

POLITICAL THOUGHT

FINNISH YEARBOOK of

POLITICAL
JUDGEMENT



vol. 2

1998

SoPhi

Finnish Yearbook
of
Political Thought
1998
vol. 2

SoPhi

Publications of Social and Political Sciences and Philosophy 22

University of Jyväskylä

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SoPhi is a publication series at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. SoPhi publishes studies on social policy, sociology, political science and philosophy. Texts are chosen for publication on the basis of expert review.

Correspondence should be sent to the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy/Publications, University of Jyväskylä, P.O. Box 35, FIN-40351 Jyväskylä, Finland, tel. +358-(0)14-603123, fax +358-(0)14-603101, e-mail jutavi@dodo.jyu.fi.

Publications can be ordered from Kampus Kirja, Kauppakatu 9, FIN-40100 Jyväskylä, Finland (tel. +358-(0)14-603157, fax +358-(0)14-611143, e-mail kampuskirja@co.jyu.fi).

Visit SoPhi home page at <http://www.jyu.fi/~yhtfil/sophi/sop.html>

ISBN 951-39-0192-0

ISSN 1238-8025

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Printed at Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy, Saarijärvi 1998

Cover Paula Kangasniemi

Layout Juha Virkki

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Editorial

Judging Politics – A Temporal Perspective

The discussion of political judgement commonly includes it as a special case of more general figures of judgement. This is also the case with most of the contributions in this volume, taking the work of Hannah Arendt as a point of departure. Still, ‘judgement’ in the case of Arendt was a name for a certain type of activity of judging itself: the planned title of the third volume of the *Life of the Mind* was Judging.

I want, however, to hint at another perspective, perhaps worth being developed more closely some day. While the tradition from the Aristotelian *phronesis* to Arendt takes judgement as the noun and the political as its qualification, my aim is to revert the tables. I want to draw distinctions within politics as activity itself, constituted by the criterion of playing with the contingency in the situation (cf. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*).

The English adjective ‘political’ refers – in the 20th century usage – to three different nouns: politics, policy and polity. I have introduced a further nuance against the

background of the history of the concept, namely, dividing politics into two verbal figures of politicization and politicking. In my nominalistic view, understanding politics as activity, as a *Bewegungsbegriff* in the Koselleckian sense, the primary ‘performative’ operations are simply politicization and politicking. Politicization refers to the marking of a *Spielraum* of contingency and politicking to performances within this *Spielraum*. Polity is a limiting case which demarcates that which is ‘confirmed’ as a commonly accepted *Spielraum* of politicking in a situation, while policy refers to regulated forms or ‘lines’ of politicking of any agent engaged in politics. This reading turns politics into a verbalized and temporalized phenomenon (cf. my Introduction in Kari Palonen & Tuija Parvikko (eds.): *Reading the Political*, Helsinki: The Finnish Political Science Association, 1993).

‘Decentering’ politics into these four aspects – politicization, politicking, polity and policy – allows us to understand that politics may be manifested in thematically different yet related styles of activity. They can, at least potentially, also be turned against each other. My point is to argue that this pluralization of politics also invites us to a corresponding differentiation in the activity of judging politically.

Playing with the contingency of the situation as the constitutive criterion of politics means, in an important sense, playing with time. The possibility of analyzing political judgements in temporal terms can be related to the three classical dimensions of time: judging has an inherent relation to present, past and future. Reinhart Koselleck has – especially in the article “Begriffsgeschichtliche Anmerkungen zur Zeitgeschichte” (in Victor Conzenius & Martin Greschat & Hermann Kocher (eds.): *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte*, 17-31. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988) – proposed that each of them, in turn, has their own present, past and

future. Thus, he extends the matrix of historical time into a field of nine types of temporal experience.

My suggestion is, furthermore, to distinguish political time from historical time. The initial point lies in the understanding that, whereas historical time is, in principle, unlimited in its relations to the past and future, political time is limited in both respects. Following Gisela Riescher (*Zeit und Politik*, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1994) we can take the electoral term as a representative anecdote illustrating the temporal limits of political activity and the limited character of political time.

In sum, we get the following rough ‘time-table’ of political judgements:

Time-table of Political Judgements

past future polity 1	present future politicization 2	future future politics fiction
past present policy 1	present present politicking	future present policy 2
past past ‘prehistory’	present past politicization 1	future past polity 2

In explicating the table, the first point concerns the borderlines of politics. Both past past and future future can be located beyond the political experience of time. Because of this, I want to name name them ‘prehistory’ and ‘politics fiction’ respectively. How these temporal experiences are presented, may be politically relevant in a wider sense, but it has no direct significance for the present political situation. Any change in the situation may move aspects of these temporal experiences into one of the significant modes of political time.

On the other hand politicking as performance in the present is not just momentary or limited to special occasions. It can, rather, refer to a kind of extended 'present present': Riescher's point is to insist on the electoral term as a contemporary paradigm for this sort of extended present. We can thus locate the performative action of politicking, in the sense of the apt Arendtian metaphor of politics as performing art (cf. *Between Past and Future*) in the center of the political timetable. The point is that it is not just a passing moment but a temporal conduct within the limits of an extended present, such as the current electoral term. It is just this extension of the present which makes it possible to us to include the self-assessment of the performance by political actors to political judgements.

Using Max Weber's idea in *Politik als Beruf*, we can rename citizens as 'occasional politicians'. This idea helps us to relativize the Arendtian distinction between actors and spectators in the judgement of political performance. Even those who only assess a politician's performance on TV are in this sense 'occasional politicians' who are involved in political judgement.

All of the other aspects of political action in this timetable are divided into two variants, the past- and future-oriented. The first one indicates – in Koselleckian terms (cf. *Vergangene Zukunft*) – the space of experience, the second one the horizon of expectation of present politics.

My typology then helps us understand that the most important aspect in judging politically concerns politicization, understood nominalistically as any move opening specific dimensions of contingency to the play of politicking. The present politicking takes place within a definite horizon of the possible, of *Chancen* in the Weberian sense: without judging this horizon of politicization(s), the present performance is not intelligible. Neither can the present performance be assessed entirely without a perspective

of the future: it refers to new and vanishing *Chancen* already indicated by the present performance in politicking. To make this sort of judgements is difficult for the performing professional politicians, for they presuppose a distance from the present performance which is available only to analyzing spectators. Still, it is impossible to imagine any self-judgement of one's activity by a performing politician without the presence of a certain horizon of *Chancen*, both past and future. The spectator-analyst of political performance should always cast attention to these often tacit dimensions in the self-understanding of present political actors.

While politicization refers to the opening moves of playing with contingency, polity in my formal, nominalistic interpretation is a limit-figure which refers to the moves of confirming some existing types of politicization. These moves both exclude and delimit the use of some available forms of politicization and create an obstacle for the possibility of new *Chancen* of politicization becoming commonly acceptable. Politicking as performance should not only be related to those politicizations which are open in principle, but also to the commonly accepted and regimented forms of the polity. The past and future aspects of the polity can then be understood as analogous to those of the broader *Spielraum* of politicization. Political judgement thus concerns both the borderline between polity-conform and non-conform forms of politicization as well as the utilizing (past) and indicating (future) aspects of politicking in relation to both of these forms of politicization. Judgements of this sort are probably highly difficult for the performing actors, while they may be all too ready to accept the limits of polity as the limits of politicking in general.

Politicking as performance should be related to the regulated forms of politicking contained in policies, as plans, programmes or 'lines'. As compared with past

policies, politicking is characterized by a sort of transcendence-in-action in several respects. It consciously deviates from the line-conform type of action in some respects and legitimates this both by the distance from the present to the moment of the fixation of the policy and by the insight of the special temporal occasions involved in the ongoing extended present. On the other hand, the transcending aspect of the performance cannot last forever, but is likely to produce new fixations. The future policy dimension thematizes the ‘outcomes’ of politicking by turning them into subjects of choices between alternative policies. When policy-judgements are always related to politicking as performance, there is no point in trying to make politicking as policy-conforming as possible, or to end the unpredictable performance in politicking as soon as possible. In this sense policy-judgements cannot be pure spectator judgements but are related to self-judgements in the differentiation between policy and politicking among acting politicians.

Finally, a historical point. According to Koselleck’s thesis from the seventies, the horizon of expectation has grown more important than the space of experience. This has been the case roughly since the French Revolution. As I already indicated in the *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* vol. 1, Koselleck has later relativized this thesis, especially by insisting on the role of *Umschreibung* in history (cf. “Erfahrungswandel und Methodenwechsel”, published in Christian Meier & Jörn Rüsen (eds.): *Die historische Methode*, München: DTV, 1988). Although, for Koselleck this remains mainly a question of historiography, my thesis is that now – roughly speaking at least since the ‘Revolutions’ around 1989 – the situation has been changed.

For politicking, as present performance, the past politizations, politics and policies are, today, more important than the perspectives on the future. I think this is the case for the simple reason that we can make quite definite and

contestable judgements on the past aspects, while for the future, the judgements necessarily remain vague. The present past, as a space of experience for the political action in the present present, today contains more radical political potentials for change than the assessments of the future. Just the illusion on the fixity of the past dramatizes its re-interpretations and deconstructs such constructs of history, which are taken as ‘reliable’ conditions for acting in the present. On the other hand, the reliance on specific trends and prognoses and long-term plans based on them has vanished, and nobody wonders if fixed expectations on the future will no longer keep. This shift from the present future to present past can be seen as a result of increasing insight into the contingency of history and the realization that contingency can also be used as a resource in politics. (Cf. my *Das Webersche Moment*, Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998).

All this also means an increasing significance of temporal judgements as inherent parts of political action. ‘Playing with time’ no longer only means only playing against the corrosive elements of time but playing with temporal categories and distinctions as operative elements in both political action and political analysis.

Kari Palonen

Main topic

Political Judgement:
Hannah Arendt and Others

Simona Forti

Judging Between History and Politics

I would like to begin by taking as a pretext an essay by Jean-François Lyotard in which he charges Hannah Arendt of having unduly interpreted Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in "a realistic and sociological" fashion. He reproaches her for having sacrificed the transcendental trait of the judgement of taste and of the *sensus communis* in order to transform these concepts into the categories that bear out a radical political project: that of a community which coincides with the "self-government of being-together" (Lyotard 1991, 86).

Lyotard does not contest the content or the validity of the proposal, which he considers as being the theoretical transposition of the experience of democratic councils. But he believes that, in itself, the projection of a form for a political community is the sign of a thought which is still "too conciliatory"; of a thought which is trying to leave behind dialectical logic but cannot remain in the contradiction, and therefore ends up relinquishing the critical weapon of reflection and resigns itself to the

reconciliation between the subject and political objectivity.

For Lyotard, in short, the Arendtian philosophy gets caught in the trap – which is always waiting – of the Hegelian synthesis: a synthesis that takes away from philosophy the possibility of being a “place of resistance”.

I do not believe that things stand this way. Indeed, I am convinced that all the ambiguities and paradoxes of the Arendtian writings are due precisely to the extreme vigilance of the author who, on the one hand, would like to retrieve for us the originary meaning of the concept of citizenship; but, on the other hand, is aware of the fact that any attempt to reconnect theory and praxis always risks becoming reinscribed in the dialectical reconciliation.

In order to show why Hannah Arendt thinks that the faculty of judgement *is* a weapon for resisting the existent, and therefore not an instrument to overcome *in extremis* the divergence between thought and action, I will rapidly expose the content of Arendt's *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Arendt 1982) emphasizing above all the anti-Hegelian *pathos* that runs through them. I will then refer to some appropriations of Arendt's reflections on judgement, including that of Lyotard, and I will draw some conclusions about what I take to be the most adequate way of reading the *Lectures on Kant*.

