers of people seek to justify the tribulations of their lives with artificial, but nonetheless coherent, collective narratives. It is because of their prejudice against collective religions, traditions, and national identities that liberal democrats cannot define what it means to be an American, German, or Russian to right-wing populists. Populists then often wind up as the only ones who can define a national vision of the people.

A third misconception about democracy, made evident by the worldwide reaction against politics, is that political adversaries are public enemies. Instead of understanding political opponents as people with different opinions and different interests, the moralists of the anti-political elite, such as Gessen, imagine populists as violent outsiders who threaten the post-political consensus. So confident in their access to the truth, liberal, centrist, and even conservative elites refuse to debate with those (populists) who disagree.

When our opponents are evil, no common democratic world is possible. On all sides, we can retreat into our comfortable Facebook bubbles of affirmation. We live content in the echo chambers of our superiority and recoil from the hard work of democracy, of listening and learning to find commonalities with those with whom we disagree.

Taken together, these three misconceptions — that democracy is liberal, that democracy is individualist, and that democracy moralizes our opponents as evil — reveal a

fourth and overriding misconception: that democracy is prejudiced against politics by its distinct preference for security over freedom.

The idea that political opponents are a danger to the well-being of society as a whole is rooted in a profound fear — a fear that could destroy itself *through* political choices in a nuclear and technological age. Having lived through totalitarianism, having witnessed the dropping of nuclear bombs, and now living in this technological age where we can replace humans with artificial intelligence, we are deeply aware that politics may well destroy political economics or even the human world.

From out of this fear of politics, there is, I think, a horrible hope. Arendt expresses it: "Underlying our prejudices against politics today are hope and fear: the fear that humanity could destroy itself through politics and through the means of force now at its disposal." The hope is to overcome politics and replace it with an "administrative machine that resolves political conflicts bureaucratically and replaces armies with police forces" (Arendt, 2005: 97). Terrified by the danger of politics in an age of horrifying technical power, it is all too likely that democracies will seek to replace politics with a technocratic and bureaucratic administration. But such a hope, Arendt argues, is more likely to lead to "a despotism of massive proportions in which the abyss separating the rulers from the world would be so gigantic that any sort of rebellion would no longer be possible, not to mention any form of control of the rulers by the ruled." We will, in other words, trade our political and democratic freedoms for the security of expert rule.

This, I think, is the danger we face today, and the rise of populist movements on the left and the right around the world is, in many ways, a last gasp of people who feel an unwanted power over their lives, feel the rise of an unresponsive technocratic-bureaucratic machine, and who are seeking to find some means of controlling it. That does not mean they have the right ideas. But it means we have to take them seriously. Which is why we need to be much more open to hearing dangerous and radical ideas in the public sphere.

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Невозможная политика

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Российско-американская журналистка Маша Гессен высказала недавно идею, что в эпоху роста авторитаризма политика становится невозможной. Гессен обращается к творчеству Ханны Арендт, чтобы осмыслить феномен свободы, возникающей из принадлежности к движению, сражающемуся за свободу. Эту свободу Арендт называет «сокровищем» публичного пространства, где люди действуют совместно. Однако эмоционально заряженные связи, которые возникают благодаря этой коммунальной свободе, зачастую обнаруживают нетерпимость. Как писал Алексис де Токвиль, в практиках совместного управления в американских городах проявлялась американская свобода, однако зачастую в них же обнаруживались грубость и несдержанность. По мнению Токвиля, у элит всегда есть желание ограничить свободу этих городских собраний во имя цивилизованности. Гессен

в настоящий момент беспокоит то, что крупные политические движения стали действовать подобно маленьким ячейкам движений сопротивления. К примеру, «Женский марш» требует от своих членов и лидеров идеологической чистоты, так что всякому, кто в своей частной жизни проявляет антисемитизм, в таком движении нет места. Как сторонники Дональда Трампа, так и многие либеральные группы заставляют подчиняться единой идеологии шельмуют и исключают из своих рядов всякого, кто заботится о защите окружающей среды в первом случае или не принимает политик идентичности — во втором. Всё, что нам осталось, по мнению Гессен — это политика шельмования. В такой ситуации политика становится невозможной. В этом выступлении я обращаюсь к наследию Арендт, чтобы спросить: как может выглядеть политика в условиях её невозможности?

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, свобода слова, агонистическая политика, либерализм, демократия, Маша Гессен

The Temptations of Lying

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The lie accompanies us, it is parasitic on the truth and indispensable in our everyday life. But how can we limit it and prevent it from destroying the truth? This question is particularly topical given the so-called "post-truth" phenomenon of fake news, conspiracy theories and populist propaganda. Arendt's analyses of the relationship between truth and lies in politics are helpful. To defend facticity, truth is indispensable, but factual truth resists limitless freedom of speech and action, or, in Arendt's words, our enlarged mentality. Imagination is the common ground for creativity, the design of another world, but also for lies. Therefore, politics and lies are structurally very close, though of course not the same. Contemporary populist movements use lies in order to undermine the credibility of other politicians and mass media. The boundaries between truth, lies, the denial of reality, invented truths as well as, for example, anti-Semitism and racism are dissolving. Conspiracy theories are the pinnacle of the loss of reality. In contrast to lies, they offer a closed parallel world in which nothing happens by accident and nothing is what it seems. Zygmunt Bauman's term retrotopia indicates that globalization and technological change are leading to growing uncertainty and a discrediting of policies, which meet with populist aims. Arendt's republicanism offers an alternative to both, populism and consumer liberalism: the defense of facts, enlightened criticism and a concept of a qualitative plurality of engaged citizens.

Keywords: truth, post-truth, lying, enlarged mentality, plurality

Lying is practiced in both the private and the public realm, including politics. Psychological research has shown that we lie as many as 200 times a day. Austrian scientist Peter Stiegnitz introduced the scientific study of lies, or mentiology, which distinguishes five forms of lying: the self-deceptive lie to suppress uncomfortable truths; the white lie to keep friendship unharmed; the prestige lie to impress people; the anxiety lie to avoid the disagreeable consequences of one's own actions, and the unscrupulous lie to deceive, disadvantage, misinform or mislead others for self-benefit (Stangl). One could add the obsessive, pathological lie or *pseudologia fantastica*, as in the case of a man in Switzerland who dressed as an orthodox Jew in the 1980s and 1990s, inventing and living out his life story as a child survivor of the Holocaust in Auschwitz (Wilkomirski, 2002).

A lie cannot exist without the truth. It is a "parasite of the truth" (Dietz, 2003: 43–44; Bettetini, 2003), its opposite, and frequently its partner. In ancient times, Plato approved of lying for the benefit of the common weal (*Politeia*, Book III). During the Renaissance, Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* declared dissimulation to be the duty of courtly

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conduct, while Machiavelli saw lies and violence as a legitimate means of domination in defense of the republic and Torquato Accetto, whose work *On Honest Dissimulation* was published in 1641, recommended placing a "veil of honest darkness" over life's sad truths. In modern times, Leo Strauss distinguished between the philosopher's truth, reserved for the ruler, and pious myths and illusions, i.e., religion and morals, alleged to be good for the masses (Strauss, 1959).[1]

Philosophy was more puristic: St. Augustine refused to accept lies or any excuse for lying, while Kant, with reference to metaphysics and politics, strongly declared that a lie always harms someone else, "if not some other particular man, still it harms mankind generally, since it vitiates the source of justice" (Kant, 1889: 363). With this argument he rejected Benjamin Constant's reasoning that lying was legitimate if a murderer, for example, were to enquire about the location of a potential victim.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, adopted a radically different perspective. Rebelling against conventional morals and their corresponding practices, he considered lies to be business as usual and truth a construct of illusions. "This art of dissimulation reaches its peak in man. Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendor, wearing a mask, hiding behind convention, playing a role for others and for oneself-in short, continuous fluttering around the solitary flame of vanity." According to Nietzsche, men "are deeply immersed in illusions and in dream images; their eyes merely glide over the surface of things and see 'forms'. . . . Their senses nowhere lead to truth; on the contrary, they are content to receive stimuli and, as it were, to engage on the back of things." Truth, Nietzsche says, is "a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and; anthropomorphisms . . . illusions which we have forgotten are illusions — they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force." He concludes that we are dealing with a "great columbarium of concepts, the graveyard of perceptions" (Nietzsche, 2006: 117). It is not Nietzsche's intention here to nihilistically question all access to truth, but rather to suggest the stoic man of reason lay aside "his masterpiece of deception" and "with dignified, symmetrical features" even "when a real storm cloud thunders above him," walk "with slow steps . . . from beneath it." In other words, not to be a slave to concepts and the game of creating them, but to acquire instead the independence of the non-conformist in both thought and action.

This is the path Arendt chooses. Unlike Kant's formal analysis and Nietzsche's perspective of cultural and epistemological criticism, Arendt concentrates on the lie as a political phenomenon, simultaneously discussing the existential-philosophical dimensions of lies and the truth. This was against the backdrop of the heated debate on her report of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, an experience that confronted her with the significance of factual truth and truth-telling, and the exposure of the truth about the Vietnam War waged by the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, which led her to question the temptation to lie in politics. We cannot ignore the fact that "post-truth" lies have currently taken

1. See Robert Pippin: "Strauss believed that good statesmen have powers of judgment and must rely on an inner circle. The person who whispers in the ear of the King is more important than the King. If you have that talent, what you do or say in public cannot be held accountable in the same way" (Hersh, 2003).

on a new form. Can Arendt's analysis help us to deal with the lies that are prevalent in contemporary politics and society?

In answering this question, I will discuss the following aspects:

- Arendt's position on truth and lies in politics and human existence;
- the new "post-truth" phenomenon of fake news, conspiracy theories and populist propaganda;
- the underlying conditions of this post-truth and where they differ to those of the political lies Arendt faced in her time;
- Arendt's concept of qualitative pluralism as an effective antidote to the "post-truth" phenomenon.

Arendt's Position on Truth and Lies

The publication dates of the essays on this topic are several years apart. "Truth and Politics" was published in 1964, shortly after her report on the Eichmann trial appeared, while "Lying in Politics" came out in 1971 following the publication of the Pentagon Papers by *The New York Times*. Each essay was Arendt's response to a current debate. She constantly responded to the challenges of the day and saw it as her civic responsibility, one that forced her to think, to judge and, at least as an observer and author, to act. In the course of a discussion with friends she declared: "What is the subject of our thought? Experience! Nothing else! And if we lose the ground of experience then we get into all kind of theories" (Arendt, 1979: 308). All her writings were motivated by current events.

The two essays are closely linked. Given Arendt's pathos about a new beginning and political action, anyone who hopes to find a definition of politics that is bound to truth and effectively excludes lying will be sorely disappointed. Her two basic insights on truth and lies are: the truth is apolitical, whether it appears in the form of historical facts, i.e., as factual truth that is immovable and cannot be destroyed by any attempt to conceal it, or in the form of a conviction, as a truth of reason, which, declared as the only valid truth, becomes tyrannical and is directed against human plurality. Error, illusion or opinion are the opposites of the truth of reason; the opposite of a factual truth is a lie.

In comparison to truth, lies are structurally closer to action. "The deliberate denial of factual truth — the ability to lie — and the capacity to change facts — the ability to act — are interconnected; they owe their existence to the same source: imagination" (Arendt, 1972: 5). Action and lying come from the same mental source, a place in the mind where we distance ourselves from reality and truth. When Arendt defined *enlarged mentality* in her posthumous writings on the capacity to judge as the capacity to imagine an abundance of plural opinions through which common sense is set in motion and universally valid judgments are made, she knew it also had the potential to serve the development of non-plural thinking, disparate judgments, dissimulation and concealment from the public eye. Hence her statement on thinking as dangerous, but not thinking as far more dangerous, clearly evidenced in the case of conformists or careerist bureaucrats such as Eichmann.

The truth can be uncomfortable and is not always convenient. In everyday life, a small lie tends to be the lubricant that prevents processes from stagnation. Not always telling the truth, not saying everything that could be said is the basis of our daily dealings and political diplomacy. It allows for smoother cooperation. However, there are factual truths that dare not become the victim of diplomacy: historical truths such as the genocide of the Armenians by the Ottoman authorities (today's Turkey) and the mass murder of Jews under the German Nazi government. In Arendt's view, denying these facts means watering them down into opinions so as to strip the truth of its mandatory nature. There is a strong link between the conscious negation of facts and action, which is generally guilty of negating facts in the interests of unfettered behavior. Here, the liar has the advantage of knowing what people do not want to hear, that is, uncomfortable facts (Ibid: 6). The ardent nationalist cannot accept the fact that the Armenians were slaughtered as a security measure by the Ottoman state and its people. The fact that the Vatican pursued a pro-fascist policy during World War II was highly unpleasant for many Catholics after the war, while the French were reassured by the declaration that despite its defeat by Hitler, France belonged to the victors. Since historical facts — bare facts — always require interpretation and meaning, they are vulnerable. Arendt's portrayal of Eichmann and of the Jewish councils caused an outcry among the survivors: her report on his trial in Jerusalem described Eichmann not as a monster, but as someone whose inability to question or think for himself manifested itself in the unspeakable language he used, which was riddled with clichés; Arendt described the cooperation of the Jewish councils installed by the Nazis in the occupied countries as a very dark moment in Jewish history. Facing up to these uncomfortable truths caused her tremendous pain. The portrayal of Eichmann as a monster and of the victims as completely innocent would have been much more conciliatory. In a letter to Arendt, her friend, publisher Helen Wolff, quoted from the speech delivered by Socrates in his own defense: "Don't be angry with me when I speak the truth" (Arendt, 2017: 593) — but they were angry. Since time immemorial, the messenger has always been punished. Those who succumb to this threat, however, are entering dangerous territory: "What is at stake here is this common and factual reality itself, and this is indeed a political problem of the first order" (Arendt, 2006: 232).

In summary, according to Arendt this means that "our ability to lie — but not necessarily our ability to tell the truth — belongs among the few obvious, demonstrable data that confirm human freedom. . . . It is this freedom that is abused and perverted through mendacity" (Ibid.: 246).

A striking example of this is the lie about the Vietnam War, according to which North Vietnam attacked an American battleship, forcing the United States to launch a war of self-defense. In addition, the unleashing of war by the US without the vote of Congress was a violation of the constitution. According to Arendt, dispensing with the idea that reality had to be concealed by a lie was new in the Vietnam era. Instead, facts and opinions were manipulated to such an extent that the difference between truth and lies was no longer visible. It was all about the *image* of the invincible US. Warfare had detached itself completely from reality and depended on "problem solvers," cyberneticists and futurolo-

gists. Unlike the lie as a parasite of the truth with expert knowledge of it, the Vietnam War and its transformation of the truth bore witness to the loss of the reality of the war and the conditions in Indochina at the time. Deceiving the opposition and the voters led to self-deception, the most dangerous form of lie (Ibid.: 249). The US president, surrounded by advisors and problem solvers, seemed to be the very person who was most manipulated and most isolated in his own country.

In Arendt's analysis, three protagonists are responsible for the derealization and fiasco of the Vietnam War: the intellectuals who were keen to act politically as problem solvers, the isolated and unsuspecting president, and the lack of monitoring activities by the senate, all of which made it impossible for the separation of powers to effectively enable criticism, defend the truth and put a stop to derealization.

Already, the fundamental difference between these circumstances and the current "post-truth" phenomenon is apparent. I will address this in the next section.

The New So-Called "Post-Truth" Phenomenon: Fake News, Conspiracy Theories and Populist Propaganda

The Vietnam War lie was a lie organized by the ruling circles and their intellectuals in the sense of Leo Strauss, and we encounter it again in the amateur lie about the alleged weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which the US proclaimed in the UN security council in 2002 to justify their planned invasion.

Current lies are quite a different matter. No longer presented by the government for the alleged good of the nation, lies are now a double act: practiced by politicians and certain sections of the population. Their common aim is to change the balance of power, not by using the enlightened nature of truth-telling to defend reality, but on the contrary, by derealizing reality with the help of lies. Communication developments on the internet, especially using social media, allow for information exchange and the creation of pressure groups to a hitherto unimagined extent and with breath-taking speed. The Australian political scientist John Keane invented the term "post-truth" to describe the obvious transgression of the standard of truthfulness valid up to now. A "post-truth" differs from a lie in this case, whereby a lie is merely one of several means of confronting the truth with other truths or with "alternative facts," as US President Trump's advisor Kellyanne Conway called them. Factual truths are dissolved into opinions and vice versa, opinions become facts — alternative facts. During his first presidential year, Trump made 2,000 false statements, that is, between five and six each day. According to Keane, "post-truth" consists of lies, bullshit, buffoonery, gaslighting and endless exaggeration (Keane, 2018). This characterization applies notably to the US government, which has abandoned the traditional relationship between truth and lies.

Israeli sociologist Eva Illouz claimed that Trump mocks "any principle and any axiom of communicative action and rationality in the public space: He lies constantly and disregards the principle of at least giving the impression of speaking the truth. He challenges the validity of science and consequently the existence of objective criteria by which com-

peting claims can be evaluated. He vigorously challenges the notion of a common world for all men and women. For him, there is only one world, comprised of people who support him and his interests — his denial of global warming is but one example of this. His communication with other nations shows that he is not even interested in pretending to work towards a common understanding" (Illouz, 2017). Whether Mexico, the EU, NATO, North Korea or China — Trump's statements change constantly for no plausible reason. He never tires of emphasizing that regardless of the challenge, he is the greatest, the most knowledgeable and the best. "He gives his own personal feelings free rein, be they feelings of hurt or the desire for revenge, making him a private person in charge of the country" (Ibid). In a similar manner, populist parties and politicians in Europe seek to destroy truth with propaganda: Marine Le Pen's fake news videos to discredit state media during the electoral campaign; at a time when thousands of Syrian refugees were arriving in Germany, the newspaper report falsely claiming that the young daughter of Russian immigrants had been kidnapped and raped by men who looked Arab, which led the Russian community in Berlin to call for a mass demonstration; the designation of the media as "the lying press" and the denial of global warming; the claim by a growing number of people, 15,000 to date, that the German Empire had never been dissolved and that therefore no one in Germany today was obliged to follow the rules of the authorities; many in this group are armed; one police officer has been killed.

The boundaries between truth, lies, the denial of reality, invented facts, and anti-Semitism and racism are blurred. It is only a short step from the xenophobic assertion that Germany has become the target of Islamization to the racist claim that refugees are causing a population exchange that will culminate in the genocide of the "white race." Conspiracy theories thrive in such a climate and are highly effective when it comes to undermining truth and reality: from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to the alleged truth about 9/11 and the condensation trails left by planes, which are in reality "chemtrails" laced with chemical additives to reduce the size of the population. Contrary to lies, conspiracy theories offer a closed parallel world, in which nothing happens by chance, nothing is what it seems and everything is connected. The conspirators are the elites, ranging from the Queen, the Rothschilds, and the German chancellor to the Illuminati or freemasons, or all of them combined. Those who enter these parallel worlds are largely immune to criticism, which is claimed to be part of the conspiracy, thus ultimately confirming its existence in the first place (Feuerbach, 2017; Butter, 2018).

The Conditions that Led to "Post-Truth" in Contrast to the Political Lies Arendt Faced in Her Time

I have already discussed, the fundamental distinction between a state lie and the enlightening nature of truth-telling in defense of reality, on the one hand, and populist lies, on the other hand, that show politicians and certain sections of the population working together in an attempt to destroy reality. Why is this strategy so successful within large parts of the population? Eva Illouz interprets Trump's election not so much a "result of

ideological convictions (apart from a minority), but rather of an immense rage that has accumulated in American society without an addressee" (Illouz, 2017). Unlike in Arendt's time, criticism here does not serve constructively for the future. On the contrary, it serves to reject change, not in the sense of utopia or heterotopia, but retrotopia, to borrow Zygmunt Bauman's term. In his view, the current historical phase is marked by "back-to tendencies . . . notably the rehabilitation of tribal models of community, the resort to the image of an original/unspoiled 'national identity', whose destiny is predetermined by non-cultural factors and those that are immune to culture." This tendency is enhanced by the prevailing belief in the social sciences and among popular opinion that "there are essential, non-negotiable *sine qua non* preconditions for a 'civilizing order'" (Bauman, 2017: 17–18). This popular but illusionary notion of a cast-iron cultural identity has now reached racist circles, with the "Identitarian Movement" in Austria, Germany and France demanding that all peoples should stay in their own nation.

The Edelman Trust Barometer survey carried out in twenty countries in 2017 found a high degree of insecurity among the population, and a lack of trust in the media and information. 63% said they were unable to distinguish between quality journalism and fake news; 80% feared that fake news would influence elections and 50% followed the news less than once a week (Edelman Trust Barometer).

According to Bauman, retrotopia is the result of a general uncertainty caused by the delimitation of job markets, wars and migration, political and social insecurities, the end of an optimistic future, or indeed of a safe future, and the death of the great narratives such as liberalism or socialism. Furthermore, familiar values and roles are undergoing a shift. In Eastern Germany, for example, a fundamental insecurity of middle-aged and older men with regard to their roles following the reunification of Germany has been observed. They, in particular, are the men who support right-wing parties and movements (Machowecz, 2017). Their retrotopia emerges where former male values such as physical strength, leadership and binary problem-solving form of the either-or alternative predominated. Eva Illouz's description in her Adorno lectures in Frankfort in 2004 of "feelings in capitalist times" (Illouz, 2007) disconcerts these men: the therapeutic society and its narrative of personal responsibility and self-realization, the vast attention given to the role of a victim, the emotionalization of the product world and the de-emotionalization of privacy, as well as the "transformation of the public arena into a showcase for privacy, emotion and intimacy" (Ibid.: 160).

This general sense of discomfort leads to a longing not for plurality, interdependencies and relations, but rather for unambiguousness, an either-or truth, the *I* among the *We* against *Them*, the others. It is the search for a truth that is found in unambiguousness and interprets reality from this perspective and sensitivity.

In the quest for unambiguousness, there is a rejection and an active fight against all things insecure: experts, the media, refugees, the European Union, the Euro and referendums for greater economic cooperation, for example with Ukraine. It is easy to find like-minded people on the internet and create a comfort zone, an echo chamber, a hall of mirrors. "Free from the unsettling and discouraging cacophony of reality, the comfort

zone is a place where nothing else is heard but the noise produced by oneself, nothing is seen but the reflections of what is similar to oneself" (Bauman, 2017: 184). Here, the feeling of sovereignty and control returns; likewise the sense of no longer being a helpless victim, but one with the right to defense by any means. The emotion that sustains this self-isolation is rage for its own sake; when it turns to violence, then for the sake of violence. Ordinary citizens are capable of attacking their fellow citizens with hate and lies in a manner hitherto unknown[2]. This is the climate of self-righteousness and mob justice.

On the political level, this orientation leads to a revoking of plurality and the splitting of society. Populist movements declare themselves to be the genuine representatives of the "people," at the same time excluding all others as non-people and as enemies of the people. Since a society's democratic-republican constitution rests on and institutionalizes the plurality of both opinion and action, revoking it inevitably weakens its institutions. This is clearly visible in the current efforts of populist governments in Poland and Hungary to undermine the separation of powers to the advantage of the executive. Arendt's statement that freedom is the meaning of politics implies that without the practice of plural, diverse thought and action, freedom will wither away.

Liberalism, at least in its characterization by Rawls, fails to provide a viable alternative (Kreide, 2016). Up until now, we have for the most part seen the deficits of democratic institutions in terms of legitimacy and agility, including *Post-democracy* by Collin Crouch and *Democracy without Demos* by Catherine Colliot-Thélène. Thoughts on greater participation have been suggested by Claus Leggewie, for example, and a reform of the electoral system in favor of the lottery procedure has been proposed by, among others, David Van Reybrouck (Crouch, 2004; Colliot-Thélène, 2017; Nanz, Leggewie, 2016; Reybrouck, 2016). There is, however, an absence of ideas that see this era of change as the interrelationship between globalization, retrotopia and a shift in economic and political power at international level.

Since retrotopia is directed against the globalization that affects us all, it is a global occurrence rather than a phenomenon exclusive to some individual states. It merges with traditional autocratic methods of organization and forms sustainable governments. As John Keane points out, the focus of international trade and the global economy is gradually shifting eastwards, to a region extending from Turkey and Saudi Arabia to India, Southeast Asia and China, whose economic growth rates have the potential to give legitimacy and stability to "despotisms," as Keane calls them. This process is enhanced by the fact that Europe's strength and importance for the global economy and world politics is diminishing by a similar proportion. The same holds true for the United States in the wake of the Obama administration. This vast region in the East is clearly not pursuing the long tradition of European Enlightenment or an enlightened understanding of politics, so that neither Tocqueville nor Montesquieu can offer assistance in absorbing the situa-

2. See the report of a constantly persecuted German journalist who reported on the terrorist attack in Nizza as an eye witness and a short time later on the attack in Munich. At the same time he rejected theories claiming these terrorist attacks were the work of an international conspiracy to conquer the world (Gutjahr, 2018: 6).

tion (Keane, 2015). Keane observed that "these despotisms . . . have their own 'reality' — we resemble the blind, each examining different part of an elephant's body in the dark and on the basis of traditional knowledge attempting to grasp what kind of creature it is. Undoubtedly, we need to rethink the old concept of despotism. We erroneously tend to perceive despotism as a political system in which violence vents its fury unrestrained. . . New despotisms are different, more subtle, much more efficiently organized and focused on stability" (Ibid.: 29f.). Are we dealing with a new form of despotism? Are we in the same situation as Tocqueville, who at the intersection of aristocracy and democracy was forced to admit that "Our heritage was left to us without a testament"?

Arendt's Concept of Qualitative Pluralism

This concept is beyond neo-liberalism and authoritarianism, that is, beyond a quantitative pluralism that interprets pluralism merely as a multitude of different people and opinions, on the one hand, and the resultant desire for simplification and unambiguousness, on the other. The seemingly extreme juxtaposition of an unlimited mass and a restriction on diversity through leadership leaves room for the collective and the individual, but not for distinctiveness and personality. In her book *The Human Condition*, Arendt defined the "fact of human plurality" as "the basic condition of both action and speech" and characterized this plurality as "the twofold character of equality and distinction. If men were not equal, they could neither understand each other and those who came before them nor plan for the future and foresee the needs of those who will come after them. If men were not distinct, each human being distinguished from any other who is, was, or will ever be, they would need neither speech nor action to make themselves understood" (Arendt, 1958: 156). This existential duality is the basis of civilized society. Its institutions, the separation of powers, the public realm and any form of opinion-making must guarantee room for its development. As a matter of interest, the concept of plurality also contradicts that of the sovereign nation state in favor of the federation as a further pivotal form of vesting the powers of government in separate bodies (see Heuer, 2016). Arendt is certain that the stubbornness of facts is superior to all power constellations. Even totalitarian ideology, with its large-scale attempt to substitute reality entirely with its compelling logic, failed.

This, however, calls for protagonists to defend truth and reality. The proximity of the necessary interpretation of factual truths, to grasp their meaning and the falsification of facts, and to avoid unpleasant consequences clearly testifies to the importance of the independence of those who judge. Journalists and historians must remain independent and cannot become lobbyists. Their personalities hinge on their veracity, their integrity and their independence. They help persistent facts to withstand power. The Edelman Trust Barometer finding that despite considerable confusion, 2017 saw an increase in people's confidence in experts and quality journalism seems promising.

Arendt compared the impartial judgment of historians with that of judges, but also with that of witnesses and professional journalists (Arendt, 2006: 255). The separation

of powers, which includes the independence of the judiciary, not only guarantees the impartiality of the judiciary but also the area of truth within its framework. That is why autocratic attacks on the constitution and the independence of the judiciary are so alarming. With plurality they undermine the truth in favor of the arbitrariness of the majority. Hence there are targeted attacks on the independence of the judiciary in order to weaken the core elements of the republic: democracy, fundamental rights, and the rule of law.[3]

Arendt adds another aspect: it is not only about journalists, judges and historians, but about all of us, the citizens who shape civil society in the republican sense through their actions and ability to judge. The foundations of the republic, once discussed and adopted by constituent bodies such as parliaments and courts, must be discussed critically time and again. Just as freedom exists only when it is practiced, so can other republican values only be defended if they are discussed and reaffirmed concretely. Why is there a general ban on torture if you think it could save a life under certain circumstances? Why does the right to asylum remain valid when it has been granted to hundreds of thousands at the same time? Why does a republic need an independent judiciary? Why do we allow those with whom we cannot agree to speak with words that are difficult to bear?

Finally, Arendt speaks of the "joys and gratifications of free company" which "are to be preferred to the doubtful pleasures of holding domination" (Arendt, 2006: 242). This joy is the emotional side of independent judgment, and what unites these men and women here is their ability to judge not only other people's opinions but also the quality of other people. Who we want to be with does not depend on political programs or statements, but on the personality of others, on their integrity. The idea goes back to Kant and before him to the early Enlightenment. It clearly contradicts our values and our practice of utilitarianism, our individualism and conformism, our only quantitatively understood plurality. This is the path Arendt offers as a solution to the current crisis.

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3. Susanne Baer, judge at the German Federal Constitutional Court, explained: "The talk and acts that need to worry us today are not just critical. Rather, they are attacks on the foundation of constitutionalism, with the intent to do away with courts that deserve the name. This happens when people, or governments, refuse to comply with rulings from the ECHR or reject the very idea of the ICC, which keeps happening. Then such fundamental rejection, which is different from critique, is not the problem of that one court alone. Rather, it is the problem of all who care for constitutionalism" (Council of Europe, 2017).

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Соблазны лжи

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Ложь сопровождает нас, она паразитирует на истине и является неотъемлемой частью нашей повседневной жизни. Но как мы можем ограничить ложь и предотвратить разрушение правды? Этот вопрос особенно актуален в связи с новым феноменом так называемой «постправды» с его фейковыми новостями, теориями заговора и популистской пропагандой. Здесь может оказаться полезным обращение к арендтовскому анализу отношений между правдой и ложью в политике. Для защиты достоверности необходима истина, но в то же время фактическая истина противостоит безграничной свободе слова и действий, или, говоря словами Арендт, нашему широкому образу мысли. Воображение — это общая основа для творчества, мысленного построения другого мира, но также и для лжи. Таким образом, политика и ложь структурно очень близки, хотя, конечно, не одно и то же. Современные популистские движения используют ложь, чтобы подорвать доверие к политикам и средствам массовой информации. Границы между правдой, ложью, отрицанием реальности, выдуманными истинами, а также антисемитизмом и расизмом стираются. В конспирологических теориях потеря чувства реальности достигает своего апофеоза. В отличие от лжи, они предлагают закрытый параллельный мир, в котором ничего не происходит случайно и ничто не является тем, чем кажется. Термин Зигмунта Баумана «ретротопия» указывает на то, что глобализация и технологические изменения приводят к растущему уровню неопределенности и дискредитации политики, что отвечает популистским целям. Республиканизм Арендт предлагает альтернативу популизму и потребительскому либерализму: защиту фактов, просвещенный критицизм и концепцию качественной множественности вовлеченных граждан.

Ключевые слова: правда, пост-правда, ложь, широкий образ мысли, множественность

Lying and Politics

How to Rethink Arendt's Reflections about Lying in the Political Realm

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People of today live in times where lying seems to be a "normal" tool of politics while at the same time political representatives declare themselves to be truth-tellers. Practices like inventing "counter-truths" are usual in authoritarian states as well as in populist movements or parties in democratic states. Hannah Arendt was the first political theorist after Niccolò Machiavelli to acknowledge the importance and the aftereffects of lying in the political realm. In my paper, I will, firstly, focus on how Arendt explained the origins, the impact, and the ambivalence of lying in politics in its different historical forms. Secondly, I will follow Arendt when she analyses the problem of how to know about what a lie is and if it undermines the political realm or if it is just a "normal" (occasional) lie which can be corrected by legal means. Thirdly, I will ask how we are measuring politics. Is politics about telling people the truth? Or are there other dimensions of acting in public that require attention? Here, too, I will start with the arguments Arendt elaborated in her essays. In the last part I will focus on the question of how to transfer Arendt's reflections into the political realm of today. In the era of digital communication and digital warfare we must rethink Arendt's reflections about how to counteract systematic lying. I will sum up with a couple of reflections about the means and forms of dealing with that kind of lying in politics: lying which undermines the political realm.

Keywords: lying, truth, counter-truth, ideology, totalitarianism, democracy, Hannah Arendt, Niccolò Macchiavelli, digitalization

Political representatives always declare themselves to be truth-tellers. For them, it is the political opponent (the other party, the other state) who is lying. Practices like inventing "counter-truths" (Jacques Derrida) are common in authoritarian states as well as in populist movements or among political parties in democratic countries. Today's citizens know that by experience.

One way of handling this experience is a kind of cynical relativism. We find it in the slogan "politics is always about lying." We can find judgements like this from the beginning of modernity. It has always been linked to a devaluation of the public sphere and to a special understanding of the political which is supposed to be found in the arcana of power.

In modern times the devaluation of the public sphere shows itself in critical arguments of liberal democracy like:

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— It takes too much time.

— Political processes are evoking chaos instead of order.

— Parlamentarism is only about talking — instead of decision-making.

— Compromise is denying the will of the citizens and undermining their trust in the government.

To name but a few. A post-modern variation of the skepticism of liberal democracy is the claim favored by some leaders of authoritarian states, namely: "The West is always lying, so we do have the same right to lie, too." This rhetorical trick supposes that lying is not only normal but also legitimate. It would then be seen as just being the "truth of the moment." We are also witnessing massive outbreaks of public anger and protest against systematic lying in politics in authoritarian states as well as in democratic countries.

But how can citizens tell the difference between lying as an occasional practice which will be corrected and lying as a common practice which replaces the political? After Niccolò Machiavelli, Hannah Arendt was the first political theorist to recognize the ambivalence in the phenomenon of the lie.

In my paper I will address different aspects of Arendt's discourse about lying:

— the impact and the ambivalence of lying in politics in its different historical forms;

— the difference between traditional lying and modern lying and its impact on politics;

— the question of finding orientation in the realm of the political and how to refer to it.

In the last part I will focus on the question of how to transfer Arendt's reflections into the political realm of today. Living in the era of digital warfare one has to rethink Arendt's reflections on how to counteract systematic lying. I will conclude with a couple of preliminary reflections about the means and forms of dealing with modern systematic lying in politics.

1

As early as in the 1940s when she was preparing her book on *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (published in the United States in 1951, in West Germany in 1955) Arendt starts reflecting on the phenomenon of the lie. In the third part of her book she explains the rise of totalitarian ideology and how it was linked to terror. In trying to understand what makes totalitarian ideologies so successful, Arendt comes up with three basic functionalities of ideology:

> First . . . (the) claim to total explanation promises to explain all historical happenings, the total explanation of the past, the total knowledge of the present, and the reliable prediction of the future. Secondly, in this capacity ideological thinking becomes independent of all experience. . . . Hence ideological thinking becomes emancipated from the reality that we perceive with our five senses, and insists on a "truer" reality concealed behind all perceptible things, dominating them from this

> place of concealment and requiring a sixth sense that enables us to become aware of it. The sixth sense is provided by precisely the ideology. . . .
>
> Ideological thinking orders facts into an absolutely logical procedure which starts from an axiomatically accepted premise, deducing everything else from it. . . . The deducing may proceed logically or dialectically. (Arendt, 1968: 470f.)

Later Arendt uses the term "the coercive force of logicality" (see Ibid.: 472)[1]. With this term she strengthens her thesis that ideological thinking is basically self-referential, i.e. it works with quite accidental references to the manifold dimensions of reality. The purpose of totalitarian ideologies is to erect a world of propaganda in which nobody shall know what "the real thing" is.

In Arendt's view, totalitarian ideologies explain what has to be, what has been and what will be. Secondly, it declares its independence from experience and reality, and thirdly, it proves the domination of an absolute logicality. There is even a similarity between ideology and lying. Ideology is based on what Arendt calls "organized or systematic lying." Totalitarian ideology, however, is not just false. Its success lies in the fact that it uses elements of truth as well as elements of reality.

> What distinguishes the totalitarian leaders and dictators [from other demagogues in the past — AG] is rather the simple-minded single-minded purposefulness with which they choose those elements from existing ideologies which are best fitted to become the fundaments of another, entirely fictitious world. Their art consists in using, and at the same time transcending, the elements of reality, of verifiable experiences, in the chosen fiction, and in generalizing them into regions which then are definitely removed from all possible control by individual experience. With such generalizations, totalitarian propaganda establishes a world fit to compete with the real one, whose main handicap is that it is not logical, consistent, and organized. (Ibid.: 361f.)

The creation of the fictitious is intended to replace the real world. Moreover, it claims to be the "new reality." However, its most successful effect is that it makes people unable to differentiate between ideology or lies and reality. Arendt's reflections about a fictitious world of ideology created by totalitarian rule directs the reader's attention to a strange aspect of the whole context: the competition between the real world based on acting, judging, experience and contingency and the parallel world based on a logical and self-referential ideology.

2

The destructive effects of ideologies on the community of citizens and their political body is a constitutive phenomenon of the 20th and 21st century. However, organized or systematic lying itself is not constrained to totalitarian regimes. It is present in democratic

1. In German it is "Der Selbstzwang des deduzierenden Denkens" (see Arendt, 1986: 722).

societies[2]. In two essays, the first written in 1967 for the journal *The New Yorker* and the second written in 1971 for the *New York Review of Books*, Arendt reflected on the nature of modern lying within democracies, and its relation to truth.

It is not accidental that in both articles Arendt referred to her earlier reflections on totalitarian ideology. Yet, for her lying in democracies was different from totalitarian practice — there are at least two types of lying. Furthermore, she was convinced that lying belongs to politics, to action. I will come back to this later.

Looking back at the debate about the trial against Adolf Eichmann and at the organized campaign against her report on the trial, Arendt differentiates between traditional and modern lying within democracies[3].

If traditional lies are told, she argues, relevant information is withheld from the public. However, the peculiarity about modern lying is that it can also destroy reality and replace it with an *image* of reality. Modern lying replaces truth with an image of truth. The image still refers to the original but it reflects reality in a very accidental way. It rather belongs to political propaganda (Arendt, 1968a; 1968: 252)[4].

A modern lie is beyond the suspicion of being an obvious lie because it no longer relates to an individual action but to the entire political sphere. Its purpose is to confuse citizens to such a degree that they no longer feel capable of making judgements of their own or of acting. What is more, image-reality betrays belief and confidence in putting them at the place of judging and acting. For example, in democratic elections citizens put their trust in democratically elected representatives and give them executive powers. Those pursuing the strategy of creating an image-reality intend to convince people that unrestricted trust must be placed in the executive authorities and in the so-called experts instead of an ongoing public discourse on what is best for the country and what is best for the citizens.

To use again the term coined by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, "counter-truths" are spread, which are created to push forward certain interest groups and mislead the public (see Derrida, 1997: 148). A prerequisite for the creation of a "counter-truth" seems to be that the common sense for right- and wrong-doing is confused, not only in the private but also in the public sphere. Thus, "truth" becomes a "performative act" (Derrida, 1997: 143).

Arendt describes this type of lying as a destructive force for every political community for two reasons. Firstly, because it damages people's confidence in the political body and secondly, because it attacks the fundamentals of the polity: the citizen's ability to judge and to act.

The counterpart of the lie is the "internal self-delusion" of the liars, i.e. presenting something as true although they know that it is untrue. The liars know that they tell lies;

2. Following Arendt to Augustinus, Jacques Derrida gives a definition of the lie by explaining that "the lie is not a fact or a state; it is an intentional act, a lying" (Derrida, 1997: 131).

3. It is this reference to the historicity of the concept of the lie which Derrida calls the "History of the Lie" (Derrida, 1997: 130).

4. Jacques Derrida argues that this is a kind of "mutation" in the history of the lie (Derrida, 1997: 134).

however, they pretend to believe that their lies were truthful (Arendt, 1972: 3). For Arendt, this kind of "organized lying dominating the public realm" is typical for modernity (Arendt, 1968a: 232). In the end, truth is left behind as a matter of opinion.

There are similar mechanisms in the world of lies and in the world of ideology. However, the main difference is that totalitarian ideology is linked to systematic terror whereas in post-totalitarian states terror is used occasionally and serves a functional purpose.

Lying in democracies is practiced by using democratic tools (lobby groups, state power, media power, digital tools etc.). However, eventually, it underlies processes of parliamentary control and public criticism.

A totalitarian regime seeks to establish a regime based on terror in which correcting a lie publicly or privately, can be life threatening. However, in democracies, it should be possible to unveil a network of lies in order to control executive power and restore the integrity of the political body and the trust of the citizens.

However, as we experience it every day, it is sometimes a long procedure to correct a wrong. The procedures of the rule of law are slow and complex. In some countries, democracies cannot react to systematic lying because civil societies are too weak and there is no counter-part to the lying representatives.

On the basis of this understanding it is comprehensible why Arendt pays so much attention to the phenomenon of lies in democratic politics, which at first glance seems to be harmless compared to a totalitarian ideology which is based on terror.

The fact that manipulative lying is inherent in modern democracies is disturbing. It seems as if totalitarian rule has bestowed a heritage upon modern societies which they cannot get rid of, that is, the capability of self-destruction by creating fictitious worlds.

For this reason, totalitarian rule cannot be described as an "accident of history" but rather as a kind of watershed beyond which there is no return to when you could believe that lying can be corrected by truth. One must reckon with the openness of modern societies which, under certain circumstances, might not be able to prevent the creation of a semi-totalitarian world of half-true and half-false images of reality.

3

Arendt's analysis evokes the question of how to counteract systematic lying.

It may be surprising, for all those arguing that the basic orientation for political communities is based on a belief in values, that Arendt does not call for a return to ethical standards of action such as the value of truth, the value of honesty, the value of moral behavior, the value of a nation. Neither does she revert to the revival of Christian or other religious traditions of faith or to enlightened reason. It appears useless to her to pin one's hopes on values achieved through the sanctioning instruments of sin, bad consciousness or trust in reason. The canon of values deduced from this can be manipulated at will by any regime. The Nazi regime equated moral standards with the totalitarian ideology (Arendt, 1968: 617). Under the regime of Stalin the ideology of the ruling party was supposed to have the highest moral standards. Contemporary political leaders in countries with

democratic institutions are putting nationalistic or even ethnic "values" at the top of the list of common values claiming that they are moral standards.

Hence one needs to look elsewhere to find answers for the question of how to find an orientation against lying.

Arendt neither evolved a theory of "correct action" nor did she establish a system of fundamental values. She did not measure political thinking or acting against maxims. This becomes apparent in her analysis of the fundamentals of thinking. For instance, she even deconstructs the terms moral and ethics by uncovering their etymological and historical origins as being customs and habits.

One can interpret Arendt's point with Margret Canovan in saying: There are no absolute moral rules for acting (Canovan, 1994: 191). This is because morals are customs, and customs change or can be destroyed (Ibid.: 190f.). This leaves us with the questions: How to fill the void? How to create a legitimate foundation for action?

Turning to questions like these, Arendt puts *plurality* in the place of ethics. For her, acting within the political realm is always acting in plurality. Plurality means those who come from different perspectives act together. This concept of action is not meant to be decision-making by a leader. For her, it is about establishing civic customs and rules of conduct, but again, these customs can only be kept alive if there exists a strong plural community. As soon as it becomes weaker, customs and morals can be manipulated at will. This is what — in Arendt's view — is left of *ethics* after totalitarianism.