The Perspective Opened by Kant

Arendt's work as a whole tries to rethink in a radical way the traditional relation between theory and praxis; a relation that tends to privilege the first dimension over the second. In less generic terms, one can say that her entire reflection – from *The Human Condition* (Arendt 1958) to *The Life of the Mind* (Arendt 1978) – puts into question

the consequences that the approach of “first philosophy” has for the comprehension of the practical sphere (Forti 1996). In particular, she is after the reasons that have allowed metaphysics to compromise an authentic consideration of human affairs. What betrayed free and plural action into the asymmetrical relation between rulers and ruled, what reduced praxis to the order imposed by *theoria*, was the refusal by philosophy to accept the constitutive instability of “human affairs”. To synthesize rather brutally, one may say that for Arendt the basic trait of Western Philosophy, from Parmenides to Husserl, consists in the persistent attempt to negate contingency and plurality, in order to find immutability, permanence and identity in the unshakeable sphere of the “I think”.

Kant plays a fundamental role in the work of deconstructing this basic tendency of metaphysics – a work that Arendt carries out most efficiently in *The Life of the Mind*. There is no time for a detailed treatment of Arendt’s interpretation in the *Lectures*, but it is enough to remind oneself that – through a very selective and projective reading of Kantian texts – Arendt calls upon all those passages which, in her opinion, testify to Kant’s eccentricity with respect to the Western philosophical tradition. As if she wanted to retrieve an image of Kantian philosophy emended of every metaphysical and universalistic aspect.

One could say that Arendt presents *not a pre-Hegelian Kant, still ignorant of the “power of the negative”, but a post-Hegelian, or even post-metaphysical, Kant*. This Kant seems to have passed through the philosophy of existence and turns back to reflect on the *finitude of our being-there* and on the untranscendable co-belonging of man and world.

Arendt, though, cannot avoid certain convergences between Kant and Hegel. For example, Kant seems to embrace, like Hegel, a conception of history that posits an idea of progress and that postulates as its subject the

human species, an entity which is no less abstract than the Hegelian *Geist*.

But if one follows carefully the argument that illustrates the analogies between the two thinkers, one gets the impression that Arendt admits and enumerates the points of contact between the two philosophers only in order to render rhetorically more effective the denial of any real affinity between them. According to Arendt, if Kant did indeed give in to a progressive and providential conception of history, he nevertheless did not hypostatize an Absolute Spirit that reveals itself in history. History, understood in Kantian fashion, does not realize its *telos*: the ideas of freedom and of peace between States are not realized in the course of history like the Hegelian *Geist*, but are simply guiding threads that permit an ordering of the chaos of the events into a narrative plot.

It is essential for her to emphasize the distance that separates Hegel from Kant and to minimize the influence that certain aspects of Kantian criticism have had on idealism. This is because, for Arendt, Kant and Hegel assume the value of *two alternative theoretical paradigms*: either one sides with Kant, in order to save the meaning and the autonomy of what appears; or one sides with Hegel, in order that everything may become reconciled again in the monistic logic of the idea and of historical necessity, from which one demands the meaning of each singularity.

This opposition is asserted with such insistence that one is tempted to think that Arendt's main worry is not so much that of providing an original reconstruction of Kantian thought, as that of sketching a profile on Kant which reveals his radical extraneousness to Hegel's project.

From this perspective, Arendt considers as decisive those passages of the text "Is the Human Race Constantly progressing?" that, apart from allowing her to locate in Kant the separation of politics and morality, also allow

her, once for all, to absolve Kant from any responsibility with respect to Hegelianism.

Undoubtedly, Hegel's belief that Universal History makes sense only if "from the actions of men there results something else, apart from what they intended and attain, know and want immediately", can also be applied to Kant himself, when he writes about the French Revolution. For Kant, in fact, the greatness of the revolutionary events is not due to the actions and the intentions of the actors that took place in those events: what makes him decide for the importance of what has happened, lies in "the mode of thinking of the spectators which reveals itself publicly in this game of great revolutions, and manifests such a universal, yet disinterested, sympathy for the players on one side against those on the other". That is in the fact that the revolution manages to impress "in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in this game themselves) a wishful participation that borders closely on enthusiasm".

Kant and Hegel are therefore united in their belief that it is not through action, but through contemplation that one discovers the meaning of the whole. Kant, like Hegel, seems to remain inside that traditional relation between *theoria* and *praxis* that privileges the first over the second, that gives dignity to contemplation but not to action.

But in the different considerations attributed by the two philosophers to the figure of the spectator, Arendt believes to have found a decisive difference.

If for Hegel the spectator "exists strictly in the singular", and is the philosopher himself, as "organ" of the absolute spirit which homologates reality to itself in the process of reflection, – for Kant, instead, the *Weltbetrachter*, the spectator, who is potentially in every man and not only in the philosopher, exists only in the dimension of plurality.

It is the plural dynamic of *this* spectator – radically different from the “organ” of the Hegelian *Geist* – that Arendt interprets through the categories of the Kantian *Urteilstkraft*.

This investigation tries to bring forward a different way of relating that *bios theoretikos*, which has traditionally cut off its ties to this world, to the *Lebenswelt*. In other words, the conclusions implicit in the trilogy of the last Arendtian work seem to suggest that only if one individuates *within the life of the mind itself* a way of thinking reflectively that maintains firmly its own relation to the world, can one redeem the world of human affairs from the ontological disrepute in which metaphysics has placed it.

This is what Arendt asks of the *Kritik der Urteilstkraft*, a work that she believes to be less compromised than others by the homologizing and unifying power of the concept. The Analytic of the Beautiful lends itself to the enterprise of the “ontological rehabilitation of the singular”; it delineates the competences of a subjective faculty that manages to catch the phenomena directly, thereby eluding the grasp of conceptual determinations. A faculty that escapes the narcissistic delirium of modern subjectivity which brings back all reality to the hegemonic principle of the Self, to the principle of self-identity.

The key passages of the *Kritik der Urteilstkraft* that Arendt uses, to indicate the paradoxical art of “thinking the singular”, are well known. She refers to the discriminating capacity of “taste”, then to the *Erweiterte Denkungsart*, “enlarged mentality”, which in turn refers to the concepts of imagination and *sensus communis*.

As opposed to the “eye of the mind” of metaphysics, which can perceive the truth of being only in isolation, the Kantian concept of the imagination places us in a virtual communication with others in the very moment in which we compare “our judgement with the possible, rather

than actual, judgement of others”. (*Kritik*, § 40)

To guarantee the possibility of such a comparison, Kant calls upon the category of *sensus communis*. A category which is presented by Arendt, rather elusively, as a supplementary spiritual endowment that allows human beings to participate in a community. *But it is not a concrete community*, as Lyotard thinks. The *sensus communis* of which Arendt speaks can be made to coincide with a kind of “factual apriori”, if one can use this oxymoron, which does not define human nature but has the function of circumscribing a specific difference: “It is the capability by which men are distinguished from animals and from gods”. (Arendt 1982, 70)

The sensus communis does not coincide with an ontological principle that grounds the natural sociability of man, from which derives the necessity of a good political community. *It is rather a fact*, which is given phenomenologically, that is at the same time the condition of possibility of language, of communicability, and of sharing in general.

The *sensus communis* cannot even claim to designate the modalities and procedures through which one can attain a “self-government of being-together”, a collective consensus and unanimous political decisions.

It is rather the last, but non-foundational, instance to which Arendt appeals in order to reinforce the argument in favour of the sole and humble truth offered to mortals: that “not Man, but men inhabit the earth” and that “plurality is the authentic essence of men to the degree that they belong to this world”.

It is certainly not surprising that this reading of Kant has provoked numerous criticisms. Of these, the most frequent one, and also the most obvious one, is that Arendt would have deliberately misunderstood the intentions of Kant, in so far as the latter is never supposed to have “displaced” his political philosophy into his aesthetic theory, and even less would he have been disposed to

separate politics from morals – as Arendt’s interpretation presupposes. But also those who consider that it is legitimate to seek the politics of Kant in those texts which are not expressly dedicated to politics, express a note of caution against the excessive facility of Arendt’s interpretation. More precisely, they note that in order to bend the aesthetic judgement to her own purposes, Arendt has to weaken, to the point of irrelevancy, the transcendental problematic, just as she evades the teleological problematic.

There is not much to say about this type of objection. From the point of view of philological accuracy and as a textual analysis, the *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* are hardly defensible. In fact, it is from a different perspective that one must evaluate their relevance: as a “pioneering” text that has opened the way to a wide philosophical and political debate, as well as a renewed interest for Kantian aesthetics, and lastly as a precious indication to understand the whole significance of Arendt’s reflection.

Contentions About the Arendtian Inheritance

Perhaps the most efficient way to bring out the possible implications of the *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* in the recent philosophical debate around political Judgement, is to follow the “reception” of this text in four different authors, each more or less influenced by the Arendtian reflections on the Kantian *Urteilstkraft*.

To indicate the lines along which Arendt’s theory of judgement has been pursued, I have employed *thinkers who are in some way “representative” of different philosophical tendencies*.

Ernst Vollrath has been called upon to testify about the sort of reception reserved for the Arendtian-Kantian judgement within a philosophical context which can be

considered to have important affinities with the philosophical horizon of the German *Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie*. Ronald Beiner, instead, is charged with presenting the relation between Arendt's reflections on Judging and American Communitarianism and Neo-Aristotelianism. From Seyla Benhabib one asks the delineation of the way in which the universalism of Habermasian "discourse ethics" could integrate the perspective opened by the *Lectures*. Lastly, I will consider some reflections of Lyotard, in search of affinities between the interpretation and the use of Kantian reflective judgement made by Arendt and the "anxieties" of a philosophical context, such as that of the French "philosophy of difference", engaged in confronting itself with the inheritance of Nietzsche and Heidegger.

The work of Ernst Vollrath, *Die Rekonstruktion der politischen Urteilskraft* (1977) and *Die Grundlegung einer philosophischen Theorie des Politischen* (1987) move from Arendtian premisses, even though it intends to go beyond Hannah Arendt by extrapolating from her unfinished work a *systematic theory of political judgement*. Especially in *Die Grundlegung einer philosophischen Theorie des Politischen*, Vollrath attempts to delineate a "new philosophical theory of the political" and thereby respond to the serious crisis in which traditional political theory finds itself.

The project of *Die Grundlegung* is very ambitious and it has among its merits the fact that it problematizes some aspects of the so-called "*Rehabilitierung*" of practical philosophy, even though its horizon is not foreign to Vollrath. According to him, the philosophical project of the *Rehabilitierung*, which repropose the Aristotelian separation between *sophia* and *phronesis*, is untenable for at least two reasons. Although the Aristotelian doctrine of *phronesis* responds to the essential requisite of a non-metaphysical theory of politics, because it perceives and accepts the "optional" and not necessary character of the

world of human affairs, still in Aristotle everything that is contingent remains ontologically subordinated to the primacy of what is necessary. In the second place, the Aristotelian wisdom remains tied to the historical presupposition of the Greek *polis*, whose *ethos* has been irredeemably lost. Vollrath's *Neue Klugheit*, the new wisdom on which the philosophy of the political must rest, cannot simply be a new version of the ancients: it must entail a paradigm change.

This is where the *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* become the indispensable theoretical instrument to effect such a change. It will take place only if one puts the rationality of reflective judgement, with its openness to plurality, in the place of metaphysical reason. This type of judgement is called upon to mediate rationality and empiricism, universality and particularity. It is a form of knowledge that emerges directly from the political phenomenon and which is therefore capable of grasping it in its purity, without imposing extraneous criteria. Accordingly, Vollrath delineates the formal criteria which constitute the political: it is not identified in a concrete content, but represents a modality of being-together ruled by the dynamic which is implicit in the Arendtian-Kantian aesthetic judgement. The subjects who judge according to interpersonal universality, and who put themselves, thanks to the imagination, in the place of every other, represent the authentically political modality of association. By judging from a common point of view, they manage to constitute a community. For Vollrath, without this "participation in judgement" there would be no authentic politics, but merely organization.

Ronald Beiner, one of the first proponents of a theory of political judgement, is equally motivated by the desire to put to work the Arendtian inheritance. He is primarily interested in the significance that political judgement may have for a *strong theory of citizenship* (Beiner 1983). Beiner is

situated within a philosophical position – that of the communitarians – which places the problem of intersubjective agreement and consensus not on the theoretical and transcendental plane, but inserts it in the concrete tissue of a community, in the “living” web of a shared *ethos*, from within which emerge and develop the beliefs and convictions of human beings. From this perspective, to investigate the nature of judgement means to investigate a human faculty that, in the absence of objective methods and certain rules, is able to orient itself in the context of particular situations and to open a space of deliberations, of active participation in public life.

But Beiner believes that the Arendtian reconstruction of Kant’s judgement of taste, although fundamental to understand the subjective dynamic of judgement, is incapable of giving a concrete principle on which to support the dynamic of the community, because of the transcendental background in which it moves and because of the universality to which it appeals. This principle is to be looked for in the so-called “Aristotelian theory of judgement”.

In the end, Aristotle remains the necessary complement of Kantian formalism; the Aristotelian political judgement gives what Kant cannot offer: the substantial and concrete co-ordinates of a peculiar modality of human interaction, of which a non-secondary aspect resides in deliberating and deciding together “about the ways of life is desirable to pursue inside a determinate context of possibility”.

Quite different, at first sight, is the perspective from which Seyla Benhabib employs the Arendtian-Kantian judgement. Benhabib turns to the Arendtian *Judging* in order to find a model for “moral action” – understood as communicative action – that can be posited as foundation for democratic politics (Benhabib 1988 and 1996). The author is aware, though, that the Arendtian *Urteilskraft* is

hardly compatible with the still universalist and rationalist perspective of Habermas's universal pragmatics. But precisely on the terrain of the *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Benhabib individuates the place for a possible dialogue between communitarianism and theory of communicative action. For her, Arendt's peculiar interpretation of Kant – which has rid him of certain excessively formal garbs and dressed him up with those of Aristotelian *phronesis* – indicates the way for a possible mediation between the particularistic attitude toward context and the universalist point of view of morality. In brief, for Benhabib the merit of the hermeneutical operation that conjugates Aristotle and Kant is that of having made thinkable a fruitful reconciliation between the transcendental aspect of the “enlarged mentality” and the contextual moral judgement to which communitarians appeal. The latter, if appropriately understood, could mitigate the formalism and abstractness of universalist morality.

We must admit that Habermas in some respects followed the path indicated by Benhabib (Habermas 1976 and 1980). He took into consideration the criticism moved by communitarian thinkers. With reference to the latest Habermas, we may in fact speak of a “contextual and particularistic turn”. That is to say: the assumption of a more critical attitude towards a pure universalistic paradigm and the attention for a more particularistic one; a turn which is connected, in a not merely secondary way, to these Arendtian reflections on Kant.

Nevertheless I do not think it is possible to consider this Habermasian move as a paradigm change, as someone has suggested. Habermas is still tied to a philosophical framework which states a universalistic claim, even if in a milder way. A claim which prevents him, in principle, from a radical recognition of differences as well as an authentic acceptance of the radical “singularistic” point of view adopted by Arendt.

The “philosophy of judgement” of Jean-François Lyotard has very little in common with the so-called theories of political judgement. The French philosopher does not appeal directly to the *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*. One can say, though, that he thinks side by side with Arendt, through an interpretation of Kant which shows much more than a simple formal affinity with her (Lyotard 1983). Lyotard’s hermeneutical operation also consists in amplifying the antimetaphysical charge of certain Kantian notions, as if to contrast the weight of universalistic elements contained above all in the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. The French philosopher emphasizes the Kantian discovery of the heterogeneity of subjective faculties and interprets them in a radical manner, drawing from it the extreme consequence of an unreconcilable discord. From here derives the insistence of the irreducible difference between Wittgensteinian “family of phrases” – aesthetic, theoretical, ethical, political – and the accusation of violence brought against any attempt to subsume them under a unique epistemic discourse. The aesthetic, reflective judgement, according to Lyotard, would thus be the faculty which is capable of putting into communication radically different types of discourse without thereby doing an injustice to their singularity. And critical philosophy – the philosophy in charge of “judging” – becomes the legitimate pretender to the “impartial tribunal”; a tribunal which has no prescriptive authority and which limits itself to regulate and establish the borders between different language games (Lyotard 1986).

Behind the ironical and eclectic style that would seem to place the author of *The Postmodern Condition* in a strand of thought which is wholly “relativist”, there lies in fact the same exigency that Arendt espoused. That is: *the need to define a place of resistance against the hegemony that determinant judgement exerts on the sphere of human affairs*. The same *pathos* for a space-time that escapes the logic of the process; a

logic that in our times takes the guise of the calculus, of efficiency and functionality at all costs. To refuse this logic is possible for both thinkers by virtue of the faculty to judge reflectively: because only the reflective judgement allows for different types of discourse not to be dominated by that logic.

Just like Arendt, Lyotard believes that it is illusory and misleading to put to work the determinant judgement before an event: to anticipate the meaning of what is happening by a pre-understanding that inserts it in the reassuring chain of the relation of cause and effect. These thinkers have also in common the belief that *nothing can exempt us from the "responsibility" of having, time and again, to give an answer to the cases: to judge the case without the help of established criteria.*

But if Arendt appeals to the Analytic of the Beautiful, and to its possible extension to the sphere of politics, Lyotard appeals to the Sublime, and to that feeling of pleasure and displeasure that one experiences not just before nature, but also before historical events. In his opinion, the aesthetic judgement tied to the beautiful still carries with it the hope of an "harmonic integration", in which the particular reconciles itself with the universal. The sublime, on the contrary, by evoking excess and incommensurability, remains faithful to non-reconciliation, to the fundamental task – of which Lyotard is the bearer – that the plurality of voices may be preserved and not recomposed inside of a discourse that is unitary and hegemonic.

Also in this case one can say that Kant – with his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* and above all with his treatment of the Sublime – is called upon to contrast Hegel: as the Arendtian *Lectures*, also the writings of Lyotard give us back a "post-Hegelian" image of Kant, intended to disrupt the dialectical system, in all of its more or less mystifying variations. And in a more radical manner than with Arendt, here the accent is placed on the impossibility of

an acquiescent synthesis, on the impossibility of re-composing the contradictions (Lyotard 1986).

In conclusion, we can say that in spite of the divergent appeals to the Sublime (Lyotard) and the Beautiful (Arendt), the two readings of Kant appear undoubtedly close, as is testified above all by those pages of *L'enthousiasme*, in which Lyotard appeals to the "gift" of judgement and thereby seems to restate the same alternative proposed by Arendt: either one appeals to a subjective faculty which can discriminate, think critically, and decide; or the Hegelian *Weltgericht* will have the upperhand, and, by demanding to world history the emission of the final verdict, will exempt everyone from the responsibility of judging.

Judgement and the "Activity of Thinking"

A new type of practical rationality; a modality for deliberating on the principles on which to base a political community; a fundamental category of communicative action; a form of understanding that allows us to grasp the sense of events, without predetermining them.

These, in synthesis, are the directions of a possible continuation of Arendt's interrupted discourse and also the diverse tasks assigned in turn to judgement. These tasks are assigned from philosophical perspectives which are also in contrast with one another. But if in spite of this, these perspectives share – directly or indirectly – the reference to Arendt's *Judging*, then one will have to admit that Arendt's political philosophy in general, just as her reflections on judgement, is traversed by different vectors which are not easily reconcilable within a reassuring theoretical framework.

Perhaps it is also for this reason that interpreters have given much space to the *opus postumum* of the author: *as if*

in it there were kept the secret of her last words, that, one they were deciphered, would shine light over her entire work.

In short, if communitarians see in the usage of a Kantian transcendental perspective the reason for the abstractness of the Arendtian judgement, the Habermasians reproach her precisely of not following through the implications of the “critical and intersubjective rationalism” of Kant. If on one side the supporters of “discourse ethics” approve Arendt’s insight for avoiding the identification of *sensus communis* with a real and determined political community – an insight that gives to this concept the value of a regulative idea for a discursive practice as enlarged as possible – the communitarians, on the other hand, regret precisely this point. They are willing to follow Arendt’s discourse on judgement only up to the point in which it nears Aristotelian *phronesis* and abandon it when the appeal to Kant – a falling back into modernity, in their opinion – becomes determinant, and accounts for the fact that the concept of *sensus communis* cannot offer a support for the functioning of a community that expresses itself and renews itself on the basis of a shared *ethos*.

As I had anticipated, we find ourselves before divergent decodings of the “last word” of Hannah Arendt. These are so different one from the other that we may be led to think that she offers, in reality, many theories of judgement – perhaps complementary ones: political judgement, moral judgement, historical judgement. In reality, she never formalized these distinctions; if anything, she has emphasized the unitary and autonomous character of the faculty of judgement. Especially in the last writings, when it is modelled upon the reflective judgement, the faculty of judgement becomes – this is certainly true – more and more the prerogative of an impartial observer. Impartial, but not indifferent to the events of the world.

If we pay attention to the way in which Arendt individuates the temporal modalities which are supposed

by the faculties of the life of the mind, perhaps the physiognomy of judgement stands out more clearly.

To thinking, in fact, corresponds the eternal present and willing turns out to be related to the future; the past, lastly, is the proper temporal dimension of the faculty of judgement. The reflections on *Judging*, thus, have little in common with the “judgement” implied in the practical deliberation of the Aristotelian *phronimos*, or in the intersubjective dynamic of “communicative ethics”, whose temporal direction is undoubtedly oriented towards the future.

The last word of Hannah Arendt, thus, returns to the concept of history, and therefore represents a progressive shift toward the external borders of the political. But not in the sense that one can read *Judging* as the result of a thought which through clearly distinguished stages returns to the place from which it had wanted to leave behind originally. As if this thought were trapped by that very escape from the world of human affairs which it had originally put into question.

The work of Hannah Arendt begins with a critique of the separation of thought from action. It tries constantly to subvert the hierarchical order in which theory and praxis present themselves within traditional political philosophy. It is also true that this work ends without suggesting an answer to how both terms can connect themselves. It does not give us a “new political science” that would allow us to make projects and to put order in the world of human affairs in a non-traditional way.

But I think that this lack should not be seen as an unkept promise or a deviation from the original intentions; *rather it must be considered as a result that was inscribed in the premises of this critical, radical, and anti-systematic thought, a thought, nevertheless, which was much more coherent than what the author herself liked to admit.*

It is true that in works preceding *Thinking and Moral Considerations* (Arendt 1971), Arendt looks into the Aristo-

telian perspective of *phronesis* in order to find the possible overcoming of the fracture between theory and practice, in accordance to a modality different from both rationalistic constructivism and the Hegelian dialectical rationalism. And it is undeniable that judgement – in those writings – is considered also under the register of the actor who acts in concert and who deliberates on matters of common interest.