Who cares for plurality in the world? In the humanist tradition of Machiavelli, Locke and Montesquieu, mankind is good *and* evil. There are citizens who care about civil society and there are others who do not care but instead detest plurality and yearn for authoritarian leadership. Last not least, there are others who do not care about the "common good" but are occupied by their private needs and sorrows.

Moreover, the political realm is grounded on a paradoxical relation between lying and truth: with Kant, Arendt argues that veracity — identified with authenticity or public appearance — should be the measure of political action. On the other hand, she points out: "It may be in the nature of the political realm to be at war with truth in all forms" (Arendt, 1968a: 239). Hence action and telling lies are closely linked: Action has something to do with changing reality — and so do lies. Arendt goes even further by saying: "Our ability to lie — but not necessarily our ability to tell the truth — belongs among the few obvious, demonstrable data that confirm human freedom" (Ibid.: 250).

As a consequence, lying belongs to freedom of action. It is part of the human capability to change a situation by altering its interpretation. One can easily illustrate that by looking at the recent history of diplomacy. The art of bringing opponents to mutual agreement is based on creating illusions, on outsmarting each other, thus gaining space for action. Such agreements as Dayton 1995 or the Camp David agreement of 1978 would not have been possible without those questionable practices.

Furthermore, politics is always linked to power, which we understand in two ways: the power of the people and the power exerted by leaders, functionaries, and representa-

tives of all kinds. Hence the tension between truth and the inclination of those who take political action to present the truth as their measure of action will always exist.

Up to here, two conclusions may be drawn: first, the capacity to unveil lies is linked to those interests, to those interpersonal relations which provide the basis for plurality and which at the same time help to uncover hypocrisy sooner or later. Hence veracity is to be reestablished in the same sphere in which truth can be destroyed.

Secondly, the capacity to correct lies is inherent in all citizens who take action; it is linked to their ability to begin something new, to change direction. However, this may not be taken as a declaration of belief in the morality of truth. Although the maxim of truthfulness (veracity) of action taken by citizens is not suspendible, truth-telling does not represent a guideline for actions either. For action has something to do with "bringing oneself into appearance." Appearing in the view of others, acting in the light of plurality is not necessarily based on truth. It is not accidental that in "Truth and Politics" Arendt compares "the liar" to an actor whereas "the truthteller" appears as somebody who raises suspicions (Arendt, 1968a: 250).

Political action is not about implementing the truth but about opening up new spheres of the political realm within plural societies. Moreover, the criterion for what is true cannot be found inside politics but outside. In the end, this is a different understanding of what truth is. Arendt emphasizes:

> . . . what I meant to show here is that this whole sphere [the political realm — AG], its greatness notwithstanding, is limited — that it does not encompass the whole of man's and the world's existence. It is limited by those things that men cannot change at will. And it is only by respecting its own borders that this realm, where we are free to act and to change, can remain intact, preserving its integrity and keeping its promises. Conceptually, we may call truth, what we cannot change; metaphorically, it is the ground on which we stand and the sky that stretches above us. (Arendt, 1968a: 253f.)

Here we have a substantial difference between the moral concept of truth, the ethics in the history of political theory, and philosophy. It is the world around us on which truth (understood as veracity) dwells, the world confined by the ground on which we stand and the sky "that stretches above." Acting truthfully would then mean to respect the borders of one's own action. More concretely: to respect the fact that there is only one world in which we live. We share it with others and we have to care for it and for them. And above all: there are limits to changing it.

4

At this point it is necessary to reflect upon the role of modern digital technology, which allows the creation of a new kind of image-world.

When Arendt wrote her critical reflections on the phenomenon of lying in politics she had no idea about the digital revolution to come. However, in the meantime we have

experienced that creating images has become an ever more important part of human practice and in particular politics. This means that the citizen's ability to differentiate between image and reality and to judge what is right and what is wrong is as important as it is difficult.

Compared to Arendt's time we are confronted with ongoing systematic lying in the public sphere. Systematic lying is not supposed to be a deviation from the norm, however it has become a normal phenomenon. Nowadays, not only are political leaders attacking our ability to differentiate between truth and falsehood. Digital trolls are attacking our ability to perceive what is real and what is fake. To quote Megan McArdy from the Washington Post on March 15, 2018: "Mark Twain is said to have remarked that a lie can travel around the world and back while the truth is still lacing up its boots. In these modern times, of course, a lie can spread just about as fast as a human finger can click 'retweet.'"

There are democracies based on democratic institutions, which are manipulated by lies for the purpose of accumulating power. There are new models of political order settling in-between democracies and totalitarian systems. In the West, it was the Italian media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi who as prime minister in the 1990s started acting like an artist, lying and manipulating the public. In many countries systematic lying is used by political leaders, starting from the Le Pen family in France and spreading to the populist anti-establishment movements in all Western countries and ending with the White House with its work force of active producers of counter-truths. In Eastern European countries we witness how democratic institutions and procedures are manipulated by economic interest groups having occupied the political power. Here, too, more or less charismatic populist leaders are practicing a culture of mass manipulation by creating a world of images (foreign powers, "evil subjects" or Western liberalism intend to undermine people's identity, "the West" wants to dominate "the East," to name just two).

Looking at this we should ask: How can political liberalism respond to this constellation?

In Arendt's view the worst effect of organized lying and ideology is the loss of the human capacity to act and to judge. What can we do with this diagnosis today? How is it possible to make a new beginning in the real world?

* * *

One of Arendt's strongest quotes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* reads: "The gas chambers of the Third Reich and the concentration camps in the Soviet Union have disrupted the continuity of occidental history because in reality nobody can assume responsibility for them. At the same time they pose a threat to the solidarity among people which is a prerequisite for our taking the risk to assess and judge the actions of others" (Arendt, 1986: 704)[5].

5. This text is included only in the German edition.

The key words in the above quoted text are: disruption, responsibility, solidarity, action, judging, and risk. A disruption cannot be reversed. It continues to exist regardless of the fact that time goes on. No one can take political responsibility for what happened under totalitarian rule and yet citizens have to confront it. Solidarity among citizens has been suspended, and yet human existence is not possible without trusting in solidarity. Action has evoked crime, and yet something new may only arise from the world of action. Judgment has been turned into the absurd and yet it provides the basis for relationships between citizens. These terms mark the climax of reflection about the events in Auschwitz and in Soviet camps: And still the citizens of the world today have to take the risk of responsibility, solidarity, acting and judging again.

The provocative element in Arendt's discourse is that there exists an overarching responsibility of citizens all over the world towards each other and not towards a state, or God or a higher reason and not even solely towards the victims of terror. Regenerating the political community in the face of systematic lying means that citizens have to start renewing the public sphere in which responsibility can be taken. We are told by Arendt that citizens can fail, their communities can be destroyed, they can be subjugated by an authoritarian will but they do not have anything but themselves to start anew. This is as true for societies under authoritarian rule as it is under democratic conditions.

Fighting against systematic lying is about:

— restoring the facticity of facts;

— strengthening the self-trust of citizens;

— defending the public sphere;

— resetting the power of legal action against systematic lying;

— regenerating parliamentary control over the executive powers;

— re-establishing parties as part of the process of public opinion building;

— criticizing the illusion that morality is a guarantee of humanitarianism and good politics.

Although there are a lot of other means and tools to restore the public sphere against systematic lying, one thing never changes: citizens have only themselves to regenerate what has gone wrong and to heal the wounds inflicted by unjust regimes.

I think this rationale of Arendt's discourse is still worth discussing.

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Ложь и политика: как переосмыслить идеи Арендт о лжи в пространстве политического

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В наше время ложь кажется «нормальным» инструментом политики, но при этом политические деятели объявляют себя правдолюбами. Такие практики, как создание «контрправды», обычны в авторитарных государствах, но также и в популистских движениях или партиях в странах с демократическим режимом. Ханна Арендт была первым после Никколо Макиавелли политическим теоретиком, кто признал важность лжи в пространстве политического и обозначил ее последствия. В статье сначала рассматривается, как Арендт объясняла истоки, влияние и двойственность лжи в политике в ее различных исторических формах. Далее, следуя за Арендт, проанализированы проблемы распознавания лжи и понимание того, разрушает ли она политическую действительность, или же является «нормальной» (случайной) ложью, которую можно исправить законными средствами. В следующей части статьи автор обращается к вопросу о том, как мы оцениваем политику. Состоит ли политика в том, что мы сообщаем людям правду? Или же есть иные оценки действия в публичной сфере, нуждающиеся в анализе? Здесь также идет обращение к аргументам, разработанным Арендт в ее эссе. В последней части речь идет о возможности приложить размышления Арендт к современному пространству политического. В эпоху цифровых коммуникаций и войн следует переосмыслить подход Арендт к тому, как противостоять систематической лжи. В завершение статьи — размышление о средствах и формах борьбы с ложью того типа, который разрушает пространство политического.

Ключевые слова: ложь, правда, контрправда, идеология, тоталитаризм, демократия, Ханна Арендт, Никколо Макиавелли, цифровизация

Hannah Arendt and the Dark Public Sphere

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Hannah Arendt once described "dark times" as characterized by "'credibility gaps' and 'invisible government,' by speech that does not disclose what is but sweeps it under the carpet, by exhortations, moral and otherwise, that, under the pretext of upholding old truths, degrade all truth to meaningless triviality." This paper argues that as Western democracies experience conditions that echo Arendt's twentieth century assessment — among these are the death of truth, the decline of civility, and the dearth of authenticity in the public sphere — Arendt's work helps us better understand two sources of this modern crisis. First is the blurring of *truth* and *opinion* in contemporary political discourse; second is the blurring of the *public* and *private* realms made possible by the coercive intermediation of *the social*. An acute danger of these circumstances is the lure of demagogues and extreme ideologies when the words and deeds of the public realm — either because they are not believed, or because they have been reduced to mere image-making — increasingly lack meaning, integrity, and spontaneity. A second danger is the erosion of faith in the free press (and with it our common world and basic facts) when the press itself, reacting to its own sense of darkness, undermines its role of truthteller by assuming the role of political actor. In the end I suggest that underlying these several acute issues of democracy lies a more basic tension in the public sphere centered on an Arendtian notion of "freedom of opinion."

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, public sphere, free press, lying, fake news, social realm

Election 2016: Crises of Democracy

The 2016 election of Donald Trump as US President signaled to many a crisis of American democracy. "The blunt fact," wrote *Politico*'s Jeff Greenfield a day after the election, "is that many of the guardrails that were supposed to protect the world's oldest functioning democracy have been shown to be perilously weak, as vulnerable to assault as the Maginot Line was in the face of the German army some 75 years ago" (Greenfield, 2016). The timing of Greenfield's remarks is important. Long before Trump prevaricated in his condemnation of white nationalism after Charlottesville (Godfrey, 2017), or fired the FBI Director responsible for investigating his own campaign (Shear, Apuzzo, 2017), or called members of the American media the "enemy of the people" (Kalb, 2018), Trump's election had by itself signaled that *something* was irregular, if not disquieting, about the state of American democracy.

At least three concerns stood out. First, from an institutional perspective, the 2016 election cast doubts on democracy's integrity at a time when online information and

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social media consumption were not just increasing, but increasingly entwined. As one scholar summarized, "Those who worry about the implications of the 2016 campaign are left to wonder whether it illustrates the vulnerabilities of democracy in the Internet age, especially when it comes to the integrity of the information voters will access as they choose between candidates" (Persily, 2017: 67). The 2016 campaign saw social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter not only setting the agenda of traditional news media,[1] but at times displacing them altogether.[2] Online consumers also faced an unprecedented barrage of sensationalist "fake news" stories and bot-generated Tweets that were intentionally deployed to impact voter behavior and, absent the fact-checking and quality-control mechanisms of traditional media outlets, were hard to consistently distinguish from reality.[3] All of this ran parallel to an increasingly bitter relationship between candidate Trump and mainstream news organizations, during which the term "fake news" became a unifying rallying cry among Trump supporters, and a linchpin of the mutual accusation between conservative candidates and popular news sources. Critics like Michiko Kakutani (2018) mourned the "death of truth" in current public discourse.

A second problem involved the rise of a new "American populism" catalyzed by Trump's unorthodox campaign.[4] "Trumpism," as it came to be called, appealed principally to less-educated and lower-income whites and rejected discursive norms of "political correctness" typically associated with respect towards minorities. Juxtaposed with a series of inflammatory remarks towards Mexicans, Muslims, and other groups (Reilly, 2016; Haberman, Oppel Jr., 2016; Beckwith, 2017), the timbre of Trump's rhetoric was often uncomfortably "infused . . . with populist imagery based on an assertive, nativist, and arguably xenophobic brand of nationalism" (Ostiguy, Roberts, 2016: 42).[5] Moreover, the demographics of Trump's political base, combined with his active rejection of political correctness — whether at rally speeches, public appearances, or in seemingly off-the-cuff Tweets where caricatured insults like "Little Marco" Rubio and "Crooked Hilary" Clinton were a trademark — led many to associate Trump's rise not only with the "death of civility" in American public discourse (Bybee, 2018), but the reentry into mainstream politics of racist and (for that reason) socially rejected groups. Some weeks after the elec-

1. Wells et al. (2016) discuss the Trump campaign's effective use of this strategy.

2. Silverman's (2016) analysis determined that "in the final three months of the US presidential campaign, the top-performing fake election news stories on Facebook generated more engagement than the top stories from major news outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post*, NBC News, and others." The study subsequently shows that over these three critical months the "20 top-performing false election stories from hoax sites and hyperpartisan blogs" outperformed the "20 best-performing election stories from 19 major news websites" in terms of a raw count of shares, reactions, and comments.

3. US intelligence reported that Russia alone hired 1,000 "paid Internet trolls" to steer swing states like Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania towards Trump (Papenfuss 2017; see also Shane 2017), and such efforts were hardly unique (Allcott, Gentzkow 2017).

4. The populist trend in the US echoed similar developments in Europe, and both inspired a resurgence of academic interest in the topic. Recent general surveys of populism include Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017) and Müller (2016).

5. Following his election, Trump's words would eventually prompt First Amendment litigation to block a White House executive order restricting entry into the United States from several Muslim-majority countries (see Beckwith, 2017), though a modified version was ultimately upheld by the US Supreme Court.

tion, Charles Sykes (2016) wrote that "Trump's victory means that the most extreme and irresponsible voices on the right now feel emboldened and empowered. And more worrisome than that, they have an ally in the White House." Well before Election Day, journalists linked Trump's campaign with a "mainstreaming of alt-right ideology" that had "an invigorating effect on an older generation of white nationalists" (Posner, Neiwert, 2016; Neiwert, 2017).

Finally, a third democratic crisis of 2016 involved the so-called "hidden voter."[6] Trump's victory was especially shocking in light of the sizeable discrepancy between pre-election polls, which almost universally predicted a Clinton victory, and voter decisions in the ballot booth. In retrospect it appears that public stigmatization (whether real or anticipated) of Trump support led many Trump voters to falsify their preference to pollsters, causing pre-election polls to skew inaccurately towards Clinton. Only two major polls — the USC-Dornsife-*LA Times* Daybreak and Trafalgar Group of Atlanta polls — consistently projected a Trump victory, and their method was revealing: The USC-*LA Times* poll contacted respondents exclusively online rather than over the phone, and this boosted Trump's numbers considerably. The Trafalgar Group asked respondents who they thought their *neighbors* were voting for, which also proved crucial for finding the so-called "hidden Trump voter." As one Trafalgar employee put it:

> [I]f you want to find out the truth on a hot topic, you can't just ask the question directly. So the neighbor is part of the mechanism to get the real answer. In the 11 battle ground states, and 3 non-battleground, there was a significant drop-off between the ballot test question [which candidate you support] and the neighbors' question [which candidate you believe most of your neighbors support]. The neighbors question result showed a similar result in each state. Hillary dropped [relative to the ballot test question] and Trump comes up across every demographic, every geography. Hillary's drop was between 3 and 11 percent while Trump's increase was between 3 and 7 percent. This pattern existed everywhere from Pennsylvania to Nevada to Utah to Georgia, and it was a constant . . . And what we discovered is . . . a lot of minorities were shy voters and women were shy voters. (Fossett, Shepard, 2016).

A similar difference was found between live phone call and robocall results, suggesting widespread discomfort among Trump voters in revealing their preferences to other humans.

Thus, ironically, while Trump's election inspired outrage from an array of voices based on things Trump had said over the course of the campaign, others voiced concern over what his supporters had *not* said out loud — that they supported Trump himself. Perhaps this, too, was a challenge to democracy. A day after the election CNBC's Jake Novak (2016) argued bluntly:

> The problem was that too many people felt afraid to answer [the pre-election polls] honestly. For all the focus on how nasty and offensive Trump was, there was a stron-

6. This and the following paragraph draw from the discussion in LeJeune (2017: 1–8).

> ger and steadier stream of nastiness from editorials in major papers, posts on social media, and conversations in office break rooms and classrooms that bashed Trump, sometimes even equating him to Hitler. That took its toll on a lot of Trump supporters . . . [I]t's clear millions of Americans have been living for months in fear of saying they intended to vote for him.

It is notable that the United States was hardly alone in this story. For the crises of democracy raised by the 2016 election — crises of truth, civility, and authenticity — were resonating throughout the democratic world. In what Mishra (2017) calls our "age of anger" in a post-9/11 and post-2008-recession world, he argues that "hate-mongering against immigrants and minorities has gone mainstream" (Mishra, 2016) in a range of globally interconnected contexts. In Europe, for example, a myriad of anxieties linked to a perpetual war on terror, a stagnant global economy, and challenges to both private and public interests raised by the chaotic migration of refugees from war-torn areas of North Africa and the Middle East, have propelled parties on the far-right to steady and at times stunning electoral success (Holleran, 2018; Fekete, 2018). No single description captures the range of party platforms generally classified as Far Right (Camus, Lebourg, 2017); many parties reject the label of racist, while others are happy to embrace it (Cummings, 2018). Attached to their electoral success (which includes outright parliamentary majorities in Hungary and Poland) has been an opening of the public sphere to speech once deemed too crass, hateful, or bigoted to command legitimate recognition (Holleran, 2018; Fekete, 2018).

As in the United States, however, this pattern of radical opening has also been accompanied by an attendant sense of closure in the public sphere, the latter manifest in the rise of "hidden voting" as a salient political phenomenon. Most notably, in a June 2016 referendum, British voters shocked pollsters by voting to "leave" the European Union, where the result turned on so-called "shy voters" who hid or falsified their preferences prior to Election Day based on a fear of social ostracism. Much like the Trump campaign, the Leave campaign led by UKIP leader Nigel Farage actively renounced political correctness and often employed crass nationalist messaging, including a particularly dehumanizing "Breaking Point" billboard depicting non-European immigrants as an impersonal mass and British problem. Farage denied the charge of racism, but many Brits who wanted to leave the EU for any number of reasons (not all of which concerned immigration, or did so for inherently racist reasons) feared being associated with this message and ostracized. As reported in *The Guardian*, one representative voter concealed his preference to 'leave' the EU even from family members, fearing they would misconstrue his economic motives as immigration-based and racist. Another shy 'leave' voter said, "My main concern is immigration because I think the UK is just stretched right now. But I feel that in recent weeks, people have come to associate that opinion with racism, so of course I am not going to speak out about it" (Sanghani, 2016).

This juxtaposition of trends suggests that while extremist, racist, or otherwise hitherto censured forms of speech have exploded into the public sphere, this has also, and ironi-

cally, catalyzed heightened fears that even moderate but so-called "politically incorrect" speech will bring harm or ostracism. Thus as the democratic space opens to voices which place its outer boundaries under question, much of the space previously within those boundaries seems more inhospitable than ever to precisely those forms of speech it was designed to protect. It is as if, while the outer perimeter of the democratic public space has expanded, and the comfortable center has held steady, a less comfortable but entirely civil space in between has dissolved.

How should one understand this extraordinary confluence of crises in the democratic public sphere, the (1) death of truth, (2) decline of civility, and (3) dearth of authenticity? Are these crises a transient product of strange and extraordinary times (and thus destined to pass), or do they reflect more fundamental pathologies of democracy, and the need for more radical and inventive solutions? If so, what might these creative solutions look like?

To pursue these questions, I turn to the writings of Hannah Arendt, the twentieth century theorist most famous for her 1951 opus *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Hannah Arendt on Crisis and Dark Times

In the wake of 2016, scholars and journalists alike have often turned to Hannah Arendt (Berkowitz, 2018; Friedman, 2017; Sykes, 2018).[7] Already popular among academics,[8] after 2016 Arendt's name became so visible in blogs and editorials that her appropriation itself became a subject of political contention (Romm, 2017). In one particularly scathing piece, Emmett Rensin (2017) argued that "no writer, except perhaps James Baldwin, has had their ethos cannibalized so voraciously by a public that is also so disinterested in the labor of actually reading their work." Rensin called "pretending" to know Hannah Arendt "the favorite activity of the left," done if only to buttress catastrophic visions of Trump's presidency, confirm depictions of his followers as "just fascists," and ignore the concrete grievances that brought him to power.

Serious appropriations of Arendt have drawn useful parallels between Arendt's analysis of the rise of European fascism in the early-to-mid twentieth century, and the conditions surrounding the current resurgence of the Far Right (Isaac, 2016). As this fertile terrain is well tread, this paper pursues a different path by turning the critical lens on democracy itself: If democracy is indeed in crisis, then what endemic problems of democracy *itself* have recent events revealed? And what might be done to address these issues in pursuit of a healthy and vibrant public sphere?

Such inquiry was a hallmark of Arendt's writing. Crisis for Arendt was not a time to despair, but an opportunity to learn through thinking and critique. In an essay called "The Crisis in Education," for example, Arendt (1993: 174) spoke of "the opportunity, pro-

7. Sales of Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, her classic analysis of European fascism and imperialism, spiked considerably following the November 2016 election: "Commentators have been referencing [Origins] since Donald Trump's election in November," reported *The Guardian*, "but rarely has this spurred so many people to actually buy a copy" (Williams, 2017; see also Illing, 2017).

8. Walter Laqueur (1998) once cited a Hannah Arendt "cult."

vided by the very fact of crisis — which tears away facades and obliterates prejudices — to explore and inquire into whatever has been laid bare of the essence of the matter," for crisis "becomes a disaster only when we respond to it with preformed judgments, that is, with prejudices." In this respect Arendt's analysis of American politics was distinct. A consistent approach (let us call it the "acute-basic" approach) is implicit in the essays "Reflections on Little Rock," "Lying in Politics," "Civil Disobedience," and "On Violence,"[9] all of which respond to immediate American events. Arendt explains her method in a recently published 1957 letter to Robert Maynard Hutchins, who later founded the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions:

> I think it is in the nature of politics that each factual issue of empirical importance discloses its own foundation. Thus, we may be entitled in political research to start from the surface, because every political danger spot is by definition the point where a basic issue breaks the surface . . . I therefore am inclined to believe that the best order to follow is the one drawn up by reality itself, that is, to approach basic issues as indicated in the development of acute and politically relevant issues. By this method, it may be possible to attempt the otherwise forbidding task of reexamining basic ideas and traditionally rooted concepts. (Arendt, 2018: 93)

Here Arendt describes a fluid movement from a provisional analysis of the "acute" or immediate issues of the time, to a point of more generalizable revelation about the "basic" or underlying political system itself. Such an approach accomplishes at least two things: First, it keeps the political theorist grounded in political reality and the world of common sense. Second, it employs the fact of crisis to see more clearly the fundamental problems of political life itself.

In the 1971 essay "Lying in Politics," for example, Arendt uses the revelations of the Pentagon Papers, the problem of dishonesty in the American executive branch, and the "famous credibility gap, which has . . . suddenly opened up into an abyss" (1972: 3–4), to consider the underlying pathologies of "image-making" as an element of modern democratic politics. In a much different context, Arendt's 1959 essay "Reflections on Little Rock" uses the "acute" issue of school desegregation to explore the more "basic" issue of equality before the law, the particular freedoms attached to the political, social, and private realms, and threats to each of these freedoms which follow when the boundaries between these realms are crossed.

Thinking in Arendt's terms, then, in 2016 the "acute" crises of democracy were manifold. They included the explosion of "fake news" as both a political and rhetorical weapon. They also included the legitimation of offensive or uncivil discourse, on one hand, and the uncomfortable absence from the public realm of more moderate and "hidden" voters. I have characterized these three "acute" issues as the death of truth, the decline of civility, and the dearth of authenticity, respectively. If this is so, then what "basic" issues of modern democracy underlie all three?

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9. "Reflections on Little Rock" is found in Arendt (2003), pp. 192–213, while "Lying in Politics," "Civil Disobedience," and "On Violence" are all contained in Arendt (1972), pp. 1–47, 49–102, and 103–198, respectively.

Tackling this question draws us to a range of Arendt's works. What is initially striking, however, is the underlying element of cynicism each issue projects towards contemporary democratic discourse, as if the public sphere itself has become somehow darker and less edifying. This steers us first to an unlikely source — the collection of biographical essays written throughout Arendt's career called *Men in Dark Times* (1968). There Arendt addressed the most serious crises of democracy and humanity in the 20th century, refracting often horrific events through the prism of the lives of ten extraordinary people.

Arendt's subjects in *Men in Dark Times* are eclectic. They range from esteemed writers like Berthold Brecht and Walter Benjamin, to the left-wing revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, philosopher Karl Jaspers, and even Pope John XXII. And while "it is not difficult to imagine how they might have protested, had they been given a voice in the matter, against being gathered in a common room" (1968: vii) their lives shared a quality that Arendt calls "illumination." Arendt employs this term to invert the Platonic tradition: Where Plato, in the *Republic*, contrasted the shadows of opinion with the illumination of the good, effectively lifting the perfection of truth above the caprice of human affairs, Arendt seeks to illuminate the very stuff of human affairs. It is as if, where Plato's philosopher prefers to leave the Cave to see metaphysical truth illuminated by the sun, Arendt's heroes stoke the fire within to make the cave itself brighter.

This analogy helps one understand Arendt's concept of "dark times" as not inherently entangled with catastrophe, but representing a general malady of the public sphere. As Arendt (1968: ix) writes in the Preface to *Men in Dark Times*: "'Dark times,' in the broader sense I propose here, are as such not identical with the monstrosities of this century which indeed are of a horrible novelty. Dark times, in contrast, are not only not new, they are no rarity in history, although they were perhaps unknown in American history, which otherwise has its fair share, past and present, of crime and disaster." Catastrophes on the scale of the twentieth century — including the inhumanity of twentieth century totalitarianism — are enabled by "dark times," a kind of systematic distortion of reality within the public sphere, whereby the latter's substance is determined:

> . . . not by realities but by the highly efficient talk and double-talk of nearly all official representatives who, without interruption and in many ingenious variations, explained away unpleasant facts and justified concerns. When we think of dark times and of people living and moving in them, we have to take this camouflage, emanating from and spread by "the establishment" — or "the system," as it was then called — also into account. (Arendt, 1968: viii)

But so too are "dark times" manifest in less extraordinary settings, by the steady and insidious erosion of public faith in the meaning of politics, the integrity of public officials, and the importance of personally engaging in political action at all. As Arendt continues:

> If it is the function of the public realm to throw light on the affairs of men by providing a space of appearances in which they can show in deed and word, for better and worse, who they are and what they can do, then darkness has come when this

> light is extinguished by 'credibility gaps' and 'invisible government,' by speech that does not disclose what is but sweeps it under the carpet, by exhortations, moral and otherwise, that, under the pretext of upholding old truths, degrade all truth to meaningless triviality. (Arendt, 1968: viii)

Darkness manifests where lying, secrecy, and image-making dominate the public sphere and the political realm, and it shakes the very foundations of democratic politics. Arendt knew this well, for she argues throughout *The Origins of Totalitarianism* that the death of democratic politics in the 20th century was often preceded by a general sense of political malaise, public meaninglessness, and private loneliness (Gaffney, 2016). This danger remains ever present to modern democracies, which Arendt suggests directly by her conspicuous choice of subjects in the Preface to *Men in Dark Times*, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Neither receives a biographical essay, nor is treated seriously elsewhere in the book. But Arendt suspends their writings, personalities, and biographies over her subsequent essays like a sword of Damocles.

Arendt quotes Heidegger — her most important philosophical mentor alongside Karl Jaspers — several times from the 1927 masterpiece *Being and Time*, where Heidegger lamented the spiritual emptiness and "mere talk" of the public realm. Arendt observes that Heidegger's initial response to his disgust with public affairs was to turn away from the public and towards philosophy: "There is no escape, according to Heidegger, from the 'incomprehensible triviality' of this common everyday world except by withdrawal from it" (Arendt, 1968: ix). But eventually, Heidegger found something even more abhorrent to fill the spiritual vacuum, as if to compensate for the abhorrent lack of meaning in the public realm and "mere talk" by embracing a brand of politics that professed to freshly imbue the world with an energetic sense of mission, purpose, and reality. He joined the Nazi Party on May 1, 1933 (see Strong, 2012: 263–324, esp. 269–276).

While obviously condemning Heidegger's response to the problem of "dark times," it is important that Arendt accepts fully his diagnosis of what ails the modern public realm: "In our context, the point is that the sarcastic, perverse-sounding statement [of Heidegger's] . . . 'The light of the public obscures everything' . . . went to the very heart of the matter and actually was no more than the most succinct summing-up of existing conditions" (Arendt, 1968: ix). Here Heidegger (with Arendt) finds common ground with Jean-Paul Sartre who, at the other end of the political spectrum, stood among the most prominent voices of the radical left: "Nothing of this is new," writes Arendt (1968: viii). "These are the conditions which, thirty years ago, were described by Sartre in *La Nausée* (which I think is still his best book) in terms of bad faith and *l'espirit de sérieux,* a world in which everybody who is publically recognized belongs among the *salauds*, and everything that is exists in an opaque, meaningless thereness which spreads obfuscation and causes disgust." Arendt's agreement with Sartre in this context is notable, for soon thereafter in "On Violence" she would castigate Sartre at length for his turn to violence as a positive political force — not only for the sake of power, but as a source of existential meaning (see esp. Arendt, 1972: 114–115, 122–123, 185–187).

The conditions of lying, disgust, and loneliness in relation to the public sphere ring eerily familiar in our times as well. The popularity of "fake news," the pull of radicalism, and the personal alienation from the public realm witnessed throughout contemporary democracies all suggest that beneath these acute problems may lie an underlying condition that Arendt diagnosed a half-century ago as "dark times" in the public sphere. In what follows, I examine these conditions and reconstruct, to the best precision Arendt's writings allow, her own response to these problems as they manifest in the vocation of journalists and the actions of citizens. In both contexts, I suggest that fundamental to Arendt's project is a rigorous maintenance of the distinction between philosophical truth, common sense facts, and political opinion in the democratic public sphere. I also discuss how the illumination Arendt seeks in the public sphere is unsettled by the encroachment of the coercive powers of the social realm upon the private sphere. Finally, I conclude that the basic issue of our times, underlying the three acute problems just discussed, centers on tensions surrounding the Arendtian notion of "freedom of opinion."

Lying and Politics

The emergence of "fake news" as a salient political phenomenon, whether employed as a tactical device to mislead and sway voters, or a rhetorical trope used to deflect public criticism, raises two related but distinct problems that Arendt tackles in the complimentary essays "Lying in Politics" and "Truth and Politics." The first and more visible of the two concerns the problem of facts. As Arendt argues, both the integrity of factual truth, and the gathering of citizens around common sense facts, constitute an absolute precondition for meaningful political discourse. Arendt tackles this relationship directly in "Truth and Politics" (1993: 238):

> Facts and opinions, though they must be kept apart, are not antagonistic to each other; they belong to the same realm. Facts inform opinions, and opinions, inspired by different interests and passions, can differ widely and still be legitimate as long as they respect factual truth. Freedom of opinion is a farce unless factual information is guaranteed and the facts themselves are not in dispute. In other words, factual truth informs political thought just as rational truth informs philosophical speculation.

By "facts" Arendt means nothing more than "brutally elementary data," like "the fact that on the night of August 4, 1914, German troops crossed the frontier of Belgium" (Ibid.: 239). Then with characteristic delicacy, she calls the "opposite" of a fact neither "error" nor "opinion," but the "deliberate falsehood, or lie" (Ibid.: 249). The distinction is critical, because Arendt grounds her political thought on an extraordinary supposition about the relationship between truth and politics: "[H]istorically," she writes, "the conflict between truth and politics arose out of two diametrically opposed ways of life — the life of the philosopher . . . and the way of life of the citizen. To the citizens' ever-changing opinions about human affairs, which themselves were in a state of constant flux, the philoso-

pher opposed the truth about those things which in their very nature were everlasting and from which, therefore, principles could be derived to stabilize human affairs" (Ibid.: 232–233). The Platonic philosopher, bound to the certainties of metaphysical truth, faces a choice when confronted with the messiness of human affairs. Either with disdain he can dissociate from the world, using whatever leisure he has to contemplate the true and eternal; or he may seek to shape the world precisely in the image of philosophical truth.

The latter, often associated with political idealism, Arendt calls "the transformation of ideas into measures," the adoption of "unwavering, 'absolute' standards for political and moral behavior and judgment in the same sense that the 'idea' of a bed in general is the standard for making and judging the fitness of all particular manufactured beds" (1993: 110). This approach to politics, Arendt argues in "What is Authority?," is "the essential characteristic of specifically authoritarian forms of government" (Ibid.: 110–111), because it privileges the authority of philosophical "truth" with its predetermined end over human freedom and spontaneity. It rejects democratic discussion as the play of mere opinions, and subsequently authorizes the wise who bear witness (whether priests, philosophers, or good Marxists) to despotically bring the ignorant and intransigent to heel, through coercion if necessary.

Political freedom is different. Instead of philosophical truth or final answers, "the reality of the public realm," writes Arendt, "relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised." As distinct from the absolute certainty of philosophy, "Under the conditions of a common world, reality is not guaranteed primarily by the 'common nature' of all men who constitute it, but rather by the fact that, differences of position and the resulting variety of perspectives notwithstanding, everybody is always concerned with the same object" (1998: 57–58). The critical element of politics is thus not a determinate agreement upon metaphysical truths, but more simply a common set of agreed-upon facts and objects — what Arendt calls our common world recognized literally by our common senses.

"Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear" (Ibid.: 57). This human condition of multiplicity gathered around common objects in the public realm, Arendt calls *plurality*,[10] and each person's unique view of the world, attached fundamentally (though not exclusively) to their own unique position, Arendt calls *opinion*. Politics is subsequently the process through which plural individuals are moved to support public decisions, and often to change their opinions, via the words and deeds of others. The use of stories and arguments to gather support is *persuasion*; while symbolic or principled deeds that inspire others to follow, Arendt calls *action*, or the "capacity of beginning something anew" (Ibid.: 9; see also Kane, 2015; Muldoon, 2016).

10. "Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live" (Arendt, 1998: 8).

This depiction of politics can be jarring, for it seems to leave the public sphere without any moral or philosophical banister, without the ballast of authority to tie the public to a common or even decent vision. Arendt's full reckoning with this problem is beyond the scope of this article.[11] Most fundamentally, however, Arendt ties the very possibility of meaningful judgment and public deliberation to the existence of *common sense*, manifest in the "brutally elementary data" of "facts." Facts themselves, unlike philosophical or rational truth, do not carry authority because knowledge of the past cannot dictate the future to free humans. But facts are, Arendt insists, the "ground on which we stand" when making collective decisions (1993: 264).

To illustrate this point Arendt, in "Truth and Politics," analogizes political judgment to the judicial process. There are "certain public institutions," she argues, "established and supported by the powers that be, in which, contrary to all political rules, truth and truthfulness have always constituted the highest criterion of speech and endeavor. Among these we find notably the judiciary, which either as a branch of government or as direct administration of justice is carefully protected against social and political power" (Ibid.: 260). As in genuine (rather than feigned) political deliberation, a genuine (rather than show) trial lacks a predetermined outcome. This is why we have a trial; though the trial procedure would collapse entirely were there not basic indisputable facts to ground a judge or jury's deliberations. The same is true with democratic deliberation — absent a set of basic common facts around which people with different opinions and perspectives can gather, meaningful discursive engagement becomes impossible.

An upshot of this is to underscore the pivotal role of the free press to enable meaningful public deliberation. As Arendt writes in "Lying in Politics," "so long as the press is free and not corrupt, it has an enormously important function to fulfill and can rightly be called the fourth branch of government" (1972: 45). Notably, Arendt wrote this in response to the 1971 leak of the Pentagon Papers which exposed a range of deceptions in the US executive branch's conduct of the Vietnam War. When officials requested a halt to their publication, Justice Hugo Black wrote famously in *New York Times Co. v. United States* (Legal Information Institute, 1971) why the court rejected prior restraint:

> In the First Amendment, the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The Government's power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the Government. The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell. In my view, far from deserving condemnation for their courageous reporting, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and other newspapers should be commended for serving the

11. Among other things, she sees creative possibilities in the project of revolutionary foundation and the political origins of legitimate constitutions The American Revolution was an especially important model for Arendt in this regard. See Arendt (2006, esp. pp. 132–206), and Arendt (1993), p. 136–141.

> purpose that the Founding Fathers saw so clearly. In revealing the workings of government that led to the Vietnam war, the newspapers nobly did precisely that which the Founders hoped and trusted they would do.

Even with this outcome, Arendt advocates for more robust protection of "unmanipulated factual information" as a constitutional civil right, for "Whether the First Amendment will suffice to protect this most essential political freedom, the right to unmanipulated factual information without which all freedom of opinion becomes a cruel hoax, is another question" (1972: 45).

But employing this essential freedom, in the name of what Arendt calls "freedom of opinion," also comes with a strong caveat. For if the press as the "fourth branch of government" scaffolds and defends the basic facts (the "ground on which we stand" in a discursive democratic public sphere), and is trusted to "look upon politics from the perspective of truth," this in turn also "means to take one's stand outside the political realm." For unless the journalist does so, argues Arendt, he, as truthteller, "forfeits his position — and, with it, the validity of what he has to say — if he tries to interfere directly in human affairs and to speak the language of persuasion or of violence" (Arendt, 1993: 259). It follows that the journalist *while she is a journalist* must sacrifice her political personality, must above all refrain from the appearance (let alone the reality) of political partisanship, and must actively refrain from trying to persuade the public to reach one political conclusion or another. For "just as the philosopher wins a Pyrrhic victory when his truth becomes the dominant opinion among opinion-holders, the teller of factual truth, when he enters the political realm and identifies himself with some partial interest and power formation, compromises the only quality that could have made his truth appear plausible, namely, his personal truthfulness, guaranteed by impartiality, integrity, independence" (Ibid.: 250).

In less opaque terms, Arendt urges the journalist to report the facts with extreme political circumspection and a minimum of editorializing. The truthteller who discloses facts cannot attempt to dictate what they mean, for this threatens to undermine the integrity of the facts themselves. Above all, the reporter of facts must avoid (except under the most dire circumstances, as under totalitarianism, where telling the truth is itself a kind of action) the appearance of becoming a political actor herself.

It is as if the journalist must herself cease to exist as a political person, and must become a political nobody, if only to enable others to act and deliberate democratically. For as truthtellers, journalists bring nothing new into the world; they only reveal what has been. Just as the "transformation of ideas into measures" was the despotic temptation of philosophy that threatened the very legitimacy of political plurality, so too is the transformation of *facts* into *judgments* the tragic temptation of journalism, for it is here that the reporter ceases to stand outside the political realm and becomes a political actor herself (with all the risk and satisfaction this entails). This too threatens to destroy the foundation of democratic politics by undermining public faith in the integrity of the facts themselves and it is for this reason — the necessary sacrifice of political personality

entailed in the journalist's vocation — that Arendt likens the loneliness of journalism to the solitude of philosophy in a manner that is almost tragic — for each, she says, amounts to "one of the various modes of being alone" (Ibid.: 259).

Image, Action, and Loneliness

One of the more startling aspects of the democratic crisis of our times concerns not only the prevalence of lying, distortion, and concealment as elements of politics, but the partisan manner in which citizens absorb both factual and fake news narratives. In a summary of recent studies examining the public reception of fake news, *The New York Times* reports that:

> The partisan divide is easy to detect if you know where to look . . . But the fake-news phenomenon . . . is not limited to one end of the political spectrum. Rather, Americans' deep bias against the political party they oppose is so strong that it acts as a kind of partisan prism for facts, refracting a different reality to Republicans than to Democrats. Partisan refraction has fueled the rise of fake news, according to researchers who study the phenomenon. (Taub, 2017)

Other research suggests that the impetus for the spread of both factual and fake news particularly over social media typically stems from an initial partisan bias that renders a particular story palatable, favorable, and important to the reader, accompanied by an elevated sense of trust between co-partisans when such stories are shared (Rini, 2017).

This partisan trend — particularly when those holding opposing ideological views systematically trust or distrust different news sources (Mitchell et al., 2014) — further erodes public reliance on common facts as part of a common world. As a recent Reuters study involving eight focus group from the US, UK, Spain, and Finland suggests, generally speaking, "The fake news discussion plays out against a backdrop of low trust in news media, politicians, and platforms alike — a generalized skepticism toward most of the actors that dominate the contemporary information environment." Thus "from an audience perspective, fake news is only in part about fabricated news reports narrowly defined, and much more about a wider discontent with the information landscape — including news media and politicians as well as platform companies" (Nielsen, Graves, 2017). In this environment, words and deeds cease to matter in the public realm — either because consumers do not trust them anyway, or because what is said and how it is received by different groups are predictable from the outset.

It is this particular sense of meaninglessness in the public realm — the sense that words and deeds reveal nothing in the public realm and bring nothing new or novel into it — which harbors an especially acute danger for democracy. Not only are facts unreliable, but predictable words and telegraphed deeds in the public sphere lack interest or spontaneity. No longer an arena of genuinely principled or spontaneous action, politics becomes the arena of calculated and cynical "image making." Arendt describes this vividly in "Lying in Politics," that the "recent generation of intellectuals, who grew up in the

insane atmosphere of rampant advertising . . . were taught that half of politics is 'image making' and the other half the art of making people believe in the imagery" (1972: 8). Lying under these circumstances often does not even reach the level of *action* as Arendt understands it (though it might), but merely serves to project or uphold an image. Knowing this, citizens consume public words and acts with the same skepticism as product ads.

All of this deteriorates the meaning of the public realm. Over time the cynicism surrounding such meaninglessness transmogrifies not only into nausea and disgust, but even a passionate and emotional reaction against a world defined by false words and values. Arendt discusses this phenomenon in the lead up to World War I and the so-called "front generation" in Europe:

> Not only Hitler and not only failures thanked God on their knees when mobilization swept Europe in 1914. They did not even have to reproach themselves with having been an easy prey for chauvinist propaganda or lying explanations about the purely defensive character of the war. The elite went to war with the exultant hope that everything they knew, the whole culture and texture of life, might go down in its 'storms of steel' . . . Simply to brand as outbursts of nihilism this violent dissatisfaction with the prewar age and subsequent attempts at restoring it . . . is to overlook how justified disgust can be in a society wholly permeated with the ideological outlook and moral standards of the bourgeoisie. Yet it is also true that the 'front generation,' in marked contrast to their own chosen spiritual fathers, were completely absorbed by their desire to see the ruin of this whole world of fake security, fake culture, and fake life . . . Destruction without mitigation, chaos and ruin as such assumed the dignity of supreme values. (Arendt, 1973: 327–328)

Subsequently, Arendt describes what might be called the extreme case under which disgust with the combination of international weakness, spiritual emptiness, and the political ineffectiveness of interwar liberal regimes inspired radical reactions among disaffected elites, who in turn found a discontented following among a mass of people who found themselves socially and culturally excluded from that same bourgeois society. Thus, says Arendt, "The temporary alliance between the elite and the mob rested largely on this genuine delight with which the former watched the latter destroy respectability" (Ibid.: 333). It was precisely these disaffected elites, willing to act by any means necessary, whether through violence, terror, or lies, but all in the name of a unifying movement, who reinvested the disaffected masses with the words and actions of political leaders and the spiritual meaning of politics, if only by their willingness to go to extremes in order to ride the wave of alienation.