But if one examines carefully those references to *doxa* and to *phronesis* one realizes that they do not resolve the relation between thinking and action, they *do not reconcile theory and praxis through the mediation of the political judgement. The tension between the two moments persists: a separation that becomes more radical in her last works and which the author intentionally does not want to overcome.*

Even if it were through the modality of reflection rather than determination, on the basis of a phronetic rather than epistemic knowledge, that respects and recognizes the contingency and singularity proper to the world of human affairs, a theory of political judgement that would serve to orient action by giving it an intention that begin from an idea, binding again both terms, would travel along those same rails that Arendt wanted to abandon. If action would actualize a theoretical project through judgement, then it would again make of action an “applied consequence”, the mere execution of a knowledge, no matter of which kind it may be.

In other words, such a theory of judgement would repropose the derivative character of a praxis which obeys to the command of *theoria*; it would present once again, under a different guise, that same logic of means-ends in opposition to which Arendtian thought gains its significance. In this case one could really say that the author has returned to a place which she wanted to leave. Instead, it is as if Arendt throughout her work, but with more tenac-

ity in the final part of it, forces herself *to resist the temptation of the synthesis, of the reconciliation and of mediation.*

The only acceptable reconciliation is that which connects thinking and reality – once the former has shed the curial habits of metaphysics – in the reflective judgement of the person who, not interested in adequating the meaning of what happens to her own philosophical conviction or to her own theoretical project, tries to grasp the sense of the events. Just as she tries to free herself from the ungrounded subjective self-sufficiency by educating the imagination to “visit” the point of view of others; especially of those who are the outcasts, the pariahs whose voices cannot be heard from by the dominant chorus.

In spite of the fact that this judgement *does not mediate between thought and action within a political community, it does not lend itself to be the basis of a systematic political theory, it does not draw out the presuppositions of a discourse ethics, it maintains the claim to be at once ethical and political, as historical.*

As I have pointed out already, far from being brought back to the *bios theoretikos* which had turned its back on the world, this judgement becomes, in the hands of her author, the weapon to combat what Hegelian *Geist* represents in Arendtian eyes: not the least of which is an acquiescent attitude toward the process of becoming which justifies everything that happens.

In contrasting this conception of history, which subordinates the contingent to the necessary and the event to the process, the Kantian *Urteilkraft* recovers, according to the intentions of her interpreter, the Greek meaning of *historein*. That is, this faculty assists to the events of the world and then decides what is worthy of being remembered and of being “saved” from disappearing in time.

But this faculty, which would appear to be a mere category of historical understanding, reveals at the same time its *ethical potential* (Bernstein 1996 and Parvikko 1996).

Without appealing to universal criteria and moral rules, it implies *the responsibility to give or withdraw one's assent to reality, to discriminate what is right from what is wrong in everything that happens.*

But in so snatching the final verdict “from the pseudo-divinity of the modern age named History”, judgement gives expression to thinking, and becomes the *place of resistance with respect of the existent*. And this judgement, in “times of political emergency” can become *immediately* action.

Toward the end of *Thinking* Arendt wrote: “When everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because their refusal to join in is conspicuous and thereby *becomes a kind of action*. In such emergencies, it turns out that the purging component of thinking (Socrates' midwifery, which brings out the implications of unexamined opinions and thereby destroys them – values, doctrines, theories, and even convictions) is political by implication. For this destruction has a liberating effect on another faculty, the faculty of judgement, which one may call with some reasons the most political of man's mental abilities. ... The faculty of judging particulars (as brought to light by Kant)...realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances, where I am never alone and always too busy to be able to think. The manifestation of the wind of thought is not knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And this, at the rare moments when the stakes are on the table, may indeed prevent catastrophes, at least for the self.” (Arendt 1978, 193)

Arendt did not elaborate further her vision of this mysterious faculty. And perhaps it was not accidental. As if it were only possible for her to conclude her path by reminding us that thinking critically and judging reflectively are, as Lyotard says, the sole true freedom that we

are left with, amidst the ruins of ethics and the progressive retreat of the public space: “the freedom to say yes or no to abjection”.

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Tuija Parvikko

Hannah Arendt as Judge

A Conscious Pariah in Jerusalem

I did try to leave my position, to leave for the front, for honest battle. But I was held fast in those dark duties. Once again I would stress that I am guilty of having been obedient, having subordinated myself to my official duties and the obligations of war service and my oath of allegiance and my oath of office, and in addition, once the war started, there was also martial law.

This obedience was not easy. And again, anyone who has to give orders and has to obey orders knows what one can demand of people. I did not persecute Jews with avidity and passion. That is what the government did. Nor could the persecution be carried out other than by a government. But I never... I accuse the leaders of abusing my obedience. At that time obedience was demanded, just as in the future it will also be demanded of the subordinate. Obedience is commended as a virtue.

May I therefore ask that consideration be given to the fact that I obeyed, and not whom I obeyed.

Adolf Eichmann's Final Plea,
cit.<http://www.pbs.org/eichmann/ownwords.htm>

On May 11, 1960 Adolf Eichmann was captured in a suburb of Buenos Aires and smuggled to Israel by the Israeli intelligence service. His trial took place the following year in Jerusalem. The prosecution and the judges did not give much consideration to the fact that Eichmann obeyed (cf. Hausner 1966); but they did find that the accused acted out of an inner identification with the orders that he was given and out of a fierce will to achieve the criminal objective (see also *The Eichmann Trial. Proceedings*. In <http://www.pbs.org/eichmann/>).

Among the public at the trial there was Hannah Arendt, who did give consideration to Eichmann's obedience. She did not, however, consider it a mitigating circumstance as Eichmann's defense wanted but rather aggravating evidence against the accused. Whereas the prosecution built its case upon Eichmann's participation in the mass murder and fate of the victims, Arendt remained faithful to the basic principle of the Western legal system according to which the verdict must be based on the deeds of the accused.

Out of a conviction that obedience was the key trait of Eichmann's conduct as a Nazi official, she started to write her report on the trial, which first appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1963 and then as an enlarged version in book form later the same year with the title *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report of the Banality of Evil* (EJ). In this book Arendt directs attention to the overall orchestration of the trial on the one hand and Eichmann's role in the deportation of the Jews on the other.

It has often been argued (see e.g. Beiner 1982) that what really directed Arendt's attention to the question of judgement was precisely Eichmann's trial. Having witnessed the trial as a reporter for *The New Yorker*, and having published a highly controversial report about it, Arendt became deeply committed not only to her own account of it but also to principles and criteria of judgement in general.

This argument holds, of course, partly true. The trial of Eichmann turned out to be a touchstone of Arendt's ideas about judgement. In its extremity it proved to be something that put her own capacity for judgement to the test. On the other hand, it gave her the impetus to reconsider the criteria for judgement, as it seemed evident to her that after the phenomenon of totalitarianism, the traditional criteria of political judgement were no longer valid.

However, it should not be ignored that Arendt had begun to approach the question of political judgement already during the war, when she decided, together with her husband Heinrich Blücher, to examine the phenomenon of totalitarianism and its constitutive elements. In other words, Arendt's interest in the question of political judgement was not awakened all at once in the Eichmann trial, it was rather one of the leading themes in her thinking from her early considerations of Jewish pariahdom until her late discussions of the life of the mind (cf. Young-Buehl 1982, 164-211).

In fact, if one compares Arendt's war-time criticism of the actions of the Jewish leadership with her judgement of the Jewish Councils in EJ, one is struck by the similarity between them. This convergence stems from Bernard Lazare's impact on Arendt's thinking. It was from Lazare that she adopted her view of the political incapability of the Jewish leadership to act politically and lead its people in the modern world. In a profoundly Lazarean manner, she criticized the Jewish leadership for preferring to hold to traditional strategies of negotiation and concession instead of organizing the Jewish people into a fight against a common enemy. This view shaped both Arendt's war-time writings and her interpretation of the Eichmann trial (for more detail see below).¹

As is well known, the American reading public, especially American Jewish intellectuals, did not regard

her capacity for judgement very highly but severely attacked her account of the trial. In other words, Arendt's book was by no means welcomed as a valid and truthful report of the trial. A storm of criticism and debate followed immediately particularly in America but also in Europe. At the front line of the debate were American Jewish intellectuals, who accused Arendt of all kinds of distortions, from those concerning the conduct of the trial to those of twisting historical facts (see e.g. Musmanno 1963; Podhoretz 1963; Robinson 1965; Syrkin 1963). Even those who had approved Arendt's earlier accounts of totalitarianism deemed her report heartless and cruel (see e.g. Scholem 1963). She was blamed for having turned her back on her people by defending the Nazi criminal in court.

In her approach to Arendt's conception of judgement in this volume, Simona Forti argues that "[w]ithout appealing to universal criteria and moral rules, [the faculty of judgement] implies the responsibility to give or withdraw one's assent to reality, to discriminate what is right from what is wrong in everything that happens." For Arendt, judging is, indeed, always about "particulars", concrete phenomena of the human world. The events of the world do not follow any moral rules or general laws but take unforeseen paths in the face of which we are left with our capacity for critical and reflective judgement. This means that in the Arendtian framework, there cannot be any universal theory of judgement precisely because judging is always about unprecedented particulars.

In the following, I will reread Arendt's report on the Eichmann trial from two perspectives. Firstly, I lean on Simona Forti's account in this volume in which she argues that Arendt's conception of judgement neither lends itself as the basis of a systematic political theory nor draws out the presuppositions of a discourse ethics but yet maintains the claim to be at once ethical and political. Secondly, I

will read Arendt's report from the perspective of "pariah ethics"², the cornerstone of which is the idea of the inescapability of personal responsibility. I will argue that Arendt's account was badly misread because the dimension of pariah ethics was either omitted or rejected by her readers.

The attacks on Arendt never really hit the target because virtually nobody understood or wanted to understand her underlying conceptual commitments and interpretive arguments. This was partly her own fault because she did not understand how important it would have been to explicate the principles and criteria of her interpretation; rather it remained hidden, constituting an implicit frame of her judgement. She did not comprehend, in other words, how radically her conception of personal and political responsibility and political accountability at large differed from the common sense view of American intellectuals. In order to grasp this frame one has to be acquainted with Arendt's early writings on Jewish pariahdom and particularly, on the role of Bernard Lazare in them.

I will first discuss the principal arguments of Arendt which caused the debate and relate them to her pariah ethics. I will then take a glance at Arendt's critique of the arrangements of the trial. Finally, I will consider how the particular case of the Eichmann trial is located in Arendt's reflections on judgement.

A Conscious Pariah in Jerusalem

In Arendt's account of Eichmann's trial, there are two crucial arguments which caused debate. These are her interpretation of the role of the Jewish Councils in "the final solution of the Jewish question" and her thesis of the banality of evil in Eichmann's deeds.

Arendt argued that instead of organizing the Jewish people into common resistance against the Nazis, the Jewish leadership, most importantly the Jewish Councils, preferred to cooperate with the Nazis, believing that with a traditional policy of concessions and sacrificing a few they would be able to save many. In other words, the Jewish leadership did not understand that they were confronting an unprecedented phenomenon to which traditional modes of Jewish policy were not applicable: they were not able to see that this time, there was no end to the pogroms, or rather, the final solution was not simply another manifestation of the pogroms, and this is why a traditional policy of concessions could not work successfully (see EJ, Chapter VII). Unlike what was frequently argued in the debate over EJ, Arendt did not claim that the Jewish leadership should have understood from the start where Nazi policy was leading. This would have been impossible because the official decision on the execution of the final solution was made only in 1942 at the so called Wannsee conference. Even though Hitler's desire and intention to destroy the Jews was clear and obvious much earlier, the rhythms and modes of the destruction developed only gradually (cf. Hilberg 1961; Goldhagen 1996).

In Jerusalem, the question of the role of the Jewish Councils in the final solution was not, of course, raised by Arendt but it did emerge in the course of the trial. It followed faithfully the wide-spread postwar debate over why the Jews did not resist or fight back. Unlike the prosecution, Arendt was not satisfied with the typical explanation of the impossibility of resistance under totalitarian rule (cf. Hausner 1966). She considered it necessary to have a second glance at what the Jews, or more precisely the Jewish leaders, actually did when faced with deportations. She argued that at a certain point, when the mass deportations started, the Jewish leadership should have seen that all the routes led to the gas chamber:

whatever the motives of the Jewish leadership might have been, they ended up supporting Nazi rule by cooperating with the Nazi authorities, and thus facilitating the deportations of Jews (cf. Arendt 1963b).

As to the argument of the banality of evil, Arendt's claim is that Eichmann was neither the main architect of the plan of destruction of the Jews (Eichmann was principally concerned with the execution of the deportations) nor a particularly evil or perverse person. In his case, Arendt argues, the horror lies in the fact that he was too normal. In other words, he was basically an average and decent man who wanted to do his job well and follow orders without asking questions. The evil lies precisely in this unquestionable desire to follow orders because it connotes an incapacity to think, to personally consider what one exactly is carrying out when following orders (EJ, 276, 287).

This kind of evil is banal because there is nothing inhuman, monstrous or Faustian in it. It is simply banal, average, and mediocre. It is neither a mark of hopeless stupidity nor over-intelligent monstrosity but rather the result of ethical and political thoughtlessness.

Despite what most of her critics suggested, Arendt's purpose with these arguments was not to make the Jews guilty of their own destruction but to raise the question of responsibility, both from the viewpoint of the perpetrator and the victim. It is indeed my argument that in Arendt, the underlying conceptual commitment, which binds the Jewish Councils and Eichmann's banal evil together, is her conception of responsibility. More precisely, what is common to both the Jewish Councils and Eichmann is the omission of responsibility. It did not occur to them that with their unquestioning obedience they might be contributing to something they did not desire. They simply believed they were doing what they had to do under the circumstances without assuming responsibility for their own acts and deeds.

Arendt's conception of responsibility was strongly shaped by her acquaintance with the writings of Bernard Lazare, a French Jew of the era of the Dreyfus Affair. In Lazare's view, pariahdom does not offer any excuse for irresponsibility and passive yielding to fate. Rather it is the duty of every human being to resist oppression. In other words, social or political exclusion does not offer any excuse for withdrawing from the duty of resisting the plight of injustice and political voicelessness.

From this basic conviction, it follows that every human being is responsible for his/her own acts and decisions concerning his/her political situation. Human agents are not radically divided into cruel evil-doers and innocent victims. Every human being contributes to his/her own political future by his/her own acts and deeds through which s/he becomes committed to the common world. In other words, pariahs also have their own share of responsibility for their fate.

In the case of European Jews, this means that they were not merely innocent victims of evil Gentile forces around them. Although their social and political oppression is an undeniable fact, this fact does not relieve them from a share of responsibility for their political vicissitudes. From this Arendt concludes that the political past of the Jewish people should not only be read as a miserable Diaspora history of historical sufferers but also in terms of their role as makers of their own history. (cf. Arendt 1948)

It was precisely Arendt's conception of the responsibility of the pariah that was omitted by her critics. This omission is due to the reception of her works in post-war America and Europe. Even though those acquainted with Arendt's early writings knew that the dimension of pariahdom played an important role in them, virtually anyone had personally consulted Bernard Lazare's texts.³ This is why it was practically impossible for the reading

public of the 1960s to grasp an entirely Lazarean tone in Arendt's report. Her binding and personally challenging pariah ethics were understood as cruelty and heartlessness if not direct sympathy for Eichmann.

Similarly, her profoundly Lazarean stance towards Jewishness itself remained unnoticed. Her ironical remarks on the internal hierarchies of Jews were read as signs of a bias against eastern Jews in her own thinking. Had the American intellectuals been acquainted with Lazare's monumental *L'antisémitisme, son histoire et ses causes* (1894), they might have been able to grasp a connection between Arendt's irony and Lazare's relativization of Jewishness as an eternal and primarily religious identity of an entire people. He argued forcefully against inner hierarchies in Jewish communities and spoke for the possibility of a political existence for the Jews on European soil.⁴

Arendt as Judge

Those who accused Arendt of distorting the conduct of the trial did not simply argue that she warped the facts or told lies about what happened in Jerusalem but rather they claimed that she gave a false picture of the motives for organizing the trial because of her lack of empathy towards the Jews and their historical fate (see e.g. Robinson 1965).

Keeping in mind Arendt's above-mentioned Lazarean conceptual and interpretive commitments, I will now shift attention to the characteristics of the setting of the trial and Arendt's judgement on it. This is because in order to understand what she said in EJ one needs to be acquainted with what she did in Jerusalem.

In her book, Arendt did not restrict herself to reporting faithfully the stages of the trial. Rather, she presented herself as a self-authorized judge, who assumed the right to pronounce her own verdict not only on Eichmann but

also on the entire orchestration of the trial. However, by this gesture she did not attempt to replace or exceed the sentence of the “real” judges or to compete with them in professional qualifications. As a self-authorized judge Arendt was not concerned with giving a moral or juridical judgement, however she did attempt to make a political judgement both on the trial and its subject because according to her pariah ethics it was the duty of every human being not only to resist oppression and fight for justice but also to judge politically the deeds of one’s peers.

In her “verdict” Arendt approaches the question of why the trial was organized and discusses both the roles and motives and the factual acts and deeds of the prosecution, defense, and judges as well as those of the Israeli government.

As I have already pointed out, Adolf Eichmann was not sentenced *in absentia* at Nuremberg immediately after the war, but was traced for years by the Israeli intelligence service and finally caught in Argentina in 1960. The Israeli government did not want to have him tried before an international court but claimed that a Jewish court in Israel was the only proper place for the trial.

Already, the first pages of the Eichmann book reveal that Arendt considered the motives of the Israeli government to organize the trial highly questionable. She points out that “justice demands that the accused be prosecuted, defended, and judged, and that all the other questions of seemingly greater import...be left in abeyance” (EJ, 5). For Arendt, Eichmann’s deeds should have been on trial, not the sufferings of the Jews, not the German people or mankind, not even antisemitism and racism (EJ, 5). This is because Arendt sincerely believed that it was not possible to put on trial general concepts or collective groups of people but only individuals and their deeds. She admits that this was exactly what the highly qualified judges of

the trial were trying to do. However, she identifies four basic factors which impeded their sincere efforts to do justice.

Firstly, for David Ben-Gurion, the Israeli Prime Minister, and his government what were on trial were by no means Eichmann's deeds but all the above mentioned questions, which should have been held in abeyance. In other words, Ben-Gurion was organizing a show trial, the purpose of which was to reveal to the entire world the immensity of the sufferings of the Jews, the guilt of the German people and other Gentiles for the destruction of European Jewry, and the eternal character of antisemitism and racism. Moreover, the underlying motive and desire behind these aims was to prove to the whole world that the only possible resolution of Nazi crimes would be to guarantee the existence of the Jewish state in Palestine. In other words, in Arendt's interpretation the Eichmann trial provided the Israeli government with a smoke-screen behind which to justify the establishment of an all-Jewish state in Palestine (cf. EJ, 9-10).

The second factor is related to the first: in Arendt's interpretation Ben-Gurion remains the invisible stage manager of the proceedings, dictating that which the prosecution was doing: "in the courtroom he speaks with the voice of Gideon Hausner, the Attorney General, who, representing the government, does his best, his very best, to obey his master" (EJ, 5).⁵ In other words, the manuscript of the trial was not written by the representatives of justice but was dictated by the leaders of the state of Israel. It consisted in bringing to court a huge number of witnesses who testified about their own stories and experiences under Nazi rule. More often than not these testimonies had no direct connection with Eichmann's deeds, as in the case of Polish Jews who were not deported anywhere by Eichmann but killed on the spot by *Einsatzgruppen* (cf. EJ, 206-207).

The third factor concerns the proper way to organize the trial. In the opinion of the Israeli government and Gideon Hausner, an international court would not have been a proper place to judge Eichmann because they believed that only a Jewish court could render justice to Jews, and that it was the business of Jews to sit in judgment on their enemies (cf. EJ, 6-7). In other words, according to the prosecution, Eichmann's crimes were crimes against the Jews and for this reason he ought to be judged in a Jewish court. Arendt disagreed. In her view, the overall setting of the trial was improper and Eichmann was sentenced on an incorrect basis. As a Nazi official who acted as part of the entire Nazi machinery, his crime was not only against the Jews but also against the whole of humanity. This is why he should have been condemned in an international court as *hostis generis humani*, and not as *hostis Judaeorum*.

The fourth factor concerns the absurdity of the task of the trial. In principle, the task of the trial is to find a proper punishment for a crime. By suffering a punishment sentenced by the court the criminal is supposed to reconcile his/her crime and gain the chance for a new beginning in the common world among her peers. In the case of Nazi crimes this general principle of the Western conception of justice is not valid because they were simply too immense to be reconciled.

In Arendt's view this holds true in Eichmann's case, too and from this viewpoint, the Jerusalem trial was an absurdity. However, Arendt does not suggest that Eichmann should not have been punished at all because his crime was too immense to be reconciled. Instead, she suggests two alternative ways of dealing with the situation. Either Eichmann should have been judged in an international court in order to remind humankind of the fact that what was at stake in Nazi totalitarianism was the incapacity of European political culture to deal with the problems

produced by itself, or Eichmann should have been executed without any trial whatsoever. From the latter perspective a trial was unnecessary because Eichmann's crime was evident and well-known and his fate was foreseen.

Invitation to Judge Politically

To act and to judge are not the same, but in politics they are inseparable. More precisely, political action presupposes political judgement and *vice versa*. Otherwise responsible political action and commitment to the human world are impossible. The difference between acting and judging lies in the fact that they cannot always take place at the very same moment. Political judgement, by its nature, is retroactive (cf. Forti in this volume) whereas political action often leans on *ad hoc* considerations. It is precisely because of this peculiar nature of political action as contingent and unprecedented that it requires retrospect judgement. Without retrospective judgement, which weaves political acts into the web of history and remembrance and gives them significance⁶, single political acts might remain a chain of scattered and random, and, as such, insignificant events and happenings.

The inseparability of acting and judging concerns, above all, judgements on future events. Political actors need to try to foresee future events in their contingency in order to be able to decide what kind of strategy would best promote the realization of a preferable course of events. In this they have to judge still potential events without an overall view of them which retrospective judgement can enjoy.

It turns out that in the Arendtian perspective, retrospective judgement of past events and antecedent judgement of future events require each other. Retrospective judgement improves our capacity to judge and

helps us to grasp the profoundly contingent character of the human world and its events. It may help us understand that we will never be able to master and foresee the future. On the other hand, antecedent judgement is necessary in the attempt to prevent something like totalitarianism, which should not have happened, to reoccur on earth. Without any guarantees of success all we can do is to consider and judge as carefully as possible what we are doing and what we are going to do.

The question remains whether Arendt's position as a self-authorized judge of the setting of the Eichmann trial can be justified. It is my argument that she ventured to take this position because it was her deep and sincere conviction that it was the duty of every human being not only to act but also to judge politically. In matters that concern the common world between people, anyone is justified if not even obliged to judge politically. In other words, Hannah Arendt's right to judge the Eichmann trial is based on a general human right – and duty – to judge events in the human world. Making judgements does not mean elevating oneself morally above one's fellow human beings but rather exercising one's basic human right and capacity. Hannah Arendt's judgement was not meant to be the last word on the Eichmann case but rather an invitation to exercise the capacity for judgement whenever something significant happens.