Layered onto this problem of alienation — and indeed part and parcel of it — is the mass phenomenon of loneliness and isolation engendered by the blurring of public and private personalities that has dramatically intensified in a world of social media. In the modern democracies in question, both research and anecdotal evidence suggest that "Previously, partisan conflict mostly applied to political issues like taxes or abortion," but now seems "to be operating more like racism or sexism, fueling negative or positive judgments on people themselves, based on nothing more than their party identification"

(Taub, 2017). Indicative of this trend was White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders and several members of her family being asked to leave a Lexington, Virginia restaurant based on her political affiliation with Donald Trump (Stracqualursi, 2018), following similar treatment dealt to Trump's Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and adviser Stephen Miller. This was followed by a statement from California Democratic Congresswoman Maxine Waters to, "If you see anybody from that (Trump) Cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd and you push back on them, and you tell them they're not welcome anymore, anywhere" (Davis, 2018). After Waters's remarks several Democrats, including US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, publicly renounced such behavior: "I strongly disagree with those who advocate harassing folks if they don't agree with you," said Schumer, "No one should call for the harassment of political opponents. That's not right. That's not American" (Ibid.).

The problem of exclusion in the public realm (and in public accommodations) is, of course, multifaceted and a multitude of factors — including race, gender, language, citizenship status, and class, among others — can systematically affect not only one's access to the public space of democracy, but one's own sense of efficacy when appearing in that space. Here, however, Arendt explains how the breakdown of the separation between the *public* and *private*, driven largely by the intermediary role of the *social* realm, leads to a deterioration of the quality and integrity of public discourse. The problem of social ostracism is one manifestation of this breakdown, for it suggests that no separation can be made between one's *public persona* — the identity one assumes in public when one voices political opinions that seek to persuade, and when one acts on principles he hopes others will follow — and one's *private self*, which has other, more basic, needs for security, comfort, and sustenance. But the integrity of either, argues Arendt, requires maintaining their rigid separation in practice: "[O]ur private possessions," she says, "which we use and consume daily, are much more urgently needed than any part of the common world," and "the four walls of one's private property offer the only reliable hiding place from the common public world, not only from everything that goes on in it but also from its very publicity, from being seen and being heard" (1998: 70–71). Shielding this private space from the political, effectively turning the private realm into a holding environment to which one can always retreat, allows one to act with courage and spontaneity in the public sphere.

This separation, however, has broken down largely via the intermediating influence of the social realm through which private citizens, viewed and sanctioned by a faceless mass society, face intense pressure to conform to ostensible public opinion. The effect can be chilling on political speech and action, for "It is decisive that society, on all its levels, excludes the possibility of action, which formerly was excluded from the household. Instead, society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (Ibid.: 40). The rule

of society, though impersonal and diffuse (what Arendt calls a kind of "no-man rule"), is no less coercive because of that fact:

> But this nobody, the assumed one interest of society as a whole in economics as well as the assumed one opinion of polite society in the salon, does not cease to rule for having lost its personality. As we know from the most social form of government, that is, from bureaucracy . . . the rule by nobody is not necessarily no-rule; it may indeed, under certain circumstances, even turn out to be one of its cruelest and most tyrannical versions. (Ibid.: 40)

The combination of these three factors — (a) the loss of a common world and even a common set of facts; (b) the meaninglessness of political words and deeds when both have been reduced to predictable and ideological image-making; and (c) the chilling effect on political action due to the breakdown of the separation of the public and private via the coercive impact of a rapidly thickening social realm — may help us better understand both the lure of radical and outrageous political platforms in recent years, and the recent phenomenon of "hidden voting" in which citizens express their political preferences secretly but fail to properly appear in the broader public sphere. In the case of the former, radicalism and incivility are not only, or simply, the expression of ideas once deemed too crass or dangerous to enter the public sphere. They also represent the desperate attempt of particular people to find meaning of *any* kind in a political world in whose reality and integrity they have no faith. Where the world itself seems inauthentic and unreal — where words and deeds in the public realm speak not to reality or common sense, but to ideological pretense and an image of reality carefully crafted by political elites, statisticians, and marketing experts on all sides — there the temptation to ignore the facts, to flaunt the rules of social respectability, and to intentionally upset a carefully crafted reality which itself seems unreal, is large indeed, if only to feel genuine and spontaneous for its own sake.

On the other hand, the obliteration of the sanctity of the private realm via the intermediation of society has enabled the intense blurring of not only our public opinions and private personalities, but the fluid enforcement of public social norms in historically private contexts (including work and, in some cases, the home). This has heightened not only the phenomenon of "hidden voting" in democratic societies, but a commensurate increase of "lying in politics," on a daily basis, by citizens to each other. In this sense the inaccuracy of pre-election polls only partially represents the more profound depth of lying and concealment which takes place among colleagues and even (as we have seen) among friends and family. All of this contributes to a general sense that political words and deeds, whether those of politicians or everyday citizens, ultimately reveal nothing. For while truth is blurred by image, genuine opinion is concealed by citizens who, being thrown willy-nilly into a mass society, fear the punitive retaliation of a network of others who, disagreeing with their opinion, presume to know the truth.

Conclusion

We began this essay by citing three acute crises of contemporary democracy — the crises of truth, civility, and authenticity. I have suggested that underlying each of these acute crises is a more basic crisis which Hannah Arendt identified as "dark times." "Dark times" does not correspond to any particular political outcome. It is instead a political condition characterized by "speech that does not disclose what is but sweeps it under the carpet, by exhortations, moral and otherwise, that, under the pretext of upholding old truths, degrade all truth to meaningless triviality" (Arendt, 1968: viii).

The subsequent danger endemic to democracy is at least two-fold. The first is the vacuum of meaning in an image driven public sphere, combined with the tension aroused by mass conformity dictated by the social sphere, which prepares the rise of demagogues. For in dark times a lonely and alienated individual may latch onto tribalism or other divisive movements less for their own sake than as a desperate, even nihilistic search for meaning, action, spontaneity, and freedom. As Arendt wrote in *Origins*,

> Hitler appealed almost exclusively to these sentiments of the front generation. The peculiar selflessness of the mass man appeared here as a yearning for anonymity, for being just a number and functioning only as a cog, for every transformation, in brief, which would wipe out the spurious identifications with specific types or predetermined functions within society . . . They were satisfied with blind partisanship in anything that respectable society had banned, regardless of theory or content, and they elevated cruelty to a major virtue because it contradicted society's humanitarian and liberal hypocrisy . . . There was no escape from the daily routine of misery, meekness, frustration, and resentment embellished by a fake culture of educated talk . . . The point was to do something, heroic or criminal, which was unpredictable and undetermined by anybody else. (Arendt, 1973: 329, 331)

Here the demagogue benefits from the ability to lie, for lying has much in common with action. As Arendt observes with stunning insight: "[T]he deliberate denial of factual truth — the ability to lie — and the capacity to change facts — the ability to act — are interconnected; they owe their existence to the same source: imagination" (1972: 5). Lies and narratives, like action, can bring something new into the world that will inspire others to follow. This can be particularly effective when they irritate the very anxieties, frustrations and disgusts which "dark times" harbor.

The second danger lies in the vulnerability of the free press, arguably the last bastion of defense for the common world of facts upon which any deliberative public sphere must stand. The danger is not only that political actors today question or even undermine the integrity of the facts as reported. It is also that, in response to such provocation, the free press will undermine its own credibility (and with it any hope for a world of common facts) by blurring the line in its own work between reporting facts and casting judgments, and by assuming the role of political actor which is inconsistent with its position as truth-teller. One might even suggest that the lying and belligerent politician today lays precisely this trap for the free press by daring its members to position themselves ideologically *in*

opposition to political power. For once the journalist assumes the role of a political actor or opposition, it is a short step until the bare facts are crowded out (and undermined) by politically suspect "analysis" or transparent attempts to persuade. Once this happens, the journalist's credible role as truthteller and guardian of democracy quickly collapses.

Yet not all is lost. For a vacuum of meaning and illumination in the public realm also clears the space for novel and extraordinary action — let us call it leadership — which may, in fact, not only cast new light on realities within the public sphere, but open the public sphere to a rejuvenated, enlarged, and fully inclusive civil discourse. If Arendt is correct, then such an act of leadership — whatever it may be — would somehow need to inspire in mass society the humility to acknowledge the gap between truth and opinion in their own thinking. It would also need to inspire in citizens the recognition that it is often those who mistake their own opinions for truth, and who believe most strongly in the truth of their own opinions, who effect the most cruel and irrational tyranny upon others. Not least among them is the tyranny of social opinion itself.

What would such an act be? In other circumstances, whether to protect the free press as the fourth branch of government (Arendt, 1972: 45), or to more robustly ensure citizens' rights to political recognition as civil-disobedient groups (Ibid.: 101), Arendt occasionally summoned the possibility of expanding the scope of First Amendment protections in the United States Constitution, including through Amendments. As it stands the First Amendment explicitly protects the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and petition. It is telling that as Arendt probes the gaps of these protections, including her identification of "this most essential political freedom, the right to unmanipulated factual information," she sets beside it another novel freedom — "freedom of opinion" (Ibid.: 45). For in examining the three acute issues of our time — the death of truth, the decline of civility, and the dearth of authenticity — it is the latter, a crisis involving the limits and extent of freedom of opinion in the democratic public sphere, that emerges as the basic issue that links all three. For if "freedom of opinion" is hindered by the suppression of truth, and rendered futile by ideological rejection of facts, it is also abused when discourse becomes uncivil, and denied when majority tyranny stifles citizens its effective use.

What, then, would a more robust constitutional protection of "freedom of opinion" look like? And what other contradictions of democracy might that discussion reveal?

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Ханна Арендт и «темная» публичная сфера

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Ханна Арендт однажды так охарактеризовала «темные времена»: «кризис доверия» и «закулисное правительство» — это выражения, не раскрывающие, а затемняющие суть происходящего, это моральные призывы, которые под предлогом защиты любую истину низводят до бессмысленного трюизма. Опыт западных демократий созвучен оценкам Арендт в отношении XX столетия, в частности, она указывала на смерть истины, упадок гражданственности, утрату аутентичности в публичной сфере, а следовательно, ее работы позволяют лучше понять два источника современного кризиса. Первый — стирание границ между истиной и мнением в современном политическом дискурсе. Второй — размывание границ между публичной и частной сферами, случившееся из-за насильственного вмешательства социального. Критическая опасность этих обстоятельств состоит в том, что они приводят к расцвету популистских и радикальных идеологий, в которых слова и поступки в публичной сфере — либо в силу того, что в них не верят, либо в силу того, что они сводятся к созданию имиджа — лишены смысла, целостности и спонтанности. Вторая опасность заключается в разрушении веры в свободную прессу (и вместе с этим в наличие общего для всех нас мира и достоверные факты), когда средства массовой

информации, опираясь на собственное понимание «тьмы», нивелируют свою роль в качестве распространителя истины и берут на себя роль политического субъекта. В статье высказывается предположение, что в основе указанных опасностей для демократии лежит более фундаментальная напряженность в публичной сфере, связанная с понятием «свободы мнения» Ханны Арендт.

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, публичная сфера, свобода прессы, ложь, фейковые новости, социальная сфера

Hannah Arendt's Ethic of Responsibility to the "Who" and the "World"

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The rise of populism and the polarization of traditional and new media pose threats to pluralistic democratic action and judgment. Citizens often vilify each other, deny each other the space to test and justify their perspectives publicly, either because they hold radically different political views, or because they ascribe an essentialist identity upon the other, one that they believe must be negated in accordance with the logic of their own ideology. This paper presents three vital resources in Hannah Arendt's thought for addressing these challenges to democracy. First, Arendt promotes physical — not merely virtual or digital — spaces of public deliberation in which actors disclose "who" they uniquely are and the "world" that contextualizes their action. Arendt proposes a principle of resistance to totalitarianism and a "responsibility for the world" as the appropriate limit to free action within these spaces. Second, Arendt presents a limit, or standard of intelligibility, to political action and speech permissible in public: the *sensus communis* of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment. This standard of common sense, which binds the public sphere, demands that a speech act's intersubjective validity appeal to an objectivity that can be shared from different perspectives, but which allows for disagreement, and is not as restrictive as an Aristotelian ethos or an internally consistent ideology. Finally, Arendt asserts the imperative of factual truth telling and attention to the details of public phenomena, as necessary conditions for intelligible action and judgment in a pluralistic public sphere.

Keywords: Arendt, media, democracy, plurality, responsibility, judgment, action, *sensus communis*

The rise of populism and the polarization of traditional and new media pose critical threats to democratic action and judgment. Citizens often vilify each other, deny each other the space to test and justify their perspectives publically, either because they hold a radically different political view, or because they ascribe an essentialist identity upon the other, one that they believe must be negated in accordance with the logic of their own ideology. This paper presents three vital conceptual resources in Hannah Arendt's thought for addressing these challenges. The first is Arendt's promotion of physical — not merely virtual or digital — spaces of public deliberation in which actors, through the performance of speech and deeds before diverse others, disclose "who" they uniquely are and the "world" that contextualizes their action. Arendt proposes a principle of resistance to totalitarianism and a "responsibility for the world" — which she conceives as conditioned by pluralism — as the appropriate limit to free action within these spaces. Second, Arendt presents a limit, or standard of intelligibility, to political action and speech

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permissible in public: the *sensus communis* of Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment. This standard of common sense, which binds the public sphere, demands that a speech act's intersubjective validity appeal to an objectivity that can be shared from different perspectives, but which allows for disagreement, and is not as restrictive as an Aristotelian ethos or an internally consistent ideology. Finally, Arendt develops a crucial connection between responsibility for the public world and the imperative of factual truth telling. Caring for shared objects of intelligibility in the political realm requires that overt lying in public speech acts about facts and past events be forbidden. While spectator storytelling is a crucial part of political judgment and the disclosure on the meanings of political action, facts are just as crucial. An insistence on the accurate accounting of the detail of phenomena, experienced from many perspectives, is crucial for resisting radical ideology, the totalitarian tendency of transforming the given to fit the internal logic of a story propagated by the ruling regime. It is also key to acknowledging and appreciating the diversity and complexity of human affairs, and therefore rejecting the overly simplistic and often xenophobic solutions of populist rule and radically polarized and solipsistic political opinions. While Arendt's resources are immanent to human action, and by no means offer a transcendent source of validity or authority that presumes to ground and guarantee the security of the public sphere absolutely and forever, they do go a long way in inspiring a style of politics that vigilantly defends and rejuvenates democratic spaces where pluralism may be appropriately countenanced, and where the right of all human actors to appear in the world is protected.

Public Space, Individuation, and Responsibility for the World

The last decade has seen a significant shift in the way that citizens communicate with each other about political matters. More and more, people voice their political opinions, preferences, and allegiances through social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media is transforming how citizens deliberate with each other and how they regard their role as political participants. It is also contributing to a polarization and radicalization of opinion in many political systems around the globe. It is important to note, however, that social media does not cause the polarization of opinion, the rise of populism, or the vilification of political opponents on its own. Rather, it seems to be aggravating a phenomenon that bears similarities with what Arendt observed as part of the rise of totalitarian movements: a pervasive lack of confidence in the capacity of liberal democratic states, as well as liberal international economic and political organizations, to deliver on the promises of fairly distributed economic prosperity, security, responsible government, and meaningful avenues of political participation for the average citizen. The corrosion of the citizen's trust in the post-war welfare state's ability to manage the economy in a way that can provide each family with a stable income has had the biggest impact. Economic stagnancy, unemployment, and the hollowing out of the middle class in the United States have been crucial factors in the rise of Trump-style populism. Sovereign debt crises, rising economic inequality, and uncertainty over how to appropriately manage the influx of

refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere have been key to the rise of right-wing populist movements in many parts of Europe, and have posed a serious threat to the stability of the European Union, as evidenced most dramatically by Brexit. There is a very concerning trend in North America and Europe toward isolationism, nativism, and the search for scapegoats, a will among populists to protect jobs and other sources of economic and social security and status for what they perceive as the deserving, authentic, core members of the political community, from what they perceive as the undeserving others. Conditions of uncertainty and scarcity breed a fear-driven tendency to want to take care of what is closest to one's self. These economic factors, working along with the rise of new social media as a dominant mode of human interaction, have contributed to a new phenomenon of "world-alienation" that bears striking similarities to the kind that Arendt explains as contributing to, and being exacerbated by, the hyper-nationalist totalitarianism of the mid-20th century.

Before examining the contemporary form of world-alienation evidenced in social media, let us revisit what Arendt meant by the concept. Arendt explains world-alienation as when the individual no longer conceives spaces of human appearance and interaction as the loci of freedom (1958: 251–257). In situations where public spaces are no longer available for meaningful political action and judgment, individuals try to retain some sense of freedom by focusing on their own interiority, and either abandoning the common world, or imposing their own will upon it. Arendt explains this hyper-subjective standpoint as, at least in part, ethically and historically rooted in Stoicism, which encouraged individuals, if they could not effect change in the political world around them, to instead focus on attaining control over one's own internal reactions to outside phenomena, good or bad (1977a: 147–148). The individual's alienation and retreat from the pluralistic and complicated realm of human affairs is also rooted in Platonism. That world-alienation is compatible with any form of freedom at all is due to the dominant conception of freedom within the tradition of Western political philosophy since Plato; a conception that links freedom with sovereignty (Arendt, 1958: 221–227; 1977a: 157–159). Arendt sees sovereignty in terms of a mastery over one's own self, and ultimately a mastery over one's environment, including control over the wills of others (1977a: 162). Much of her work re-invigorates an alternative view of freedom as non-sovereign, experienced through speech and action, before and with others, in a way that introduces something new, albeit unpredictable and uncontrollable, to the world, in all its plurality.

World-alienation, both in 20th-century and contemporary forms, occurs when people no longer feel at home in the world, and when their speech and action have no significant bearing on the processes that seem to govern their environment. A contemporary manifestation of this can be seen in the reduction of citizen participation in traditional party politics over the last half-century, whether through voting or volunteering, driven by the sense that political and corporate elites decide the rules of the economic and political game anyway. Part of populism's appeal to those disenchanted by the institutions of liberal democracy is the prospect of a leader strong enough to affect change in the rarefied realm of elites, but representing the will of the "ordinary" people. In the early

and mid-20th century, the world-alienation that drove the rise of totalitarianism was fed by the prevalence of political ideologies that followed a common logical structure. What the Marxist ideology of Stalinism and the racist ideology of Nazism had in common was a teleological philosophy of history in dialectical form, inspired, above all, by Hegel (Arendt, 1977a: 68; 2005: 70–74). Each saw events and actors as playing out necessary laws of history and nature, a dialectical movement governed by the law of struggle between economic classes or races, all moving inevitably toward the end of history and the fulfillment of its *telos*, whether that be a classless society of non-alienated laborers, or the world dominance of the Aryan race (Arendt, 1994a: 464–468). History followed the continuous logic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, and an action was deemed free if it contributed to this necessary movement. There was a sense of purpose, rationality, lawfulness, and necessity — of being on the right side of history — if one acted in favor of the Nazi or Soviet movement. On the other hand, if one's speech or action was not clearly pro-Nazi or pro-Soviet, it would, by this internal logic, be deemed either accidental, meaningless, or worse: something that needed to be cancelled, negated, overcome in order for the movement to proceed to synthesis. How one spoke or acted came to matter much less than "what" one was, which role one served in the overall structure of history's dialectical movement, according to their class, race, religion, or nation. By this violent logic, a Jew or a bourgeois, no matter how they acted or how they spoke, were deemed the necessary opponents of the torchbearers of history, and thus negated. Particular individuals became accidental, superfluous in relation to the universal process or the law of the movement. In *Origins of Totalitarianism* and *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt explains how the dominance of totalitarian logic, and the sense that actors merely fulfilled their duty according to the laws of history and nature as expressed by the regime's leader, removed the sense of personal responsibility from individual action, and replaced it with anonymous, highly bureaucratized rule (1994a: 25–26, 135–137; 1994b: 470–473).

The capacity of individuals to question, critique, and resist the violent policies of totalitarian rulers was suppressed by the regimes' destruction of public spaces in which ordinary citizens could gather and communicate openly. These spaces of intersubjectivity, Arendt has shown, are vital for developing and sustaining the capacity to properly think and judge, the capacity to perceive and consider facts and details of common import, to validate and reform one's perspectives about meaningful events in conversation with others, and to imagine one's self in the positions of others, a capacity that is key to moral reflection. The disappearance of such public space contributed to the generalized crisis in the capacity to think that Arendt argues allowed for the "banal" evils of totalitarian rule (1994a: 252; 1994b: 475–478).

The contemporary obsession with social media represents a form of world-alienation in interrelated ways. The loss of the citizen's sense that their action or speech has much bearing on the political world or economic system induces a retreat to the inward domain of the online user. At its extreme, social media users see the construction of their online profile, through posted comments, images, "likes," and links, as more "real," "valid," or somehow authorized than their life offline. It is easier to lose a sense of the reality of a

shared world when citizens engage in political communication with disembodied social media personae or avatars that remain concealed from actual human view, and may be highly fictionalized constructions. When one draws inward into radical subjectivity, one loses connection to the detailed particularity, the texture and nuance, of what Arendt calls the "web of human relationships" (1958: 183) in the shared world. Atomized subjectivities become even more susceptible to the xenophobia and irrational attitudes towards others which a political environment of "post-truth populism" engenders. When one retreats and remains in an atomistic form of subjectivity, the internally consistent rationality of logical systems can come to dominate thought more easily, unchallenged by the facticity and complexity of the world outside. It becomes easier to draw highly questionable inferences between concepts or intuitions. It becomes easier to judge another person categorically, rather than reflectively, as a particular example subsumable to a category — their group — and expect a predetermined mode of behavior, political opinion, and historical destiny for that person. Others may appear as categorically antithetical to one's own will or sense of the historical destiny of one's community, and thus become vilified. All the while, users can safely remain relatively anonymous behind their profiles; they do not have to physically appear in public to defend their principles, nor do they have to publicly face those with very different *doxai*. This weakens the degree to which actors feel the ethical imperative of considering the perspectives of others, and accordingly moderating their own opinion. Because it is relatively simple for users to find others online with shared perspectives, and because the dominant social media expose users predominantly to stories determined by algorithms to reflect back their already existing *doxai*, the global community of users becomes rigidly fragmented according to increasingly polarized political lines. The digital echo chambers of social media do not allow for sufficiently visiting the perspectives of others, nor a careful examination of the detailed facts and particularities of public events, to develop the more moderate opinions which can best stabilize political communities and best encourage respect for all citizens' right to live well.

In the spirit of Arendt's critique, to discourage radical political polarization and the political isolation that it breeds, particularly as it is aggravated through new social media, political communities should foster physical sites of deliberative democracy to encourage actors' actual appearance in public. In these physical sites, where political actors publicly appear along with their speech and deeds, there is an imperative to answer for one's principles before others who might disagree. Politics, by Arendt's account, involves a courageous acceptance of responsibility for one's stance, rather than an anonymous retreat behind the masks of online personae. It should involve facing diverse others in a space where one might more readily feel the imperative to visit their perspectives, to respect them as co-actors or co-judges in a spirit of "disinterested togetherness," than in a virtual space. This leads to more thorough and critical deliberative praxis.

Arendt develops her account of political action in resistance to totalitarianism's threat to the public space, as well as its ideological and structural vilification of individuals based merely on their categorical group membership. For Arendt, action between indi-

viduals creates and sustains the very public space necessary for its appearance, as well as its judgment by spectators. Real human spectators, not a meta-agent working through the dialectical law of history, ultimately interpret each particular action's meaning for contemporary politics and for history. Spontaneous action and speech, not willing rationally according to a perceived dialectical law, are that through which freedom is experienced, and one's particular human dignity is confirmed publicly (Arendt, 1977a: 146, 151–153). Action accompanied by speech discloses "who" the actor uniquely is, along with aspects of the "world" that contextualizes the act (Arendt, 1958: 175–184).

Arendt's notion of the "who" is disclosed in the interaction between the actor's unique performance of deeds and speech, and objective world conditions to which they respond. While the actor may self-consciously stylize a public persona that they choose to project, the disclosure of the "who" is ultimately not something one can exert complete control over, and it appears more clearly to outside spectators than to the actor themselves (Ibid.: 179–180). It is impossible to fully reify the phenomenal ways that each unique "who" appears "in the flux of action and speech" (Ibid.: 161). Arendt argues that most attempts to identify the "who" lead to a description of universals shared with others, categories of social function or general standards of human behavior, which conceal the who's uniqueness. Following Heidegger, Arendt holds that the existential and performative "who" is separate from the constative "what" of the self, to which belong categories of identity including the actor's gender, race, religion, economic class, their biological traits, objects that represent their life's work, and even their moral intentions. Arendt presses this distinction to distinguish properly political affairs as those which deal with a plurality of "whos" that can never be instrumentally governed or mastered, as stable units, according to a principle of reason or will. Given the sheer plurality of unique and irreplaceable "whos," any inwardly consistent logic, which depends on stable and nameable entities, is inadequate for fully governing the complexity and dignity of human affairs (Ibid.: 181–182). The distinction between the "who" and the "what" is thus key to Arendt's resistance of totalitarianism, and the imperative that people be acknowledged and judged in a way that allows for their freedom, according to how they actually act and speak in their particular life story, rather than according to how their perceived category of identity fits in a pre-determined logic of a dialectical law of nature or history. Individuation through action and speech transcends anonymity, both the anonymity of one's biological life as a specimen of the human species, and as an anonymous and replaceable or superfluous "what" within the dialectic.

There is perhaps some irony in my mobilization of Arendtian resources to critique social media profiles, given Arendt's regular use of political metaphors from the world of Greek and Roman theatre, her seeing the public world in terms of the *theatrum mundi*. Arendt encourages the depersonalization of the public sphere, the actors' wearing of masks, or *personae*, when they act and speak politically (1977b: 106). This mask is meant as a metaphor for holding legal status within a political community, holding an intersubjectively recognized office or place in the public space which confirms the actor's right to speak and be heard, and helps provide context and intelligibility for their speech. This

mask, or site of amplification, helps the unique "who" of the actor sound through. It allows political opponents to disagree and compete with each other, while maintaining the imperative to listen to each other, and without vilifying the private person wearing the mask. The public persona allows actors to manage, to some extent, how much of themselves they wish to disclose to the world. This is critical, because, unlike in virtual social media space, in actual physical spaces of public deliberation, actors appear bearing their givenness, the unchangeable "whats" they are born with or to. These cannot be hidden behind an online profile. Indeed, much of the significance of political action is that it is that through which each human being reveals a unique life narrative in response to the unchangeable "whats" that they bear. Key to overcoming the contemporary polarization of political debate and the vilification of opponents is Arendt's notion of "disinterested togetherness." Action becomes determined by the instrumental logic of means and ends when human "togetherness" is lost. Speech forgoes its capacity to reveal meaning and becomes a mere tool, an instrument of potential concealment in attaining one's immediate political ends. By contrast, the spirit of togetherness is "disinterested," so that actors are neither for nor against each other (Arendt, 1958: 180). Only under these conditions — when no identity is under attack because actors are "disinterested" in relation to the other — can the particular "who" be disclosed from behind the categorical "what."

For Arendt, political action should be self-elective, since it is essential to experiencing freedom. No one should be pre-emptively kept out of the public sphere, as each individual human being ought to have the opportunity to pursue the free action which bestows an important level of dignity upon human life stories. This equal opportunity is at the root of her "right to have rights" (Arendt, 1994b: 296–297). However, free speech can be as dangerous as it can be edifying for a pluralistic public sphere. There should, therefore, be some boundary to what kind of action or speech is permitted in public, some limit to the radical spontaneity and agonism of action, to save it from its destructive side. There ought to be some guideline that the actor considers, even in their will to show themselves and their doxa as being the greatest among competing doxai, and thus worthy of remembrance. Arendt is well known for her rejection of categorical moral or rational imperatives as a way of validating speech acts, on the grounds that it robs speech and action of its freedom, its spontaneity (1977a: 145, 151–152). Arendt draws, instead, a different limit to what kind of action and speech should be permitted in public. This limit is the imperative that actors be motivated by principles that fight totalitarian tendencies, and that they accept responsibility for the public world and try to sustain it. Arendt writes: "Thus the fear of concentration camps and the resulting insight into the nature of total domination might serve to invalidate all obsolete political differentiations from right to left and to introduce beside and above them the politically most important yardstick for judging events in our time, namely: whether they serve totalitarian domination or not" (1994b: 442).

The resistance to totalitarianism involves responsiveness to a plurality of opinions, careful attention to the particular details and facts of shared objects and events within the world, and respect, rather than negation, of the categories of identity, the "whats" that

humans are born with, so that all actors may be judged based on their individual speech acts, and "who" this discloses. Individuation through action's disclosure of the "who" involves taking responsibility for one's words and deeds, for how they fit in or respond to the world that contextualizes them. This disclosure is a response to the condition of plurality. So, even if an actor is, agonistically, affirming their *doxa* as great or worthy of acknowledgement, they need also, reciprocally, be ready to listen, judge, and respond back to other *doxai* in a way that preserves the integrity of the world that allows for their own disclosure. Responsibility for the world entails acting responsively to other people in their plurality, showing them a respectful willingness to share the public sphere. It involves continuous care for the institutions and practices that allow for the disclosure of plurality, continued action and speech among those who elect themselves to participate. Arendt argues that a republican foundation that creates space for political freedom must be made in such an augmentable way that subsequent actors can freely and critically respond to their own contexts within its institutional and legal parameters. Unlike a work of *poiesis* that survives and outlasts the process by which it was made, the public space depends on continuous subsequent performative acts to maintain it. According to George Kateb, Arendt does not see the establishing of a constitution as the "making" of a model for society, so that the purpose of political action is achieved in the design of a country's political structure, but rather the "creation of a frame of institutions for indefinite future possibilities of political action . . ." (1984: 19). What binds the public sphere and deliberative community together is not a shared substantive *ethos* — there must be room for agonism, disagreement, and freedom of opinion — but a shared world, shared objects or events that can be seen from different perspectives, as well as a shared institutional framework that all actors are willing to defend through their continuous action, and that self-elected actors have a reasonable opportunity to act through.

Arendtian limits to free speech constitute more than mere "political correctness," but she never establishes a particular, substantive political ideology, right or left, that she thought should validate speech from without. This would be to contradict her phenomenology of political action and judgment, which never sought to prescribe political principles for any given people, but instead described how any given principle could be disclosed publicly and historically, through action and the judgment of its meaning. For Arendt, herself, to propose a transcendent, external standard by which to validate speech acts would be to determine a ground for action in advance, thus robbing it of its spontaneity and freedom. Arendt develops the implications of acting and judging without metaphysically guaranteed grounds. Action requires courage since the actor takes the responsibility for beginnings that are never guaranteed by moral and metaphysical certainties. Instead, Arendt writes that actions spring from the principles that inspire them (177a: 152). She alludes to principles in her account of Montesquieu, and suggests that his chief concern in *De l'esprit des lois* are the human passions expressed by a community's laws — understood as *rapports* between beings — and the types of action these inspire (Arendt, 1958: 190–191n). As examples of principles that inspire political action, Arendt lists honor, glory, equality, and excellence, but also hatred, fear, and distrust (177a: 152).

According to Lucy Cane, Arendt suggests that political communities may be inspired by many principles at once, and that these can either sustain continued engagement with the public realm, or undermine the necessary institutional conditions of freedom (2014: 62, 67). Principles do not exist in a realm higher than their phenomenal appearances in speech and in physical acts. They survive only through spectator narrative, after an act or speech has been judged to serve as a valid example of that principle. Some principles go on to inspire future political action, so that their being is extended through time.

While Arendt never posits a substantive determinant of the will that could categorically validate or invalidate a given speech act, she is consistently dedicated to defending the interrelated principles of responsibility for the public world, and the resistance to totalitarianism. A politics inspired by these principles would rule out any speech act that excludes others from freely appearing in public, that vilifies or attacks others in a personal way based on their group membership, and that threatens the public space and renders it impossible for citizens to actively respond to events of common import. A politics inspired by these principles requires and reinforces a subjectivity that Arendt describes as the "enlarged mentality," which is developed by visiting the perspectives of others in the process of political judgment. Arendt turns to the aesthetic judgment of Kant for another crucial limit to free speech, one that helps protect the world from the destructive and irrational side of action by establishing communicability and inclusiveness as procedural imperatives, yet sustains freedom itself by also rooting judgment in subjective taste.

Sensus Communis: Limiting the *Agon*

Arendt develops her account of political judgment, based on the aesthetic critique of Kant, in a way that incorporates another crucial limit to the *agon* of action, a standard to help ensure the ongoing health of a pluralistic public sphere and the communicative freedom of citizens. Arendt explains how totalitarianism destroys the common world where the plurality of *doxai* may be disclosed and exchanged, and creates atomized and isolated individuals who are unable to properly think. It became a priority for Arendt, in the wake of totalitarianism, to explore the faculty of judgment as an autonomous one, without appeal to the laws of nature or history at the core of totalitarian ideology. Dana Villa notes that Arendt's approach bears an important ethical dimension, in that it champions the autonomy of reflective judgment, yet rescues it from radical relativism and decisionism by helping deliberators reconstruct moral horizons (1996: 165).

Arendt develops her account of political judgment through an adaptation of Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment, where situated individuals judge phenomena in a world of appearance along with others who are also immediately partial. Both Arendt and Kant account for how opinions about public objects, seen from different perspectives, become validated, while maintaining freedom of judgment. Political judgments seek the agreement of others without being confirmed with the certainty of logical truth. By Arendt's account, the public sphere is bound and sustained by a Kantian *sensus communis*, an intersubjective standard of intelligibility and meaning by which spectators judge deeds and

speech, bridging the subjective taste of the individual spectator and the worldliness of objects and events which can be seen from different perspectives (Arendt, 1992: 70–72). Arendt's account of judgment can be read in at least two ways, both as a model for ethical judgment, by which an actor may consider the validity of their intended acts beforehand, and as an explanation of how political phenomena are retrospectively disclosed and judged in a public forum, how the meanings of deeds, speech, and actors become constructed for contemporary politics, or for future politics, based on their exemplary validity.

The Arendtian spectator judges an object or event primarily according to what it discloses about the meaning and integrity of the particular event in its own terms, rather than how this particular event fits into a larger natural or historical process understood through dialectical logic. The meaning of the object, event, deed, or speech in question is constructed and refined from the perspectives of the variously positioned spectators, but also closely related to its own facticity and particularity. Therefore, this judgment pays attention to the facticity and detail of the object, rather than be determined by self-consistent logic. Arendt's account begins from the immediate sense experience of the particular spectator, and the particular impression, or taste, they feel in the representation of the object. The spectator's immediate sense of the object is then compared and contrasted to the imagined perspectives and potential judgments of others.

Arendt claims that political judgments are reflective rather than determinant. Spectators must judge the meaning of phenomena without universal categories under which to subsume them. The famous Kantian example of such a particular is an object that the spectator judges as beautiful. There is no rule confirming that an object is beautiful. One merely feels pleasure in the representation of the object. This judgment of taste is aesthetic, meaning that its determining ground is subjective (Kant, 2000: 45–46). According to Arendt, in politics, like in art, the meaning of an object cannot be proven, but it can be validated intersubjectively. The spectator aims to persuade others of the validity of their judgment, and in the process, raises their *doxa* above mere subjectivity. The criteria for verification of taste's validity is its communicability. Kant posits that because one's satisfaction in communicating the mental state involved in representing a beautiful object is disinterested, one's judgment of beauty is grounds for the satisfaction of all people. One's pleasure is grounded on what one can presuppose in every other person, so one can attribute "subjective universal validity" to their judgment (Ibid.: 175).

Overcoming the impasse of the relativity of taste involves the imperative of disinterest or impartiality, an abstraction from one's own particularity through consideration of the standpoints and possible judgments of all other spectators in the judging community. By "visiting the perspectives" of others, and trying to "woo their consent," the spectator's mentality is enlarged (Arendt, 1992: 72). The communicability of taste depends on its appeal to a *sensus communis*. In referring to the *sensus communis*, as Kant explains, the spectator takes an *a priori* account of the modes of representation of all other people in the community of judgment (2000: 170–171). Disinterested judgment requires judging representations in a way that transcends considerations of their instrumentality, of the

object's relation to one's immediate sensuous need. There is thus an important material basis to conditions of disinterested judgment, as Arendt asserts: "This attitude of disinterested joy . . . can be experienced only after the needs of the living organism have been provided for, so that, released from life's necessity, men may be free for the world" (1977a: 210).

Public, dialogical critique implies that spectators can communicate their judgments, explain their implications, and be responsible for them, before others. One must be ready not to necessarily prove the correctness of their judgment, but explain how they arrived at it, by which considerations of other perspectives they formed it. The *sensus communis* may validate speech acts that appeal to its store of intelligibility, but it still allows for an important degree of disagreement in judgment and opinion, and is not meant to be as substantive or restrictive the standard of validity as an Aristotelian community's *ethos* or an internally consistent ideology, one that would invalidate or disallow a given speech act because it did not fit a particular logic or ideological premise sanctioned by political authorities. In communicating our reflective judgment, we cannot expect to always ultimately convince others. The autonomy of individual judgment remains key to exercising freedom. Spectators cannot reconcile empirical judgments, but form their own judgments from what they imagine to be the general perspective (Arendt, 1992: 43). Judging according to the *sensus communis* does not mean automatically adopting the opinions of others; rather, it means opening one's self up to the possibility of having one's *doxa* transformed by having visited the perspectives of others. In the judgment's appeal to what can be meaningfully communicable to others, this does not mean that it must conform to a substantive ethical judgment that dominates the *ethos* of one's particular cultural community. After all, we might ask, what if a particular *sensus communis* is dominated by a narrow, exclusionary *doxa*? What if two political groups in deliberation are too polarized for their respective spectators to bridge the gap, accurately imagine the other's perspective, and allow the other's perspective to significantly inform and moderate one's judgment? The Arendtian community of spectators, the bearers of the *sensus communis*, is not conceived as the bearer of a substantive harmony of judgment, where consensus of opinion is seen as the *telos* of deliberation; rather, it is a community based on open and continuous argument. Arendt's community of judgment is formed through the processes of judgment and agonistic politics themselves. Often a spectator must imagine themselves in the position of spectators who stand outside their own cultural or ethical community. This allows for the widening of the community of spectators, for the increased validity of opinions, and the enlargement of public thought.

As Villa notes, political judgment limits the *agon* of action not by disclosing a common opinion, but a common world (1996: 165). The processes of political deliberation are valuable for disclosing plurality, disclosing the world and its actors in their particularity, and thus sustaining the public sphere. Arendt's model does not and cannot promise to bridge the gap between empirical polarized *doxai*, but its underlying ethic of responsibility for the world can certainly help, especially when agents remember that the "world" is conditioned by plurality, and is not something that can be crafted, according to the in-

strumental logic of *techne*, to fit some model of perfection imagined from one particular subjectivity. Arendtian reflective political judgment discloses a shared world of events and objects that matter, about which different *doxai* can be compared and contrasted, and a shared institutional framework which allows for inclusive and diverse action and judgment. Kim Curtis shows that Arendt's theory of judgment highlights the political responsibility to countenance unique "whos" out of oblivion, to invite relevant perspectives, which might have been previously marginalized, into public light (1999: 142). Despite her championing of agonistic politics, Arendt also establishes important limits to what kind of political speech and opinion may be validated in the public sphere. In her imperative that spectators judge according to a progressively enlarging *sensus communis* and according to a principle of caring for the public world, judgments are informed by a principle that works to ensure the conditions of possibility of future pluralistic judgments.

The Responsibility of Truth Telling

For Arendt, the disclosure of the meaning of reality in human affairs takes place in narrative form. Spectator storytelling is a crucial part of disclosing and judging the worldly relevance of political action, as well as for transmitting the authority of a political tradition over time (1958: 173, 184–185). Political storytelling relies on interpretation, the augmentation of initial spectator judgments, facilitated by what Kant describes as the structure of aesthetical ideas. He writes that an aesthetical idea is an imaginative representation associated with a concept, to make it available for sense, but which is bound up with other partial representations. While imagination submits to the understanding that "clips its wings," it can also provide the understanding with an overabundance of representations that excite the cognitive faculties. These many possible representations are then available to future interpretation, future enlargement (Kant, 2000: 197–202).

Despite the freedom of interpretation that political storytelling entails, public speech acts should not include outright lying about confirmable facts and past events. One of the most important conditions of possibility for the meaningful disclosure of pluralistic speech acts and judgments in a stable public world is that these be supported by factuality, that actors and spectators engaged in politics tell the factual truth. Arendt affirms that factual data and details of particular phenomena which can be intersubjectively validated from many perspectives are crucial for establishing shared objects or events available for judgment and responsive action within a public space. Moral thinking, sound political judgment, and meaningful action are all reliant on the intelligibility of worldly events and objects that appear in public space, and lying about verifiable facts concerning these events and objects erodes the very space of appearance in which they appear. While Arendt rejects the possibility or desirability of affirming a *doxa* that claims to disclose the totality of reality, some absolute rational or philosophical "Truth" of the matter concerning human affairs, she insists on actors and spectators communicating confirmable facts and particulars. Otherwise, a political community risks slipping into an unanchored "post-truth" world where totalitarian domination is an ever-present danger.

Arendt's most direct exposition on the crucial role that facticity and truth telling play in providing stability for the public sphere is in the chapter "Truth and Politics," in *Between Past and Future*. Here, Arendt is not concerned with philosophical or rational truths, but merely the transparent accounting of facts and events of action that have come to pass. As always, Arendt is careful not to suggest that past events are predetermined. Instead, they are the result of free human action, and could have been otherwise. However, once an action has taken place, and becomes part of the past, its facticity should be undeniable, not subject to concealment and distortion by powerful interests, nor considered mere opinion.

In "Truth and Politics," Arendt presents lying as a particular form of action, in that often its aim is to reject the world as it is, to "change the record" (1977a: 249). "[The liar] is an actor by nature; he says what is not so because he wants things to be different from what they are — that is, he wants to change the world" (Ibid.: 250). The capacity to lie actually confirms human freedom, and all of the danger and uncertainty that freedom entails. Arendt is not promoting lying, however, as "it is this freedom that is abused and perverted through mendacity" (Ibid.). Under normal circumstances, that is, when a regime and a people are not engaged in collective and systematic lying or self-deception, truth telling is not a form of political action, since, on its own, it does not change the world or introduce anything new, but merely relates particular facts of the past or present. Arendt writes: "Conceptually, we may call truth what we cannot change; metaphorically, it is the ground on which we stand and the sky that stretches above us" (Ibid.: 264). Facts should not, therefore, be manipulated by political action and political power, which can never produce a substitute for the "secure stability of factual reality" (Ibid.: 258). Indeed, Arendt explains that "it is only by respecting its own borders that this realm, where we are free to act and to change, can remain intact, preserving its integrity and keeping its promises" (Ibid.: 264).

While factual truth telling is not, under normal circumstances, a form of political action, Arendt asserts that the integrity of a "common and factual reality" is a "political problem of the first order" (Ibid.: 237) and that "[w]hat is at stake is survival, the perseverance in existence . . . and no human world destined to outlast the short life span of mortals within it will ever be able to survive without men willing to do what Herodotus was the first to undertake consciously . . . to say what is. No permanence, no perseverance in existence, can even be conceived of without men willing to testify to what is and appears to them because it is" (Ibid.: 229). Verifiable facts and events that are publicly known make up the "very texture of the political realm" (Ibid.: 231), the stable ground upon which opinions may be formed and judged intersubjectively: "Facts and opinions, though they must be kept apart, are not antagonistic to each other; they belong in the same realm. Facts inform opinions, and opinions, inspired by different interests and passions, can differ widely and still be legitimate as long as they respect factual truth. Freedom of opinion is a farce unless factual information is guaranteed and the facts themselves are not in dispute" (Ibid.: 238).

Like opinions, factual truths depend on their intersubjective articulation to be disclosed as part of human reality: "Factual truth . . . is always related to other people: it concerns events and circumstances in which many are involved; it is established by witnesses and depends upon testimony; it exists only to the extent that it is spoken about . . ." (Arendt, Ibid.: 238) This is one reason why factual truths are so fragile, and subject to distortion, forgetting, and willful concealment, both by powerful actors within a political regime, and by the "hostility" of a majority of opinion-holders (Ibid.: 243). Unwelcome or inconvenient facts and events may be treated as secrets, countered by deliberate falsehoods, their very discussion may be taboo, or, more commonly in democracies, considered mere opinions (Ibid.: 236–237). In a marketplace of opinions, a liar may also present their falsehoods concerning facts and events as just another opinion, to which they are entitled as a constitutional right. As Arendt cautions, "[t]his is frequently done by subversive groups, and in a politically immature public the resulting confusion can be considerable" (Ibid.: 249–250).

Truth telling about facts and events becomes a form of political action in the special circumstance when it resists and disrupts a world that is being constructed through organized lying and propaganda. Where a "community has embarked on organized lying on principle . . . [w]here everybody lies about everything of importance, the truthteller . . . has begun to act . . . for, in the unlikely event that he survives, he has made a start toward changing the world" (Arendt Ibid.: 251). Arendt is one of the foremost theorists about the particular circumstance in which mere factual truth telling becomes political action. However, this is a situation that, unfortunately, has become a new normal, with the prevalence of the modern political lie. Arendt writes at length in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* about how totalitarian regimes instrumentally distorted and concealed factual truth so that the prevalent sense of reality would conform to an ideological fiction, in order to demonstrate how the overall political movement was achieving its *telos* (1994b: 351–353). One of the reasons why her thought has such import today is because in many countries around the globe, human beings already live or risk descending once again into the kind of "post-truth" world which characterizes totalitarianism.

Arendt describes a "relatively recent phenomenon of mass manipulation of fact and opinion . . . evident in the rewriting of history, in image-making, and in actual government policy" (1977a: 252). In "Truth and Politics," Arendt turns her attention briefly to the Cold War. She describes a national government's propaganda machine operating according to an instrumentally deceptive *raison d'état* which had learned from manipulative business practices and the advertising techniques of Madison Avenue, that was mobilized by a foreign affairs department determined to fool their opponent, but that had also spread to other, social and political, domains and that had effectively deceived their own leaders and their own citizens as well. "[A] whole group of people, and even whole nations, may take their bearings from a web of deceptions to which their leaders wished to subject their opponents" (Ibid.: 255). In the "trade of image making," the liar begins to believe their own lies, and this "self-deception is likely to create a semblance of truthfulness" (Ibid.: 254) necessary to perform publicly with conviction. Citizens might not fact

check what the political actor says, or consider the long-term impact of the substance of the speech act on the integrity of the public world, but they are satisfied that he or she says it with conviction, that he or she means what they say. Both the "deceived group and the deceivers themselves" work to keep the "propaganda image intact" (Ibid.: 255), since in the absence of a stabilizing ground of facticity, the propaganda narrative serves as an alternative source of intelligibility, albeit fictional. The long-term effect of "brainwashing" and the constant replacement of facts with lies "is a peculiar kind of cynicism — an absolute refusal to believe in the truth of anything" (Ibid.: 257). When modern political lies become pervasive, "the sense by which we take our bearings in the real world — and the category of truth vs. falsehood is among the mental means to this end — is being destroyed" (Ibid.). Lying, argues Arendt, "harbor[s] an element of violence; organized lying always tends to destroy whatever it has decided to negate" (Ibid.: 252). Arendt asks, in a cautionary tone: "And finally, and perhaps most disturbingly, if the modern political lies are so big that they require a complete rearrangement of the whole factual texture — the making of another reality . . . what prevents these new stories, images, and non-facts from becoming an adequate substitute for reality and factuality?" (Ibid.: 253–254)

Arendt's insistence on truth telling is especially significant given the influence of Machiavelli in her own account of action, despite him being a champion of instrumental lying (Machiavelli, 1995: 54–55). Indeed, Arendt shares much with Machiavelli. She promotes a secular political sphere, framed by republican institutions, whose authority rests in the act of foundation itself. Arendt espouses a politics whose guiding principles are immanent to action, not metaphysical or natural, and, like Machiavelli, she celebrates the virtuosity of great political action and speech that serves to establish or augment the foundations of a political community's public tradition (Arendt, 1977b: 175, 195–196). Further, like Machiavelli, Arendt recognizes that political communities are often founded after a violent act that liberates people from an existing, oppressive regime. However, Arendt differs from Machiavelli in important ways, namely her rejection of a politics that conceives of the human being primarily as *homo faber*, and dominated by instrumental rationality.

Arendt argues that the Western tradition of political thought has been dominated by an association of freedom with sovereignty, mastery, and rule, an association stemming from the dominance of the fabrication or work model of freedom. This model, inspired in large part by Aristotle's account of *poiesis* and its guiding intellectual virtue, *techne*, has inspired an understanding of politics dominated by instrumental rationality. Arendt challenges the intrusion of the instrumental rationality of *techne* and the sovereign will to mastery into politics. The will to master one's self, one's environment, and ultimately the destiny of others is compatible with the instrumental logic of *poiesis,* where any posited *telos* orders and justifies the means and processes involved in making (1958: 157–158, 194–195). This strictly instrumental logic tends to justify lying, and treating other humans as material to the posited end. Here, the ends established by the ruler or regime are seen as logically justifying the use of the available means, including other human beings, in often violent or manipulative ways. Machiavelli, one of this model's greatest proponents,

was, notoriously, a champion of the use of violence and deception for the purpose of increasing the prince's power and the stability of the state.

Arendt diverges in an important way from Machiavelli in that she sees foundation not as the work of a solitary figure that manipulates the raw material of other human beings and existing political and social institutions, but rather as the acts of many individuals, through non-violent collective power. As an alternative to sovereign rule, Arendt emphasizes the non-sovereign mode of immanent, collective action she calls "promise making," which relies on honesty and trust, and which she sees as the bedrock of republican political communities (Ibid.: 243–247). This is not to say, however, that violence and lying have no place in Arendt's account of the foundation of spaces of appearance through "promise making." Indeed, Arendt calls violence the "prepolitical act of liberating oneself from the necessity of life for the freedom of the world" (Ibid.: 31). This violence can itself include instrumental and strategic forms of deceit or secrecy, necessary in revolutionary war. Further, Arendt acknowledges that the instrumental violence often necessary for liberation may become concealed by an authoritative *mythos* that augments the founding event into something palatable and inspirational for future generations, who are then left with a space of appearance in which non-violent, truth-disclosive action may occur. There is, therefore, in Arendt's writing, a complex and tense relationship, one that is never fully resolved, between the revolutionary action that overthrows an old order and that is accompanied by violence, and the non-violent constitutive action that subsequently founds a new space of appearance through collective power and "promise making," the immanent source of secular political authority.

However, Arendt asserts that violence, as well as lying, is always instrumental, ruled by means-end categories. As opposed to action, violence and lying are never ends in themselves, nor do they disclose the uniqueness of the "who" or the true texture and meaning of the "world'; thus, they are anathemas to the essence of politics. Arendt does not share with Machiavelli the sense that ends established by the regime justify all means. In her 1955 Berkeley lectures on Machiavelli, Arendt differentiates between ends that organize means in order to successfully achieve them, and the general principle that inspires action and gives it meaning. Here she suggests that there is, indeed, a limit to the means that should be permitted if action is to disclose the principle that inspired the act: "In pursuing an end, you can lose the meaning" (1955: 8). Arendt, therefore, does not concede that violence and deception in the struggle for liberation justify the contemporary use of organized lying in the public sphere that was founded as a result. It does not justify rulers, or organized power, deciding on the "truth of the matter" merely through arbitrary will, or according to the regime's or ruler's dominant ideology.

We have established that Arendt's alternative to the fabrication or work model of freedom, a performative model of non-violent action and power, is based on the intersubjective exchange of *doxai*. She explains that the collective power of non-violent action creates public space and discloses reality, in a way that the muteness and instrumentality of violence and lying cannot (1958: 199–201). Arendt writes that collective power exists only "where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil inten-

tions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities" (Ibid.: 200). Admittedly, the "making of promises" achieves only limited sovereignty by partly buffering against the uncertainty of the future by stabilizing human relationships. It does so not through establishing or expressing an identical will, but through an agreed upon purpose between people with a plurality of perspectives (Ibid.: 244–245). Lying has no place in Arendt's account of action, which features the disclosure of truth and meaning through deeds and speech, among co-equals holding a diversity of perspectives. She insists on the capacity of non-violent, discursive action to create and sustain public space, as well as to disclose real and meaningful aspects of the "who" and the "world," in a way that the instrumentality of lying and violence cannot (Ibid.: 199–201). Ultimately, a plurality of actors cannot lie to each other, and have the conditions for the intelligibility of their action survive.

Arendt's proposed alternative account of freedom as non-sovereign action, and the resources she offers to limit the *agon* of free action, are themselves immanent to human action, and offer no transcendent philosophical or religious ground by which to guarantee the validity of speech acts, nor the long-term security and sustainability of the public sphere. She knows all too well how fragile public spaces are, how totalitarian practices and subjectivities pose a constant threat to the free action and plurality upon which these spaces are based. I submit that these resources within Arendt's thought are indispensable for forming a strategy to combat ways of speaking and acting that risk eroding the pluralistic world we share, whether they be populist, xenophobic, totalitarian, radically instrumental, or highly atomizing. However, nothing is guaranteed, and Arendt's principles of responsibility for the world, and resistance to totalitarianism, will wither into nothing, as principles do, without constant and vigilant action by those who elect themselves fit for the light of the public.

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Этика ответственности по отношению к собственному «кто» и к «миру» в работах Ханны Арендт

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Рост популизма и увеличение разрыва между традиционными и новыми медиа представляет угрозу плюралистическому демократическому действию и суждению. Граждане клевещут друг на друга, отказывают друг другу в возможности проверить и обосновать свои взгляды публично: либо по причине того, что их политические взгляды радикально различаются, либо потому, что они приписывают друг другу обладание такими индивидуальными качествами, которые в их представлении должны быть отвергнуты в соответствии с логикой их собственной идеологии. В данной статье представлены три ключевых источника в философии Ханны Арендт, которые позволяют справиться с этими вызовами демократии. Во-первых, Арендт ратует за физические — не только виртуальные или цифровые — пространства для публичного обсуждения, где участники раскрывают себя, «кто» они есть на самом деле, и «мир», в контексте которого совершаются их действия. Арендт считает принцип сопротивления тоталитаризму и «ответственность за мир» приемлемым ограничением свободного действия в рамках этих пространств. Во-вторых, Арендт представляет ограничение, или стандарт интеллигибельности, политического действия и речи, допустимого публично, а именно *sensus communis* кантовской теории эстетической способности суждения. Этот стандарт здравого смысла связывает воедино публичную сферу и предполагает, что интерсубъективная значимость речевого акта взывает к объективности, которая может разделяться с различных точек зрения. Этот стандарт допускает при этом разногласие и не является столь же ограничительным, как аристотелевский этос или внутренне непротиворечивая идеология. И, наконец, в-третьих, Арендт утверждает императив истины факта и внимания к деталям публичных событий в качестве необходимых условий для интеллигибельного действия и суждения в плюралистической публичной сфере.

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, медиа, демократия, плюрализм, ответственность, суждение, действие, *sensus communis*

Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, and Rethinking the Public Sphere in the Age of Social Media*

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The present paper is dedicated to the phenomenon of the public sphere which is currently undergoing significant transformations under the influence of the Internet and social media. The main goal of the article is to find a new approach to the modern development of the public sphere by rethinking it from an Arendtian perspective. The first part examines the main actual changes taking place in the public sphere under the influence of social media, and concludes that the classical concept of the public sphere, dating back to its early notion of Jürgen Habermas, needs to be rethought, this requiring a new approach which would take into account the actual changes and new circumstances in the development of the public sphere. It is proposed to use Arendt's understanding of the public sphere as one of the sources of this new approach which remains relevant today in many ways. The second part examines Arendt's notion of the public sphere as compared with the concept of the public sphere of early Habermasian writing. As a result of this consideration, it is concluded that, in a number of points, Arendt's notion of the public sphere is better suited to an understanding of the modern public sphere than the classical Habermasian concept. In the third part, I rethink the existing trends in the development of the digital public sphere from Arendt's standpoint.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, the public sphere, public realm, social media, Internet

Introduction

The emergence and rapid development of social media and its transformation into a multifunctional communication platform has been provoking profound changes in the ways of communication between people. Ultimately, a significant transformation of the public sphere and new boundaries are being drawn between the private and the public, along with the appearance of a networked public sphere with its high political potential and ability to cross state, social, and private borders. The communicative possibilities of social media can open new ways for self-organization, activation of resources in networks (knowledge, skills, financial means), citizen participation, and influence. Through the use of social networking services, the public sphere can be purposefully built up, informed,

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networked, and activated, be it for online activities or for engagement in the "real" world. These rapidly developing processes are often difficult to describe in the framework of old theories and concepts. The classic concept of the public sphere, tracing its roots to the early work of Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of The Public Sphere* (1962), needs some rethinking in order to formulate an adequate theoretical construction describing social reality in the digital era. The modern public sphere is far from being a unified public sphere as described by Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, but it is rather "a developing and complex mosaic of differently sized, overlapping and interconnected public spheres" (Keane, 1995: 1). It is something different compared to Habermas' idealized public sphere of coffee shops or salons, because the networked public sphere is far from being merely a place of rational deliberative discourse. Such an idealistic understanding of the public sphere is not consistent with the real discourse in social media where discussions are often far from an unbiased and disinterested weighing of different arguments and finding the most logical and rational solution. This inconsistency, or this gap between theory and praxis needs a new approach for its bridging which would be based on a more realistic and less idealistic understanding of the public sphere. In this article, I will try to rethink the public sphere of social media from the point of view of Arendt's political philosophy, which, in my opinion, has not lost its relevance in our time and can be useful for developing new approaches to the analysis of modern social and political processes.

The Public Sphere and Social Media

The emergence of the first social media formally dates back to 1978 when the BBS (Bulletin Board System) was developed for the exchange of public messages or files via a dial-up modem. However, social media became a truly widespread phenomenon in the first half of the 2000's when the most popular and politically significant social networking sites such as Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006) were launched. YouTube (2005), a video hosting service which has some elements of other social networking sites and often plays an important role in sharing politically relevant information, should also be mentioned among the most politically-influential social media sites. Since that time, the number of social media users has been rapidly growing, reaching about 2.5 billion users (or 71 percent of the number of internet users) in 2017 (Statista, 2018). This trend is expected to continue, and it is safe to predict that most of the global population will be connected through social media in the future. However, the subject of how social media influences the development of the public sphere is being vigorously debated and remains still largely open to interpretations due to the contradictory trends and insufficient time spent observing this phenomenon.

Some trends of modern transformation of the public sphere are obvious now. Thus, two diametrically opposed tendencies seem to exist in the development of the public sphere since the emergence of social media. On the one hand, social media forms an online alternative to the traditional offline public sphere which is more open for partici-

pants and is not so much bound by time and place. Yochai Benkler defines the networked public sphere as an online platform where active citizens can cooperate and express their opinions and serve as watchdogs over society on a peer-production model (Benkler, 2006: 177). According to Benkler, changes in the public sphere influenced by the Internet and social media are more qualitative than quantitative, and mean that "the easy possibility of communicating effectively into the public sphere allows individuals to reorient themselves from passive readers and listeners to potential speakers and participants in a conversation" (Benkler, 2006: 213). Thus, social media has been gradually becoming one of the key communicative platforms that is open and free for individual political activism in the sense of a deliberative and participatory democracy. It opens the field for non-professional political actors who can use social media as a communicative platform to convey their political views to a wide audience (Elmer, Langlois, McKelvey, 2012: 6). Therefore, it can be assumed that social media, due to its openness and free access, forms a more diverse and broader public sphere compared to the one that existed during the era of the dominance of print mass media. This new public sphere should be significantly expanded by means of those groups of the population that were often unrepresented in the public sphere of the past. It is not just about different kinds of radicals, marginals, and members of small groups with highly specialized interests, but also about children and teenagers, who, due to their social activities, have become a dominant group in some social media publics.

On the other hand, some researchers note the growing fragmentation and isolationism in the networked public sphere (Bright, 2018; Dahlberg, 2007; Papacharissi, 2002; Sunstein, 2009): social media has been not only destroying some boundaries, it has been also creating new ones. Social network sites maintain the shaping of different communities based on the interests, views and values of those members who prefer to remain within their group, and do not seek to influence the general agenda or to be a part of universal public sphere. As some empirical studies show (Colleoni, Rozza, Arvidsson, 2014; Gaines, Mondak, 2009; Garcia et al., 2015), social media tend to contribute to the fragmentation of public discourse in many ways, which in turn leads to what Cass Sunstein and some other social scientists characterize as the "balkanization" of the public sphere (Sunstein, 2008), and to the development of parallel communities whose members can sometimes cultivate extreme views and do not seek to interact with representatives of other groups (Rasmussen, 2016: 74). These groups tend to be marginalized by the mainstream public sphere, which leads to their further isolation. Nancy Fraser points out that the exclusion of the members of certain social groups from the public sphere may lead to the formation of alternative public spheres where these marginals can "formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interest, and needs" (Fraser, 1990: 67–68). As a result, these groups can become marginalized from the large-scale public sphere themselves, forming echo chambers with very similar views and interests of their users. All this can ultimately lead to the even stronger homogenization of views within such groups, to the filtering out of news and information coming in from the outside which does not fit into the world picture of these groups' members, to declaring something false to be true, to the creation

to fake news, and to the radicalization of their agenda in order to make themselves heard in the society. However, this does not allow marginalized groups to better understand or reach a consensus with other societal groups, but only leads to their further marginalization. Consequently, users with radical views consolidate into separate groups and tend to isolate themselves from other parts of society. This opinion is shared by some experts who believe that the publics of shared interests can not only trigger some collective activity, but can also form isolated groups that conform to biased images of society (Rasmussen, 2016: 74–75). Another negative tendency developing in the networked public sphere is the inequality and disproportional degrees in attention and influence: the opinions of a huge number of social media users are barely perceptible from the wide audience, while some relatively-small group of popular bloggers get the bulk of attention and influence (Ibid.: 75). That means that although social networking services are mostly open and egalitarian in sense of access and participation, their public discourse is far from democratic, if we understand democracy as the equal distribution of presence and visibility. An opinion of some popular blogger is more visible and therefore carries more weight than an opinion of some ordinary user.

At the same time, some experts (Fuchs, 2014: 75; Abril, Levin, Del Riego, 2012: 64) believe that the emergence of social media contributes to the tendency of blurring the boundaries between the public and the private. This blurring leads to the merging of the private and public sphere resulting in the appearance of "hybrid" or "semi-public" spaces which combine certain features of the public and private spheres. It requires some rethinking of the concept of the public sphere, and its adequacy to the real circumstances and conditions of the modern world. There is a broad range of communities in social media, from those public spaces near to the classic ideal of the public sphere on the one pole, to the rather private spaces with some public traits on the other pole. This concerns both the subject matter of published information (it can be very personal) and the circle of the targeted audience (it can be limited to a few people). Moreover, there are different combinations in which the private and the public is blended with each other in social media. For example, often public persons, such as politicians, post very personal information and personal statements on social media. The most striking example is probably Donald Trump, who, being the US president and its top official, publishes very personal assessments of events and people from his Twitter account, thereby turning his emotional statements, usually allowed only in a narrow circle of family and friends, into political messages. However, there are also closed social media publics where political issues are discussed but access is possible only for to a limited number of participants. An attempt to analyze the networked public sphere relying on the traditional concept of public sphere would raise a number of issues. For example, do closed or semi-closed forums belong to the private or to the public sphere? Can limited or open access to a social media group be a criterion of its publicity or privacy? Why is it that in small online communities, often with limited access and the full identification of its participants, the quality of the public discourse is higher, and the rules of discussion are established and observed much better than in large open communities? Why are large open online public forums often far

from rational deliberations in terms of the classic Habermasian concept of the public sphere? Here, I suppose, it can be useful to turn to Hannah Arendt's understanding of the public sphere and to her theory of action. This does not mean that I propose to replace Habermas' theory of the public sphere (in its earliest version) with Arendt's theory of the public realm. It is rather about learning something valuable from Arendt, something that other public sphere theorists overlook (for instance, her understanding of the role of the pluralism of opinions in political life), or something that could help social theory meet the challenges to society posed by the rapid development of modern communication technologies.

Hannah Arendt's Notion of the Public Sphere

Hannah Arendt never used the term of the public sphere as a theoretical concept in her works. However, she started to deal with the theme of the common place for public discussions (calling it the "public realm") before Habermas (at least in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [1951], and especially in *The Human Condition* [1958]) and influenced his understanding of the public sphere in many aspects (for instance, Habermas' concept of communicative power). The concept of the public realm is one of the central categories of Arendt's political thought and is based on Arendt's idealistic account of the ancient polis in its classical period. The concept of the public space is understood by Arendt in two basic meanings: it is, on the one hand, the space of appearance, and, on the other hand, it is a common-for-all place, that is, the world people hold in common. As a space of appearance, Arendt's public realm provides "the widest possible publicity" to individuals, and the possibility to "be seen and heard by everybody" (Arendt, 1958: 50), which is necessary to recognize the other and to be recognized by others. This mutual recognition is a condition for further communication and cooperation between individuals. In other words, Arendt understands the public realm as an intersubjective space where people "appear" to each other and, through this appearance, triggers human political activity by their acting and speaking together. Secondly, the public realm is the world that we hold in common. This is the world which "is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place on it" (Arendt, 1998: 52). Thus, Arendt defines the public space as the opposite of private, of the natural, or of something that cannot be common. Unlike the private realm which is natural, the public realm is an artificial realm created by people themselves; it is an "objective space" between nature and men (Dossa, 1989: 86). In Arendt's view, this artificial realm was a kind of special human world which "separates humans from nature and natural necessity" and which "provides them with a potential arena for their political life" (Brunkhorst, 2000: 182). However, for Arendt, the public and the private realm are not only in dual opposition to each other and cannot be merged, but they also supplement and need each other for their own existence. The lack of one of them negatively affects the other and destroys the healthy balance of human life in general.

Hannah Arendt's concept of the public realm has much in common with Habermas' notion of the public sphere. Both Habermas and Arendt have their ideal model of public dialogue in the past; Habermas' model is in the bourgeoise public sphere of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and Arendt's model is the ancient polis. Both underline that the private space of the past was the sphere of the family and the economy at once (Fuchs, 2014: 60). Both criticize the modern public sphere and try to find a way to repair it. Both believe that the prerequisite for the existence of the public sphere is its openness and equality of its participants. However, despite many similarities, there are also some important differences between the Arendtian and classic Habermasian views of the public sphere. First, Arendt's concept is more spatial, although the public realm's similarity to the public sphere means not a physical place, but rather an improvised place that emerges in the deeds and speeches of individuals who gather together to undertake some common activities, existing only while these activities last (d'Entrèves, 1994: 77). Arendt emphasizes the physical presence and visibility of actors, whereas the public of Habermas can be dispersed in different places but communicating to each other via the media. Second, Arendt understands the public realm not only as a communicative space where people are discussing some common affairs, but also as competitive, as an "agonistic" space (obviously referring to the agonistic character of public life in the ancient polis). Finally, whereas the public realm is a place where equal participants not only exchange opinions, but also make decisions and "act in concert" as in Hannah Arendt's political philosophy, Habermas' public sphere is primarily a communicative platform of information exchange and public opinion-formation. Arendt insists on face-to-face communication between people; it cannot happen everywhere, but only in some particular place. Seyla Benhabib explains this terminological shift from the German, the mother tongue of both Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas: when Hannah Arendt takes "der öffentliche Raum" for the public realm in the German versions of her writings, Habermas uses the term "die Öffentlichkeit," variously translated into English as the "public sphere," "publicity," and "public opinion." According to Benhabib, the public sphere of Habermas becomes increasingly de-substantialised or de-corporealised in this process compared with the public realm of Hannah Arendt (Benhabib, 1997: 7). Following Nancy Fraser's concept of weak and strong publics (Fraser, 1990), the classic Habermasian public sphere consists mostly of "weak publics" with rational discussions, but without any direct influence on political decision-making. Influence is possible only indirectly, through public opinion. On the contrary, Arendt's public realm consists of "strong publics" because they are not only the places of rational discussions, but also the places of political actions, the places where will is manifested, where power and authority emerges, where political judgements and actions are possible, and where political decisions are made.

Unlike Habermas, Arendt considers the public sphere not only as a place for the rational discussions of common affairs. For Arendt, the public sphere is a space in which people can present themselves to others and demonstrate their individuality. Moreover, the sphere of politics — and for Arendt the public sphere is always political — this is a place in which there can be not only one truth, for this is a place of many opinions. These

opinions are neither better nor worse than the others just because one of them is closer to the truth and the other is further away from it. Arendt criticizes "public opinion" as a conformist opinion based not on plurality, but on uniformity. It is the public sphere of mass society. Therefore, in real politics, according to Arendt, there cannot be a single opinion; there are plural opinions. Thus, from an Arendtian point of view, the public sphere should be an area of competition between representatives of different opinions who seek to convince other people to share their point of view or their vision of reality. At the same time, although Arendt gives weight to the rational element of a political debate in the public sphere, she also realizes very well that, in political life, the political public discourse has not only a rational perspective. For instance, there is an aesthetic — an appearance, a self-presentation (Arendt, 1998: 198–199) — or an emotional perspective — as a source of "joy of action," which Arendt describes in *Truth and Politics* (1967): "The joy and gratification, that arise out of being in company with our peers, of acting together and appearing in public, of inserting ourselves into the world by word and deed" (Arendt, 2006: 259). The fact that Arendt understood this point perfectly well indicates her attempt to combine common sense and spontaneity, rationality, and aesthetics in her theory of judgment. This means that Habermas' reduction of public discourse to the weighing of rational arguments would not only be too great of an idealization of the phenomenon of the public sphere, but would have been interpreted by Arendt as a contradiction of the very essence of politics unsuitable for an analysis of political activity in the networked public sphere, even from a theoretical point of view.

Unfortunately, unlike Habermas, who had the possibility to review his early work in light of criticism and social changes, Arendt died long before the time the Internet and social media became an essential factor of the "digital transformation of the public sphere." Therefore, I would like to add a caveat to my attempt at looking at the modern development of the public sphere from Arendt's point of view. My paper is largely a kind of speculation; even if I try to reconstruct Arendt's position on the modern public sphere relying on her views reflected in her published works and on the hypothesis, they would remain basically unchanged. However, the main goal of this article is not to reproduce Arendt's authentic view on the development of the public sphere in the context of its expansion in cyberspace, but to try to discover a new approach to the notion of the public sphere, and try to revise this notion in view of the circumstances that arose with the emergence and development of social media. How can Arendt's understanding of the public sphere be useful today? This is a difficult question, considering all the changes in the ways of human communication over the past decades, and the fact that Arendt herself relied on an even more ancient version of the public sphere, in comparison to Habermas' concept of the public sphere.

Rethinking of the Networked Public Sphere from an Arendtian Perspective

One of the most significant and distinctive features of Arendt's way of thinking was her concentration on actual events and processes combined with her endeavor to understand

social and political processes of the present through the prism of some of the important changes of the past (Salikov, Zhavoronkov, 2017: 522). However, this approach carried a certain risk since past transformations occurred in a sometimes completely different political, social, and cultural context. Therefore, conclusions based on an analysis of the past can have only limited applicability to analyses of present or future changes (Salikov, Zhavoronkov, 2018: 26). Nevertheless, at least some of Arendt's ideas seem to be useful in analyzing the networked public sphere. These ideas are quite capable of enriching the traditional approach to the analysis of the public sphere, with certain adjustments made due to the unique features of communication in social media and its contradictory tendencies towards openness and cooperation on the one hand, and the tendencies towards isolation and fragmentation on the other.

Arendt considered one of the problems of modern democracy to be its increasingly representative character, that is, the process of turning politics into a small circle of professionals performing representative functions, while the overwhelming majority of ordinary citizens in modern society refuse to participate in political life in favor of private and social ones. There are many possible explanations for this phenomenon, one of which is a too- great distance between individuals and the decision-making level in modern giant states, which triggers the sense of alienation from politics and public activity. Arendt understood very well that direct discussion and joint decision-making are possible only under the conditions of a limited community, when a number of its participants would gather in a physical public space and debate face-to-face. That is why the idea of councils or small local communities — soviets (in terms of the Russian Revolution) or townhall meetings (in terms of the American Revolution) — was important to her. At the same time, the emergence of social media provides new opportunities for this form of political life, both in an offline form and in various types of hybrid combinations, when political discussions and actions both offline and online are combined.[1] It should be noted that, from an Arendtian perspective, the public sphere is not a huge homogeneous entity, but something that consists of local public spaces. In this sense, the universal public sphere could be ideally presented as a kind of multi-level construction consisting of separate mini-public spheres where the political life of ordinary citizens actually takes place. It is then that these mini-public spheres, or elementary public spaces, can ideally be understood as some sort of councils, the historical examples for which Arendt finds in the revolutions in France, the United States of America, Russia, and Hungary.

Since Arendt understands the universal public sphere as consisting of a multitude of local public spaces, the increased fragmentation of the modern public sphere in light of her council theory does not look like such an unambiguous phenomenon as it seems to be in the light of classical Habermasian public sphere theory. The fragmentation of the modern public sphere could be considered by Arendt not only as a problem, but also as a

1. The most vivid example of this kind of hybrid forms of political activity can be illustrated by the revolutionary processes during the Arab Spring; discussions and self-organization first took place on social media, but then the main actions poured out into physical space, although social networks did not lose their function as a political public space even afterward.

natural process or a kind of reaction of an ordinary person to the processes of unification and globalization, massification, and the reduction of human uniqueness in the modern world. Perhaps the only way for an ordinary person not to dissolve in this melting pot is to build their own small world together with like-minded persons, that is, to create a kind of autonomous formation in which they can fully manifest the uniqueness of their personality, participate in discussions, make decisions, and act together: this means to create the world around them. In this sense, the fragmentation of the public sphere into separate fragments is a natural and, to some extent, inevitable process. In an interview with Carlo Schmid on Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR, Northern German Broadcasting), Arendt, in fact, directly says that the fragmentation of the public sphere into many small local public spaces can be almost the only opportunity under the conditions of modern giant states to give an ordinary person a chance to be present in publicity (Arendt, Schmid, 1965: 69). In local public places, a person can directly express their point of view and discuss it with other participants. Arendt maintains all forms of ground-level self-organization as having the potential to set up a public space in which political action can flourish (see Habermas, 1977: 3–9). She argues fiercely for localism against centralization, and for power from below in the form of local political councils (Arendt, 1990). Arendt is convinced that the civic ideal of the polis can still be realized at the scale of the local and the particular (Howell, 1993: 315). Social media with its plurality and variety of local public spaces is a very promising phenomenon where localism and particularity can flourish from this Arendtian perspective.

However, if we change our perspective from the narrower focus of local councils to a broader context of political activism, we discover that the processes taking place in the digital public sphere allow us to describe them in terms of Arendt's political philosophy, taking into account Arendt's thought of opinion and her understanding of how important the pluralism of opinions is for political life. From Arendt's point of view, the political role of social networks would reside in creating and disseminating a wide range of individual opinions. On the one side, the private opinions of initially non-public persons expressed in the certain publics in social media may attract the attention of a wide audience, and thereby become a starting point for political discussions and actions influencing the overall political agenda in such a way. On the other side, "each individual statement of a politician, while also being interpreted by traditional media, which not always represent the whole spectrum of opinions, becomes the subject of a broad public discussion, in certain aspects analogous to the Greek ἀγών between equal opinions, each of whom does not negate the others" (Salikov, Zhavoronkov, 2017: 522). According to this "agonistic" view, the public realm represents a place where people not only discuss and rationally weigh arguments, but also compete with each other for recognition, authority, and influence. As an "agonistic" space, the public realm is the space where men speaking and acting attempt to compete with other people for a vision of reality they all are living in. Although Arendt does not reject the deliberative and rational character of the public sphere, she also takes non-rational motivation of acting it out in the public realm into account: people speak and act in the public realm to be visible to other people, and to appear in the

common world. This understanding of politics more precisely reflects what happens in the real public sphere (and as well as in its digital segment), where the motivations of the participants in public discourse can be very different, just as their argumentation would not always follow the rules of rational discourse ethics. Moreover, if we logically develop Arendt's agonistic view of the public sphere, it will be quite possible to solve the difficulty in her theory which is connected with its rigid distinction between the public and the private, and the political and the social, a distinction her critics constantly pay attention to. To do this, it is sufficient to depart from the dogmatic understanding of what relates to the private sphere and what is public, which problems are political, and which are related to the sphere of economy. We will then come to the conclusion that the boundaries between these spheres could be also the subject of discussion and public consensus. The history of the emancipation of various groups (workers, women, or sexual minorities) shows that the private, or the problems of a certain group of people, can become a subject of a common public discussion, and thus, can acquire the status of a political problem. The struggle for equality or the struggle to be heard, for a place in the public sphere are always political matters, not private ones. In this sense, Arendt's public sphere might not be as static compared with the public sphere described in The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, and would provide the possibility of development and corrections, rather than simply insisting on an ideal construction with rigid borders and strict rules which is highly unlikely to happen in reality. Nevertheless, her understanding of the public sphere may seem contradictory and inconsequential. So, if we pay attention to Arendt's account of people's equality in the sense of participatory activity in politics, we will encounter a peculiar combination of egalitarianism and elitism, or of aristocratism and republicanism. Arendt insists on the right of everyone to be present in the public sphere, on the right to action, and the right to have and express an opinion as a part of a more broad and fundamental human right, the "right to have rights": "We become aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions) and a right to belong to some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerge who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation . . . the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself. It is by no means certain whether this is possible" (Arendt, 1973: 296–297). However, only a small active part of the population has a need to take part in political life. The rest is merely concerned about private and social issues (Arendt, 1990: 70). In other words, in Arendt's terms, fragmentation, isolation, and marginalization are not necessarily the possibility of about the individual's active presence being taken away in the public sphere, but more often about the natural process of stratification of society into politically active and passive parts (Salikov, Zhavoronkov, 2017: 516), which have different needs of appearing in the public sphere and different abilities to persuade other people of the significance of their issues to be a part of the general agenda. This elitist idea is found, for example, in *On Revolution*, where Arendt clearly means that the public realm is to be used by those who really want and need to be present in it:

> Politically, they are the best, and it is the task of good government and the sign of a well-ordered republic to assure them of their rightful place in the public realm. To be sure, such an 'aristocratic' form of government would spell the end of general suffrage as we understand it today; for only those who as voluntary members of an 'elementary' republic have demonstrated that they care for more than their private happiness and are concerned about the state of the world would have the right to be heard in the conduct of the business of the republic. (Arendt, 1990: 279)

The crucial issue of the modern public sphere from an Arendtian perspective could be not its growing fragmentation and isolation of certain groups in it, but the "rise of the social" that threatens the existence of the private and the public as vital spheres of human existence. By the "rise of the social," Arendt means the displacement of the political by the social, and the substitution of the public discussion of common affairs by the public protection of private economic interests. From Arendt's point of view, this "rise of the social" "has not only blurred the old borderline between the private and the political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two term and their significance for the life of the "individual and the citizen" (Arendt, 1998: 38). Arendt is convinced that the penetration of the social with its characteristic patterns of behaviour into the public sphere has a destructive effect on the latter: instead of competition between different opinions, the desire to express individuality and to present one's own uniqueness to others is replaced by conformism and the intention to be "normal," whilst free and spontaneous action is substituted by a "kind of behaviour, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalise' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (Ibid.: 40). As a result of this substitution of the political by the social, the public sphere turns into "a pseudo-space of interaction in which individuals no longer "act" but "merely behave" as economic producers, consumers and urban city dwellers" (Benhabib, 1997: 4). Therefore, Arendt considers the "rise of the social" as a great danger to the existence of the public sphere. For Arendt, "the social" makes action itself impossible, for it "excludes the possibility of action" (Arendt, 1998: 40), and substitutes the uniqueness of each actor with the monotony, predictability, and conformity of "the social": the "phenomenon of conformism is characteristic of the last stage of this modern development" (Arendt, 1998: 40). Moreover, empirical research indicates that conformity often pressures the expression of opinions and political participation (Mallinson, Hatemi, 2018). In terms of social media, this means that people try to behave as conformists and avoid acute political themes in those social media communities that consist of participants sharing different political views, and with whom they have close relations at the same time (Mutz, 2006). They prefer to discuss political topics in closed or semi-closed communities of like-minded people, that is, people with similar political views. From Arendt's point of view, what happens today to the networked public sphere could be understood as the continuation of the "rise of the social," the process of blurring the boundaries between the public sphere and the private sphere, leading to their destruction and the following fusion into a single social sphere. The process of merging the borders between the public and the private is two-sided and reciprocal in its

nature: on the one hand, it results in the privatization of publicity when publicity is limited, and when audience restriction mechanisms are used.[2] On the other hand, it results in the publicization (also politicization and economizing) of the private, when the private is exposed in the public realm or used for political and economic goals.[3] From Arendt's point of view, such a hybridization of the private and the public can ultimately lead to both the degradation of the public sphere and the destruction of the private sphere.[4]

Conclusion

Summing up, we should note that there is a growing inconsistency between the classical idealistic understanding of public sphere going back to Jürgen Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere*, and the phenomenon of the digital public sphere. In order to overcome this inconsistency, we need to rethink our understanding of the phenomenon of the public sphere and to find a new approach that would take into account recent changes in the public sphere occurring under the influence of the Internet and social media. It can be useful to consider the following ideas; first, Arendt's idea of self-organization through local communities, including her preference for localism in the public sphere over centralization, correlates well with the fact that the digital public sphere consists of many segments that, although connected, are, nevertheless, separated communities, whose participants are linked by common interests. Second, her thoughts on the role of the pluralism of opinions can also be helpful for understanding modern transformations of the public sphere. In this sense, the political significance of social networking services for the development of the public sphere would consist in their contribution to the creation and dissemination of a wide variety of opinions. Third, Arendt's idea of competition in the public sphere could be important because the public sphere is not only a place where rational arguments are weighed, but also the place of a struggle for recognition from other people, for their attention, and for the world's representations in their minds. Finally, it is the idea of the "rise of the social," which represents the most serious problem of the modern public sphere from Arendt's standpoint, with its merging of the borders between the private and the public, and with the hybridization of the public sphere which also may be useful to consider. These processes, in terms of Arendtian thought, can lead to the gradual disappearance of the public and private spheres, at least as we knew them before.

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2. There are many closed and semi-closed communities in social networks which are open only for a limited number of users. Such communities are not fully public or private spheres; they are rather hybrid semi-public or semiprivate. Some experts, like Ulrike Klinger, for instance, define these communities as "semi-public spheres" (see Klinger, 2018).

3. Christian Fuchs points out that most social media services use private, semi-public, and public user data as a commodity, and sell it to advertising clients that present targeted advertisements to users (Fuchs, 2014: 79).

4. This phenomenon is especially vividly manifested on the pages of public politicians on social media, where personal information about family and friends often coexists with political statements and discussions.

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Ханна Арендт, Юрген Хабермас и переосмысление публичной сферы в эпоху социальных медиа

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Настоящая статья посвящена феномену публичной сферы, претерпевающей сегодня существенные трансформации под влиянием Интернета и социальных медиа. Основная цель статьи заключается в том, чтобы переосмыслить происходящие в современной публичной сфере изменения с позиций политической теории Ханны Арендт. В первой части статьи анализируются основные актуальные изменения, происходящие в публичной

сфере под влиянием социальных медиа. Делается вывод о том, что классическое понимание публичной сферы, восходящее к работе Юргена Хабермаса «Структурная трансформация публичной сферы», нуждается в переосмыслении, в новом подходе, который принимал бы во внимание последние изменения и новые обстоятельства в развитии публичной сферы. В статье делается предположение, что понимание публичной сферы в теории Арендт во многом остается актуальным сегодня и может послужить одним из источников нового подхода к пониманию публичной сферы. Во второй части текста рассматривается концепция публичной сферы в теории Арендт, проводится сравнительный анализ этой концепции с концепцией публичной сферы из раннего периода творчества Юргена Хабермаса. В результате исследования автор приходит к выводу, что в ряде моментов арендтовская концепция публичной сферы лучше подходит для понимания феномена современной публичной сферы, чем классическая хабермасианская теория. В третьей части предпринимается попытка переосмысления существующих трендов в развитии цифровой публичной сферы с позиции теории Арендт.

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, Юрген Хабермас, публичная сфера, публичное пространство, социальные медиа, Интернет

On Mini-Publics in Deliberative Democracies: Inefficient Instrument or Arendt's "Oasis of Freedom"?

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According to the standard of legitimacy provided by different theorists of deliberative democracy, a collective decision could be defined as legitimate if it is rendered in accordance with a collective deliberative procedure by citizens who will be subject to this decision. In the beginning of the noughties, deliberationists became more concerned with the implementation of this ideal so that citizens could have more possibilities to take part in deliberative collective decision-making. One of the institutions which were thought to better involve citizens in deliberative decision-making and to ensure the legitimacy of outcomes were mini-publics. Mini-publics are deliberative forums composed of lay citizens who communicate about questions of the political agenda. However, using mini-publics can eventually lead to situations when citizens are "bypassed" in the process of collective decision-making. So, in our article, firstly, we will briefly discuss the standard of legitimacy provided by the theorists of deliberative democracy and the concept of mini-publics. Secondly, we will analyze how using mini-publics can lead to the exclusion of citizens from the process of collective deliberative decision-making. Finally, we will consider how Arendt's theory of councils can be used to transform the concept of mini-publics so these institutions will lead not to a "bypassing" of the people, but to the more inclusive process of collective deliberative decision-making.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, mini-publics, deliberative democracy, legitimacy, councils, participation

Introduction

Joshua Cohen formulated a standard of legitimacy for deliberative democracy which is now shared by many democratic theorists. He wrote that "... outcomes are democratically legitimate if and only if they could be the object of a free and reasoned agreement among equals. The ideal deliberative procedure is a procedure that captures this principle" (1997: 73). Seyla Benhabib proposes a standard of legitimacy which is close to that of Cohen when she writes "legitimacy in complex democratic societies must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all about matters of common concern" (1996: 68). We can single out two basic elements in these two parallel accounts of legitimacy; the first is that there is a procedure of deliberative collective decision-making,

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while the second element is that those who are subject to collective decisions take part in this procedure.