In extreme situations, such as totalitarian rule, where open participation in public matters is impossible, political judgement may provide the only available alternative for political activity. As Simona Forti points out in this volume, judgement gives expression to thinking and becomes a place of resistance with respect to the existent. This judgement, in times of political emergency, can become immediate action.

However, in my view, there is a paradox inscribed in the totalitarian situation. The impossibility to act (in the

Arendtian sense) tends to lead to unwillingness to think, to critically consider what is going on. It is as if totalitarian rule tended to destroy the capacity to judge critically by destroying possibilities to act politically, as if it were enough to forbid acting to make judging, too, disappear. This paradox is related to the fate of thinking under totalitarian circumstances. As Eichmann's case clearly shows, thinking is easily replaced by obedience and obedience, alas, shifts responsibility onto the shoulders of others. The threat here, in the Arendtian perspective, is that the link between thinking and judging is cut off. It is as if the purging component of thinking which liberates the faculty of judgement has been replaced by an obsession to obey and push doubt – which always invites one to think – as far away as possible.

As Arendt forcefully shows, this is precisely what happened to Eichmann. Instead of considering critically what he and his superiors were really doing, he preferred to faithfully follow orders, to obey the commands of his superiors without taking personal responsibility for his own acts and deeds. Thus, one of the greatest crimes of Eichmann was thoughtlessness, which led to unwillingness to assume his share of responsibility.

The horror in Eichmann's case lies in the fact that his kind of behaviour is far from exceptional. On the contrary, escaping from responsibility behind the commands of others is an ordinary vice of everyman. Still, it is not inevitable. As Simona Forti pointed out in the discussions of the seminar lying behind of this volume, we should not restrict ourselves to staring at those, like Eichmann, who behaved in an average way. Instead of regretting the unhappy consequences of obeying the rules, we should shift our attention to those who did not yield and obey, who did not lose their capacity for judgement but followed the Lazarean maxim of resisting oppression under any circumstances. Instead of becoming paralysed when

confronted with the banality of evil in Eichmann, we should ask what those rare persons really did who did not give up and acquiesce to the circumstances.

Hannah Arendt's Verdict

In the postscript of the 1965 edition of *EJ*, Arendt complains how troubled men of our time are by the question of judgement. She regrets that the argument according to which we cannot judge if we were not present and involved ourselves seems to convince everyone everywhere, although it seems obvious that if it were true, neither the administration of justice nor the writing of history would ever be possible (*EJ*, 295).

She continues by observing that although justice, and not mercy, is a matter of judgement, public opinion everywhere is in agreement that no one has the right to judge somebody else. What public opinion permits us to judge and even condemn are trends, or whole groups of people. For Arendt, this is something so general that distinctions can no longer be made, actors can no longer be named (*EJ*, 296).

These arguments of Arendt clearly show that what Arendt was pursuing in *EJ* was a rethinking and rehabilitation of the political judgement on the concrete deeds of living individuals. For her, judging the deeds and acts of an individual was the only way to distinguish right from wrong and establish the relations of responsibility. The problem and the task was to establish new criteria for political judgement as the old criteria of the nineteenth century were no longer valid after the emergence of totalitarian rule.

However, Arendt's desire to find new criteria for political judgement does not mean that a theory of judgement was to be found in her later writings. On the

contrary, she was convinced that after the appearance of totalitarianism as an unprecedented and unforeseen phenomenon, the establishment of a theory of judgement based on a firm fundament of permanent concepts and conceptions was not possible. We cannot establish permanent laws of judgement because the criteria for judgement are always related to the situation. All we can find in Arendt are the criteria of *how* to judge. More precisely, our judgements ought to be based on the recognition of the post-totalitarian situation in which we are left without eternal truths and a firm basis for thinking. We ought to strive for situated knowledge and judgements which are committed to contingent plurality and the worldliness of human existence.

I have argued that in Jerusalem, Arendt presented herself as a self-authorized judge of the trial. In the *Epilogue* of EJ she, indeed, explicitly gives her own verdict on Eichmann, offering it as an alternative to the view of the judges of the court. I have also argued that its purpose was not to replace or exceed the sentence of the real judges but rather to reveal the basic nature of Eichmann's crimes which was related to his thoughtless and uncritical obedience to the rules and commands of his superiors. This obedience is, however, only a part of Eichmann's guilt. The other part was his unwillingness to share the earth with the Jewish people. This unwillingness went against the principle of the contingent plurality of human existence. This is why Eichmann's crime was not so much moral or juridical in its nature but rather political:

We are concerned here only with what you did, and not with the possible noncriminal nature of your inner life and your motives or with the criminal potentialities of those around you. You told your story in terms of a hard-luck story, and, knowing the circumstances, we are, up to a point, willing to grant you that under more favorable circum-

stances it is highly unlikely that you would ever have come before us or before any other criminal court. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that it was nothing more than misfortune that made you a willing instrument in the organization of mass murder; there still remains the fact that you have carried out, and therefore actively supported, a policy of mass murder. (EJ, 278-279)

In other words, the fact that Eichmann was not an incarnation of the devil on earth does not relieve him from responsibility for the deeds he committed. The point is rather that in court we should not condemn a person on the basis of *what* s/he is but rather what s/he does, i.e. *who* s/he is on the basis of his/her deeds.

For politics is not like the nursery; in politics obedience and support are the same. And just as you supported and carried out a policy of not wanting to share the earth with the Jewish people and the people of a number of other nations – as though you and your superiors had any right to determine who should and who should not inhabit the world – we find that no one, that is, no member of the human race, can be expected to want to share the earth with you. This is the reason, and the only reason, you must hang. (EJ, 278-279)

In sum, unlike almost everybody else, Arendt took seriously what Eichmann said. This is not the same as to credulously justify his deeds. It means rather that Arendt built her interpretation and “verdict” on Eichmann’s own words, without making any distinction between the innocent or misleading surface and evil essence in him. She was convinced that what was aggravating the evidence in Eichmann’s case was inscribed in his own account of what he did. More precisely, for Arendt, the greatest crimes of Eichmann were visible in his appearance in front of the court and in his deeds as a Nazi official. Eichmann’s

final plea was, indeed, based on an argument, which in Arendt's view was, in addition to his unwillingness to share the world with the Jews, the most aggravating evidence of his guilt. This was the zeal to obey the orders of his superiors without ever considering what he was actually doing.

Notes

- ¹ In order to fully identify Lazare's impact on Arendt's conception of political judgement and her judgements of Jewish politics one ought to compare his writings with Arendt's war-time writings in the German immigrants' magazine, *Aufbau*, and her other war-time considerations of Jewish politics.
- ² Here, the term pariah ethics does not refer to any systematic ethical discipline. Rather I use it to refer to Arendt's conception of the accountability of the pariah position. According to her view, adopted from Lazare, social and political pariahdom did not allow political passivity but rather demanded active self-defense and rebellion against oppressors.
- ³ The omission of Lazare's texts holds true even today. This is partly due to the fact that they are not very easily accessible and have mostly remained untranslated in English. See e.g. Bernstein's (1996) otherwise sharp interpretation of the theme of pariahdom in Arendt's texts.
- ⁴ For more detailed discussion of Lazare's impact on Arendt and a bibliography of his most important writings see Parvikko 1996.
- ⁵ Gideon Hausner did not, of course, accept this interpretation but explicitly argued against it. See Hausner 1966.
- ⁶ For an excellent account of Arendt's conception of story-telling see Disch 1994.

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Thomas Mertens

Arendt's Judgement and Eichmann's Evil

Mir scheint, man muß, weil es wirklich so war, die Dinge in ihrer ganzen Banalität nehmen, ihrer ganz nüchternen Nichtigkeit – Bakterien können völkervernichtende Seuchen machen und bleiben dennoch nur Bakterien.

Karl Jaspers an Hannah Arendt, 23. October 1946

Introduction¹

In many respects Hannah Arendt's report on the Eichmann trial is interesting and stimulating. Take a close look at how she deals with the problem of territoriality, of criminal responsibility and the principle of "*nulla poena sine lege*", and at her reflection on what the meaning of human rights could be and the related issue of determining what we now call "crime against humanity". In addition to the positive reception of these aspects, the book is also widely disputed because of several other aspects²: first, for the way in which it depicts the role of the Jewish state which she suggests wanted to misuse the trial for

political reasons. According to Arendt, prime minister David Ben-Gurion had a show trial in mind which should have bolstered the legitimacy of the Jewish state. Therefore the Jewish authorities denounced the idea of judging Eichmann before an international court from the beginning. Second, the way Arendt portrayed the role of the Jewish councils in the process of deportation and destruction of the Jews as being an important instrument in the hands of the Nazis, was also disputed. Without the cooperation of the Jews themselves this process could not have been carried out so smoothly: "..., if the Jewish people had really been unorganized and leaderless, there would have been chaos and plenty of misery but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and a half and six million people".³ Her judgment of the leaders of these Jewish councils is severe and harsh, maybe, after some reflection, too severe. Recall the small correction, perhaps occasioned by the fierce criticism, made in second, revised edition of the book. Speaking about Leo Baeck, the former Chief Rabbi of Berlin and prominent member of the Jewish Council she deleted the original phrase: "who in the eyes of both Jews and Gentiles was the Jewish Führer".⁴

Thirdly, her book was criticized because of the way it depicts Eichmann, not as sadistic monster as the prosecutor Hausner would like to have him, but rather as a clown only able to speak in clichés. Arendt emphasises this dilemma between the unspeakable horror of the man's deeds and his undeniable ludicrousness, which brings her to the widely discussed account of "the Banality of Evil" as exemplified in Eichmann. She wrote as follows: "Eichmann was not Iago and not Macbeth, and nothing would have been farther from his mind than to determine with Richard III 'to prove a villain'. Except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement, he had no motives at all. And this diligence in itself was in

no way criminal; he certainly would never have murdered his superior in order to inherit his post. He *merely*, to put the matter colloquially, *never realized what he was doing*. It was precisely this lack of imagination... It was sheer thoughtlessness – something by no means identical with stupidity – that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period. ...one cannot extract any diabolic or demonic profundity from Eichmann”. The trial teaches us, according to Arendt, “the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying banality of evil”.⁵ At first sight this account of Eichmann’s evil was, however wrongly, taken as an attempt to trivialize not only what Eichmann had done, but also the horror of the Holocaust.⁶ Later in the reception of the book, the thesis of the banality of evil was taken seriously as an attempt to come to grips with political evil in totalitarian regimes. Attention was also given to the terminological problems since Arendt in the earlier totalitarianism book, a book which is still very rewarding, called this political evil “radical”. Yet, the qualification of Eichmann’s evil as “banal” continues to be subject of criticism.⁷

In this contribution I will not concentrate on the question as to whether or not Arendt deviates from her earlier thesis on radical evil. Recently, Bernstein convincingly argued that despite the impression one gets from what Arendt herself writes⁸, there is not a huge difference between radical evil and the thesis of banality of evil in the Eichmann book. Instead, I try to add to our understanding of the nature of Eichmann’s evil by focusing on the role Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy played in Arendt’s way of rendering it. It is apparent that Kant’s philosophy played a major role in Arendt’s work. Her final book *The Life of the Mind* is devoted to the mind’s faculties of knowing, willing and judging, in a clear analogy to the Kantian *Kritiken*. Unfortunately, Arendt wasn’t able to provide us with a well prepared version of her views on the faculty

of judging, due to her untimely death. She only left us with some lectures, the now well-known *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. It is my conjecture that Eichmann's evil in the perception of Arendt must be understood in the context of her work on the faculty of judging. I will therefore connect these *Lectures* with the Eichmann book, as is suggested by Arendt herself. In the introduction to *The Life of the Mind*, of which the *Lectures* were supposed to be the third part, she wrote: "Factually, my preoccupation with the mental activities has two rather different origins. The immediate impulse came from my attending the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. In my report of it I spoke of 'the banality of evil'. Behind that phrase, I held no thesis or doctrine, although I was dimly aware of the fact that it went counter to our tradition of thought...about the phenomenon of evil. ...I was struck by a manifest shallowness in the doer that made it impossible to trace the uncontestable evil of his deeds to any deeper level of roots or motives. The deeds were monstrous, but the doer... was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous. ...it was not stupidity, but thoughtlessness. ...It was this absence of thinking...that awakened my interest."⁹

My conjecture is simple: While writing on the Eichmann trial, Arendt held no thesis as to the nature of Eichmann's evil. Only after studying Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, not as a theory of fine arts or biology, but as a theory of the constitution of a political community through *sensus communis*, she found besides totalitarianism the second necessary component to understand what she was confronted with, namely the total absence of *sensus communis*. In the Eichmann book this second component remains implicit. I will try to bring it to the fore. But first, I examine the way in which Kant's moral philosophy explicitly played a role of some importance in the trial.