In the beginning of the noughties, theorists of deliberative democracy became more concerned with the second element. As Böker and Elstub put it, theorists tried to implement the ideals of deliberative democracy so that citizens can have more possibilities to take part in deliberative collective decision-making (2015: 129). One of the institutions which were thought to better involve citizens in deliberative decision-making and ensure the legitimacy of outcomes were mini-publics. Mini-publics are deliberative forums composed of lay citizens who communicate about questions of the political agenda. Usually, Robert Dahl is mentioned at the forefront of those who introduced the concept of "minipopulus" (Dryzek, Goodin, 2006: 220), but it is also thanks to Archon Fung, James Fishkin, John S. Dryzek, Robert E. Goodin and other authors that the notion of "mini-publics" has become a part of discussions related to deliberative democracy.

However, using mini-publics can eventually lead to the situations when citizens are "bypassed" in the process of collective decision-making. Firstly, decisions of mini-publics are not binding. Citizens participating in mini-publics cannot be sure that their deliberations will contribute to the collective decision-making process. Secondly, even if the decisions of mini-publics had binding power, other problems would arise. Mini-publics are usually formed by random sampling. However, there are serious questions if random sampling is a suitable strategy to reflect deliberation in the society at large. Moreover, even if this model of representation is sufficiently precise, this model usually ignores the importance of communication between mini-publics and those who they represent. In other words, many people who did not experience random selection or impose the self-selection would be excluded from the deliberation process. Finally, mini-publics with binding decisions could undermine the principles of competitive democracy with its parties and political programs.

In our article, we will try to answer the question if it is possible to escape a 'bypassing' of the people while using mini-publics. To answer this question, we will turn to the concept of 'councils' proposed by Hannah Arendt. In her book *On Revolution,* Arendt described councils as self-organized bodies where people can deliberate and pass decisions about their common deeds. Thus, three features of councils could be described. They are organized in accordance with the principle of self-selection. Citizens in councils deliberate and even enter into a political contestation with each other. Councils' decisions are binding, not advisory. We will demonstrate that mini-publics should also possess these features to give citizens the possibility to take part in the deliberative collective decision-making process.

So, firstly, we will briefly discuss the standard of legitimacy provided by the theorists of deliberative democracy and the concept of mini-publics. Secondly, we will analyze how using mini-publics can lead to the exclusion of citizens from the process of collective deliberative decision-making. Finally, we will consider how Arendt's theory of councils can be used to transform the concept of mini-publics so these institutions will lead not

to a 'bypassing' of the people, but to a more inclusive process of collective deliberative decision-making.

The Standard of Legitimacy in Theories of Deliberative Democracy and the Concept of Mini-Publics

Originally published in German in 1962, the English version of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* by Jürgen Habermas became available in 1989. As Böker and Elstub state, it is one of the most influential works for the theory of deliberative democracy (2015: 129). It is here where the crucial concepts of deliberative democracy, among which one lists the public sphere and the rational-critical debates, were examined and historicized. Additionally, as Dryzek notes, this work supplies the groundwork for the elaboration of the deliberative legitimacy (Dryzek, Niemeyer, 2010: 31). Habermas writes that the extensive sphere of public authority in the nation-states of the XVIII century was constituted of armies and public administration. On the other hand, the same historic period marks the growth of the bourgeoisie, which was affected by the mercantilism policy practiced by national states (Habermas, 1991: 18). The public sphere, in which representatives of the bourgeoisie sought to defend their interests, largely began to form as the counterweight to this policy. Therefore, different political decisions of national governments were exposed for the comprehensive discussions in the public sphere (Ibid.: 19–22). Then, Habermas demonstrates how the public sphere transformed, and how it lost its critical potential in the 20th century. However, it is the idea of the critical examination of national government decisions and laws through the lens of rational-critical debate within the public sphere which constituted the notion of legitimacy for the theories of deliberative democracy of the 20th century.

Seyla Benhabib develops an account of legitimacy provided by Habermas. She specifies the notion of a deliberative procedure which is structured in accordance with the norms of equality and symmetry. During the procedure, each participant has a right to initiate an act of speech, each participant can challenge assigned topic of the discussion, and each participant can question the rules of the procedure itself. Benhabib further states that ". . . legitimacy in complex democratic societies must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all about matters of common concern" (1996: 68). Joshua Cohen's account of the deliberative procedure differs slightly from that of Benhabib's. At the same time, he has almost the same view on democratic legitimacy, as shown in his statement that ". . . outcomes are democratically legitimate if and only if they could be the object of a free and reasoned agreement among equals. The ideal deliberative procedure is a procedure that captures this principle" (1997: 73). All in all, we can distinguish two basic elements of Cohen's and Benhabib's approaches to democratic legitimacy. Firstly, there is a procedure of collective deliberative decision-making. Secondly, all those who are subject to the collective decision-making participate in this procedure.

Discussions about the second element of this dyad became a part of the academic agenda at the beginning of the noughties. Dryzek calls it the "practical turn" in delibera-

tive democracy. Some authors focused on the deliberation in governmental structures, for example, John Rawls wrote on deliberation in the Supreme Court of the USA, and Joseph Bessette wrote on the democratic deliberation in Congress (Dryzek, Niemeyer, 2010: 6–9), to name a few. However, for the means of our research, it is more important to note that other authors devote their attention to small-scale deliberative forums. These forums were thought to be the instruments for the realization of the ideal when all subject to collective decision could take part in its elaboration (Ibid.: 27). An increase of academic attention to small-scale deliberative forums coincided with diverse civic initiatives happening across the US. The most notable examples are the self-organized neighborhood forums in Oregon which unified concerned citizens who deliberated about health-care rationing, and citizen groups in Chattanooga, Tennessee (Gastil, 2000: 119–121). In addition, state governments, local governments, and groups with private funding organized similar forums during the last two decades of the 20th century.

Archon Fung was one of the authors whose explicit goal became the acceleration of conversations among these practitioners and theorists of citizen deliberation. His article "Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences" introduced the concept of "mini-publics." Thus, using the Fung's work as the source material, we can explicate three basic criteria of compositional, functional, and procedural for defining something as a "mini-public." It should be composed of citizens who were either randomly selected or self-selected, or even composed "with structural incentives for low status and low-income citizens to participate" (2003: 343). It should perform at least one of the four functions of educative, advisory, problem-solving, or governing. Finally, it should perform fair and informed deliberation.

The notion offered by Fung became widespread in democratic theory, thus rendering plenty of political meetings analyzed earlier as citizen forums into mini-publics. At the same time, Goodin and Dryzek were dissatisfied with this concept as they wanted to exclude partisan and professional politics from the mini-publics. So, they offered to consider only those initiatives which were composed of randomly selected citizens as mini-publics (2006: 22). More than this, they wanted to describe the situations in which the decisions of mini-publics can have binding authority for those not directly involved in the decision-making process. Thus, the random-sampling design of mini-publics was also used by authors as an additional argument in favor of their legitimacy.

Therefore, we can distinguish two basic features of mini-publics. Firstly, they are composed of randomly-sampled ordinary citizens. This adds to the democratic character of mini-publics. Secondly, they function in accordance with the deliberative procedure. Thus, deliberative democrats are sure that such institutions will provide the implementation of democratic legitimacy. Specifically, mini-publics will help citizens who are subject to collective decisions to take part in rendering these decisions. At the same time, there are serious questions connected with mini-publics' capacity to embody this ideal. How can mini-publics influence collective decision-making? Are they capable to include citizens in this process? In the following section, we will deal with these issues.

Problems with the Legitimacy of Mini-Publics

It was clear that mini-publics were initially excluded from the formal structures of governmental authorities. So, it was indeterminate of "how citizen deliberation can be consequential in democratic practice." Goodin and Dryzek formulated this problem as "how to link the micro to the macro?" To put it differently, they stated that there was a problem of establishing the connection between large political systems and micro-political innovations (2006: 220). One of the most common methods to restore this connection was the establishment of mini-publics as advisory committees affiliated with state bodies (Fung, 2003: 346). However, the recommendations of such mini-publics could always be ignored without any considerations. Thus, Fung, and Goodin and Dryzek focused on the conditions which stated the obligatory status for the mini-publics. At the same time, other authors are concerned with the fact that mini-publics could become structures which legitimize existing state policy. Quite often, mini-publics are supported financially and organizationally by state agencies. Some mini-publics were even entirely initiated by state bodies, and dealt with the agenda formulated by governors.

Mark Warren, writing on the forms of governance-driven democratization, states that these forms have inherent limitations (2009: 9). It is not only that their agendas are predetermined, but even their size and scale make them unsuitable for protests and opposition. Since 2008, the number of mini-publics organized by local governments in China is continuously growing. Moreover, deliberative democracy ('socialist consultative democracy', as it was called in documents) was officially approved by the Communist Party of China in 2013 as a valuable practice (He, Warren, 2017: 157). At the same time, as Warren and He emphasized, the Chinese government uses mini-publics basically to legitimatize its reign and to get information on the people's needs. This is the agenda in which mini-public are strictly controlled by state agencies (Ibid.: 161).

Ian Shapiro goes even further and states that political deliberation itself easily leads to bargaining. When it comes to bargaining, people with more power and resources will have a greater say. Thus, deliberative forums may become dominated by them. As Shapiro notes, ". . . if rules are created to institutionalize deliberation and give it real decision-making teeth, they can all too easily undermine political competition and empower people with leverage to appropriate them for their own purposes" (2017: 79).

Even if we suppose that these risks of agenda-setting and bargaining could be overcome, there is another problem connected with the competence of mini-publics. According to the standard of legitimacy formulated by deliberative theorists, a collective decision is legitimate only if it extends to those who take part in collective deliberation (Dryzek, Niemeyer, 2010: 22). Yet, why must decisions which were elaborated and discussed in mini-publics become obligatory for those who did not take part in the deliberations? The fact that deliberation does not include all who will be subject to the resulted decision is sufficient for an inquiry into the legitimacy of mini-publics. One of the partial solutions to the problem as we have already discussed was a number of mini-publics to be formed by a random sampling of the citizenry, thus letting them represent a region or even the

whole country (Dryzek, Goodin, 2006: 222). The main assumption of this solution was explicitly formulated by James Fishkin in his works about deliberative opinion polls: if we randomly select a group of people, provide them with the necessary information, and let them have debates on different topics upon the condition of a fair deliberation, the end result of the discussion would be similar to those reached through informed and fair discussions held within the population of a region or the whole country (2003: 128). So, if mini-publics are representative, why cannot they work as parts of the democratic decision-making process?

The problem is that deliberation conducted in mini-publics is weakly connected with the processes of deliberation which took place in a region or in the whole country. According to Blumer, if we agree that society is not a mere sum of singular individuals but rather a structured network of functional groups with different interests and resources, we can see that a randomly sampled group of individuals does not represent an effective public opinion (1948: 544). Specifically, this group is not allowed to know which functional groups the selected individuals belong to. More than this, a group formed by random sampling cannot inform us about the actions and deliberations happening between functional groups and state agencies. We can also state its relevance to the notion of the mini-publics, especially those which are formed by random sampling. Mini-publics of this type cannot provide us with information on deliberation between functional groups and different state bodies. More than that, even if we agree upon the fact, that this type of representation can provide us with the "exact model of the population," we are yet to prove that the conclusions of the discussions which took place in the mini-publics coincide with the conclusions resulting after the possible deliberations between non-participants. Otherwise, we cannot make a decision elaborated in mini-publics obligatory for non-participants (Lafont, 2017: 91).

Another problem is that this 'mirror' approach to political representation tells us nothing about the interaction between the representatives and those who are represented. Hannah Piktin writes about the models of political representation where debates concerning governmental decisions become a necessary condition for communication between the represented and the representatives (deputy-model) (1972). Later, Habermas, in *Between Facts and Norms,* described a "two-track model" where transmission is organized from the opinion formation in the public sphere to the will-formation in formal representative institutions (1996: 304). Au contraire, the metaphor of the mirror assumes that representation is based on the single act of choosing deputies. It says nothing about the communication between representatives and who they represent. Instead of setting the defense for the basic claim of deliberative democracy on the accountability of decision-making bodies, they are aimed at isolating the narrow circle of people who would deliberate about public issues. Thus, much is said about the deliberation in mini-publics, yet nothing is said on the deliberation between mini-publics and those whom they represent.

Therefore, if we talk about the mini-publics' inability to implement a standard of legitimacy provided by deliberative democrats, we will be faced with the following arguments;

firstly, mini-publics are unable to render obligatory decisions and thus are unable to become powerful instruments of the citizens' collective deliberative decision-making. Secondly, even if the decisions of mini-publics are binding, they may become useful proxies for "bypassing the people." Thus, mini-publics may be suitable tools for lobbyists and state agencies because they can influence the agenda of these institutions. Yet, even if this is not the case, mini-publics formed by random selection do not represent the process of deliberation in a region or a country at large, and do not communicate with the citizens they represent. Indeed, notwithstanding the spread of mini-publics, many citizens are still excluded from the process of collective deliberation. As Lafont puts it, "Democracies are stuck with the people they have, so political improvements can count as democratic only if they take the people along instead of trying to bypass them by appealing to some favored proxy" (2017: 93).

Reconceptualizing Mini-Publics as Arendt's Councils

In her book *On Revolution,* Hannah Arendt discusses, inter alia, the peculiar experience which became accessible to the people who took part in revolutions (1990: 34). Specifically, she writes about the American and the French revolutions, the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, and the Hungarian revolution of 1956. According to Arendt, notwithstanding the differences, these revolutions began as political events. Even in the French revolution and the Russian revolution of 1917 where the social question was eventually dominant, public freedom and self-government had been the initial goals. What is peculiar about these goals is that they were implemented through different revolutions in similar ways. During the American revolution, it was the townships and their meeting halls through which public freedom was realized. In France, it was the sociéties, and in Russian and Hungary, it was the soviets. At the same time, Arendt offers the term 'councils', which captures the fundamental affinity of all these institutions. The point here is that the accomplishment of political freedom necessitates certain practices which are common even in different circumstances.

For Arendt, public freedom implies performing actions and speeches concerning common deeds in the space of equals (1990: 30; 1998: 31; 1961: 143). Moreover, public freedom, as Arendt demonstrates, usually demands the experience of a new beginning. These elements of public freedom find their implementation in councils. Firstly, councils are organs of action and of order (1990: 271). As organs of action they provide citizens with access to public space of appearance where individuals can try to excel one another and "act together in concert." These means that councils are not only places for discussions but also institutions which pass obligatory decisions. As organs of order councils have "a kind of stability or durability that action lacks" (Zerilli, 2018). Secondly, councils were self-organized bodies initiated by people. So, councils gave people the experience of a new beginning as well. Therefore, relying on this argument, we will single out three basic institutional features of councils. Firstly, councils provide people with a space where they

can deliberate and even contest with each other as equals. Secondly, councils are organs which can pass obligatory decisions. Thirdly, councils are self-selected bodies.

Our point is that the concept of mini-publics should be changed to include these three features. Then, it will be possible to overcome the bypassing of the people while using mini-publics. Moreover, it will bring us closer to the realization of collective deliberative decision-making. This point demands a clarification, however. So, further on, we will demonstrate how each of the described three characteristics can make mini-publics more efficient in providing collective deliberative decision-making.

If we grant a binding force to the decisions of mini-publics like it is in councils, we will overcome the gap between micro-deliberative innovations and larger political systems. As we have already mentioned, Goodin and Dryzek mark this gap as an obstruction for collective deliberative decision-making process (2006: 221). In other words, it will allow participants of mini-publics to take part in decision-making process directly. Some deliberative democrats still hope that cases of when mini-publics have binding decision "will become increasingly common." In this sense, it clearly helps to overcome a "bypassing" of the people. At the same time, it is not quite clear how mini-publics will share sovereignty with representative bodies of the national state. Perhaps the answer could be found in Arendt's theory of councils.

Arendt's position concerning the coexistence of representative government and council system is ambiguous. On the one hand, she underlies their incompatibility. For example, she states that "The conflict between the two systems, the parties and the councils, came to the fore in all twentieth-century revolutions. The issue at stake was representation versus action and participation" (1990: 273). On the other hand, she makes some remarks about a simultaneous functioning of councils and central power. This is especially obvious when she writes about the foundation of the USA when she writes, "The common object was the foundation of a new body politic, a new type of republican government which would rest on 'elementary republics' in such a way that its own central power did not deprive the constituent bodies of their original power to constitute. The councils in other words, jealous of their capacity to act and to form opinion, were bound to discover the divisibility of power as well as its most important consequence, the necessary separation of powers in government" (Ibid.: 267) It seems that she was not offering parliamentary democracy to be replaced by the council system. As Isaac demonstrates, "she was arguing that we ought to cease treating these [parliamentary] institutions as the essence of politics and the apotheosis of democracy and that we should deprive them of their sovereign status" (1994: 160). However, if a parliament is deprived of its sovereign status, can it still be called a 'parliament'? What legal status will councils have? There are two types of answers for these questions. The first answer calls the concept of sovereignty itself into question. The second is more moderate, and deals with the limits of responsibility of the parliament and of local decision-making bodies. We will simply present these questions here; to choose among them is a task for a separate paper.

Nancy Fraser, in her famous article "Rethinking the Public Sphere," criticizes the separation between the state and civil society made by Habermas. In contrast to his idea,

she draws the distinction between strong publics ("publics whose discourse encompasses both opinion-formation and decision-making") and weak publics (publics whose deliberative practice consists in opinion-formation) (1990: 75). Furthermore, she posits a question if it still "makes sense to understand the nation state as the appropriate unit of sovereignty." For Fraser, the parliament and councils will be forms of strong publics. Accordingly, mini-publics will become strong publics if they can pass binding decisions.

Another settlement of the discussed problem was provided by Joshua Cohen and Charles Sabel. In their conception of directly-deliberative polyarchy, parliament still has a 'prevalent' status among other decision-making bodies. However, in many cases citizens pass decisions independently of representative bodies specific for "classic" polyarchy (Cohen, Sabel, 1997: 3–4). Citizens render these decisions through different local associations. Cohen and Sabel do not specify their design, paying more attention to decision-making procedures. The range of these decisions is limited by the central government. Moreover, deliberative forums composed of citizens are authorized and monitored by state bodies and courts (Ibid.: 28). Finally, these associations must coordinate with each other to share information before rendering a decision.

We will turn now to the second feature of councils which should be appropriated by mini-publics. As it was stated, for Arendt, councils are places where people can deliberate and even contest each other as equals. Obviously, the mini-public as a concept which was developed by deliberationists is tightly connected with the idea of deliberative procedure. There are usually many levels of procedures in mini-publics where participants firstly acquire information on the topic, then deliberate with each other in groups, and finally reach a rational consensus. At the same time, Arendt's concept of councils implies not only deliberation but also a contestation between participants. Moreover, according to Arendt, political contestation can be the goal itself for participants. If we overlook this dimension of political communication, we can come to the situation where a fundamental political passion of the citizens will be ignored. This should be explained.

Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves distinguishes two models of action presented in Arendt's texts. The first, an expressive model of action, describes politics as the arena for acting to demonstrate personal distinctness. The second, the communicative model of action, concentrates on forms of interaction between equal citizens (d'Entrèves, 1994: 64–74). We will focus on the expressive model of action. Firstly, according to Arendt, excellence could be achieved by action. In *Vita Activa,* she states that "every activity performed in public can attain an excellence never matched in privacy" (Arendt, 1998: 49; 1961: 153). Secondly, behind the action, there is a desire to excel others in the public space. In the Greek polis, as Arendt noticed, this desire was connected with the hope of becoming immortal (1998: 55). The problem is that the early modern period was characterized by "the almost complete loss of authentic concern with immortality." The desire to excel another and therefore to become immortal was interpreted as the vice of vanity (Ibid.: 57).

At the same time, Arendt demonstrates, that the desire to excel others in the public space was rediscovered during the American revolution. As she writes, "what brought [Americans] together was 'the world and the public interest of liberty' (Harrington), and

what moved them was 'the passion for distinction' which John Adams held to be 'more essential and remarkable' than any other human faculty" (Arendt, 1990: 119). Moreover, time and again, Arendt notices that Americans had received the experience of political freedom even before the revolution. In other words, townships and their meeting halls provided Americans with the political experience, revealing the taste of public freedom to them, and, respectively, the desire to excel others in the public space (Arendt, 1972: 94–95).

Therefore, mini-publics should offer institutional arrangements not only for rational deliberative procedure, but also for contestation among participants. An example of such procedure is provided by Bernard Manin. He proposes to follow the "principle of relevant reasons" to make deliberation more adversarial. According to this principle, deliberation primarily is a confrontation between opposing views (Manin, 2017: 45). To encourage such confrontation, Manin offers, on the one hand, a dissection of the debated question, when he writes: "In order to encourage citizens to take account of and weigh the reasons for and against a given decision, each question that can be defined objectively and independent from other questions should be debated separately" (Ibid.: 48). On the other hand, according to Manin, participants should act in accordance with their publicly declared interest which they should "link to the substance of the policy they recommend." This should lead to the situation when participants "would, as much as is possible, be disconnected from the stakes of electoral power and competition" (Ibid.: 48).

Finally, we turn to the council's third feature which should be adopted by mini-publics. Arendt repeatedly noticed that councils were self-selected bodies established by citizens. It follows that mini-publics should also become self-selected. This will allow to overcome the problems of representation which were considered earlier. Each citizen will be able to take part in developing the agenda of mini-publics and deliberation without being randomly selected. Thus, mini-publics will not be closed structures which serve as a mere proxy, excluding the people from collective deliberative decision-making. Moreover, there will be no danger of the expropriation of the agenda by public bodies which organize mini-publics. However, there is a serious difficulty connected with self-selection. As Nagel, and Goodin and Dryzek demonstrate, mini-publics organized in such ways "are likely to attract only strong partisans" or those who are better-educated or have higher income" (Dryzek, Goodin, 2006: 22; Nagel, 1987: 58–64). To deal with this problem, we again turn to Arendt.

At first sight, it seems that Arendt does not see any problems with this point. She explicitly states that councils are bodies of the political elite: "Of course the men who sat in the councils were also an elite, they were even the only political elite, of the people and sprung from the people, the modern world has ever seen, but they were not nominated from above and not supported from below" (Arendt, 1990: 278). As Margaret Canovan notes (1978: 5–6), Arendt's elitist side cannot get on well with a democratic vision of politics. However, Arendt's understanding of the elite is more complicated. She writes that her "quarrel with the 'elite' is that the term implies an oligarchic form of government, the domination of the many by the rule of a few." Yet Arendt, in turn, offers to look at the

elite differently. In her phrase "political elite," the first word is paramount. It presupposes that there are plenty of publics spaces across the country "to which the people at large would have entrance and from which an elite could be selected or rather, where it could select itself" (Arendt, 1990: 277). Thus, everyone can take part in a self-selected elite, which makes Arendt's model closer to democratic principles. Furthermore, Arendt specifies this. Everyone who "has a taste for public freedom and cannot be 'happy' without it" (Ibid.: 279) are prone to take part in councils. Yet, according to Nagel, better-educated, higher-income partisans are prone to participate in political bodies. In case of the self-selected mini-public, can we expect that they will be crowded with those seekers after public freedom, or seekers after private and partisan goals?

Our point is that the Arendtian thesis about the seekers of public freedom will work only if mini-publics prove to be autonomous bodies which can pass binding decisions, and offer a public space for deliberation and political contestation. In other words, people will be motivated to participate in self-selected mini-publics if they can see that, through these institutions, they can influence their lives directly and get recognition during political contestations. Nagel, Goodin, and Dryzek made their conclusions about partisan bias in another institutional context. Their thesis is fair only if there are no institutions through which people can influence their lives directly, or get recognition. Yet, if mini-publics can become such institutions, citizens with different incomes and statuses may want to participate.

Conclusion

In our article, we have demonstrated how the concept of mini-publics became the part of the theory of deliberative democracy. Mini-publics were considered by deliberationists as instruments to implement the standard of democratic legitimacy which demands that all those who are subjected to the collective decision should take part in the rendering of this decision. Specifically, mini-publics widen citizens' participation in deliberative decision-making. Yet, as we have shown, the use of mini-publics can lead to a "bypassing" of the citizens. Firstly, mini-publics cannot pass obligatory decisions, and consequently do not provide citizens with direct access to decision-making. Secondly, mini-publics as bodies formed by random sampling do not accurately reflect how deliberation proceeds in the society at large. Moreover, mini-publics do not communicate with those whom they represent. So, those who did not experience random selection are excluded from the deliberation process.

We stated that to prevent a bypassing of the people while using mini-publics, we should reconceptualize these institutions drawing on Arendt's theory of councils. We distinguished three basic features of councils. They pass obligatory decisions. They provide a public space where deliberation as well as political contestation are possible. They are organized by the principle of self-selection. Thus, we propose to rebuild mini-publics on these principles. It will allow us, firstly, to bring people back to the decision-making process. Secondly, it will let us provide people with public spaces where they will be able

not only to deliberate, but also to get recognition in the process of political contestation. Finally, mini-publics will be selected by the citizens themselves so it will be harder for governmental bodies to make them proxies for bypassing the people.

In drawing the conclusion, we want to repeat that theorists of deliberative democracy acknowledge that legitimacy is reached in the case when all those subject to collective decision-making will take part in the deliberative elaboration of this decision. At the same time, they assume that the citizens' participation in this procedure could be indirect. Specifically, citizens may be represented by members of parliaments or by randomly selected neighbours. In other words, the direct participation of citizens in decision-making is not obligatory for a deliberative approach to legitimacy. However, this approach misses that, as Arendt puts it (1990: 268), "only interests can be represented." Arendt's theory of councils allows us to see that political action and speeches should be performed directly in concrete public spaces. Otherwise, we are at risk of encountering a bypassing of the people.

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О мини-публиках в делиберативных демократиях: бесполезные институты или «оазисы свободы»?

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В работах ряда теоретиков делиберативной демократии можно обнаружить схожее определение легитимности. Согласно этому подходу, коллективное решение может быть названо легитимным, если оно было вынесено в ходе процедуры коллективной делиберации гражданами, которые подпадают под действие этого решения. В начале двухтысячных в теориях делиберативной демократии стали уделять больше внимания вопросу о том, как реализовать этот стандарт легитимности. Одним из инструментов, который должен был вовлечь граждан в делиберативную процедуру по принятию коллективных решений, стали мини-публики. Под мини-публиками сегодня понимают специально организованные гражданские форумы, в которых происходит процесс демократической делиберации. Вместе с тем мини-публики в том виде, в каком они существуют сегодня, могут привести к игнорированию народа в ходе принятия коллективных решений. В нашей статье мы, во-первых, кратко разберём стандарт легитимности в делиберативной демократии и концепт мини-публик. Во-вторых, мы проанализируем, как использование мини-публик может привести к исключению граждан из процесса коллективного принятия решений. Наконец, мы рассмотрим, как, обратившись к теории советов Ханны Арендт, можно трансформировать концепт мини-публик, чтобы те решали свою первоначальную задачу: включали людей в процесс коллективного принятия решений.

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, мини-публики, делиберативная демократия, легитимность, советы, политическое участие

Emotions in Hannah Arendt's Public Space

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The article is dedicated to the role of emotions in the political theory of Hannah Arendt. Her thoughts on emotions turn out to be a stumbling block for most contemporary defenders of emotions in politics, and many of Arendt's opponents and critics focused on her ideas on emotions in order to refute or reinterpret them. However, being separated from the crucial concepts of Arendt's theory, emotions cause confusion. Therefore, the approach displayed in the article implies a discovery of their influence on public space and plurality, as well as on other significant concepts in Arendt's theory. Plurality, as a precondition of public space, is manifested by means of the uniqueness of speech and actions, and any appeal to common emotions as the foundation of a better public realm leads to the absence of plurality and uniqueness. Thus, the suggested treatment allows demonstrating a correlation between emotions and politics and, moreover, distinguishing the alternatives of emotions in politics, such as solidarity instead of compassion, or courage instead of fear. In addition, the ideas of understanding and reconciliation with the world are examined in order to demonstrate their significance for the existence of plurality and public space, unlike those emotions that destroy both of them.

Keywords: emotions, compassion, solidarity, reconciliation, love, fear, courage, Hannah Arendt

Describing certain emotions and their role in politics Hannah Arendt underlines their antipolitical character and their worldlessness. Emotions such as love, compassion, pity, and fear do not belong to the world, but rather to the political world, they are irrelevant and corrosive for politics. However, Arendt does not entirely exclude emotions from the public realm, she admits that some of them, such as joy, pleasure, rage, and laughter do appear as public emotions.[1] Peg Birmingham, in her article "Hannah Arendt's Dismissal of the Ethical" dedicated to the elimination of ethics and passions from politics, emphasized that "the passion which is properly political must have two essential *political* characteristics, namely, openness to others and plurality" (Birmingham, 1995: 138). Indeed, compassion, love, pity, and fear do not fulfill these criteria of *openness to others* and *plurality* which are both necessary for the existence of politics and public space. Arendt's split between public/private emotions and her reflections on superfluous emotions in

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1. For instance, Arendt mentioned laughter and pleasure in her essay "On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing." Both of these emotions are connected to a reconciliation with the world, where laughter "helps one to find a place in the world, but ironically, which is to say, without selling one's soul to it" (Arendt, 1970: 6). While pleasure is the result of a profound awareness of the world, that is aroused by "a passionate openness to the world and love of it" (Ibid.: 6). In the upcoming article, the politically relevant emotions will be analyzed in details.

politics caused lively discussions both among many of the modern defenders of emotions in politics and her contemporaries.

Soon after a publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil,* many readers blamed Arendt for her heartlessness. For instance, Gershom Scholem in his letter (Arendt, 2007: 465) suggested that Arendt lacked "love of the Jewish people." Answering to Scholem, Arendt mentioned that "the role of the 'heart' in politics seems . . . questionable" (Ibid.: 467), because the reporting of certain unpleasant facts has always been charged as the lack of soul or lack of heart. Besides, she underlined that emotions often "conceal factual truth" (Ibid.: 467). Such a concealment of truth causes the distortion of common reality, and may even lead to its destruction which is more crucial for Arendt than any public expressions of emotions.

A number of critics further paid special attention to Arendt's elimination of emotions from politics. Among them is George Kateb, who wondered how the author of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* could purge "true politics of love, goodness, conscience, compassion and pity?," or how Arendt could charge compassion and pity "as the sponsors of more cruelty than cruelty itself" (Kateb, 1984: 29). Kateb's position was carefully considered by Margaret Canovan in her book *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought,* where Canovan emphasized the incorrect context of Kateb's understanding. Canovan argued that Kateb (as well as Bhikhu Parekh and Peter Johnson[2]) assumed Arendt's theory of action and the book *The Human Condition* was the centre of her political thought (Canovan, 1992: 156), while in order to understand Arendt's position the proper starting point is not *The Human Condition* but *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Ibid.: 157). Canovan demonstrated Arendt's search for safeguards against totalitarianism, although it was not religion or morals but Socrates' "internal dialogue" of thought that "had great moral significance for the individual" (Ibid.: 162), particularly in the period of political crisis, or the "dark times," as Arendt titled it after Brecht's usage.

Another interpretation of Arendt's coldness and heartlessness was considered by Deborah Nelson in her article dedicated to Mary McCarthy and Hannah Arendt. Nelson underlined the popular opinion regarding the seeming-callousness of both authors' views and their indifference to suffering. Nelson argued that pain and suffering were the significant ethical and political questions for both, though instead of seeking a relief from suffering, they were focused on the "heightened sensitivity of reality" (Nelson, 2006: 88), because the consolation for suffering in warm emotions and empathy turns out to be anesthetic (Ibid.: 88) which separates oneself from reality. Therefore, the tolerance of suffering and pain causes a deeper understanding of reality. Nelson underlines that McCarthy and Arendt chose to face reality despite its ability to hurt. Thus, "facing reality" as Nelson called it, instead of escaping it, causes a reconciliation of the world. Reconciliation means accepting the world as it is, with its pain, suffering, wrongs, and evil.

Thus, the role of emotions can be defined through the crucial concepts and ideas in Arendt's theory. The meaning of emotions cannot be considered separately since they

2. See their works: Parekh, 1981; Johnson, 1988.

play a huge, though negative, role in Arendt's definition of politics. The political sphere in Arendt's theory is exactly that place where people are able to speak with each other, and appear through their speech and actions in reality between them. The absence of emotions in public creates the outer space *between* in order to speak with others but it also creates the space *within* in order to be able to speak with oneself despite any feelings and passions. In order to speak with others, one has to be able to speak with oneself, or rather, to think. There is no way of creating "space between us without at the same time creating space within us" (Parekh, 1981: 94). Therefore, emotions prevent the creation of a genuine political realm.

Despite the miscellaneous critique of the elimination of emotions in Arendt's thought by unfairly charging her with heartlessness and callousness, the analysis of emotions along with morality and ethics occupies a "central place in her canon" (Mahony, 2018: 2) as well as politics but it still requires an accurate and proper analysis. The dominance of approaches to political topics rather than of morals and ethics is caused by Arendt's interpretation of herself as a political theorist (Arendt, 2005a: 1). Deirdre Mahony argues that many political interpretations encompass ethical dimension (Mahony, 2018: 4) though this area of studies is about "ethics within Arendtian politics rather than Arendtian ethics per se" (Ibid.: 4), and suggests considering Arendt's ethical thought separately from politics.

In my opinion, it is worth analyzing emotions in the way they appear in Arendt's works in their connection with her ideas of plurality and publicity as essential parts of the political realm. Such an approach allows us to demonstrate the correlation between emotions and politics, and indicates alternatives of emotions in politics, such as solidarity instead of compassion, or courage instead of fear (Degerman, 2016: 11).

The Obscured World of Emotions

In her last book, *The Life of the Mind,* Arendt distinguishes the life of the soul that cannot appear in the world, and the life of the mind that can be articulated and presented into the world through speech. Both of them are traditionally considered as hidden or as the inner life, since mind and soul are opposed to the body due to their invisibility. However, Arendt discerns them: the life of the mind can be articulated through the inner dialog, while the life of the soul always remains hidden and is "more adequately expressed in a glance, a sound, a gesture, than in speech" (Arendt, 1981: 31). Any demonstration of emotions, feelings, or passions turns out to be a reflection about inner experience rather than the experience itself. Emotions themselves can never become "part and parcel of the world of appearances than can our inner organs" (Ibid.: 31). If anything appears in the outer world, it is always manifested through the operation of thought.

Appearance of emotions in the outside world is an act of self-presentation, since only the bearer of emotions decides that which is worth presenting. A person interprets and judges the processes of the soul by means of the mind. The awareness of emotions allows a person to interpret them, and then to let them appear in the world. The reflection

of the emotions gives them “the highly individualized form” (Ibid.: 31) because, due to that reflection, they enter the sphere of appearances for which the individualization of phenomena is essential. Without reflection, the expression of emotions is similar to their demonstration among the higher animal species, through inarticulate sounds, glances, or gestures. Reflection allows emotions to be expressed in the world as a unique individual experience.

Human beings present themselves as unique individuals in their deeds and words, and thus “indicate *how* they wish to appear” (Ibid.: 34). To have a choice what to demonstrate and what is to remain hidden is a specifically human feature. Although possessing the same emotions, people show them differently; otherwise, human beings would speak and act alike (Ibid.: 34). In this way, the presentation of the life of the soul cannot be possible without the mind and its operations. Besides, there is always a hidden motive underlying that conscious choice of the image to be shown.

That difference between emotions and their image creates the space where self-presentation is open to hypocrisy. According to Arendt, such hypocrisy is connected with the Socratic statement “*Be* as you wish to appear” (Ibid.: 37), which implies to appear always in that way as one wishes to appear, even if “it happens that you are alone and appear to no one but yourself” (Ibid.: 37). Eventually, such an appearance refers to the deliberated choices of many potential images. Once that image is presented among others, then it becomes a lasting and inseparable characteristic of personality, or as its identity.

As the image presents the hidden emotions in the sphere of appearances, they become individual features of the person which they chose to present for interpretation and perception by others. For instance, a hidden fear can be presented as courage, and it becomes a manifested image of a certain personality. To be a courageous person does not mean that the fear in one’s soul was overcome, but it means that a person decided not to show the fear once and for all (Ibid.: 36).

Arendt emphasizes the difference between self-presentation and a genuine “thereness” of existence. The discovering of hypocrisy or pretense does not lead to the authentic essence of being, but indicates and destroys the deception itself. Authentic “thereness” of existence cannot appear “to either the inner or the outward sense” (Ibid.: 39) because the inner information does not possess “permanent features which, being recognizable and identifiable, characterize individual appearance” (Ibid.: 39). Emotions and other “inner sensations” cannot be clearly perceived, acknowledged, and identified due to their lack of stability and ephemeral nature. Constant emotions or passions, a permanent mood or sensation are the signs of the serious mental disorder. Therefore, emotions turn out to be “unworldly,” since they lack the permeability and duration that are crucial characteristics of the world.

Human beings do not control their emotions, passions, or feelings, but suffer (*pathein*) them (Ibid.: 72). Moreover, the cases of an increased intensity of the inner processes may even become overwhelming, as, for instance, pain or pleasures (Ibid.: 72). People cannot control emotions because they are similar to the internal organs, whose processes people are aware of but cannot manage. As the opposite to the passiveness of the soul, the life of

the mind is genuinely active, can be controlled, or "started or stopped at will" (Ibid.: 72). Feelings and emotions are always caused by outer events that affect the soul and produce reactions which cannot be changed through an effort of will. Traditionally, the mind was supposed to rule over the soul's processes, as if the mind was the "souls' highest organ" (Ibid.: 72). Arendt believed that making a soul and a mind equal will give the passive soul "the powerful sovereignty of the mind" (Ibid.: 72).

On the contrary to the passive reactions of the soul, the mind always transforms the objects of its attention. Reflection as an essential feature of the mind creates the space between the givenness of the objects and specific mind's activity of its inner dialog that transforms the sheer givenness of the objects into speech, in contrast to any unruled reactions. "Thought without speech is inconceivable" (Ibid.: 32) means that the mind, contrary to the soul, may appear in the world by means of unique speech, and cause the space *between* - a sign of reality of the world and the self. While the obscured emotions remain outside the common world due to their passive essence and their potential destruction of the space *between*, it is crucial for common world people to share with each other.

Arendt sums up her reflections on emotions and their role in the appearance/being, and mind/soul problem in *The Life of the Mind*. In a number of previous works, Arendt considered certain emotions in their relation to public space, politics, and plurality. Additional special attention will be paid to Arendt's ideas on compassion, love, and fear.

Compassion and Solidarity

In the letter to Gershom Scholem, Arendt underlined that emotions which are displayed in public become a significant factor in human affairs. She mentioned her book *On Revolution* where she analyzed the role of emotions, particularly compassion, in politics. She felt pity for Scholem as he had not read her book before he began accusing Arendt of her heartlessness.

Indeed, *On Revolution* includes a profound critique of compassion as the emotion that influenced and distorted almost all revolutions excepting the American Revolution. Arendt argued that Rousseau introduced compassion into political theory, and that Robespierre brought it onto the stage of the French Revolution (Arendt, 1990: 81). In her opinion, after the French Revolution, compassion became a devastating motive underlying the actions by all subsequent revolutionaries. Moreover, compassion corrupted revolutions, since their aim — the establishment of a new political order — was replaced by urgent social problems, and the immediate search of solving these problems.

The irrelevance of compassion in politics is connected with a few inevitable factors. First of all, compassion "abolishes the distance, the worldly space between men where political matters" (Ibid.: 86). The meaning of politics is connected to the common interest in the world that takes place in the case when "someone talks *to* somebody *about* something" (Ibid.: 86), i.e., something is a kind of interest for both and creates the space between, whereas compassion is focused entirely on the sufferings of a certain person. Compassion ruins that space *between* because suffering replaces the common world

about which people are able to speak argumentatively. At the same time, suffering cannot be discussed since it requires an immediate cessation of the discussion. Therefore, compassion is absolutely alien to the all kinds of argumentative dialogues necessary for politics.

Secondly, it is implied that compassion cannot use political methods, and remains without any political consequences. Arendt argued that compassion displayed in public turns into pity because compassion exists only in private life, and is always focused on a specific suffering or a particular person (Ibid.: 90). This is why pity directed towards the masses becomes a public perversion of compassion. Pity is able to keep the distance between people but it does not create that worldly space *between*, because the existence of sufferings and misfortune is necessary for pity; without them, pity cannot exist. When such pity becomes a kind of virtue or a principle of actions, it always glorifies its cause, namely, the suffering of others (Ibid.: 89). Therefore, Arendt charged pity as the sentiment which "possess a greater capacity for cruelty than cruelty itself" (Ibid.: 89), which is exactly why this idea outraged George Kateb and influenced his critique. When pity enters politics, it requires suffering in order to justify itself.

Demonstrating emotions in public and making them a political principle causes another difficulty, particularly, the problem of motive. Displayed motives are destroyed in their own essence, since they are not intended to appear. When inner motives enter the sphere of appearances, they become the objects of suspicion, unlike speech and actions which are meant to appear (Ibid.: 96). The genuine motives of any actions and words cannot be displayed; they always remain hidden because of their appearance through speech and their interpretation again conceals the real motives. Any appeal to the motives in public is always at risk of being accused of hypocrisy and deception.

Motives as well as emotions inhabit the darkness of a human's heart, and always remain hidden. By darkness, Arendt means not only the concealment from others, but even from one's own self. It is connected with the fact that people as witnesses and bearers of their own emotions and motives cannot be sure in their reality as long as the sense of reality is always "bound up with the presence of others" (Ibid.: 96). Thus, the reality of hidden emotions remains doubtful even for their bearers. Such hidden-ness turns out to be a significant feature of a human's inner life, and, therefore, an authenticity of presenting emotions in public raises doubts. Arendt mentioned Robespierre's suspicion and mistrust of others because his sentimental political principles forced him to play a role of "incorruptible" (Ibid.: 97) to demonstrate his virtues, while the life of the heart has its own inner logic that breaks down once it appears in the public light. Thus, Arendt supposed that Robespierre, witnessing his inner life, knew full well that its display may have been a pretense.

A permanent demonstration of emotions in public requires their duration, or rather a constant pretense of having them. Therefore, due to the transience of any emotion, they cannot become a political principle and guide political actions. Once Robespierre made compassion the guiding principle, it ruined any other political principles because Robespierre "did not accept any limitations" (Ibid.: 90). The goal of compassion as a political

principle was the elimination of suffering, which could be reached only by violent and swift means. Arendt underlined that the aim to dispose of suffering did not include an impartiality of justice towards different social groups, and led to cruelty in order to put an end to the suffering of the poor. Suffering was recognized as poverty, and compassion brought the obscured and miserable *le peuple*, into the public light, while "high society" was blamed for its indifference towards the distress of the crowd. That is why the rules applied to the rich and the poor were different, and could not have led to social justice and political equality.

The alternative to compassion in politics (Ibid.: 88), "a community of interest with oppressed and exploited" (Ibid.: 90), may be established without any previous appeal to emotions only because of solidarity. Though compassion and suffering may influence the appearance of solidarity, it is not guided by them. Moreover, solidarity has a sense of equality in its essence that allows it to be focused equally on opposite social groups and phenomena. For instance, Arendt underlined that solidarity may comprehend both misfortune and happiness equally for the rich and the poor; it needs none of them in order to justify its own existence, unlike pity that cannot exist without misfortune. Due to its independence and permanent characteristic, solidarity becomes a principle that guides and inspires actions and is liberated from solving immediate problems, but which is founded on common interests and ideas.

Solidarity as a political principle comprehends a multitude of people, not as suffering depersonalized unity, but as a plurality of unique and different individuals. Such an ability of solidarity allows it to comprehend the common world with its inhabitants. Roger Berkowitz emphasized this feature of solidarity that is connected to the reconciliation with the world and to the constitution of common interests among differences (Berkowitz, 2017: 14). Compassion and pity are not focused on individuals themselves, but on certain experiences of their suffering. Therefore, compassion and pity cannot be political principles since they do not bring individuals onto the public space, but only their impersonal misfortunes. Only solidarity turns out to be the result of reconciliation and understanding of the world as it is, with all of its suffering and wrongs. Compassion and pity are the impulsive responses to all wrongdoings without understanding and reconciliation because compassion and pity do not have the ability to comprehend reality manifoldly, but only specific parts of it. Reconciliation with the common world has its crucial political consequence; it brings *polis* into being (Ibid.: 14). Despite the plurality and differences, there is still a common world that people share with each other. Compassion and pity towards the poor denies the world its fullness with a distortion of common reality, as reality becomes an outcome of certain narrow issues. This is why Arendt criticized Bertold Brecht and one of his fundamental emotions, that of compassion (Arendt, 1970: 235). Arendt underlined that it was compassion that brought Brecht to reality, but almost destroyed his poetry. The significant feature of reality that Brecht discovered was its obscurity. For Brecht, the suffering of the poor was connected to an absolute despair because of their invisibility. Furthermore, compassion towards the distressed determined

Brecht's political choices, influencing his commitment to the Communist Party, and his acceptance and support of its values and ideology.

Brecht's decision to join the Communist Party was influenced by his belief that the obscured could be brought to the light, and the bad world could be changed into a good one. However, Arendt blamed Brecht for his support of the Party in their period of crimes and abuses. Arendt charged Brecht as a poet as well because he remained silent, and the main responsibility of poets is to tell the truth. She claimed that it was compassion that made Brecht blind, and his silence and inability to reveal the truth were the parts of a corrupted public sphere. Brecht brought suffering and the obscured people into the light in his poems, but he did not expose the Party's outrages.

Brecht supposed that the Communists would focus on the obscured people, and that sufferers would be more significant than any of the Party's failures. In the poem *An die Nachgeborenen,* Brecht expressed the hope for the end of dark times, when people would be the helpers of each other. His hope was connected with the belief in Communism of its focus on equality and future global happiness. Thus, Brecht was not only obsessed with compassion, but with a belief in equality, solidarity, and friendship between people. However, for Arendt, it was obvious that the belief in Communism's putting an end to suffering led to the obscurity of the public space: once obscured people with their life circumstances are brought into the public light, the public light gets dark.

Thus, the reality that Brecht discovered due to his compassion was not the real one. For Arendt, reality is always the presence of others, while the focus on the poor and the distressed did not involve the others and their interests. Therefore, Brecht's reality was concealed and did not take place in the public space. It caused the problem of understanding the world as it is and the reconciliation with it: the solidarity that Brecht hoped for could not happen without a reconciliation with all the differences and uniquenesses of the world. Solidarity presumes justice for all because it comprehends all, while compassion is focused on the conditions of the unfortunate.

In the essay "On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing," Arendt emphasized the distinction of the states of the wretched and those "whose different position in the world imposes on them a responsibility of the world" (Arendt, 1970: 15). The distressed, due to their suffering, cannot participate in the common world affairs since they lack the sense of the common reality. In the absence of reality, namely, in extremely dark times, goodness, compassion, and warmth replace the sense of the common world. Only in the state of worldlessness and unreality is where "it is easy to conclude that the element common to all men is not the world, but "human nature" of such and such a type" (Ibid.: 16). The element which is common to all people can be interpreted differently; for instance, it can be the ability to think or to feel, or the ability to be compassionate. However, the only real and common element all people share with each other is the world. The conditions of the poor will not be improved owing to compassion, but because they are the part of the common misfortune of the world.

Love for the World

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl emphasized that Hannah Arendt never wrote anything dedicated entirely to love (Young-Bruehl, 2006: 204), although Arendt dedicated her dissertation to the concept of love in Saint Augustine's works, partially elaborated her ideas on love in *The Human Condition*, and mentioned it in *On Revolution*, *The Life of the Mind*, *Denktagebuch,* and in various essays. The crucial features of love for Arendt are its worldlessness and antipolitical character. Love destroys the significant space "in-between which relates us to and separates us from others" (Arendt, 1998: 242). Without that space *between,* public realm cannot exist, and neither does a sense of reality. It requires the presence of others, but not everyone or everything is able to withstand the constant presence of them. Therefore, when love enters the sphere of appearance, it "is extinguished, the moment it is displayed in public" (Ibid.: 51). Love and many other great things may survive only in the private sphere (Ibid.: 51). The essence of love is in its worldlessness, and once it is used as political principle in order to change or save the world, love becomes distorted and appears in public as false.

Arendt, in her dissertation *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustine,* pointed out that "the world constituted as an earthly world not just by the works of God but by "the lovers of the world," that is, by men, and by what they love" (Arendt, 1996: 17). To love the world means to constitute the world as a human's home. However, in Arendt's dissertation, the man-made world is considered as evil. The wrong love of men for that world is called *cupiditas*, while the good love as a tie between man and God is called *caritas*. Though, both kinds of love are different in their objectives, they have a craving desire, or *appetitus,* in common. Therefore, the human being as such does not have a constant nature and cannot be defined, because human beings are always identified through their desires towards the outside world. Peg Birmingham emphasized that "for both Augustine and Arendt there is no fixed human nature, given once and for all; instead, human beings are always transformed by the objects of their desire" (Birmingham, 2006: 79). Thus, the objects of love can identify the essence of human beings, and love towards God entails love towards oneself as God's creature and towards all other creatures (Arendt, 1996: 140).

Arendt returns to the concept of love in Augustine in *The Human Condition* where she reflects on the principles which allow the keeping of the human's community strong and tight. Arendt argued that the aim to discover strong bonds between people in order to replace the common world was "the main political task of early Christian philosophy" (Arendt, 1998: 53). Charity, or *caritas*, as proposed by Augustine, was exactly that principle that could unite not only Christians but all human beings in community. While charity is able to found a community only in the situation of worldlessness, such relationships occur in cases when there is no public space between people. The connection founded on charity has an unworldly character, and Arendt emphasized that the Christian community had always been non-public and non-political (Ibid.: 53). The community that is founded on charity and neighborly love could never become a political one. The alienation of the world in Christianity is connected with the assumption that the world cannot

last, and that the human's artifice is "a product of mortal hands" (Ibid:54). The common world people share with each other has to transcend the lifetimes of mortal human beings. That is why the Christian world is not the common world at all since it exists under another time, in another space, and with other relationship conditions. When the Christian world contacts the political world, the interaction destroys its very essence since it threatens the potential earthly immortality of the common world, politics, and public space. The continued existence of the earthly world makes it common to all people and to their predecessors and descendants, and only the ability of the earthly world to last transforms the alien outside world into the man-made home.

Worldlessness is the result of the atrophy of both the common sense that helps people to orientate in the world and "the sense of beauty, or taste, with which we love the world" (Arendt, 1970: 13). Without the taste and ability to judge, it is impossible to love the world as it is with all its imperfections and suffering. In *Denktagebuch,* Arendt wondered: "Amor Mundi — why is it so difficult to love the world?"[3] (Arendt, 2002: 522). Berkowitz, in commenting on *Denktagebuch,* notices: "It is a judgment that amidst pain, injustice, and heartbreak, we must love the world as it is" (Berkowitz, 2017: 10). Love implies understanding and the reconciliation with the world; without them, love cannot grasp the world's essence, to judge it, and reconcile with it. We love the world with a sense of beauty, and grasp the essence of its phenomena with our ability to judge them. To love the world is difficult because, once it has been understood and judged, it requires efforts to love the world as it is.

Another approach to love is connected with its appearance in public and its following distortion. Arendt emphasized that the only possible space *in-between* occurs between two lovers and includes only them. The only one who is able to enter that space between both is their child, who is the genuine outcome of love. Only their child is able to bring both lovers back to the world, because their love has transformed into a new beginning, and vanishes after that new beginning. In *Denktagebuch,* Arendt also defines the end of love as its institutionalization as marriage. The institution of marriage based on love is weaker than the most modern institutions. The reliability of institutions is guaranteed if they are founded on laws rather than emotions. On the contrary, love, upon being institutionalized becomes vulnerable. For Arendt, love is an event that can become a story or fate (Arendt, 2002: 49), but it exists only in the private realm, in that space *in-between*. Arendt mentioned Nietzsche's reflections about marriage and friendship, and argues that the criteria of friendship cannot be transformed into criteria for marriage (Ibid.: 50). Friendship cannot endure that close distance between people that love can. Thus, the main features of love are its worldlessness and essential absence of distance between lovers. Each time Arendt mentions love in her works, she underlines its irrelevance for the public sphere, since they cannot coexist.

3. "Amor Mundi — warum es ist so schwer, die Welt zu lieben?"

Fear as Potential Courage

Whereas love and compassion are antipolitical forces that destroy the common world due to their negation of the space *between*, fear is “an antipolitical principle within the common world” (Arendt, 2005b: 68). Fear is not a principle of action, but rather an impotence of any actions. Arendt emphasized that every human may experience limits of the potentiality to act at times. Fear has a close connection to the powerlessness in the public domain, and its appearance is determined by various outside conditions, for instance, tyranny. Arendt calls the experience of powerlessness fundamental for human beings and their actions, because each action has its limit. In the situation when potential action is limited and cannot be performed, fear arises.

Fear, as well as compassion and love, is a kind of the inner response to the different phenomena in the sphere of appearance. Unlike love or compassion, though, fear is aroused by the presence of others in the common world. Moreover, fear has its reasons and consequences in the public sphere. Considering tyrannies as the destruction of togetherness of men, Arendt shows that the reasons of powerlessness can be established in those cases when people are artificially separated from each other, staying alone with their fear and unable to assist each other. Tyranny as a weak political order is founded precisely on those humans’ isolation. Tyranny is considered as weak because of “the impotence and futility to which it condemns the rulers as well as ruled” (Arendt, 1998: 202). Arendt recalls Montesquieu and his definition of tyranny as one that is based on isolation due to mutual fear and suspicion among people. Isolation causes the destruction of plurality, the crucial condition of speaking and acting together in the public realm. Therefore, fear prevents humans’ capacity to speak and act together, and the ability to organize a political community.

When fear enters the public space, it becomes an antipolitical principle that implies the existence of inequality and wrongs. Fear is not aroused in those public realms where human beings can be equal participants in common world affairs. The overcoming of fear causes courageous appearances in the public space. Arendt underlines that the “courageous man . . . has decided that fear is not what he wants to show” (Arendt, 1981: 36), even while he still has fear inside and cannot overcome it once and for all. However, people can hide it as well as other emotions, and demonstrate what they desire to. Such an ability of fear to be transformed into fearlessness indicates the inherent ability of any person to speak and act in public. Courage being revealed in public becomes a crucial premise for political action. For Arendt, who admired the ancient polis and its heroes, courage was considered as an important political virtue. Arendt emphasized that “whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life” (Arendt, 1998: 36); it was courage that helped to overcome the common urgencies of life, to be liberated from labor and work, namely, from all of the inevitable processes of biological life, in order to dedicate one’s life to the affairs of the whole, of the polis. Thus, fear of speech and actions indicates the potentially-corrupted public sphere, while its concealment causes the appearance of the courage necessary for politics.

Conclusion: Understanding Instead of Emotions

Hannah Arendt considered emotions and their appearance in the public sphere as superfluous and corrosive, leading to the negation of the distance between people and their plurality. Justifying plurality is the crucial task for Arendt, because plurality for her is the main condition of human life, and the line which reads "the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world" (Ibid.: 7) determines her theory. Therefore, most previous political or philosophical attempts to eliminate plurality got her critiqued and her works received even further careful analysis. Besides this, emotions themselves turned out to be an obstacle to plurality. According to Canovan's interpretation, Arendt was always trying to establish the bulwarks against totalitarianism, and in order to withstand it, she relied on the inner dialog of thinking and the plurality of human beings. Thus, emotions are not able to protect against injustice, cruelty, and violence; emotions cannot become the foundation of political organization or public space.

The main drawback of emotions is their inability to perceive the world as it is since they always are focused on the certain objects. The understanding of the world and a reconciliation with it are crucial for the existence of plurality. Plurality is manifested by means of speech and actions, but it is not possible to achieve it without an understanding of the world as it is. Emotions may influence the perception of various phenomena, or allow to pay special attention to some of these phenomena, but they do not partake in the unending process of understanding, that specifically-human's "way of being alive" (Arendt, 2005a: 308). Understanding and reconciliation with reality are the ways of being at home in the strange world. Reconciliation with the world as such, including the wrongs and the injustice in it, turns out to be not a simple sufferance of events, but understanding the world in which such things are possible. Understanding is essential for politics since it influences the manifestation of the common world of unique and distinct individuals. In *Denktagebuch,* Arendt emphasized that "understanding is the specifically political way of thinking ("the other's fellow point of view")[4] (Arendt, 2002: 332); therefore, understanding is the way of coexisting with others to maintain that necessary distance in order to speak with and act among them. Thus, understanding and reconciliation imply the constant presence of others since they both "open the door to politics amidst a world of plurality" (Berkowitz, 2017: 20).

The significant difference between reconciliation with the world and those emotions felt towards it is the sense of reality. Reconciliation in Arendt's sense is bound with the real world as it is, while emotions are always focused on certain objects or parts of the world even though they may distort it. Emotions are able to indicate certain phenomena, although unlike understanding, they never grasp their essence. Arendt underlined that understanding is "the only inner compass we have" (Arendt, 2005a: 323) that allows people to be at home in this world and share it with others. Arendt mentioned King Solomon's "understanding heart" in order to demonstrate its political meaning: "['the understanding heart'] and no mere reflection or mere feeling, makes it bearable for us

4. "Verstehen ist die spezifisch politische Weise des Denkens."

to live with other people, strangers forever, in the same world, and makes it possible for them to bear with us" (Ibid.: 322). No emotion, even those which are directed towards other people, can be a foundation for the common world; emotions always constitute the private world of their bearers.

Thus, emotions turn out to be obstacles to the existence of the public space and plurality. They are "natural" and inherent human features and cannot be controlled or subdued by the mind, since both have different abilities. Emotions do not make people individuals, as long as the main "individualisers" are their speech and actions in the constant presence of others. Therefore, the world of unique and distinct people cannot be established on the features common to all people, but rather on their unique appearance by means of their speech and action.

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Эмоции в публичном пространстве Ханны Арендт

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Существенное для политической теории Ханны Арендт разделение частного/публичного определяет и роль эмоций, часть которых оказывается нерелевантной по отношению к публичной сфере. Частные эмоции, такие как страх, сострадание, любовь и жалость, проявляясь в публичном пространстве, разрушают его. Эти эмоции являются антиполитическими и не имеют отношения к общему миру: они всегда направлены лишь на его конкретные объекты, как, например, сострадание, всегда сосредоточенное на страдании и его причинах. Тогда как публичные эмоции — смех, радость, удовольствие, гнев — являются скорее реакцией на мир в целом, а не на его отдельные части. В статье предлагается анализ первых, антиполитических, эмоций, вмешивающихся в публичные дела и искажающих их. Анализ включает в себя сопоставление эмоций и ключевых понятий теории Арендт, таких как «множественность», «публичное пространство», «уникальность речи и действия», «понимание и примирение с миром». Данный подход позволяет продемонстрировать связь между эмоциями и политикой и, кроме того, указать на альтернативы эмоций в политической сфере, например, солидарность вместо сострадания, или мужество вместо страха. Цель представленной работы — исследовать, как благородные и неотъемлемые в частной жизни эмоции способны разрушить мир общий, в отличие от понимания и примирения с миром, без которых невозможны множественность и публичное пространство, чье существование критично для Арендт.

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, эмоции, сострадание, солидарность, публичное пространство, страх, любовь, понимание

The Transmission of the Revolutionary Spirit: Reflections on Civil Disobedience in Hannah Arendt*

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The aim of this paper is to take up Hannah Arendt's analysis on civil disobedience. This is one aspect of Arendt's thought which represents a powerful spur towards a positive and meaningful view of the world we live in. In taking up this argument I start from Arendt's idea of the law, discussing its relational dimension and its links to the *consensus universalis*, seen as a conscious, wholehearted adhesion to the laws of a country. Bearing these two points in mind, I then consider Arendt's proposal, put forward in her essay "Civil Disobedience," for making the spirit of the law compatible with civil disobedience. The idea that civil disobedience is compatible with the spirit of the law represents, for Arendt, the acknowledgement of the community's constitutive function, in which individuals define themselves in their relationships with others, drawing on a type of justice which emerges from the encounter of differing opinions. From this perspective, I explain how civil disobedience allows citizens to assert their public freedom, thereby adding something new to the world and exercising their responsibility. Thus for Arendt civil disobedience reaffirms the creation, also fostered by the revolutionary spirit, of a space of permanent participation in public life: a shared arena for the enjoyment of public happiness.

Keywords: Arendt, civil disobedience, revolution, *consensus universalis,* law, transmission

This essay examines one aspect of Hannah Arendt's thought which can be enormously fruitful for our attempts to interpret the world we currently live in: her ideas on civil disobedience. The questions of what the law actually is, what margins of freedom it leaves the individual and if we may legitimately oppose it are clearly of compelling relevance to today's world.

In discussing these issues I set out from the Arendtian concept of the law, bringing out its relational dimension and its ties to the *consensus universalis*, which Arendt sees as the conscious and comprehensive adherence to the laws of a particular country. Bearing these two points in mind, I then move on to the idea that civil disobedience can be made compatible with the spirit of the law, as put forward by Arendt in her essay "Civil Disobedience." Accepting this compatibility for her means that the constitutive function of the community is explicitly acknowledged: individuals define themselves through their relationships with others and justice takes shape through the mutual encounter of di-

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vergent opinions. Subsequently, I explain how this possibility incorporates the spirit of revolution, seen by Arendt as the aspiration to public freedom and happiness and the realization of the public spirit.

The Concept of the Law in Hannah Arendt's Political Philosophy

In all Arendt's works we find a constant concern with the fragility of human action, stemming from the tendency of action itself "to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries" (Arendt, 1958: 190) and from its unforeseeable and irreversible nature. In Arendt the celebration of the human ability to create new beginnings is interwoven with the need to trace political limits to guarantee lasting stability in the public sphere. In this context it is the law, according to Arendt, that makes the achievement of this stability possible. She writes: "The variety of such systems is great, both in time and space, but they all have one thing in common — the thing than justifies us in using the same word for phenomena as different as the Roman *lex,* the Greek *nomos*, the Hebrew *torah* — and this is that they were designed to insure stability" (Arendt, 1972a: 79). For Arendt, the law finds its *raison d'être* in its power to organize the political sphere, laying down the limits of the latter and ensuring communication amongst a community that is constantly dealing with the new beginnings represented by the birth of each and every human being. For her the function of the law is neither to discipline nor punish but to safeguard the ties forged between people who live together in a community. The Arendtian view of the law, therefore, is directly opposed to that of the Western political tradition, which embodies and entrenches the belief that collective action is only a question of who issues the orders and who obeys them. From this perspective the law is interpreted in terms of command and obedience and assimilates coercion, which, in the final analysis, becomes the base of the political edifice, essentially seen as one of domination. This top-down vision of the law is reinforced by the Judeo-Christian idea of divinely inspired writ, stemming from an "almost automatic generalization of God's Commandments, according to which the simple relation of command and obedience . . . sufficed to identify the essence of law" (Arendt, 1969: 138). According to Arendt this Judeo-Christian ideology of the law is significant not only because it is based on the relations between rulers and the ruled, but also in its appeal to a transcendent origin beyond all human power (Arendt, 1963: 189): a Creator or Divine Legislator who fashions the law and identifies its authority with the coercive, irresistible force with which transgression is punished. This view of the law is intimately linked to the concept of a creative power which expresses itself, in the last analysis, in violence. Historically, the consolidation of the Catholic Church's dominion ensured the definitive prevalence of this model of the law (Arendt, 1963: 189–190). When the Church's authority waned with the process of secularization in the modern era, it became necessary to find a new source of the law's authority. Thus Bodin and Hobbes located the sources of all earthly power in the sovereignty of the absolute monarch, while the French Revolution saw it in the will of the nation and 20th-century totalitarianism in Nature and History. For Arendt this transference of absolute, divine authority to the

human sphere brings serious consequences, since it involves the duty to punish whoever opposes the sovereign or the will of the nation and ultimately leads to the justification of oppression and terror as legitimate political tools (Arendt, 1951: 461–467).

In Arendt's view "the common dilemma — either the law is absolutely valid and therefore needs for its legitimacy an immortal, divine legislator, or the law is simply a command with nothing behind it but the state's monopoly of violence — is a delusion" (Arendt, 1969: 193). To solve this "common dilemma" she develops a new concept of power, drawing on alternative models of the law.

We should start out by clarifying that Arendt opposes the idea of power as the basis of the law. In her writings of the 1950s she elaborates the concept of a form of power contrasting almost the entire tradition of Western political thought. This new concept is based on the notion of *potentiality*, which she sees as intrinsically linked to power. "The word itself, its Greek equivalent *dynamis,* like the Latin *potentia* with its various modern derivatives or the German *Macht* (which derives from *mogen* and *moglich,* not from *machen*), indicates its 'potential' character" (Arendt, 1958: 200). Recognizing this meaning enables us to distinguish power from other concepts traditionally associated with it, such as force or domination; and this is a distinction which links back to the idea of political experience as the possibility of people gathering and acting in concert which characterizes all Arendt's thought.

It is in this sense that Arendt opposes the identification of power as the basis of the law. In her view we should instead see the law as a bulwark and a limit which power should never overstep. If power is seen as a tool for applying the law, then it becomes a necessary evil; if however the law is seen as a *check* on power, then the law owes its existence only to this vital function of restraint, and power becomes a positive force, one which is both "free and good" (Arendt, 1995: 94).

The innovation that power brings and which springs from action should therefore be balanced by the stability of legislation based on a constitution. The role of such legislation, however, is not to impose a positive order on the political sphere, nor to steer action, but rather to limit it, tempering its inherent unpredictability and guaranteeing lasting freedom. This means that the law can limit change, but cannot initiate changes; it can regulate the political sphere, but cannot prescribe any part of it.

By thus conceiving the law as a limit we go back to the ancient meaning of the *nomos*, put in place by people to protect and delimit a fragile and precious good: the citizens' own actions. For the Greeks, laying down a law was a pre-political action made by a legislator whose task was to fix the limits within which people could live freely, and in consequence it had no value outside the *polis* itself. Clearly therefore the *nomos* had an intrinsically spatial, local value, on the basis of which city-states could multiply by settling new colonies but could never forge lasting links with each other. We should add that the law, for the Greeks, took form in the sphere of *making*, since the legislator was more a specialized craftsman or architect than citizen or statesman, and expressly fashioned the features of the law to fit the political arena (Arendt, 1958: 63–64). This view, however, locates the law outside the sphere of *action*, since it lacks a relational dimension; a dimension which, in

Arendt's view, was present in the Roman concept of the law, inextricably bound up with plurality.

This is a concept which takes us back to the original meaning of the word *lex*, referring to the tie between two people or things brought together by circumstance (Arendt, 1958: 183–184). The existence of a people as an ethnic and organic unit was for the Romans independent from the presence of legislation; only after Aeneas' arrival in Italy and the outbreak of war between the newcomers and the local people was the need to lay down laws felt. Through these laws a new unity was constituted between two deeply differing entities who, after confronting each other in battle, had finally opted to merge (Arendt, 1951: 187). The law, then, has no need of an absolute source: it creates new relationships among people and unites them not through natural rights or commandments imposed from without on all alike, but through an agreement between consenting partners. Differently to the *nomos*, which is conceived by a legislator and precedes the birth of politics, *lex* stems from a "back and forth exchange of words and actions" (Arendt, 2005: 180). The difference between the Greek and Roman concepts of the law can also be explained by recalling that the Roman people had been able to move forward through the alliances created after the struggles between patricians and plebeians, brought to an end with the promulgation of the Law of the Twelve Tables: a contract between two rival factions requiring the consensus of all the people: a *consensus universalis* which takes pride of place in Roman historiography (Ibid.: 185–186).

The *consensus universalis*

According to Arendt the idea of the *consensus universalis* is fundamental, since it regards the citizens' position in relation to the law, as she explains in the essay "Civil Disobedience," discussing the situation in the USA at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s. During this period the country was going through a deep crisis, whose main elements Arendt analyses in "Lying in Politics" (Arendt, 1972b: 3–47), written shortly after "Civil Disobedience," and in numerous letters to her friend Mary McCarthy[1]. On many occasions the US government flirted with illegality and breaching the constitution: the seven years of undeclared war in Vietnam; the growing influence of the secret services on public affairs; the naked or barely concealed threats to the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment; and the attempts to deprive the Senate of its constitutional prerogatives, such as Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia, in flagrant contradiction of the Constitution, which explicitly requires the approval of Congress for acts of war (Arendt, 1972a: 74–75).

In "Civil Disobedience," Arendt recalls that in modern constitutions the sovereign is such only when represented, but at the same time representation happens only by channeling sovereign power towards the top and depoliticization towards the bottom: in this way the *reductio ad unum* of the represented individuals, bound together in the people,

1. In a letter of 19th May 1969 for example, Arendt writes: "Here everything goes from bad to worse. It looks like the end of the Republic, though not necessarily of the country" (Arendt, McCarthy, 1995: 235).

the nation, the state, is realized. Thus the decisions of the represented subject are not free, since representation breaks the direct link between liberty and popular will, interposing the mediation of the representative institutions. In this way political action is transformed into administrative technique. We find examples of this model throughout the Western tradition of political philosophy, whether in the liberal tendency of Hobbes or in the democratic one of Rousseau: once all power is concentrated in the hands of the sovereign by means of the social contract, the entire society is deprived of political power.

Through this argument Arendt criticizes the social contract as a vertical pact, to which she then counters the idea of a horizontal contract. Aside from the Biblical bond established by a people with their god, Arendt discusses firstly the Hobbesian contract, in which each individual enters into an agreement with the sovereign, thereby renouncing his or her rights and powers in return for a guarantee of security. To this she contrasts the horizontal contract put forward by Locke, where instead individuals come together to form a community founded on equality and reciprocity: in this way, while limiting the power of its individual members, the community's collective power is left intact, and it can set up a government founded on a contract between independent persons. While all contracts, pacts and agreements presuppose relations of reciprocity, the great advantage of this horizontal social contract is that every citizen remains bonded to every other through this relationship. It is the only form of government in which the link between individuals is based neither on a common history or ethnic homogeneity, as in the nation-state, nor on a tie such as in Hobbes' *Leviathan,* which unites the people by oppressing them. The horizontal contract hinges on the strength of the mutual endeavor to create public arenas in which freedom and action can be exercised (Arendt, 1972a: 85–87).

Arendt recalls that agreements and promises are the only tools with which individuals can organize and settle their future, thus making it as foreseeable as possible. However, since the future can never be completely predictable, we are only held to respect our agreements if unforeseen events do not intervene and reciprocity is not broken. In the USA of the 1960s and 1970s the government's frequent challenges to the Constitution and the people's resulting loss of faith in constitutional power seem to have led to the need to set up a new consensus that would renew the *consensus universalis* previously granted to the Constitution and constitute the spirit of American law itself (Ibid.: 84–89).

Arendt goes on to say that the *consensus universalis* is based on a tacit adhesion which cannot be seen as voluntary if the possibility of dissent is not contained within it. She presents *consensus universalis* as a conscious and comprehensive adhesion to the laws of a country and as being fully realized only when dissent and dispute are recognized as prerequisites of a truly free country:

> We all live and survive by a kind of *tacit consent*, which, however, it would be difficult to call voluntary. How can we will what is there anyhow? We might call it voluntary, though, when the child happens to be born into a community in which dissent is also a legal and *de facto* possibility once he has grown into a man. Dissent implies consent, and is the hallmark of free government; one who knows that he may dissent knows also that he somehow consents when he does not dissent.

> Consent as it is implied in the right to dissent — the spirit of American law and the quintessence of American government — spells out and articulates the tacit consent given in exchange for the community's tacit welcome of new arrivals, of the inner immigration through which it constantly renews itself. (Ibid.: 88)

At this point the problem arises of how civil disobedience may be compatible with the spirit of the law. In fact, Arendt gives paramount importance to the discovery of a formula which can constitutionalize civil disobedience: the law's recognition of it, according to her, represents a huge advance in the relationship between the state and its citizens and can determine whether its institutions are flexible enough to stand up to the assaults it is subject to without falling into civil war or revolution.

If we look at civil disobedience from the juridical point of view it inevitably appears as a disruption of legality: a law cannot justify its own violation even when it has the object of preventing the violation of another law. However, knowing whether there is at least a possibility of making a place for civil disobedience in our political institutions is another question, which involves addressing the issue of duty and obligation in the political sphere; and this means going back to the right to criticize any law that is not seen to fit with collective aspirations, and any government undertaking legally and constitutionally dubious actions. Thus we can affirm that civil disobedience has its roots in the concept of justice as a public good.

Civil Disobedience

For Arendt, then, civil disobedience represents the recognition of the constitutive function of a community which defines each of its individual members in relation to all others; and is rooted in the concept of justice as shaped by the mutual encounter of differing opinions. In her view, "justice is the essence of men's living together" (Arendt, 1994: 325). Appealing to this idea of justice, civil disobedience involves the power of openly declaring the injustice of specific laws and opposing them, aspiring, in this way, to reduce the prescriptive nature of the law. We should not forget that, as we saw previously, the purpose of the law and of the institutions as a whole is only to check the shifts and changes resulting from individuals' free, innovative actions. Thus the law cannot itself drive transformation: it "can indeed stabilize and legalize change once it has occurred, but that change itself is always the result of extra-legal action" (Arendt, 1972a: 80).

This discussion implies, therefore, that if the legitimacy of civil disobedience were recognized juridically then the relationship between the state and the citizen would take a huge leap forward, since within it the free action of the individual even against the institutions themselves would be guaranteed, thereby addressing the issues of how the law is transformed and how the balance between the stability of legislation and the creativity of action is struck.[2] Stated briefly, Arendt's concern is to find a way to prevent a majority,

2. As further proof of the inherent difficulty of finding an institutional meaning for civil disobedience, it is interesting to recall John Rawls' remarks: ". . . the theory of civil disobedience supplements the purely legal

even when backed by legal authority, from imposing a dominance that would suffocate any potential contestation. However, in her view dissident movements should not break the *consensus universalis*, since the right to dissidence would form an integral part of the primary consensus itself and in consequence would only need to be recognized as such by the law. It would not be a question, however, of having popular legitimacy simply prevail over legality; far from promoting a scheme of laws which would be modifiable according to circumstances, in this scenario civil disobedience is instead the legalized reincorporation of the spirit of the law itself.

This interpretation of Arendt's theory becomes clearer if we look more closely at the elements that for Arendt constituted civil disobedience. First, in civil disobedience there must be a disinterested, self-aware and intentional breach of a valid law emanating from a legitimate authority. Secondly, this breach must be made with the cognizance that the law in question *should* be contravened; thus civil disobedience shows itself to be a political act in the strict sense (Rawls, 1971: 347–352). Lastly, the breach must be *public*, since it is not the expression of an individual conscience but stems from the beliefs of a group, of an organized minority united by a joint resolution expressing itself in the opposition to a specific government policy, even when this is upheld by the majority (Arendt, 1972a: 55–57).

Subsequently, referring to Socrates and Thoreau, often-cited figures in the theory and practice of civil disobedience, Arendt shows that both took individual decisions, responding only to their own conscience, so that their stances were merely private and essentially apolitical, and did not call into question the relationship between the citizens and the law. Like Socrates, who thought that it was better to suffer a wrong than to inflict one, Thoreau refused to subscribe to an injustice, and while this posture essentially reflected the will to avoid partaking in an injustice which would harm others, it did not primarily concern itself with the wider world in which such abuses exist, nor did it bear upon the consequences that such abuses might have on the future of the world. For this reason Arendt claims that conscience should be substantially political (Arendt, 1972a: 60–61)[3].

Thus, we can say that Arendt's analysis of civil disobedience is not inscribed either in what we could call the Cartesian tradition, which makes the ego the ontological terrain and sole locus of truth, nor in the American tradition inaugurated by Thoreau. Her aim is not to set a deeply-felt individual freedom against cynical state machinations, but to stress the potential power of a plural form of discussion and debate which does not seek to protect itself from the political, but instead to appropriate the political for itself in order to carry out actions of the widest possible scope. From this perspective, civil disobedience responds to a will to oppose, expressing itself not in particularist impulses but on the basis of a shared judgment which rises up against specific laws or policies held

conception of constitutional democracy. It attempts to formulate the ground upon which legitimate democratic authority may be dissented from in ways that while admittedly contrary to law nevertheless express a fidelity to law and appeal to the fundamental political principles of a democratic regime. Thus to the legal forms of constitutionalism one may adjoin certain modes of illegal protest that do not violate the aims of a democratic constitution in view of the principles by which such dissent is guided" (Rawls, 1971: 338).

3. On this issue see also Margaret Canovan's observations in Canovan, 1992: 183–184.

to be against the common interest. It embodies a political project which sets itself against the rejection of political obligations and asserts instead its own preeminence over the law. The constitutive function of the community stems from people's experience and not the power of the institutions: "Ever since the Mayflower Compact was drafted and signed . . . voluntary associations have been the specifically American remedy for the failure of institutions, the unreliability of men and the uncertain nature of the future" (Arendt, 1972a: 102). Therefore civil disobedience represents the endeavor of citizens to make real changes, not limiting themselves to simple resistance but rather founding a public sphere whose reach would extend beyond the official political institutions.

Civil disobedience, as Arendt understands it, with her analysis of power and politics, consistently opposes the laws being seen as mere vehicles of authority, as for example Derrida conceives them. The potential reach of civil disobedience aspires towards a type of law which could be described as flexible, as it would both envisage and embrace dissent and controversy; thus the law would not be expressed through violence or require pure and simple obedience, since it would represent a type of authority which, in Arendt's scheme, is based on recognition and respect from those exercising it towards those bestowing it. Echoing Jefferson, Arendt claims that we should have the courage not to make constitutions immutable, but instead equip them with clauses making amendments possible (Arendt, 1963: 222–223). Clearly, this position is related to the foundational act itself, which, based on people's collective decision-making, should refuse to appeal to divinity, self-evident truths or natural law since these are irresistible in the strict sense of the word. For Arendt, in politics the appeal to the absolute is illegitimate since it cannot be resisted and therefore involves mere obedience rather than consent and agreement. Arendt's aim, therefore, is to prevent any supreme law being placed above humanity itself, thereby becoming irresistible (Honig, 1991: 97–113). This type of foundation is based on the absolute results of a passive attitude typified by a flight from the present; and we have tragic experiences of this in the 20th century. Barring an appeal to the absolute in the foundation also prevents any violence aimed at securing and maintaining the new venture (for example in the cases of Robespierre and the Leninist and Stalinist terrors, see Arendt, 1963: 64–79) being transformed into what Benjamin calls "the law preserving administrative violence, that serves it" (Benjamin, 2002: 252). Civil disobedience, according to Arendt, is therefore a tool of the struggle against the force of the law when the latter is not inserted within the sphere of power, as she interprets it.

The Transmission of the Revolutionary Spirit

Political abuses in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s were unmasked by the intervention of the unforeseen, represented by civil disobedience. This unforeseen element, which for the moment saved the US Republic, was in Arendt's view the direct heir of the American revolutionary tradition. The demonstrations of the human rights movement, the gradual abolition of the racial segregation laws in the southern states, the struggle against the Vietnam war, and the student movement were all described by Arendt in the

same terms she used to analyze the revolutionary process. American youth seemed to have rediscovered a taste for politics in those years, showing great courage, an unexpected will to act, and an unshakable faith in the possibility of change (Leibovici, 2000: 234). Their many acts of civil disobedience against the government expressed a deep loyalty to the spirit of the revolution and the American Constitution: in the demonstrations in the capital or in the southern states (often semi-improvised and totally lacking any utilitarian or monetary stakes) and in the student protests against the war, Arendt saw the embodiment of the tradition which had inspired the fathers of the Constitution:

> For Americans still regard associations as "the only means they have for acting," and rightly so. The last few years, with the mass demonstrations in Washington, often organized on the spur of the moment, have shown to what an unexpected extent the old traditions are still alive. Tocqueville's account could almost be written today: "As soon as several of the inhabitants of United States have taken up an opinion or a feeling which they wish to promote in the world" or have found some fault they wish to correct, "they look out for mutual assistance, and as soon as they have found one another out, they combine. *From that moment, they are no longer isolated men but a power seen from afar,* whose actions serve for an example and whose language is listened to." It is my contention that civil disobedients are nothing but the latest form of voluntary association, and that they are thus quite in tune with the oldest traditions of the country. (Arendt, 1972a: 95–96)

Arendt, in fact, argues that the revolutionary spirit is inspired by three basic principles: public freedom, public happiness and public spirit. The revolutionary aspiration consists above all in the creation of a permanent sphere in which people can enjoy public freedom, seen by Arendt as participation in public life and as the power to initiate any new project. This exercise of public liberty gives rise to public happiness, which expresses itself "in the joy of discourse, of legislation, of transacting business, of persuading and being persuaded" (Arendt, 1963: 131). Thus her idea of the public spirit combines the enjoyment of public happiness with the responsibility to preserve the political sphere (Ibid.: 279).

The close affinity between Arendt's view of both the revolutionary spirit and her interpretation of civil disobedience seems, to me, clear. As we have remarked above, Arendt saw civil disobedience as a tool for citizens to assert their public freedoms: thanks to it, they can reassert their right to participate in public life, regardless of the crisis of political institutions. Civil disobedience offers them the chance to bring something new into the world, something which may preserve or innovate, may have the aim of safeguarding stable constitutional norms or making necessary changes (Arendt, 1972a: 75). From this standpoint, citizen's practicing civil disobedience, like revolutionaries, express their willingness to shoulder responsibility for the whole public sphere and the determination to act within it. In her observations on the protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Arendt stresses that "what really distinguishes this generation is . . . its determination to act, its joy in action," and adds: "This generation discovered what the eighteenth century had

called 'public happiness', which means that when man takes part in public life he opens up for himself a dimension of human experience that otherwise remains closed to him and that in some way constitutes a part of complete happiness'" (Arendt, 1972d: 202–203). In civil disobedience the determination to act and the joy of acting come together, according to Arendt, in that realization of public happiness which is combined with the public spirit.

The presence of the revolutionary spirit in civil disobedience explains why Arendt calls for an institutionalized space for the latter. Civil disobedience, in fact, directly retrieves the experience of the American Revolutionary councils, seen by her as bodies whose aim was to safeguard the revolutionary spirit. As she writes in *On Revolution*, Jefferson himself saw as fundamental the division of the land into wards small enough to enable all citizens to participate in person. Recalling Jefferson's struggle to found these "elementary republics," Arendt underlines that they are also the constitutive elements of every 19th- and 20th-century revolution. The importance of these organizational forms is that "each time they appeared, they sprang up as the spontaneous organs of the people, not only outside of all revolutionary parties but entirely unexpected by them and their leaders" (Arendt, 1963: 249). But the councils were not taken seriously by the politicians, historians or even the revolutionaries themselves, who did not understand that they were faced with an entirely new form of government, creating a new public space for freedom. In the preface to *Between Past and Future* Arendt writes:

> The history of revolutions — from the summer of 1776 in Philadelphia and the summer of 1789 in Paris to the autumn of 1956 in Budapest — which politically spells out the innermost story of the modern age, could be told in parable form as the tale of an age-old treasure which, under the most varied circumstances, appears abruptly, unexpectedly, and disappears again, under different mysterious circumstances, as though it were a fata morgana. (Arendt, 1968a: 5)

Arendt's call for the institutionalization of civil disobedience, therefore, springs from the fear that this echo of the revolutionary spirit, its lost treasure, should disappear once more. Returning to Jefferson's concerns, Arendt argues that the revolutions did not succeed in guaranteeing a space in which the freedoms gained could be wielded by everyone and not only their representatives. It is just this opportunity to recover the activity of self-expression, debate and decision-making — manifestations of freedom which can overcome the limits of the representative system — which is salvaged by civil disobedience (Arendt, 1963: 234–237).

Conclusions

In light of our discussion so far, we can conclude that for Arendt civil disobedience is linked to the right to form associations promote a particular stance and reduce the power of the majority, thereby channeling the civic urges of people with differing opinions. Briefly, this is linked to the faculty of judgment, to the ability to withstand and resist op-

pression or injustice, and the power to choose one's companions and recognize the world as one's own (Birulés, 2007: 238–239). We can argue that civil disobedience reclaims the autonomy of thought and the call for responsibility, and recaptures the initiative of acting and of participating actively — the foundation stones of Arendt's thought — restoring its full potential for transformation. Hannah Arendt's whole career, in fact, can be interpreted as a constant endeavor to theorize reality on the basis of its possibility for transformation, responding to the human desire to fully achieve one's own potential jointly with others in a shared public sphere, and characterized by the desire to play an active role in one's world.

Our discussion has enabled us to see clearly the great potential of Arendt's reflections on civil disobedience in analyzing our own present and positioning ourselves within it. Speaking of civil disobedience she questions ideas such as consensus, participation and the law and calls for new forms of citizenship and consent towards the institutions and the state. These analyses and demands are of crucial importance in tackling the challenges of the 21st century: we cannot speak of new forms of citizenship and consensus, of new spaces for political participation, at a time when our models of governing institutions and the state are going through a deep crisis. To the same extent to which individuals have the power to make new beginnings and to act, they should avoid shunning responsibility for the world they live in. The concepts and demands embodied in civil disobedience revive the principles of public freedom, public happiness and the public spirit embodied in the spirit of the revolution; and through them the representative institutions, currently in crisis, may recover a little of the energy of the revolutionary tradition.

The lost treasure of the revolution may be rediscovered in our own times through civil disobedience, with its drive to bring about change in institutions, in politics and in people's opinions. Arendt was convinced that "the civil disobedient shares with the revolutionary the wish to change the world, and the changes he wishes to accomplish can be drastic indeed" (Arendt, 1972a: 77).