Eichmann and the Duty to Obedience

During the police interrogation before the trial an apparently strange episode took place. For what would seem to be more strange than bringing the moral philosophy of Kant in connection with the murderous activities of the Nazis? Yet that is what happened. During these interrogations Eichmann said that he had lived his whole life according to Kant's moral precepts and especially according to the Kantian definition of duty. During the trial Judge Raveh questioned the accused on this point and, Arendt writes, Eichmann came up with an approximately correct definition of the categorical imperative: "I meant with this remark about Kant that the principle of my will must always be such that it can become the principle of general laws".¹⁰ He then told the judges that he had read the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. However, in response to the question whether he considered his contribution to the Final Solution in accordance with the Kantian principles, he answered that this was not the case: "No certainly not. ...For I did not mean as I was living then, under the pressure of a third party. When I talked of the categorical imperative, I was referring to the time when I was my own master, with a will and aspirations of my own, and not when I was under the domination of a supreme force. ...Then I could not live in accordance with this principle. But I could include in this principle the concept of obedience to authority. This I must do, for this authority was then responsible for what happened".¹¹ Again, Judge Raveh was surprised: it might be true that the killing of people cannot be reconciled with Kant's philosophy, but does Eichmann really mean that blind obedience is one way or another implied in the concept of the categorical imperative? Eichmann answered that that he had to obey and that he found himself into a completely new situation

which he could not really judge. When pressed again, he gave up: "es kann nicht im Sinne der Kantischen Forderung liegen, Menschen gewaltsam zu töten, weil es an sich nichts Gottgewolltes ist". But, as he justified himself, "die ganze Materie Kant" is not understandable for a person such as he; he just lived "ein ordentliches Leben" according to "kategorischen Imperativs für den Hausgebrauch eines kleinen Mannes". In this household use of the little man nothing more of Kant's spirit was left than the demand not only to obey the law, whatever its origin, but also to identify with the principle of the law, whether it is practical reason or the Führer's will.¹²

Arendt does not pay much attention to this episode in the trial, which she apparently considers as just one more strategy of the defense to present Eichmann as just an ordinary law-abiding citizen. He simply carried out his duties and how can he be held responsible? And she more or less agrees with Eichmann's evaluation of the situation: he was no longer able to live in accordance with Kantian principles when his will was put under the domination of a supreme force. Arendt takes it for granted that Kant's moral philosophy rules out blind obedience since it is so closely bound up with man's faculty of judgment. For Kant every man was a legislator from the moment he started to act.¹³ She also agrees with Eichmann's contention that in Germany the very odd notion existed that to be law-abiding means not merely to obey the law but to act as though one were the legislator of the laws one obeys.¹⁴ She is therefore not astonished by Eichmann's declaration that he felt uncomfortable when making two exceptions for Jews in his neighbourhood. He helped a half-Jewish cousin and a Jewish couple after a request made by his uncle. He feels guilty about these events, because the law has to be obeyed unconditionally, even when one has to act against strong inclinations.¹⁵

However, Arendt neglects to mention that such obedience to the authorities can be traced back to Kant's philosophy as well. At first sight, it seems that Eichmann has a point here. Isn't the duty to obedience a commonplace in Kant's political philosophy. Kant's famous 1786 essay "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" emphasizes the freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters and provides the famous definition of Enlightenment: "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity". Such freedom, however, does not entail being freed from the duty to obedience. In the very same essay Kant quotes Frederick the Great with much approval: "Argue as much as you like and about whatever you like, but obey!"¹⁶ To be sure, during the Nazi regime, there was no freedom to argue, but it is highly questionable whether this unjustified restriction of the freedom to argue would lead to the removal of the duty to obey, according to Kant. The duty to obey seems not to be contingent on freedom of speech. For although Kant's more mature "On the Common Saying: "This May Be True in Theory, but it Does not Apply in Practice"" emphasizes the freedom of the pen again, we also find the harsh statement that all resistance against the supreme legislative power is the greatest and the most punishable crime. This prohibition is absolute: "even if the power of the state or its agent, the head of state, has violated the original contract by authorizing the government to act tyrannically, and has thereby, in the eyes of the subject, forfeited the right to legislate, the subject is still not entitled to offer counterresistance." Resistance is absolutely prohibited.¹⁷ Kant's *Rechtslehre* confirms this: "If the organ of the sovereign, the ruler, does anything against the laws (e.g. if he infringes the law of equal distribution of political burdens in taxation, recruiting, or the like), the subject may lodge complaints about this injustice, but he may not offer resistance". The sovereign of the state has

rights only in relation to the subject, and no coercive duties.¹⁸ Would 20th century experience with totalitarianism then not refute at least Kant's political philosophy?

There are some good arguments against such reasoning however. First, Kant's arguments apply to the situation in which he lived: not the situation of totalitarianism, but of the ascent of republicanism. It is even possible to understand his refusal of the right of revolution as an argument in favour of the French Revolution, namely as a denial of the right of the French king to restore his power.¹⁹ Furthermore: the denial of the right of revolution is not exceptional nor unprecedented: Kant merely reiterates the Hobbesian argument that the establishing of sovereignty is the necessary condition to leave the state of nature. To acknowledge a right to resist would deny such sovereignty. The problem of the "*quis indicabit*" would remain unsolved, since the state of nature's problem is exactly the absence of a final judge. Therefore there cannot exist a juridical right to resistance. Thirdly, in a few places in Kant's writings, a restriction of the duty to obedience is indicated. In the second edition of the *Rechtslehre* Kant adds an appendix, in which he replies to Bouterwek's criticism, among others, on this point. Kant writes: although the following proposition is offensive: "That one who finds himself in possession of supreme executive and legislative authority over people must be obeyed and that this obedience is rightfully unconditioned", it is a categorical imperative to obey the authority who has power over you. But between brackets he now adds the following: "in whatever does not conflict with inner morality".²⁰ A footnote in the earlier "Religion within the Limits of Reason alone" repeats this: the biblical saying that we ought to obey God rather than men (*Acts*, V 29) means that if men command anything which in itself is evil, which is: directly opposed to the law of morality, we dare not, and ought not, obey them.²¹ The *Kritik der*

praktischen Vernunft even gives an example of such a command: when someone was forced to give a false statement on Anna Boleyn by such high authority as Henry VIII, he rightfully refused to do so.²²

Now it could be argued that these statements and this example cannot have far-reaching consequences. For they occur on the margin of Kant's political philosophy: an appendix to the *Rechtslehre*, in chapter three of Kant's book on Religion and in the second *Kritik*, not in its core. Furthermore, these remarks are very vague: they by no means indicate the conditions as to what counts as a violation of "inner morality" and as to when exactly the duty to obedience is lifted. And if such conditions aren't specified, who then is going to judge? If every citizen had the right to judge whether or not morality is seriously violated, his duty to obey would not mean much. There seems to be, to say the least, a conceptual tension between Kant's admission that one should obey God more than man and the unconditional duty to leave the state of nature.

In order to answer the question whether Eichmann could have justifiably referred to Kant's political philosophy for his defense, we need a more substantial answer than these references. A first step toward such answer would be to consider what blind obedience and giving up of one's own judgment would mean. Let us have a look at how Eichmann could have formulated the principle of his will, using the formulations Arendt gives: "Act as if the principle of your actions were the same as that of the legislator or of the law of the land; or in the words of Hans Frank: Act in such a way that the *Führer*, if he knew your action, would approve it." Could these imperatives be called categorical? To a certain extent they can, for in a trivial sense these commands ask for obedience without any restriction, because they are intended to have universal validity. But in a more technical, Kantian, sense they

cannot be called categorical, as it is important to realize that the form of an imperative alone does not decide whether it is categorical or not. The imperative: "if somebody lends money to you, you have to pay her back", is categorical despite its hypothetical formulation; the imperative "take care of your health" is hypothetical despite the absence of an if-clause.²³ Whether an imperative is categorical or not, depends on whether it derives its binding force from itself or from something else. The concept "categorical imperative" means that there are obligations which do not derive their validity from any kind of contingent presupposition. If on the other hand the validity of an imperative depends on some contingent preconditions, it must be called hypothetical. Therefore, it is clear that the duty to frame your actions according to the same principles as those established in the law of the land or according to the will of the *Führer*, depends on the existence of this law of the land, on the existence of the *Führer*. Such duty can therefore not be anything but hypothetical.

This conclusion is further reinforced if we apply the criterion Kant formulated when we want to know whether our maxims, our general principles of how to live our lives, are morally acceptable or not. In this case we have to put these maxims to the formal test of universality and find out whether the ones that guide our lives could be accepted by all others as the guiding principle of their will as well. The categorical imperative therefore requires us to "act only on that maxim through which we can at the same time will that it should become a universal law". If my maxim can be "willed" as a universal law (of nature, as Kant later adds), acting upon such maxim is a moral duty. If, on the other hand, the maxim destroys itself as soon as it is made universal, it clearly cannot be considered to be a categorical imperative.²⁴ Now let us apply

this formal criterion to the maxim as it could have been formulated by Eichmann and Frank: I want to act as if the principle of my actions were the same as that of the legislator or of the law of the land; or: I want to act in such a way that the *Führer*, if he knew my action, would approve of it. Can such determination of my will be made universal? In answering this question and conducting a thought experiment, one presupposition must be made. Such a determination of the will in accordance with the law of the land or the *Führer* is not the result of some physical law of nature, but indeed an act of their will. Human beings necessarily act under the idea that they are free.²⁵ Therefore people have to decide to act according to such maxims. Now we ask: is it possible for a human being to determine their will in such a manner? The answer is, of course, in the affirmative. We have seen ample historical evidence. Eichmann is a clear example of a human being prepared to subordinate his will to that of someone else. Many people even consider it comfortable to have others think for them.²⁶ However, in order to know whether such determination is morally acceptable, we have to ask whether it can be universally valid. Can I consistently will this maxim to be a universal law? Here the answer is evidently negative: I cannot consistently subordinate my will to someone else's will and therefore such maxim cannot be made into a universal law. The reason for this lies in the contradiction of such a will. For in such a case I use my capacity as a being endowed with a will to give up myself as such a being: through the very same maxim I want to have a will, namely in order to subordinate my will by way of an act of the will, and to not have a will in order to follow unconditionally someone else's will. At the same time, the will affirms and denies being a will. Such a maxim is inconsistent and can therefore not be made into a universal law.²⁷

This very same argument can be formulated differently as well. The maxim “I shall subordinate my will to someone else’s will” is a violation of the respect that everyone should have towards himself as a end in itself. And therefore such framing of the will not only contradicts the first formulation of the categorical imperative (the formula of universal law), but also the second (the formula of the end itself).²⁸ And in this sense a clear analogy in Kant’s political philosophy can be found. If we ask whether it is possible that someone makes himself into the slave of someone else, empirically the answer must be affirmative. We can imagine people being in the situation of giving up all their right, and thereby having duties only. But if we ask whether such act can consistently be willed, the answer is negative: Making oneself into a slave would be an act of the will, and would at the same time amount to not having a will anymore. Yet, not having such will would make the established contract void. In Kant’s words: no one can voluntarily renounce his rights by a contract to the effect that he has no rights, but only duties. The reason being that such a contract would deprive him of the right to make such a contract and thereby invalidate the one he already made.²⁹

We may therefore conclude that Arendt is right in arguing that for Kant morality is incompatible with blind obedience.³⁰ The line of defense taken by Eichmann as not being responsible for the killing of the Jews because he was only carrying out orders, cannot be supported by Kant’s political philosophy, nor by Kant’s ethics. Strict obedience to immoral duties is ruled out as evil. Eichmann has to be convicted, but then still the question remains: what exactly is his crime? And is there a relation between judgement and crime?