This is the sense in which today we can recover the reading of Arendt's reflections on civil disobedience: in the "dark times" which we are living through, we should avoid the temptation to distance ourselves from politics and retreat into conformism, struggling instead to assert our will to intervene in reality. Thus in *Men in Dark Times* Arendt recalls that: "Even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination, and that such illumination may well come less from theories and concepts than from the uncertain, flickering, and often weak light that some men and women, in their lives and their works, will kindle under almost all circumstances and shed over the time span that was given them on earth" (Arendt, 1968b: ix). Her theory of civil disobedience articulates the deep need felt by Hannah Arendt to grapple with the present in order to understand and transform it. It reminds us that by demanding our right to citizenship and by setting out from our relationships with each other we can shape, precisely on the basis of the structures and forms we decide to give these relationships, our conditions in the world we were born into. Taking up again these Arendtian guidelines, therefore, means seizing

the quest for illumination in every moment and in every circumstance in order to change and better our shared world.

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Трансмиссия революционного духа: размышления Ханны Арендт о гражданском неповиновении

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Целью статьи является рассмотрение анализа гражданского неповиновения в работах Ханны Арендт. Этот аспект философии Арендт представляет собой мощное побуждение к позитивному и осмысленному взгляду на мир, в котором мы живем. Отталкиваясь от этого утверждения, автор начинает с анализа идеи Арендт о законе, обсуждает ее отношенческое измерение и связь с *consensus universalis* (всеобщее согласие), понимаемое как осознанная и искренняя верность законам страны. Учитывая эти два момента, в дальнейшем рассматривается предложение Арендт, изложенное в эссе «Гражданское неповиновение», суть которого состоит в формировании духа закона совместимого с гражданским неповиновением. Представление о том, что гражданское неповиновение не противоречит духу закона, говорит о том, что Арендт признавала конститутивную функцию сообщества, в котором индивиды определяют себя в отношениях с другими, опираясь на тот тип справедливости, который возникает от столкновения различных мнений. С этой точки зрения дается объяснение, как гражданское неповиновение позволяет гражданам утверждать свою публичную свободу и тем самым вносить в мир нечто новое, демонстрировать свою ответственность. Таким образом, по Арендт, гражданское неповиновение заново устанавливает (в том числе поддерживаемое революционным духом) пространство постоянного участия в публичной жизни: общую арену для наслаждения публичным счастьем.

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, гражданское неповиновение, революция, всеобщее согласие, закон, трансмиссия

Nihilism and the Crisis of Tradition: Arendt and Contemporary Radical Conservatism

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The present paper is a preliminary approach to the question of the applicability of Hannah Arendt's ideas on tradition and nihilism to the analysis of contemporary radical conservatism. For this purpose, I examine Arendt's essays of the 1940s and 1950s which shed light on the origins of the European conservatism crisis, and the difference between traditionalist and anti-traditionalist thinking. These arguments on the nihilistic aspects of radical conservatism, which legitimizes itself by appealing to a crisis of tradition, illustrate the shortcomings of Karl Mannheim's analysis of conservatism and traditionalism. In order to complement Arendt's rather fragmentary concept of conservatism, I use the definitions of adjectival and nominal conservatism to define the key differences between genuine conservatism and radical conservatism (pseudo-conservatism). Based on the analysis of the past, I address the question of why Arendt is important to the understanding of contemporary pseudo-conservatism, including its historical origins, self-description, and key instruments. Lastly, I explain why, together with Arendt, we should choose a broader perspective by focusing on analyzing the crisis of judgement in the public sphere and the resulting distortion of the ideas of tradition and dialogue, rather than simply describing contemporary radical conservatism as the spiritual successor to National Socialism.

Keywords: Arendt, Jaspers, conservatism, pseudo-conservatism, radicalism, nihilism, thinking, acting

The rise of right-wing, national-conservative movements and parties in Europe and across the world over the past decade has been accompanied by the new popularity of pseudo-conservative strategies. The idea of a political, economic, and social crisis pertaining to a certain cultural tradition is used as a pretext for unexpected, situational decisions. The rhetoric around preserving values has transformed into political revisionism and aggressive claims against both real and imaginary, internal and external opponents. Pseudo-conservatism feels perfectly at home under the conditions of the constant hastening of the social and political processes of decision-making, toying with incompatible arguments, and not shying away from direct confrontation or the risks associated with the alleged necessity of an immediate rescue of traditional values. My paper will examine some key aspects of this phenomenon, traditionally called radical conservatism (or ultraconservatism), from the perspective of Hannah Arendt's thought as a theoretical

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basis and a major impulse for the analysis of pseudo-conservatism in comparison with 'classical' conservatism.

1

In order to analyze fake forms of conservatism, we have to examine their history and origins which go as far back as the 1920s. The period between the two World Wars saw major political, legal, and cultural crises. Included among these was the crisis of political and social (everyday) conservatism, which resulted in its gradual replacement, or substitution, by imitations that Adorno later called "pseudo-conservatism."[1] In Arendt's early essays (sadly undervalued by many scholars) and her major works on totalitarianism, thought, and action, we find important arguments that can shed light on the premises and major elements of this new phenomenon of pseudo-conservatism.

Starting from the mid-1940s, Hannah Arendt, along with her friend and mentor Karl Jaspers, took an active role in the discussions about Germany's future, its citizens' individual and collective responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi regime, and the crisis of values in the public sphere caused by the aggressive refutation and destruction of previous traditions. In his editorial preface to the first issue of the monthly journal *Die Wandlung*, which received praise from Arendt,[2] Jaspers describes the post-war intellectual crisis in Germany, marked by the loss of values and normative ties in the light of social atomization.[3] He returns to the same topic in his highly debated speech *Our Future and Goethe* (*Unsere Zukunft und Goethe*) given in Frankfurt on August 28, 1947, upon receiving the Goethe prize. In his speech, Jaspers directly stresses the utopian character of the idea of a non-critical return to classical tradition and scrutinizes it from a modern point of view. His thoughts on the causes of the crisis of thought and the methods of overcoming it are consonant with the ideas Arendt first formulated in her essays of the 1940s (many of which were published in *Die Wandlung*[4]) and developed in her major works.

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1. While Adorno sometimes used the notion of pseudo-conservatism in the sociological book *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950), there still has not been a study dedicated directly to this topic. My goal is to re-evaluate this notion from a contemporary perspective.

2. Cf. Arendt to Jaspers, 29.01.1946: "'Die Wandlung', für die ich ihnen herzlichst danke und die hier von Hand zu Hand geht, obwohl ich sie eigentlich gar nicht aus der Hand geben wollte, ist ein schöner Anfang. Ihre Einleitung ist ganz herrlich . . ."

3. Jaspers, 1945: 5–6: "Wir haben fast alles verloren: Staat, Wirtschaft, die gesicherten Bedingungen unseres physischen Daseins, und schlimmer noch als das: die . . . uns alle verbindenden Normen, die moralische Würde, das einigende Selbstbewusstsein als Volk. . . . Haben wir wirklich alles verloren? Nein, wir Überlebenden sind noch da. . . . Vor dem Nichts raffen wir uns auf. Mir dürfen öffentlich miteinander reden. Sehen wir zu, was wir einander zu sagen haben. Wir sind innerlich und äußerlich verwandelt in zwölf Jahren. [Wir bitten] Deutsche, zu sprechen, ihre Gedanken mitzuteilen, Bilder zu gestalten, öffentlich fühlbar werden zu lassen, dass und wie sie leben. . . . So hoffen wir, auch in radikalen Auseinandersetzungen doch solidarisch miteinander zu reden. . . . Der Einzelne ist machtlos. Er bedarf des öffentlichen Geistes, der ihn trägt. . . . Wir wollen in öffentlicher Diskussion uns der Bindungen bewusst werden, aus denen wir leben. . . . Die Gegenwart und die Zukunft sind unsere Aufgabe. Alles Denken, das für sie wesentlich sein kann, soll in dieser Zeitschrift Raum finden, Politik, Wirtschaft, Technik, Recht, Wissenschaften, Kunst und Dichtung, Theologie und Philosophie."

4. More on Arendt's collaboration with the journal *Die Wandlung* see in Zhavoronkov 2018.

Sharing the overall diagnosis of the period, Jaspers and Arendt suggested several similar therapeutic instruments, such as the rehabilitation of dialogue in the public space. Still, Arendt's analysis of the past goes beyond the theoretical program of her mentor and friend. She uses Nietzsche's notion of nihilism (e.g., in Arendt 1946 and 1978) in her description of National Socialism's beginnings, shifting from the ethical to the political level while also presenting it in a much more one-sided manner while stressing the dangers and downplaying the creative aspects Nietzsche emphasized. In her essays and lectures, as well as in *The Human Condition* and *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt constantly reminds her readers that nihilism destroys all of the connections between thinking and action, and in doing so, distorts the understanding of one's motivation and stimulates the will toward non-thinking and Nothing itself. While it is evident that Arendt's "nihilists" are primarily followers of the National Socialist ideology, her idea of nihilism is much broader. She points out that nihilism is used as the means to refuse thinking in general. Its key trait, which plays an important role in my analysis, is the negation of any kind of tradition in favor of the irresponsibility of choice.

In the German version of her essay "Imperialism: Road to Suicide" ("Über den Imperialismus," 1946), Arendt mentions three types of modern followers of nihilism. In the first group, there are those scientists who willingly or unconsciously "believe in Nothingness." Second are those people who believe they have experienced the Nothingness themselves. The third (and most important) type are those who undertake the impossible task of "producing the Nothingness" by "piling one destruction upon another" (Arendt, 1946: 662–663). The silent approval of the majority supports the destruction of existing traditions for the sake of Nothingness, recognizing it as a means of realizing their secret dreams or innermost experiences (Ibid.). For Arendt, National Socialism's instrumentalization of this form of nihilism was a logical consequence of the expansion of European imperialism starting from the second half of the 19th century, and represented a new alliance between capital and the mob. This mobilization of the mob, which is devoid of all principles, results in anti-Semitism since the Jews are now viewed as dangerous rivals to imperialist "big politics." On the academic level, this intellectual erosion manifests itself in the replacement of the notion of nation by the notion of race in both the natural and human sciences.[5]

Arendt's important achievement lies in the precise description of the radical contrast between the conservative facade of National Socialism and its evidently anti-conservative substance, which hides itself behind the mask of adherence to German traditions while incessantly destroying all the traditions standing in its way. This nihilistic thinking facilitates a non-critical adaptation of any other ideology, including the National Socialist ideology, or social order. Long before Theodor Adorno's influential essay "The Meaning of Working Through the Past" ("Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit," 1963), which takes on the topic of the dangerous legacy of National Socialist thought in Germany, Arendt registered the same problem, although from a slightly different point of view.

5. Thus, Arendt implicitly criticizes the logic of development and philosophical anthropology and the ideologization of Darwinism.

Both Arendt's and Adorno's analyses were placed in the broad contexts of the problem of nihilism and the non-critical foundations of action.

Arendt describes the role of nihilism in the political sphere, tracing its connection to nationalism and the idea of exclusivity for certain peoples or nations. In the course of her analysis on the details of the Dreyfus affair in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt reasonably notes that the atmosphere of nihilism makes traditional conceptions and institutions, including the system of law, appear obsolete and unnecessary. In the conflict between anti-Dreyfusards and Dreyfusards, both parties *de facto* chose nihilism, replacing the legal question of whether Dreyfus was innocent or guilty with the political question "Who will win?". Instead of careful justification independent of the political circumstances, these nihilistic arguments were based on a situational judgement.

Why does political nihilism need a conservative facade? To answer this question from an Arendtian perspective, we have to return to the beginnings of her idea on the banality of evil, traceable to her essays of the 1940s. We find many preliminary arguments concerning individual and collective responsibility, which will play a key role at a later point, e.g., in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.[6] In her essay "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility" (1945), initially written for the Zionist journal "Jewish Frontier" and translated for the German publication in *Die Wandlung* under the title "Organisierte Schuld," Arendt criticizes the popular notion of collective guilt rooted in the attempts to present the Germans as "potential Nazis ever since Tacitus' times" (Arendt, 2005: 125). She states that "in trying to understand what the real motives were that caused people to act as cogs in the mass-murder machine," the aim of National Socialism, "we shall not be aided by speculations about German history and the so-called German national character" (Ibid.: 128), but rather understand the personality of those engaged in mass murder. Arendt illustrates her thesis by quoting a fragment from an interview between the journalist Raymond A. Davies and the paymaster of the death camp at Maidanek who was firmly convinced that he only carried out orders without actually murdering anyone (Ibid.: 127). Arendt sees the motives (in the German version, she uses Kant's notion of *Triebfeder*) that induce a man to transform himself into an element of the mass-murder machine in the character presented by the National Socialists, that is, not as something extraordinary, but as a norm. Under these circumstances, the transformation of a "responsible member of society" into a lifeless object occurs in an allegedly conservative, prosaic manner (Ibid.: 129).[7]

We can see that the concept of nihilism Arendt adopted from Nietzsche has been modified for her description of social-political consequences of the crisis of thought, and plays a key role in her analysis of tradition which remains relevant in a contemporary context. While examining the question of why social and political nihilism (the root of the current crisis) took the shape of traditionalism and conservatism under National Socialist use, Arendt takes note of the paradoxical nature of radical nihilism, since the

6. This topic plays a central role in Jaspers' philosophy of the same period, especially in his work *The Question of German Guilt* (Jaspers, 1946).

7. Arendt's thesis concerning the anticonservative character of totalitarian regimes can also be applied to Stalinism. Cf. Teichmann, 2016, case study of the political system in Soviet Middle Asia of the 1920s–1940s.

latter presents its latent endeavors to augment boundaries and exceptions as a consistent adherence to the everyday norm.

2

While Arendt's arguments remain highly relevant from a contemporary point of view, we must point out that her arguments do not have a systematic character since the notion of conservatism does not play a significant role in most of her works. An important exception is the essay "What is Authority" (1954) where she makes observations concerning the pessimistic aspects of conservative thinking. According to Arendt, "liberalism . . . measures a process of receding freedom, and conservatism measures a process of receding authority" (Arendt, 1968: 100). In her other essay of the same period, "The Crisis in Education" (1954), Arendt observes conservative thinking from a broader, ontological point of view, denying the possibility of preserving a perennial *status quo*. The cause, according to Arendt, lies in the world itself since it is doomed to gradual decline and destruction in the absence of active human involvement.

Since constant change is an integral part of human life, the critical question concerning conservatism as a way of thinking can be formulated as what can (or should) be preserved and for how long? Arendt does not explicitly ask this question, although we can deduce several answers from her discussion of other topics, most importantly, that of common sense and the shared world it creates. The concise character of Arendt's direct description of conservatism should thus hinder us from trying to reach a goal that was also her own, i.e., using Arendt's instruments to understand modern social and political phenomena. In order to deliver and expand her arguments, I will make a brief excursus into several conservatism studies, bridging the gap between her essays of the 1940s and 1950s and the present state of research, including the current debates on conservatism in the light of contemporary nationalist movements.

While conservatism is a political theory, in the broader sense it is also a social attitude with potential political consequences (cf. Oakeshott, 1991). The analysis of the conservative model of action goes back to Karl Mannheim's 1925 habilitation thesis (1st ed. 1984).[8] Assuming that conservatism emerged during the French Revolution (although this thesis is insufficiently backed by arguments), Mannheim introduces a key opposition between fully reactive traditionalism, which lacks a long-term, historical fundament, and the more flexible conservatism based around a certain set of principles. While traditionalism opposes changes, conservatism may adopt or even favor them — given that they do not contradict its own principles of action. Arendt's ideas can be used to refine Mannheim's theory since they demonstrate the limits of conservatism, something Mannheim did not take into account. In the light of Arendt's arguments, the National Socialist ideology does not look like a kind of reactive traditionalism (as Mannheim suggests), but rather as a

8. Interestingly, Arendt has written an essay on Mannheim's sociology "Philosophie und Soziologie: Anlässlich Karl Mannheims 'Ideologie und Utopie'" (Arendt, 1930), although she has never referenced his studies on conservatism, neither in that essay nor in her other works.

false form of conservatism that negates traditions and takes any possible shape due to the absence of long-term principles. To describe this form, which has only a superficial similarity to conservatism but has an essentially anti-conservative and anti-traditional character, I use the notion of pseudo-conservatism as invented by Adorno.

To give my line of argument a more concrete shape, I will make use of the parallel, analytical tradition of conservative studies, particularly debates on the question of what can be considered a "genuinely" conservative action.[9] Some scholars like Beckstein (Beckstein, 2005), have fairly criticized the distinction between adjectival and nominal conservatism, i.e., the idea of action that seeks to avoid possible risks and the idea of protecting the *status quo*, because of the uncertainty about the limits of the *status quo* and crucial inconsistencies in the model of action, whose sole goal is to preemptively eliminate any risks.[10] Although these critical remarks are largely justified, it is still evident that a conservative model of action, e.g., as a business model, aims to preserve a long-term (although not perennial[11]) *status quo* while minimizing (but not fully eliminating) all possible risks. As Oakeshott reasonably remarks in his brilliant essay *On Being Conservative* (1956), most people are conservative by nature, not trusting anything new, and evading risks.

To prevent misunderstandings, I must note that I do not seek to define conservatism in comparison with liberalism, and will not even offer a separate detailed description of conservatism, including its main deficits; thus, I will not participate in the complex discussion between the main authors of conservative tradition in political theory.[12] Since I am examining conservatism in a broad sense, I will only mention some basic characteristics that help us to understand its specific features and limitations. In the light of these characteristics, we can clearly see the paradoxical nature of the appeals to tradition and conservative thinking from the standpoint of political nihilism, as described by Arendt in her works on totalitarianism, the banality of evil, and thinking. Taking into account that political nihilism negates any kind of tradition while also appealing to a broad, largely (but not exclusively) conservative audience, we can regard it as one of the pillars of pseudo-conservatism. In the terminological triad of traditionalism, conservatism and pseudo-conservatism, conservatism occupies a place in the center, that is, between innovation-friendly traditionalism and pseudo-conservatism (or 'radical conservatism') which is willing to undertake significant risks without regard to pragmatic considerations as it strives to undermine the *status quo*.

(1) While some pseudo-conservatism traits may look similar to those of conservatism, there are, in my opinion, at least five key differences we must consider when dealing with specific cases:

9. See especially Huntington (1957), Oakeshott (1991) and Brennan and Hamlin (2004).

10. If we consider that conservatism's purpose is to find a temporary balance, rather than avoid risks, the main issue will be analyzing how and why a new paradigm of action replaces an older one. Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, Arendt is unconcerned with this kind of question.

11. Cf. Arendt's remarks in "The Crisis in Education" (Arendt, 1968).

12. For this discussion, see Buchanan (2005), Hayek (2011) and many others.

(2) Unlike conservatism, pseudo-conservatism does not operate with the current *status quo* but with a former one or with a fully fictive construct that presents itself as historical reality. It also regularly undermines the present *status quo* (producing the 'nothingness', to use Arendt's language).

(3) In pseudo-conservatism, risks are not limited by authoritative restrictions but, rather, welcomed as a 'necessary evil' used to achieve a grand goal.

(4) Pseudo-conservative actions and reasoning are mostly situational since pseudo-conservatism does not *de facto* appeal to any existing (or living) long-term tradition.

(5) Conservatism has to be flexible in the long term, eventually recognizing important changes in the *status quo*.[13] Pseudo-conservatism, on the other hand, is much more reactive. For instance, it seeks to revive isolated elements of past traditions[14] and/or give them new meaning.

While conservative action takes place when the rules are made clear to all involved parties, it can be and often is the other way around in the pseudo-conservative model.[15] The latter can easily offer an explanation *ad hoc* or *a posteriori* while the real reasons may remain concealed or even not properly considered.

3

To illustrate our point, we also have to consider several key arguments from radical conservatism studies. It would be trite to say that contemporary radical conservatism (e.g., "the New Right") in the USA, Europe, and elsewhere can hardly be identified with the "classical" conservatism briefly described above. These new patterns of action may appear to be essentially conservative, although much more radicalized and, in many cases, polarized than in the past. Indeed, some radical conservatives care about preserving certain cultural, moral, and economic traditions (or at least do so superficially). Moreover, not all radical conservatism, with its many shapes, local genealogies and goals, can be labeled as pseudo-conservatism. This notion, however, still applies to many cases when conservatism is used to mask a wholly different idea of action and the reasoning behind it. I will list some of the most important 'smaller' traits that do not conform with the basic prin-

13. As Hayek notes in his classical critical essay, conservatism is only opposed to *drastic* changes (cf. Hayek, 2011 [1960]: 519).

14. See, for instance, von Beyme, 2013. While I do agree with Drolet and Williams (Drolet, Williams, 2018) that we have to take a serious theoretical approach to contemporary radical conservatism "as a theoretical perspective" (p. 285) despite its obvious inconsistencies, I think the authors seriously underestimate this pseudoconservative trait in the New Right while also neglecting the differences between, for instance, the 'Nouvelle Droite' ideology and modern pseudo-conservatism, with its imperialist slogans and tendencies (a good example would be the ideology of territorial revisionism in Hungary under Victor Orbán).

15. This trait can be deduced from two common arguments presented in several key studies on conservatism (such as those of Hayek and Buchanan, which are in turn quoted by many others): (1) that conservatism does not offer alternative models of action, lacking creativity in this regard, and; (2) that conservatism presupposes a certain order to things, which is based on the idea of a stable social hierarchy of power (e.g. in the form of elitism), as opposed to liberal egalitarianism. Thus, a conservative action can only choose from a range of already existing sets of principles that are based on a hierarchic worldview.

ciples of conservatism. These traits, pointed out in recent studies on radical conservatism, can be derived from the ones described above.

Pseudo-conservatism is nurtured by a disappointment with the current *status quo*, including hierarchical relations (be it on the national or international level).[16] This disappointment, while not being in any way exclusive to pseudo-conservatism, urges pseudo-conservatism proponents to choose restoration over preservation, as they do not see the possibility of improving existing relations through traditional means (e.g., in the case of the many British citizens who have voted in favor of Brexit, which was actively supported by the UKIP). The everlasting conservative debate on how far a conservative restoration can reach without causing harm to existing traditions is resolved by pseudo-conservatism in the most radical of all possible ways — by thinking outside of the historical, cultural, social, and economic relations of the present.

In contrast to contemporary mainstream conservatism, pseudo-conservatism does not need a flexible, pragmatically-oriented basis of argumentation (as, for instance, in mainstream German politics during Angela Merkel's era). Instead of choosing between several possibilities with the help of our faculty of judgement (in the Kantian and Arendtian sense), it strives to equalize real and fake facts as well as sound and baseless arguments while promoting its own theoretically and practically inconsistent strategy as a unique remedy against the current crisis of tradition.[17] Its almost religious devotion[18] to ideals of restoring a former glory induces it not only to deny rationalist liberalism but also, in many cases, to negate reason, even though reason, as a practical instrument, is equally necessary to both liberal and conservative strategies. This kind of worldview explains the fact that pseudo-conservatism is notoriously aggressive towards alternative opinions.

Compared to conservatism, pseudo-conservatism has much more creativity in its treatment of facts and arguments as it works not only with the present *status quo* but also with a multitude of dead traditions having the most national or even international history at its disposal. The necessity of finding a suitable explanation *post factum* induces pseudo-conservatism to broaden its scope by referring to the most convenient historical examples, be it the 1950s or the second half of the 1980s as the supposed "golden era" of American economics or, for instance, some unknown point in history after World War II, when European countries were absolutely free of immigrants.[19] These (imaginary or real) examples have little to do with the current situation but serve the hidden practical

16. See, for instance, Coles, 2017: 52–62 (on the American far right) and 62–76 (on far-right movements in Europe after the 1990s).

17. Aside from many newspaper articles, there are several recent studies, such as: Vorländer, Herold, Schäller, 2018 (on PEGIDA and the German New Right) and Shanahan, 2018 (on Donald Trump's politics), which have already touched on that topic.

18. For more on the connection between the Radical Right and religion, see Minkenberg 2018. See also Toplin 2006 (although I would not go as far as to label radical conservatism as fundamentalism).

19. Cf. Viktor Orbán's repeated claim that Hungary has to remain free of immigrants, which is connected to the idea of preserving national independency against the new "invasion" of Europe. Similar rhetoric about invasion is used by the German AfD to support their anti-immigrant policy.

interests of their proponents.[20] This gap between contemporary reality and the historical (or imaginary) past is a serious threat to the basic conservative goal of supporting established institutions.

Lastly, the situational character of pseudo-conservatism legitimizes its aim of maximizing the number of exceptions in decision-making instead of keeping them at a necessary minimum, as would be the case in 'traditional' conservatism and, with some reservations, in contemporary conservatism as well. The key trait of contemporary pseudo-conservatism is its spontaneity, which can easily appeal to the broader public as 'fascinating' in comparison to the 'boring' predictability of conservative action.[21] Increasing social acceleration,[22] which significantly shortens the gap between thought and action in the social sphere, raises the pressure to constantly re-synchronize the pace of decision-making with that of social developments. This shortage of resources presents a serious problem for any kind of conservative strategy. The fact that pseudo-conservatism proves to be more efficient in this regard is as alarming as it is understandable.

4

Considering the boundaries of my theoretical approach (and of this paper), I am setting aside the more practical question of the self-definition of contemporary conservatism as a potential golden mean between traditionalism and pseudo-conservatism. In limiting the analysis to a description of pseudo-conservative strategies of action, I will instead answer a question that connects observations of Arendt's ideas of tradition and nihilism with the studies on conservatism and the so-called radical conservatism: "How can we use Arendt's arguments in the critical observation of pseudo-conservatism as a social and political phenomenon?" I will briefly show how the main aspects, or layers, of contemporary pseudo-conservatism can be better understood with the help of Arendt's toolkit.

Several aspects that I will mention, such as Arendt's notion of factual truth, which is popularly used today to contrast with the notion of "post-truth," are already the focus of Arendt studies in recent years (or even the last decades, e.g., the opposition of thinking and non-thinking). However, they are viewed from other perspectives since the topic of conservatism still plays a marginal role compared to the idea of revolution[23], the role of morals in politics, or Arendt's notion of the banality of evil. Thus, my own reflections present an attempt to view some traditional questions and topics from a new angle.

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20. See, for instance, George Lakoff's brilliant analysis of Donald Trump's language, which includes appeals to a "past ideal state" (Lakoff, 2016).

21. This has many effects, including the rise in popularity of radical conservative parties and personalities in the media. The high media coverage of radical conservatism has a major influence on the political and social climate, which many scholars still underestimate. More on this see in Ellinas, 2018.

22. The most important studies on contemporary social implications of acceleration are those of Hartmut Rosa (esp. 2005 and 2010). On the relation between time and politics, see also Paul Virilio's classical study (1977).

23. There are currently no monographic studies and only one dissertation on this topic: Wolcott, 2010.

To understand pseudo-conservatism, we have to understand its structure and limits, historical origins, the forms of its current manifestation, and its (often non-exclusive) instruments. Respectively, there are four main areas of analysis that can be considered from the standpoint of Arendtian studies:

(1) First of all, we must re-evaluate the limits of conservatism since we are not placing it opposite to liberalism (as is the case in most studies) but to pseudo-conservatism. For this purpose, we have to follow Arendt in maintaining our critical distance from the well-established views defining the everyday use of some key terms. In other words, we are to question the notion of conservatism just like Arendt questions the notions of tradition in her early essays, and revolution, in her works on this topic from the 1960s. We must ask ourselves if we really can or should regard a movement or strategy of action as conservative simply because it is called so by the actors themselves. In many cases, it will very probably prove to be a disguise that conceals the nihilism of thought Arendt described in her essays of the 1940s and several of her major works after 1951.

While Arendt's analysis of the perverse nature of the National Socialist idea of tradition is in no way exclusive, she was one of the first thinkers to describe the social and political results of these nihilistic transformations with such insight and in such detail. However, there is another theoretical aspect which should be considered as well. Contrary to some scholars such as Irwing Horowitz (2012), I do not regard Arendt as a purely liberal or conservative thinker (even less so as a radical-conservative philosopher), although there are parallels between Arendt's thought and that of conservative authors like Roger Scruton. It would be much more plausible to say that Arendt takes on the role of external observer judging some key pros and cons of conservatism and liberalism, as we see in her essay "What is Authority?" (1954). This neutral stance allows us to see the limitations of each model of thought, thus being perfectly suitable to compare these models to one another and to other forms such as pseudo-conservatism.

(2) On the diachronic level, we have to look into the historical roots of pseudo-conservatism which flourished in totalitarian regimes, thus sharing some of its key features and premises (for instance, the use of rhetorical strategies for creating confusion) with those pointed out by Arendt. A good example would be her observations on the political role of nationalistic nihilism in Germany and France before and between the World Wars together with her analysis of the transformation of the traditional nihilistic principle of "everything is permitted" into the much more destructive non-utilitarian, practical principle of "everything is possible," which transcends the realm of self-interest (Arendt, 1979: 440–441).[24] Unfortunately, in this context, Arendt pays little to no attention to the contribution of the thinkers of the so-called Conservative Revolution to the development of radical conservatism in Europe,[25] although she herself speaks of a "conservative

24. On the three different stages of nihilism according Arendt, see Schwartz, 2016: 148–149.

25. There are several studies that regard the Conservative Revolution as one of the initial stages in the development of radical conservatism, e.g., Dahl, 1999. On the parallels between the ideas of Conservative Revolution and the contemporary radical conservatism of the New Right in Germany, see Pfahl-Traughber, 1999. The same continuity is postulated in more recent studies, placing the New Right in the "gray zone" between ultraconservatism and conservatism (cf. Keßler, 2018).

revolution" — not in regard to 1920s Germany, but to the revolution in America (Arendt 1990, 44–45). Instead, she sees the experience of World War I as an important element contributing to the radicalization of the mob (Arendt, 1979: 330–331).

Despite the obvious importance of Arendt's observations concerning totalitarianism's genesis, it would be rather counterproductive to regard pseudo-conservatism as a "totalitarian" element of modern societies, since the notion of totalitarianism is defined by a set number of criteria (e.g., a well-defined and detailed ideology or the existence of a single governing party). These criteria mostly do not fit into the analysis of contemporary tendencies and narrow the scope from the social level as a whole to the political perspective. Considering that pseudo-conservatism has meanwhile adapted itself to other types of societies, especially during the new wave of nationalist movements in the EU as well as in the USA, Turkey, and Russia, we have to take an alternative approach. Together with Arendt, we should ask ourselves about the reasons for the current popularity and adaptability of pseudo-conservatism as a model of thought and practical action strategy. Referring to Arendt's studies of totalitarianism, e.g., to her notions of the mob and political nihilism, we need also look for her underlying observations on the causes behind the absence of thought and on the relations between thinking and acting, which define most of her works after *Origins of Totalitarianism*.

(3) Pseudo-conservatism, which has spread rapidly in recent years, opposes traditional models of politics. Its appeal to the emotions, particularly those associated with patriotism, rather than facts, and long-term considerations is consonant with the current tendencies of post-truth politics. From Arendt's perspective, this phenomenon can be viewed as a symptom of its abandonment of the idea of federalism (which she explicitly supports) in favor of a new nationalism. On the other hand, it also presents a dangerous example of the retrospective justification of actions that have already been taken, as was the case during the French Revolution, Arendt's key example in *On Revolution*.[26]

Arendt's approach and terminological apparatus may also be applied to the analysis of minor pseudo-conservative phenomena, an example being "fake news." Arendt's notion of factual truth, already used to describe the social role of "fake news" (cf. Hendricks, Vestergaard, 2017), plays an important part. In pseudo-conservative models of action, the plurality of opinions Arendt advocates is replaced by the absence of alternatives that is justified by references to the crisis situation and the necessity for immediate action without preliminary discussion.

(4) Lastly, Arendt's ideas are indispensable for understanding the key instruments pseudo-conservatism uses to popularize itself. One of these instruments is the undermining of public dialogue where all sides can be heard. Against the background of Arendt's notion of acting in concert (used in its aesthetic sense), the pseudo-conservative strategy of action looks not like a traditional musical piece which can be divided into individual elements, but rather like a loud din of individual voices blending into an undecipherable, chaotic mess. Instead of a Socratic exchange of ideas which serves as a classical

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26. Although Arendt does not directly mention the problem of retrospective justification, historical examples from *On Revolution* can be used to further develop her analysis in this area.

example for Arendt's notion of dialogue[27], we have an exchange of emotions where each side is desperately trying to silence the other, thus negating the need for many opinions. Pseudo-conservatism distorts the idea of dialogue and urges other parties representing alternative opinions to use the same emotional tactics to further confuse them and the wider audience.[28]

Social media play an important part in this strategy. They can be instrumentalized both in a positive sense by promoting the plurality and accessibility of differing opinions as well as in the opposite manner as the means of limiting the opinion plurality via such phenomena as the echo-chamber or the spiral of silence. Arendt's language, i.e., her notions of opinion, dialogue, and acting in concert, can be used to describe the influence these phenomena exert on collective action in the public sphere.

Pseudo-conservatism is a symptom of a crisis of judgement in the public sphere. Rather than simply representing the return of nationalism, it mirrors the problems of political decision-making under the increasing pressure of time. From a broader perspective, it represents a shift in everyday thought, and is maybe even a defensive psychological mechanism that helps us avoid the tiresome and time-consuming necessity of making a difficult choice between multiple alternatives. By advocating the plurality of opinions and the idea of thinking as a dialogue, Arendt indirectly outlines a pattern of critical analysis for pseudo-conservatism. All that remains is to undertake a more complex and detailed approach connecting the context of Arendt's studies with that of modern sociology and political theory.

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27. More on this see in Zhavoronkov, 2017.

28. One can compare this situation to the one Arendt described about the Dreyfus affair in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

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Нигилизм и кризис традиции: Арендт и современный радикальный консерватизм

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Настоящая статья представляет собой первую попытку ответа на вопрос о возможности применения идеи традиции и нигилизма у Ханны Арендт к анализу современного радикального консерватизма. С этой целью автор обращается к эссе Арендт 1940-х и 1950-х годов, проливающих свет на истоки современного европейского кризиса консерватизма и на различия между традиционалистским и антитрадиционалистским мышлением. Предложенные Арендт аргументы, касающиеся нигилистических аспектов радикального консерватизма, легитимирующего себя отсылками к кризису традиции, помогают выявить недостатки анализа консерватизма и традиционализма у Карла Мангейма. Дополняя фрагментарную арендтовскую концепцию консерватизма, автор использует понятия адъективного и номинального консерватизма для определения ключевых различий между подлинным и ложным, радикальным консерватизмом (псевдоконсерватизмом). Исходя из результатов анализа прошлого, предлагается ответ на вопрос о том, почему работы Арендт важны для понимания современного псевдоконсерватизма, в т.ч. его исторических истоков, самоописания и основных инструментов. В завершение автор поясняет, почему исследователи, вместе с Арендт, должны выбрать более широкую перспективу анализа современного кризиса суждения в публичной сфере и проистекающего из него процесса искажения идей традиции и диалога — вместо того, чтобы ограничиться упрощенным определением нового радикального консерватизма как духовного наследника национал-социализма.

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, Карл Ясперс, консерватизм, псевдоконсерватизм, радикализм, нигилизм, мышление, действие

The Life of the Work: Virno's Reception of Arendt's Political Theory

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Since antiquity, political philosophy has been occupied with basic human capacities, dividing them into three main realms: work, action. and intellect. The definition and aims of these capacities, as well as their relation to the main human virtues, were elaborated in Aristotle's Ethics. This work is a starting point of a long tradition of reflection on the human condition. Its further development was incorporated by Hannah Arendt into her more-modernized political theory. Following Aristotle, Arendt defines two main spheres: vita activa and vita contemplativa. An attempt to redefine the main terms of this tradition was made by an Italian political philosopher, Paolo Virno, who combines it with Marxism. For this, Virno turned to Arendt's political thought. He follows the central idea that the ability of action is connected with speech and has a virtuosic character. However, in his perception of Arendt's theory Virno tries to blur the boundaries between other concepts of her political philosophy. The goals of this article are to explore the ways that the reception of Arendt's ideas has shaped Virno's political thought, and to analyze how his approach is able to cope with the main problems that she poses in her political theory. In his interpretation of Arendt's political thought, Virno tries to redefine the distinctions that she draws, and to combine the spheres of praxis, intellect, and work. According to the author of this paper, this strategy does not always succeed in accurately covering all aspects of Arendt's political thought.

***Keywords**:* Hannah Arendt, Paolo Virno, action, intellect, contemplation, multitude, virtuosity, work

A Brief Introduction: The Common Sense of Arendt's Conceptual Framework

The main political treatise by Virno is called *The Grammar of the Multitude*. This text originated from the seminars held in 2001 at the University of Calabria. In this work, Virno attempts to justify the theory of the multitude, that is, political subjectivity which arises as a result of the formation of new conditions of production and lifestyles. In order to support this theory, Virno appeals to a variety of philosophical theories, and Arendt's political theory plays a big part thereof. Virno refers to Arendt in order to come to a deeper understanding of what the contemporary multitude is, and what universal capacities we can find here. The theory of the multitude, which Paolo Virno is trying to create, must be understood not only as a theory of a new political subject, but also as an attempt to revise the long tradition of political philosophy which can be traced back to Aristotle.

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Virno says that for all who participate in a political life, the classic division of human experience into work, action, and intellect is reasonable. Aristotle's ideas are basic and essential for the comprehension of political life, and are accessible and understandable to many. Moreover, is not necessary to read Aristotle to be aware of this: "Labor, Action, Intellect: in the style of a tradition which goes back to Aristotle and which has been revisited with particular efficacy and passion by Hannah Arendt (*The Human Condition*), this tri-partitioning has seemed clear, realistic, nearly unquestionable. It has put down solid roots in the realm of common sense: it is not a question, then, of an undertaking which is only philosophical, but of a widely shared pattern of thought" (Virno, 2004: 50). According to Virno, Arendt clearly and convincingly shows the above-mentioned difference. One might even think that Virno hints that it is through her appeal to the experience of Greek political thinking and its reflection in Arendt's texts that this tradition first becomes more tangible and then acquires the status of common sense.

The threefold division of human activity is entrenched in the minds of a whole generation, according to Virno. We used to look at human activity from such an angle. If a person works, they interact in natural relations, fabricating products that they will later consume. When acting, they intervene in the political relations that arise between free people and require an active presence in public among other people. When a person begins to think, their external activity seems to freeze, but the internal flow of words and sentences begin to move: the person begins an internal dialogue with themselves. However, Arendt herself fears that these three aspects of human life might be mixed, and that that situation threatens to dispose of political action. In her text, there is a clear concern that political action starts to be treated within the work model, and is organized according to the work type. Hence, it loses its singularity and freedom. However, in general, highlighting these three human abilities helps structure human experience accurately. According to Virno, this is the main message of the Arendt's theory: "'To each his own' seems to be the message of Arendt's *The Human Condition*, and every man for himself" (Virno, 2006: 206).

Here, Virno makes a sharp turn in relation to Arendt's thought. His analysis of modernity convinces him that work, action, and intellect are not located in different spheres, and can form a unified experience. Arendt intentionally made this distinction clearer because she feared that political action would finally take the form of work, the fabrication of parties, meetings, etc. However, Virno is more likely to say that it is the work experience itself that is changing: by creating work, we can now get the experience of political action where the experience of intellectual reflection is added, which does not withdraw a person from this world, and does not detach him from common affairs. The work experience is changing since modern conditions of production require quality from the worker. This is necessary for someone who has traditionally been understood as a so-called actor performing on the stage of political life. Thus, as the concept of virtuosity appears, Virno follows Aristotelian tradition: virtuosity is a quality that is found in art and politics. Labor is virtuosic as workers now have to master the performance skills in public, possessing the ability to solve various tasks, being flexible, and acting without a predetermined

script. Thus, in reconsidering Arendt's works, Virno tries to propose the opposite point of view: "As must be obvious by now, however, what I am arguing here is radically opposed to the conceptual schema proposed by Arendt and the tradition by which it is inspired" (Virno, 2006: 206). The basic concepts of Arendt's political philosophy in his conceptual framework will change their location in areas which were clearly defined for them earlier. For example, work traditionally does not fall into the public space, but, in accordance with Virno, it can manifest itself in a public way.

Nevertheless, as we will see further in Virno's texts, Arendt's central idea of action will remain as a virtuosic performance of the act in public, inextricably bound with speeches and similar to an actor's performance on stage. Here, Virno can be interpreted as an Aristotelian postmodernist. Despite his attempts to revise this political tradition, he inherits it in many ways. Discussing the problem of work, action, and intellect in the second part of his *Grammar*, the author largely refers to Aristotle's analysis. Virno adopts the basic definitions of *poesies* and *praxis* which Aristotle provides, disagreeing only with the relation between these two concepts.

Moreover, Virno sees Arendt as an absolute adherent of this tradition. Aiming at a revision of the relationship between the key concepts of this tradition of understanding work, that is, action and intellect, he also reshapes other significant distinctions of Arendt's philosophy, such as the distinction between private and public, social and political, and thinking and action. Nevertheless, the following question remains open: how successful is this interpretation in relation to all of the concepts of her political philosophy? It should be noted that Virno incorporates only a part of Arendt's concepts into his reflections on the multitude, while many important details are overlooked. Virno ignores, for example, the distinction between the social and political, but in Arendt's philosophy, this point was connected to the problem of action and the possibility to substitute blind administrative regulations and norms. As a part of our work, it is necessary to see how Arendt makes the most important distinctions in her philosophy and builds a hierarchy of relations between work, action, and intellect, and to examine this hierarchy being turned over in the political theory of Paolo Virno.

The Social and the Political

The problem of the social, as Arendt put it, has been analyzed by many political theorists and is considered to be one of the most important conceptual frameworks that helps to understand the structure of the modern world. There is no doubt that the social is not some kind of transcendental structure that makes all other things comprehensive to us in the modern world, but it is rather a product of historical development. Nevertheless, we cannot avoid this concept since it says much about the place where humans conduct themselves with each other, and how we can describe this kind of conduct. Though this concept looks very simple and intuitive at first glance, it is rather hard to define. Hannah Arendt discussed this concept in her various books, and analyzed it from different points; she compared it to a family and as opposed to the political realm and the private.

A simple solution in defining it is to put the social as a mediate term between the private and the political, which is, however, only one side of this issue. Pitkin, in her study of Arendtian philosophy, gives a very catching metaphor of the social as "the Blob," an aggressive anonymous mass, or the multitude that absorbs everything within its reach. Pitkin writes that "society is variously said to 'absorb,' 'embrace,' and 'devour' people or other entities; to 'emerge, 'rise,' 'grow,' and 'let loose ' growth'; to 'enter,' 'intrude' on, and 'conquer' realms or spheres; to 'constitute' and 'control,' 'transform' and 'pervert'; to 'impose' rules on people, 'demand' certain conduct from them, 'exclude' or 'refuse to admit' other conduct or people; and to 'try to cheat' people. The social, then, is very lively indeed" (Pitkin, 1998: 4). However, this living essence is difficult to analyze without referring to the political (or public) and private, which are opposed to the social, according to Arendt.

Although we mentioned that putting the social as a mediator term between the private and the political is only one side of this question, it is a very important side that must be looked at carefully. Indeed, the social realm is a historical phenomenon which appeared in modern times. Political thinkers used to talk about the republic, the *polis*, the monarchy or commonwealth, but not about the social. Even the "science" of the social, that is, sociology, has only appeared at the beginning of the 19th century with the positivism of Auguste Comte. Arendt says that the social in some sense is a transformation of the private sphere, which was a realm of the household, the household's administration, and so on. The household, *oikos*, is a place where people used to carry out their private affairs and necessities of life. It is opposed to their public life where people were able to devote themselves to glorious deeds and speeches, and contribute to the life of the city. The distinction between the private and the public seem to be more "primordial," originating in ancient Greek thought. Aristotle articulated Greek common sense with its primal distinction in social ontology. It is reflected in the distinction between *oikos* as a private sphere of life's necessities and *polis* as a public sphere where a free man can act towards other free members of the political community. In this hierarchical relation between *oikos* and *polis,* we can observe relatively different aspects of life. *Oikos* does not function under the rule of *nomos*, but under the natural dominance of the householder. Hence, in this private sphere, a human "appears as much more bound to the animal, tied to the grinding necessities of production" (Butler, 2010: 7). In fact, it is in the public sphere where I spend a rather political way of life, free from labor and life's necessities. The *polis* is relevant for deeds and speeches, and is where people organize their life not as dictated by Nature, but under the rule of *nomos*. One of the main conditions of the ability of taking part in the political life of the community is to be free from the necessities of life. Thus, one must be a householder or an aristocrat to have this possibility, so a major part of the *polis'* population was excluded from political communication. Nevertheless, for Arendt, political life was a true foundation of freedom, a place where one can reveal one's human nature to the world and exercise it through glorious deeds and speeches.

Then the new political body appears — the State with a sovereign power, where free and equal members of the political community transforms to include citizens and the population — and this little sphere of the household grows in size and covers new masses

of people. *Oeconomics* turns into economics, the administration of production, distribution, and trade. Thus, the social can be considered as some kind of improper expansion of the household sphere to a very large collectivity of people. In fact, this situation greatly affects the division between the private and the public: "The emergence of society — he rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems, and organizational devices — from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere, has not only blurred the old borderline between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance for the life of the individual and the citizen" (Arendt, 1998: 38).

Therefore, the social at this level is connected to the administration, control, private interest, and the problems of sustaining life. Then, these narrow interests are transformed into a more common language, and the place where people gather together to deliberate on public affairs would be the sphere of the political. In contrast to the social, where private interests and passions direct people and their motives, the political is a certain way of life when people can form a collectivity of another kind. The social produces a mass collectivity, the *vulgus*, which is driven by affects, while political collectivity is some kind of self-deliberating and self-observing collectivity. In the political realm, people have an "ability . . . to take the standpoint of others into account, to reverse perspectives and see the world from their point of view. In fact, itis a crucial virtue in a civic policy that certainly becomes most necessary and most fragile under conditions of cultural diversity and social opacity. The public sphere is like the pupil in the eye of the body politic" (Benhabib, 2000: 211). Additionally, in this sense, the description of the Social made by Pitkin as "a collectivity of people who-for whatever reason-conduct themselves in such a way that they cannot control or even intentionally influence the large-scale consequences of their activities" (Pitkin, 1998: 16) is very precise. The social collectivity lacks this capacity of deliberation and solving political problems since it cannot control or oversee all the different issues that might occur.

The social that expresses itself in the appearance of the masses on the stage of political life is also connected to revolutionary movements. In her book *On Revolution* Arendt shows what happens when the masses rush into politics. The masses bring only violence and terror because the aspirations of the masses are not in the area of establishing the institutions of freedom, but in the area of eliminating need and poverty. Arendt calls it the "Social Question," which is the main difference between the French and the American Revolutions: the aim of the former was to solve the social question by political means, while the latter aimed to establish an area of political freedom. However, solving a social question with the help of political force leads to the spread of violence; the masses are not able to use other methods, as their obsession with emotions, such as compassion and pity, paradoxically turns into a desire for violence and terror. Arendt writes that "Since the revolution had opened the gates of the political realm to the poor, this realm had indeed became 'social'. It was overwhelmed by the cares and worries which actually belonged in the sphere of the household and that, even if they were permitted to enter the public realm, could not be solved by political means, since they were matters of administra-

tion, to be put into the hands of experts, rather than issues which could be settled by the twofold process of decision and persuasion" (Arendt, 1990: 91). Thus, the opening of the social space in this manner opposes and suppresses the political. However, it does not have anything to do with the fact that the masses do not want to discuss matters peacefully, but with their attitude that does not allow them to do so. Their mode of existence does not allow them to establish a space free from violence and suitable for discussion.

The Three Capacities of Active Life

According to Arendt, every part of human activity has its own proper place either in the public or private sphere. Things which are considered to be hidden from the eyes of others find their place in the realm of the private. On the contrary, things that must come into this world for the sake of good deeds and speeches which allows one to disclosure one's personality in the eyes of others must be performed in public. Arendt uses the term "action" to describe the part of active life which is usually performed in public. In Arendt's view, action is not only bound to communication and freedom, but it also brings something new to the world. By doing so, we reveal our own unique identities and create a new beginning which are unpredictable in its end as we cannot foresee what kind of person the newborn baby will become. Her famous concept of natality represents the situation when newcomers enter this world, and all human activities thereafter are aimed to bestow the world upon them as a safe place for living and prospering. She points out that natality is inherent to all human activities, but, of course, action has a closer relation with natality due to its creative and virtuosic nature.

In a sense, the capacity of action gives us, as political animals, the possibility to overcome natural causality and start something new. However, we cannot be sure in what way our deeds might change the world. Sometimes, action can lead us through humble beginnings to the apex of power. Hence, the action itself has a characteristic of potentiality, and human beings can actualize different projects of life that are always related to the world we live in. Thus, action has a relationship with the world, and we cannot act without regard to the current situation. As Lawrence Biskowski put it: "Political action is inherently connected to care for the world, not only for what the world thinks (the 'glory' for which the Greeks strove) but for what the world will be like in the wake of one's acting. . . . Action is an ontological category, a way of being in the world irrespective of the unpredictable practical consequences of any particular action" (Biskowski, 1993: 880). Hence, care for the world, which is inherited from the capacity of action, brings an ethical component to our actions.

This ethical component correlates with the idea that our world is perishable, and there are dozens of methods that can contribute to this. In his reflection upon Arendt's concept of political judgement, Biskowski considers care for the world as one of the most important aspects of the capacity of action. Indeed, it is worth to admit that along with love of freedom, caring for the world provides the crucial relation between acting and judging, which is one of three capacities Arendt puts in the sphere of *vita contemplativa*. In her

Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy (Arendt, 1992), Arendt says that care for the world is more important than care for the soul. The concern for the soul, especially for its purity, can be successfully exercised in the private realm, since politics for Christianity and the public realm itself is something that can be easily avoided if we aim to live in the City of God. As we know from Machiavelli (Machiavelli, 1998: 67), public affairs usually demand another kind of ethos. Our care for the world helps us to withdraw from this private standpoint to a situation when we are able to act towards a common goal. According to Arendt, these political deeds can encounter evil and "by resisting evil, you are likely to be involved in evil, your care for the world takes precedence in politics over your care for your self-whether this self is your body or your soul" (Arendt, 1992: 50). The world is a common place for human beings, and thus it creates a potentiality of a common framework for political judgement. Biskowski proclaims that love of freedom and care for the world establishes some kind of "quasi-transcendental foundations for political judgment. They are the more or less formal conditions that must obtain if politics and political action in Arendt's sense are to be viable possibilities. But they also provide substantive moral and practical content to the theory of judgment and thus perhaps also a bridge over the abyss of relativism" (Biskowski, 1993: 885). Though political action has a deeper relation with the care for the world, such activities of the private sphere such as labor and work also take part in that process. The products of work contribute to our material culture just as art and science contribute to our spiritual culture.

Turning back to the distinction between private and public, we should analyze the types of activities that Arendt attributes to the realm of the private. The main activities of the private sphere are labor and work. The former is connected with every day activities in maintaining the necessities of life, whereas the latter is connected with the creation of things and weapons which make this world fit and available to us. In short, this unusual distinction can be presented in the famous phrase which Arendt attributes to Locke: the labor of our body and the work of our hands (Locke, 1988: 287). It also corresponds to the distinction between animal *laborans* and *homo faber*. As it is implied in the title, *animal laborans* is more akin to the slave or animal lifestyle occupied with every day routine issues in maintaining life, while the *homo faber* has a certain goal to be achieved, which is a more human way of life. Richard Sennett brilliantly described the situation of *animal laborans* in *The Craftsman*: "*Animal laborans* is, as the name implies, the human being akin to a beast of burden, a drudge condemned to routine. Arendt enriched this image by imagining him or her absorbed in a task that shuts out the world, a state well exemplified by Oppenheimer's feeling that the atomic bomb was a 'sweet' problem, or Eichmann's obsession with making the gas chambers efficient. In the act of making it work, nothing else matters; *Animal laborans* takes the work as an end to itself" (Sennet, 2008: 7). Let us remind ourselves here about the traditional Aristotelian distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, that are proposed in terms of ends; *poiesis* always has a certain end outside, whereas *praxis* has an end inside its own process, i.e., public conduct is considered as excellence. This situation highlights a similarity between labor and action that at first might

seem strange because both of these parts of *vita activa* require a comprehension of the goal as something placed inside the very process of their activities.

Arendt traces the roots of this distinction back to the etymology of many European languages, like "arbeiten" and "werk" in German, or "lavoro" and "opera" in Italian. The main difference between these words is that labor usually has an unproductive nature, as it leaves nothing behind as a result of its activity. It quickly consummates everything in order to continue the process of life-maintenance. In contrast, the ultimate goal of *homo faber* is not to consume, but to create. *Homo faber* creates an artificial world of different things, as the working process always leaves many products which can be consumed later by other people or can be used as other tools of world transformation for the sake of human life. Products crafted by *homo faber* have durability; therefore, they are not simply consumed, but are being reused. The more stable condition of crafted products allows them to "withstand, 'stand against' and endure, at least for a time, the voracious needs and wants of their living makers and users" (Arendt, 1998: 137). However, at the same time, the process of work is more violent than labor, as it takes material from Nature directly or indirectly, and transforms it with a purpose of crafting something new. Thus, if *animal laborans* lives in stable conditions and in peace with Nature, *homo faber* aims to be the master and conqueror of Nature. Yet, it allows the craftsman to be a more virtuous man since the products of work can be used by other people and involves the craftsman into a closer communication between them. The act of finishing the labor is sufficient because, by doing so, we want to satisfy our natural needs and consume that we have already created. Moreover, it can be a well-done job, and will be a virtuous act since we can get recognition and feel proud of what we have done after a creation of something good.

The Virtuoso Nature of the Worker

In contrast to Arendt whose methodology includes the clarification and the refinement of concepts, that is to say, making distinctions, Virno is attracted to the establishment of relations. Being a Marxist theorist, Virno does not pay attention on the distinction between labor and work. In his works, the terms "labor" and "work" ("lavoro" and "opera" in Italian) are usually used together. Arendt criticizes this position, saying that only productive labor was important for Marx since it is deeply involved in the economic system by creating the so-called surplus value. However, Marx regarded unproductive labor as a parasitic type of activity which does not produce any products. Moreover, Arendt writes that antiquity also ignored the distinction between labor and work, although Aristotle distinguishes *poiesis* and *praxis*. The former has producing a product as an ultimate goal while the latter has an end in itself. Meanwhile, Virno might rely more on that distinction since he frequently uses the term "activity without finished work," which refers to the Aristotelian definition. Hence, he does not separate the two terms of labor and work since they can be used as synonyms.

Virno mostly concentrates on the relations between action, work, and intellect. His main thesis is that work, as the transformed mode of production which he defines as

post-Fordism, has similar characteristics to action: "In the post-Fordist era, we have Work taking on many of the attributes of Action: unforeseeability, the ability to begin something new, linguistic 'performances,' and an ability to range among alternative possibilities" (Virno, 2006: 190). Work acquires the qualities that are exclusively imposed on political action. Work demands not only the implementation of some repetitive actions at the modern stage of the development of capitalist relations; it requires cooperation, communication between individuals, and a certain flexibility in order to solve various tasks. Therewith, it is required not only to solve them, but to do it with excellence, qualitatively, and in a virtuosic manner. Virtuosity is required at all levels of production, whether it is a simple worker who is among other workers, or a leader who is compelled to solve numerous issues in a masterly fashion, acquiring the traits of a performing artist as a result. Thus, work becomes public and is then performed among other people. The purpose of work now is not only to create a material culture but also to modulate social cooperation; hence, communication skills play a significant part in this process. Besides, this modulation "takes place through linguistic services that, far from giving rise to a final product, exhaust themselves in the communicative interaction that their own 'performance' brings about" (Virno, 2006: 192).

Blurring the boundaries between work and action implies that a worker would in some sense perform an "activity without finished work," the matrix of which is the virtuosic performance of the act of speech. Similar to the pianist or actor, a worker under these circumstances performs an activity with a purpose that coincides with the very fact of its execution. In the essay "When the Word Becomes Flesh," Virno considers such activity primarily as an act of speech. In his opinion, this "activity without work" can fill the gap between structural linguistics and the philosophy of *praxis*, that is, between the *Course* by Saussure and the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle (Virno, 2015: 21). The structural gap lies in the fact that the linguistics of Saussure only singles out the formal structure of the language and pays little attention to how the language is connected with the public sphere, whereas the ethics of Aristotle considers the features of *praxis* and its differences from *poesies*, without linking *praxis* to a specific application language ability. Thus, Virno radicalizes Hannah Arendt's thesis that action and speech cannot be separated. In her version, action includes speech, since there can be no speechless deeds from which it would be impossible to say anything. Virno takes a step forward and argues that language activity is action *par excellence*, that is, *praxis* in the literal sense. Thus, the linguistic activity is not directed at any specific aim, but has this aim in itself.

Undoubtedly, Virno does not claim that there are no extralinguistic goals for acts of speech. In fact, he states that just as the meaning of playing the piano cannot be explained on the basis of something external related to this act, so language itself constitutes its rules and norms. Pragmatism and cognitivism are aimed at understanding language as *poises* (activity directed toward an external goal) or *episteme* (knowledge system), but they miss the fact that the language is primarily a *praxis*. The speaker, as a virtuoso performer, is potentially able to establish new connections and articulate new relationships. It is worth mentioning that there are significant differences in how language is understood by Ar-

endt and Virno. For Arendt, language is an instrument of our thought, where thinking is carried out through an inner dialogue. However, Virno emphasizes the moment of virtuosity in the very nature of language: "If language is a symphony, the speaker shares the same characteristics as the performing artist. Being contingent and singular, each speech act boils down to a virtuoso performance. It does not create an independent object and therefore it implies the presence of others. This means that linguistic activity, considered as a whole, is neither production (poiesis) nor cognition (episteme), but action (praxis)" (Virno, 2015: 24). Hence, their interpretations of the concept of virtuosity are also different. Virtuosity, as Arendt defines it, is an illustration of freedom which is inherent to a human's capacity of action. Virtuosity also describes an excellence which makes someone a good artist, pianist, etc., and virtuosic politics are similar to the performing arts: "Since all acting contains an element of virtuosity, and because virtuosity is the excellence we ascribe to the performing arts, politics has often been defined as an art" (Arendt, 2000: 153). If one can perform playing on the piano or another art with virtuosity, that makes him free. Thus, freedom is always at the center of any consideration. However, Virno concentrates mostly on the idea that virtuosity can be described as the identity between the performance of an action and its purpose, where "its results perfectly coincide with its execution" (Virno, 2015: 28). This idea is based on the Aristotelian distinction between *praxis* (action) and *poiesis* (making or production). In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle draws this distinction in this way: "For while making has an end other than itself, action cannot; for good action itself is its end" (Aristotle, 1999: 94). Hence, the very concept of activity without work is a direct reference to this passage from Aristotle.

Contemplation and Thinking

Now it is necessary to approach the human's third capacity, that of intellect and thinking. For Aristotle and Plato, a contemplative lifestyle based on *nous* (intellect) was considered to be the most beautiful and the most highly valued. Here, Arendt and Virno deviate from the thoughts of the classics, considering that it is in political life that the human experience is manifested in the most complete way. However, Arendt follows Greek classical thought where it is considered to be a separate sphere or a particular way of life which is named the *vita contemplativa*. Virno sees the intellect as something that is manifested in modern society largely in production processes where intellect acquires public character. Virno says that Arendt "rejects out of hand the very idea of a public intellect. In her judgment, reflection and thought (in a word, the 'life of the mind') bear no relation to that 'care for common affairs' that involves an exhibition to the eyes of others" (Virno, 2006: 193). However, the question of why, in this case, was the intellect and contemplation originally understood as a kind of solitary activity remains unanswered.

The state of contemplation is described as a conscious cessation of activity when someone in a speechless wonder can behold a deity. Contemplation belongs to the sphere of *vita contemlpativa,* which Arendt considered as something radically different from *vita activa*. The former starts from the speechless wonder which causes one to withdraw

from the reality of material world to the ideal world of pure thought, while the latter is concerned with public matters or satisfying the necessities of life. However, in some sense, *homo faber* also might be the awareness of the experience of contemplation. The fabrication of products that are later used by other people is certainly a very active process. Sennet adds that while accomplishing this, we are deeply engaged in doing a good job, so our motives are driven not only from a desire of profit and goal achievement, but also by the very form or *eidos*. Hence, a special contemplative glance might seem to be a part of the attitude towards the things one fabricates. As Arendt writes: "*Homo faber* could be persuaded to this change of attitude because he knew contemplation and some of its delights from his own experience; he did not need a complete change of heart, a true periagoge, a radical turnabout. All he had to do was let his arms drop and prolong indefinitely the act of beholding the eidos, the eternal shape and model he had formerly wanted to imitate and whose excellence and beauty he now knew he could only spoil through any attempt at reification" (Arendt, 1998: 304). However, this attitude has faded since modernity concentrates mostly on the process of producing things rather on the contemplation of the pure form or *eidos*. Thus, there is no place in the modern world for contemplation, rendering it meaningless.

Nevertheless, Arendt explores this field in her last fundamental philosophical work, *The Life of the Mind*. After studying the active way of life in *The Human Condition*, she turns to the notion of passive and solitary *vita contemplativa*. Earlier, we discussed the glance of contemplation which can be found in the craftsman's experience, but this is just a minor part of a broader subject she presented in her *The Life of the Mind*. Some crucial points of this topic must be considered in this work, as our aim is to see the correlation between Arendt's view and Virno's interpretation of her ideas.

Vita contemplativa includes three autonomous capacities, those of thinking, willing, and judging. The last is the unfinished part since Arendt died after she wrote the parts concerning thinking and willing. Contemplation is connected with the capacity of thinking, but these parts are still different. Thinking is an activity of the inner dialogue with the inner self, while contemplation is the most passive state, being the cessation of all activities. The next passage describes this process: "The thinking activity — according to Plato, the soundless dialogue we carry on with ourselves — serves only to open the eyes of the mind, and even the Aristotelian *nous* is an organ for seeing and beholding the truth. In other words, thinking aims at and ends in contemplation and contemplation is not an activity but a passivity; It is the point where mental activity comes to rest" (Arendt, 1981: 6). Hence, thinking led to contemplation as the highest stage before it became a servant of science in the modern age. However, while thinking can be silent, this inner dialogue needs speech to be activated. Thereafter, we think to construct consequences of sentences which create some meaning for us. In contrast to thinking, contemplation is a speechless beholding of the truth guided by intuition. The sudden insight of intuition withdraws us from the real world of the here and now to a place with no time and space where we can behold the truth. These sudden insights were known in many cultures and

have many names, like *satori* in Zen Buddhism; therefore, this state of the mind cannot be considered as thinking.

The most common condition for the life of the mind is the withdrawal from the world, which is a quiet and sheer condition, and where no public involvement can be seen. Thus, this withdrawal makes both contemplation and thinking parts of the private sphere. When I am actively engaged in public affairs, there is no place for thinking and contemplation since all my individual powers are oriented towards other people and their common goal. For example, an actor during the play cannot observe the play as a whole, as the actor's mind and action are concentrated on the virtuosic performance of the role. Arendt highlights that the *vita contemplativa* requires not only the position of the actor, but also the position of the spectator.[1] She even shows that the Greek word "theory" comes from the ancient Greek word "theatai," which means "spectator." Arendt writes: "From the Greek word for spectators, *theatai*, the later philosophical term 'theory' was derived, and the word 'theoretical' until a few hundred years ago meant 'contemplating', looking upon something from the outside, from a position implying a view that is bidden from those who take part in the spectacle and actualize it" (Arendt, 1981: 93). The actor in the scene is just a small part of a big play; the actor has their own role, but the performance of this role is guided by deeds and speeches. It follows that the performance is public. As it was discussed earlier, actions can be unpredictable: with a new beginning, it has a start, but the end is unclear. Hence, the position of actor does not allow us to observe the whole picture of what Hegel called "The cunning of Reason" — the idea that history has a rational end, and fulfills it in an indirect manner through the great deeds of heroes.

Thinking and contemplation also have a significant difference in terms of the very nature of their objectives. The objective of contemplation is stability and immobility, as it is very "similar to the beatific vision known from both Aquinas and Dante, the immediate knowledge of God, characterized by motionless awe" (Cirillo, 2014: 54). Indeed, contemplation itself has certain theological connotations: it is known that medieval philosophers saw the pure idea of contemplation as a communication with God. For example, Plotinus considers contemplation as witnessing Absolute Beauty in its integrity, for its purity is perfect. In the process of contemplation of this great beauty, we identify it as the apogee of our life. It is written in Enneads that "If he that has never seen this Being must hunger for It as for all his welfare, he that has known must love and reverence It as the very Beauty; he will be flooded with awe and gladness, stricken by a salutary terror" (Enneads I.6.7.). In contemplation as well as in thinking, there is also me and others, but while thinking is carried out through an inner dialogue with myself, contemplation is the motionless awe of God.

Thinking, on the contrary, is very mobile and versatile. Opposite to science, which is just a more developed version of common sense for Arendt, thinking is aimed at finding meaning, while science is based on positive knowledge. For science, the result is the most important thing, but thinking is a more hermeneutic process which requires some kind

1. A detailed investigation on this issue, see Khreiche, 2015.

of circular movement of the interpretation of meaning. This meaning is a very slippery object, and the mind of the philosopher must be very active to hold it since it always fades away: "Compared to an object of contemplation, meaning, which can be said and spoken about, is slippery; if the philosopher wants to see and grasp it, it 'slips away'" (Arendt, 1981: 122). Thinking as a circular activity must be repeated again and again as the mind is inclined to ask questions that science is not able to answer. Many philosophers appreciated this desire for metaphysics as the most significant feature of the human mind, but it also makes us strangers to this world of appearance. In becoming detached from the world, the still-active ego moves through universalities, while actions deal with particularities. Thinking is a home-less activity; it cannot be localized in space, and creates a gap between the past and the future as well.

Social or Public Intellect?

As mentioned above, Virno's aim is to show that work attains similar characteristics to action, or perhaps it is better to say that he wants to demonstrate the fact that the dividing line between work and action is blurred. Virno adds that work becomes similar not only to political action, but it also includes the spheres of intellect and thinking. Here, he refers directly to Arendt's work *The Life of the Mind*, and argues that thinking, which does not participate in public affairs, is now transformed under new modes of production. The paradox is that thinking combines with work, and thereby becomes public. To define the notion of thinking, he uses the concept of "General Intellect," which originates from the works by Marx. In addition, Virno also uses the term "public intellect" (*intelletto pubblico*). By using these terms, Virno aims to oppose his concepts to the classical tradition whose intercessor is Arendt; there, the intellect and mental activities are presented as a solitary activity opposed to *praxis* (public actions). Therefore, for Virno, the thinker is a public figure who does not reflect alone and is always in communication with others. As for the concept of "General Intellect," it was taken from the *Grundrisse* by Marx, where the term was originally used in English to emphasize that intellectual activity takes a collective character and serves as the basis of social production. "General Intellect" for Marx is a science embodied in social production. However, according to Virno, Marx does not accord enough attention to the fact that the intellect is public in a sense that different people communicate with each other, and perform various tasks based on their equal access to scientific and technical knowledge.

Nevertheless, it is worth asking whether such an expansion of the intellect and the elimination of the sphere of the private using of the intellect is turning it into a public space. When the intellect becomes universal and open to all, and science becomes part of social production, such a situation is often described as cognitive capitalism or the information society. In this case, the intellect really generates a certain collectivity because it provides a universal access of knowledge for all. Moreover, Virno shows how the general intellect becomes the conductor of protection and orientation in the world when all other traditional landmarks collapse: "Thus, we could say that the 'life of the mind' becomes,

in itself, public. We turn to the most general categories in order to equip ourselves for the most varied specific situations, no longer having at our disposal any 'special' or sectorial ethical-communicative codes. The feeling of not-feeling-at-home and the preeminence of the 'common places' go hand in hand. The intellect as such, the pure intellect, becomes the concrete compass wherever the substantial communities fail, and we are always exposed to the world in its totality" (Virno, 2004: 37). However, such collectivity does not mean creating a public sphere where people experience togetherness with their diversities preserved. The commonality of linguistic and cognitive patterns provided by the general intellect creates the basis for the realm of the social as a space of collectivity where everyone is the same, but not united by common interests and the desire to deliberate on public matters.

It is more likely that such a general intellect will create less space for uniqueness and discussion since it provides everyone with the same forms of knowledge and communication. The "General Intellect" is rather a social intellect. It will certainly be an effective means for a solution to what Arendt calls a social question. As a metaphor, "General Intellect" and thinking can be opposed to each other as *Verstand* and *Vernunft* are in German classical philosophy. The first ability is suitable for communication, and the use of common logic for all reasoning and problem solving according to criteria that is understandable for all. The second ability is a synthesizing activity that implies solitude and concentration of thought on itself, where social intellect will be a cognitive administrative resource for solving social problems. Moreover, it is not for nothing that the modern sphere of social security and services provided by the state is increasingly becoming part of the "General Intellect," moving into a publicly accessible format, and becoming part of the information field. This creates the possibility of direct access for every citizen in this area of social intellect.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it is necessary to highlight the key points where our analysis of Virno's interpretation of the main concepts of Arendt's political philosophy. First of all, Virno considers Arendt's theory to be an expression of a long tradition of political thought which originated with Aristotle. This tradition, which describes the relationship between work, action, and intellect, has nowadays become the common pattern of thought. Virno believes that the modern conditions of production create a completely different experience of these basic human capacities in which work resembles the characteristics of action and conjoins with the intellect. So, the general approach to this tradition in Virno's conceptual framework is not to separate the various concepts and categories, but to show how they can be mixed, and what can come out of it.

Virtuosity, which Arendt attributed to political action, now arises in the work experience. According to Virno, this is due to the fact that work changes its orientation from the production of goods and the interaction with the world of nature to the modulation and production of the communicative ability itself. Work requires the presence of oth-

ers, and its product cannot be separated from the execution of the act. The figure of the worker acquires a political character. Virno takes another important step by showing that virtuosity does not only relate to a political figure or an artist on the stage, as was the case with Arendt; it is also the virtuosity of a linguistic act, which is a matrix of political action.

From this approach of Arendt's political philosophy, Virno will mainly focus on those concepts that help him describe this new, unified experience of human capacities that the *multitude* can possess. He will ignore other important distinctions of her theory since they do not help him solve the issues he imposes. He overlooks the distinction between the social and the political, which, for Arendt, is connected to the problem of the possibility of action in the modern world, and its replacement with behavior. For Virno, the problem is rather how to manifest the full potential of virtuosic work when the state with its bureaucratic apparatus absorbs this opportunity. It is also worth mentioning that Virno disregards the distinctions between labor and work and between the figure of *animal laborans* and *homo faber*. Virno uses the concepts of work and labor synonymously, as it is much more important for him to consider the relationship between *poises* and *praxis*.

Virno considers the sphere of intellect in a similar way, but the fact that he ignores the distinctions between the social and the political affects this interpretation. For Arendt, thinking cannot manifest itself in a public way for this is what happens inside a person, representing an internal dialogue with himself. For Virno, the intellect is the basis of modern production; the general capacity to think is accessible for everyone. Hence, in his opinion, there arises the publicity of the intellect, since it serves as a general "score," due to which the virtuosic acts of the workers are performed. However, proceeding from the social problem of Arendt, the concept of the "General Intellect" for Virno can be interpreted as social intellect since it participates in the reproduction of a certain collectivity, in which common patterns of thinking and knowledge are realized, and where science serves as the basis of production. "General Intellect" creates social, but not a political collectivity which is built on the basis of not diversity, but rather the uniformity of behavioral patterns. Overall, in Virno's theory, the classical idea of dividing human experience into the three components of labor, action, and intellect is generally presented in such a way that they are mixed and placed in some single space, the key point of which is work. Such tactics are unable to disclose all the problematic nodes of the Arendtian philosophy fully, since many issues simply fall out of Virno's scope of consideration.

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Жизнь труда: рецепция Вирно в политической философии Ханны Арендт

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Политическую философию со времен античности занимал вопрос об основных человеческих способностях, которые подразделялись на труд, действие и интеллект. Определение и предназначение этих способностей, а также их связь с основными человеческими

добродетелями были описаны в «Этике» Аристотеля. Следуя Аристотелю, Ханна Арендт определяет две основные сферы, в которых эти способности локализируются: *vita activa* и *vita contemplativa*. Попытка на основе марксизма переопределить основные понятия этой традиции была предпринята итальянским политическим философом Паоло Вирно. В данной статье автор рассматривает, каким образом происходит интерпретация основных понятий политической философии Арендт в работах Вирно, как его подход помогает справиться с основными проблемами, которые она ставит в своей политической теории. Итальянский мыслитель описывает ситуацию, когда труд начинает демонстрировать качества, традиционно приписываемые политическому действию. Вместе с этим жизнь ума, мышление помещается им в центр трудового процесса, а интеллект становится средством публичной коммуникации. В то время как Арендт проводит важные для анализа нашей политической реальности различения, Вирно концентрируется на объединении различных сфер и установлении новых отношений между категориями политической философии. По мнению автора, такая стратегия не всегда позволяет точно охватить все аспекты политической мысли Арендт. Объединение интеллекта с трудом и действием подрывает саму возможность опыта мышления и созерцания. Игнорирование различия между социальным и политическим приводит к тому, что публичность интеллекта можно интерпретировать как то, что интеллект становится социальным, а значит, более пригодным для решения «социального вопроса».

Ключевые слова: Ханна Арендт, Паоло Вирно, действие, интеллект, созерцание, множество, виртуозность, труд

Recovering Hannah Arendt: How and Why?

BERNSTEIN R. J. (2018) WHY READ HANNAH ARENDT NOW? CAMBRIDGE: POLITY PRESS. 124 P. ISBN: 978-1-509-52859-2

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Hannah Arendt taught her last courses on revolution, totalitarianism, and democratic theory at the New School for Social Research from 1967 until her death in 1975. Since that time, the New School has carefully preserved Arendt's legacy and has established the Hannah Arendt Center in 2000, i.e., a vast collection of her articles, letters, memoirs, and books. This unique archive is easily accessible today for all scholars interested in Arendt's personal biography and philosophical ideas. It was the philosopher Richard Bernstein who made this center possible and who, like other professors at the New School, greatly contributed to Hannah Arendt's scholarship in the United States and abroad. Bernstein has written multiple books and papers in which he discusses Arendt's ideas and moves her arguments forward. Although while generally promoting Arendtian political thought, Bernstein puts certain elements of her philosophy into question. He criticizes, for example, her famous but severe distinction between the social and political spheres.[1] In the fall of 2016 when Trump was newly elected as president of the United States, Bernstein was teaching a course on Arendt's politics and philosophy. His new book, *Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?,* largely echoes this class.

As in his course, Bernstein's book gives a brief but quite dense introduction to Arendt's political philosophy. There is seemingly no single topic or concept that this small book does not cover. Bernstein begins his text by describing Arendt's articles on refugees that she published after moving to New York City in 1941, and then goes on to summarize key arguments of all later major Arendtian works, including *The Origins of Totalitarianism, The Human Condition, Between Past and Future, Eichmann in Jerusalem, On Revolution, Men in Dark Times, On Violence, Crises of the Republic,* and, finally, *The Life of the Mind.* The author structures his book around a set of political issues that, as he puts it, Arendt touches on in almost every paper she has ever written. What exactly are these burning

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1. Bernstein R. J. (1986) Rethinking the Social and the Political. *Philosophical Profiles*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 238–259.

issues? According to Bernstein, during her entire academic life in the US, Arendt had been always concerned about political refugees, Zionism, the Jewish nation-state, racism and segregation, the banality of evil, the lack of public freedom and plurality, the high levels of political violence, and, last but not least, the legacies of the American and French Revolutions. Throughout the course of this book, Bernstein argues that "all the problems that Arendt highlights . . . continue to plague us — indeed, they have been intensified and exacerbated" (p. 20). Arendt's positions regarding all of the dangerous political tendencies (as they are presented in Bernstein's book) will be revealed in what follows below.

For Arendt, every human thought and philosophical system derives from one's lived experience. Arendtian philosophy, in particular, had been born out of a story of a German-Jewish refugee who escaped Nazi Germany. Arendt's political thought insightfully reflected her social experience. Being a regular columnist for a German-Jewish newspaper and a member of several Jewish associations, Arendt often wrote, for instance, about other German immigrants like herself. As well as losing their former citizenship, German-Jewish refugees, Arendt insisted, lost their community. She argued that 20th century refugees did not feel fully included in the states that welcomed them, whether it was France or the USA. In most cases, immigrants strived hard to become "ideal" loyal and passive citizens of their new states and were deeply scared of criticizing new governments. In other words, refugees felt unable to engage in public politics, a fact that was, according to Arendt, a symptom of a deep political crisis. The Jewish migrants in Paris and New York with whom she worked with could not exercise their "right to have rights" or the inalienable human right "to belong to a community . . . where individuals can express and share opinions and where one can act collectively with fellow human beings" (p. 28). Instead of actively participating in politics, they passively submitted to the state leaders. While refusing to resist, refugees refuse to act politically and collectively and, if using Arendtian language, turned "into something that is not human" (p. 34).

In the first two chapters of the book, Bernstein notes that "there appears to be no end in sight to the increase in the numbers and categories of refugees" in contemporary societies (p. 15), and that "political events add ever new masses of stateless persons and refugees" (p. 20). So, the "refugee-question" still exists today. The question did not evaporate from the world; therefore, the author concludes that Arendt's observations and worries on migration remain highly relevant for us today. Although Bernstein remarkably articulates Arendt's thoughts on refugees, he does not explain how exactly one can link her comments to the politics of the 2010s. Why should we pay attention to growing migration levels on the planet? Is it because migrants in the 2010s are as politically passive as the French and American Jewish immigrants from the 1940s? Bernstein does not refer to any particular refugee group, or explain why the growth of migration constitutes a dangerous political tendency. In general, he does not clarify what and whom he means when talking about "contemporary refugees" or "contemporary societies." In this regard, his main statement about the especial actuality of Arendt's works for today's world sounds rather groundless. What events, groups, countries, and historical periods does Bernstein have in mind when discussing the "contemporary world" we are living in? *What is that politi-*

cal "now" he wants to bring Arendt back into? These two questions re-appear through the book, moving from one chapter to another.

The next three chapters disclose Arendt's analysis of the Jewish-Arab conflict, race segregation in American schools, and the Eichmann trial. For a brief period of time, Arendt was attracted to the Zionist movement. She considered Zionists as the only active force opposing Hitler and the Nazis in the 1930s. However, in the 1940s, when the Zionists introduced their plans to establish a Jewish state, Arendt strongly objected to that program. The Zionists completely disregarded the lives and opinions of the Arabs, i.e., the majority of people living in Palestine. Arendt, hence, stood up against Zionism, defending the idea of a federated "Jewish homeland . . . a place where Jews would learn to live with Arabs in a joint community, where all citizens would have equal rights" (p. 42). According to Bernstein, this severe conflict was essential for Arendt's later ideas about politics and public freedom (as the realm for plural opinions and open public debates). At the end of the chapter, Bernstein reminds the readers that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been unresolved since the 1940's, and that Arendt was absolutely right predicting the constant state of exception in Palestine. In this case, no one listened to her. Still, Arendt was not always right. Sometimes her sharp political commentaries could be quite reactionary. Arendt, for instance, opposed the attempts to end race-based school segregation in the US in the late 1950s. She claimed that the government had no right to interfere into the "private" realm of the American educational system: "She even suggested that Negro (black) parents were using their children to fight adult political battles" (p. 50). For Arendt, racial segregation always seemed to be a social rather than political question. Bernstein makes an attempt to elucidate some anti-racist elements of Arendtian philosophy. I do not think, however, that his defense of Arendt against accusations of racism ends up being convincing.

Arendt became a widely-known philosopher primarily for her articles in *The New Yorker* in which she discussed the Eichmann trial in 1963. With these articles, she got involved in a very public scandal. Many of her friends and colleagues turned away from her after the publication. Some readers thought that Arendt justified Eichman's actions and even sympathized with him. Her main point was, in fact, very simple. The Nazi leader was far from being an extraordinary monster, sadist, or psychopath. On the contrary, the man was as ordinary, diligent, submissive, and banal as many other individuals who supported and created Nazism. He simply followed the rules he was given, and never seemed to question any of them. Bernstein himself generally agrees with Arendt's concept of "the banality of evil," although he does not believe that her description of Eichmann was entirely correct. In a similar manner with the initial chapters, Bernstein concludes this one by stating that Arendt's "idea of the banality of evil is still relevant today because we need to face up to the fact that one does not have to be a monster to commit horrendous evil deeds" (p. 67). Whom and what does he imply as the embodiments of banal evil in the contemporary world? The answers to these questions are again far from being lucid.

After describing Arendt's views on Zionism, racism, and Nazism, Bernstein turns to a discussion about the philosophical system she developed in her later works. Chapters 7

and 8 are central for Bernstein's book. In these two chapters, Bernstein defines the fundamental Arendtian network of concepts, talking about such categories as politics, plurality, freedom, spontaneity, revolution, natality, power, and action. There is no need, probably, to restate Bernstein's definitions of all of the terms or to summarize the core arguments of Arendt's books, *Human Condition* and *On Revolution*. It is worth mentioning here that Bernstein reconstructs Arendt's philosophical framework with great accuracy and precision. He emphasizes that politics, for Arendt, is the name for a collective action directed towards creating something new in a given world. In her works, Arendt proposes a very "narrow" and unique understanding of politics, calling "political" as only the moments when a majority of people comes together to establish a new set of political rules. For her, the term *politics* refers, in other words, to some privileged situations in which the people exercise their collective power to constitute a new society. It is very important to note here that Arendtian "politics" is a horizontal concept. Unlike other political thinkers, she consistently refused to call domination, violence, command, and obedience "political" relations.

In Chapter 8 ("The American Revolution and the Revolutionary Spirit"), Bernstein repeats his main question of *Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?* Here, he finally formulates his distinct answer to it. The author argues that it is only Arendtian political philosophy that can provide us today "a source of inspiration for political action" that is so desperately needed in contemporary melancholic and cynical times. It is hard not to agree with him on that point. Like previous chapters, however, this one too lacks important references to existing political movements and events. Nevertheless, using Arendt's ideas and texts, Bernstein aptly identifies the key problem of all democratic protests that have emerged in the 2000s–2010s, both in the US and outside. Contrary to popular struggles that led to the American, French and even the October Revolutions,[2] contemporary movements (like Occupy Wall Street, for example) do not follow any positive project. Their participants tend to give up the idea of constituting another social order. Such movements appear to be merely negative. Therefore, they could be hardly called *political* in the Arendtian sense of the term. Bernstein dates the last emergence of constitutive *politics* back to the Polish labour union *Solidarność*.[3] Arendtian political philosophy, as Bernstein points out, could help us realize that constitutive revolutionary action is possible today, even in the United States, regardless of multiple structural obstacles. Arendt is the rare philosopher who was certain that the capacity "to act in concert, to initiate, to begin, to strive to make freedom a worldly reality" is deeply rooted in human nature (p. 121). Hence, this revolutionary capacity could never be totally suppressed.

To sum up, *Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?* is a valuable introductory book about Arendt's philosophy. Its author not only summarizes Arendt's key points, but, more importantly, conveys her unique and affirmative writing style, i.e., the one she became famous for. Bernstein does not impose his thoughts on the German-Jewish philosopher;

2. The one that Arendt especially did not like.

3. He notes that the movement could once turn from a mass anti-bureaucratic resistance to a powerful collective force shaping Polish political decisions in the late 1980s — early 1990s.

rather, he carefully reveals what Arendt tried to communicate through her multiple papers. Bernstein focuses on the ideas Arendt advocated without distorting them. He really cares about these ideas, praising and leaving them intact. This theoretical "care" could be considered as one of the strongest elements of Bernstein's review. The other very strong element of the book is its effort to present Arendt as a coherent and systematic thinker. Quite often, Arendtian thought is divided by interpreters into journalistic and philosophic parts, between short essays and some "serious" books. In this text, Bernstein proves that such classifications are wrong or, at least, not productive. He argues that Arendt's personal and journalistic reflections fueled her philosophy. These two things are inseparable from each other. To a great extent, Arendtian thought had been developed through reflections on her biography and responses to those political events she had lived through during the 1930s–1960s. In other words, her social experience rather than some Ancient academic training that, as Bernstein highlights, was the real driving force for her theories of politics, democracy, and revolution.

Bernstein's recovery of Arendt's thought, however, raises two important questions. First, *how could one connect Arendt's thoughts from the 1930s–1960s to the present political moment?* What concepts could be useful and insightful for a political analysis of the 2010s? As already mentioned, Bernstein does not seem to give a detailed answer to these questions that he himself poses in the book. *Why Read Hannah Arendt Now?* is detached from current political events, mobilizations, and discussions in the United States, Latin America, Europe or Russia. It drops some hints about contemporary dark political times, though avoiding a discussion of the signs and examples of such darkness.[4] Unlike Arendt, Bernstein almost completely excludes commentaries of particular events, figures, or movements from his writing. Although he does not give an example of an Arendt-like political analysis of the 2010s himself, in a sense, the book pushes students to engage in such analyses.

The second important question the book leaves open is the question of how to situate Arendt's particular ideas within the larger context of political thought. I*s it possible to place Arendt within the history of philosophy?* Following Arendt's self-description, Bernstein portrays her as an isolated intellectual figure. He enforces her popular image as a female outsider of the academic world, i.e., one who consciously and consistently refused calling herself a philosopher until her death. Bernstein states that Arendt could not be inscribed to any philosophical tradition and that she remained independent from the philosophical schools and trends of her time. While it is certainly true that Arendt, as she often emphasized in her public speeches, was excluded from the professional philosophical community,[5] it seems to be a big mistake to interpret her works in isolation from other thinkers both preceding her and inspired by her. Although Arendt, in fact, did not

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4. Why exactly do we live in dangerous, hopeless, and totalitarian political times? Women's Marches, International Women's Strikes, Teachers' Strikes, new and strong Socialist wave within the US Democratic Party, all these extraordinary events increasingly undermine the dark vision of the present.

5. See, for example, Arendt H. (2003) Prologue. *Responsibility and Judgement*, New York: Schocken Books, pp. 3–17.

always cite other authors, her works, as historians and philosophers confirm, directly corresponded to the texts of Aristotle, Nietzsche, Bergson, Kant, Hegel, Benjamin, and Adorno, among many others. Moreover, it was Hannah Arendt who influenced the entire generation of critical theorists and feminists, in the 1980s–1990s. Thus, the primary task for Arendtian scholarship today could be putting her thought (back) in dialogue with other philosophers and political thinkers. Bernstein's book about Arendt rather reinforces her theoretical isolation.

Возвращение к Ханне Арендт: как и почему?

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