Eichmann and the Absence of Judgement

For several reasons it might seem strange to try and use Kant's philosophy in understanding Eichmann's evil. First, apart from the brief episode I just reflected upon, Kant isn't mentioned in the Eichmann book. Furthermore: despite the fact that the thesis on the banality of evil has attracted much attention, Arendt didn't mean to write a theoretical treatise on the nature of evil.³¹ Thirdly but connected therewith: according to Arendt we are dealing here, as she has already indicated in her book on totalitarianism, with crimes without precedent.³² Totalitarian regimes commit crimes that can neither be forgiven nor punished, because they constitute "absolute evil which could no longer be understood and explained by the evil motives of self-interest, greed, covetousness, resentment, lust for power, and cowardice". Within the philosophical tradition this form of evil has never been conceptualized, neither in the Christian tradition, nor even by Kant, who was "the only philosopher who, in the words he coined for it, at least must have suspected the existence of this evil even though he immediately rationalized it in the concept of 'perverted ill-will' that could be explained by comprehensible motives". We are confronted with the undeniable existence of a phenomenon that cannot be understood with the conceptual means provided by tradition. The only certainty is the fact that this evil emerged in connection with a system in which, as Arendt formulates it, everything is possible and in which all people are equally superfluous.³³

Despite these considerations I think that Kant's philosophy is helpful in understanding Arendt's interpretation of Eichmann's evil. We could imagine Kant as an expert witness. In order to do so let us examine Arendt's description of the defendant in some detail. According to

her, the most striking thing about Eichmann was his ordinariness. In spite of the way in which the prosecution wanted to portray him, the trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, (namely) terribly and terrifyingly normal.³⁴ There seems to be no depth in his motives: he just obeyed orders, which he took for the law of the land and therefore legal orders; like so many people, he was ambitious and repeatedly complained about not having reached the position in the hierarchy that he deserved in his own eyes. Despite his loyalty his rank was never higher than "*Obersturmbannführer*". He had been merely modest in his judgement, because he thought that he was not in the position to morally evaluate the objectives of his superiors: "who am I to judge?", even more so when it turned out that the bloody solution was not only ordered by Hitler and Himmler, but, as the Wannsee Conference made clear, actively supported by the "élite of the good old Civil Service". "At that moment, I sensed a kind of Pontius Pilate feeling, for I felt free of all guilt", Eichmann remarks.³⁵ It is my conjecture that the core of Arendt's thesis of the banality of evil lies in this inability to judge. Look again at the crucial lines Arendt wrote: Eichmann was not Iago, not Macbeth, nor did he intend 'to prove a villain' like Richard III. He was eager to make a career, but would never have thought about murdering his superior in order to inherit his post. He merely failed to realize what he was doing, due to "lack of imagination" and "sheer thoughtlessness", that disposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period.³⁶ This, and not diabolic and demonic profundity, is the banality of evil.

From this description a few consequences follow. For Arendt, there seem to be two kinds of evil. The one kind is the "normal" one that we are familiar with: the evil behaviour of man motivated by self-interest, greed, cov-

etousness, resentment, lust for power, and cowardice. The other kind then consists of the lack of imagination and judgement, and is thoughtlessness. This kind of evil, unforeseen in the past, emerges in connection with the rise of totalitarian regimes and is perpetrated within such setting. Second, this new kind of evil must not be equated with stupidity or inconsiderateness. But what then does Arendt mean by “thoughtlessness”? It is evidently not the absence of any kind of moral consideration. Eichmann was eager to promote his career³⁷, but not at all costs. It can also not be equated with lack of rationality: Eichmann was an excellent organizer; he knew which means to use in order to reach the goal of the Final Solution. But, crucially, he never thoughtfully considered the nature of the end he was pursuing. He did not question the Final Solution. This “thoughtlessness” can be connected with a series of observations. Arendt remarks that Eichmann is characterized by a tremendous lack of what I would like to call authenticity. This is the meaning of her labeling him as a clown. This lack of authenticity became apparent when it turned out that Eichmann remembered only the important stages in his career but that he had hardly any recollection of the decisive stages in the development of Nazism or the war. His memory is focused extremely on himself. Furthermore: he is completely unable to truly communicate: he can only speak through clichés. For this reason he was very susceptible to the language rules the Nazis invented for covering up their crimes as he belonged to the “bearers of secrets”.³⁸ And even his last words, under the gallows just before his execution, were totally silly. Even then he could speak only in the cliché of the funeral oratory. This thoughtlessness is “thought-defying”³⁹ and consists of the almost total inability to look at anything from the other fellow’s point of view, or in other words, the inability to think, namely to think from the standpoint of somebody else.⁴⁰

Now it would seem as if this inability must be considered as evil since it violates Kant's categorical imperative, which, in its second formulation, commands us to treat every other human being as an end in itself. But this is not the case. Arendt's conception of thoughtlessness as the incapacity to recognize the other's point of view has Kantian roots, but they must not be sought primarily in Kant's practical philosophy, but in the first part of the third *Kritik*: the Critique of (Aesthetic) Judgement.⁴¹ As we find in her posthumously edited *Lectures*, Arendt claims to have found Kant's unwritten political philosophy in this Critique of Aesthetic Judgment. At first sight this is an astonishing thesis. Don't we find Kant's political philosophy in the essays mentioned above and in others, like "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht" dedicated to the philosophical description of the history of political institutions, or in the demand for world peace in *Zum ewigen Frieden*, or in the glorification of the French Revolution in the second part of *Der Streit der Fakultäten*? Didn't Kant write a *Rechtslehre*, part of the long planned *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*?

Arendt knows, of course, that these texts exist, but nevertheless holds that only the first part of the third *Kritik* deals with the specifically political existence of human beings and communities, namely that they exist in plural. This emphasis on diversity and plurality must be distinguished from Kant's thoughts on the human race as a specific species among other species on the one hand and from thoughts devoted to man as a rational being among other rational beings on the other. In the former man is subject to the law of nature. Thus Kant writes: "The history of the human race as a whole can be regarded as the realisation of a hidden plan of nature".⁴² The latter perspective deals with man as subjected to the law of practical reason and as a member⁴³ of the realm of intelligible beings, together with other, yet unknown, ra-

tional beings. The first perspective reduces man to the realm of nature and the second lifts man to the realm of rational beings. Both perspectives, however, fail to focus on the specificity of the human condition, namely on the “plurality” of men as earthbound creatures, living in communities, endowed with common sense, a sense of and for community.⁴⁴ According to Arendt, when Kant writes about the human being, we always have to consider what he refers to: to the human being as a part of teleological nature, to the human being as a part of the kingdom of ends, or – and this is the genuine political perspective – to human beings “as they really are”.⁴⁵ Political philosophy has to thematize the specifically human inhabitation of the world, as earthbound creatures endowed with a community sense.⁴⁶ The precondition for the good life within a political community is therefore the well functioning of the specifically human sense, for the *sensus communis* distinguishes men from animals and from gods. A human community can only be upheld as long as the rules of *sensus communis* are respected: think for oneself; put oneself in thought in the place of everyone else; and be in agreement with oneself (these are the maxims of enlightenment, enlarged mentality and consistency, respectively).⁴⁷ Although this faculty of putting oneself in the place of someone else must be exerted in solitude, it will disappear unless one communicates with others and exposes one’s opinions to the test of others.⁴⁸ While moral evil is the inconsistency of the proposed maxim to bring the Kingdom of Ends closer, political evil consists of the total neglect of these rules, i.e. of the withdrawal from the political realm⁴⁹ with the attempt to extinguish the sense for community as its *sine qua non*. According to Arendt’s interpretation, Kant’s unwritten political philosophy results from applying the so-called reflective judgment⁵⁰ in aesthetics to the realm of politics. In a judgment of taste we consider both an object of art and an

object of politics from a general point of view⁵¹ thereby abstracting from our own particular point of view. We are able to reach this general point of view by the faculty of imagination.⁵²

Eichmann's political crime, and the crime of the Nazi era generally, consisted of the effort to extinguish imagination and absolute refusal to reach an extended way of thinking. Thus, in the specific Kantian sense this era and this person could be called insane, since insanity consists of the loss of *sensus communis*⁵³ and the predominance of *sensus privatus*: the world is conceived according to the standards of the self only, and the ability to make something present which is absent, is lacking.⁵⁴ People are no longer willing to liberate themselves from private circumstances and conditions: everything is literally "*Gleichgeschaltet*". Totalitarianism with Eichmann as its fanatic instrument is the terrorist attempt to destroy the plurality of the human condition: "Total terror...substitutes for the boundaries and channels of communication between individual men a band of iron which holds them so tightly together that it is as though their plurality has disappeared into one Man of gigantic dimensions".⁵⁵

These thoughts on *sensus communis* and on judgment enable us to understand what Arendt meant with her thesis on the banality of evil as well as her final judgment on Eichmann. She agreed with the actual verdict of capital punishment, but if she had been judge, she would have motivated this verdict as follows: "You, Eichmann, supported and carried out a policy of not wanting to share the earth with the Jewish people and the people of a number of other nations as though you and your superiors had any right to determine who should and who should not inhabit the world. Just as you supported such policy, we find that no one, that is, no member of the human race, can be expected to want to share the world with you and that is the reason, and the only one, you must hang".⁵⁶

According to Arendt, Eichmann was put to trial and condemned to death, not for his crimes against the Jewish people, but because of his crimes against the human status. He, and totalitarianism with him, was not a “*hostis Judaeorum*”, not an extreme example of age-old anti-Semitism, but a “*hostis generis humani*”.⁵⁷ He violated that which makes a plurality of human beings and communities possible, the *sensus communis*. He contributed to the attempt to annihilate the human cosmopolitan condition.⁵⁸ Eichmann is guilty of a crime against mankind’s very nature.⁵⁹ Therefore he should have been put to trial and sentenced before an international criminal court of justice instead of before a tribunal that represent one nation only.⁶⁰

Radical Evil and *Sensus Communis*

Despite Arendt’s illuminating observations and clear analyses, I agree with Allison’s comment that in her book she did not really pursue the question of individual responsibility for criminal thoughtlessness such as Eichmann showed. This might be due to the anti-metaphysical thrust of her book.⁶¹ The book may well be an adequate description of evil, perhaps even in its banality, but the lack of *sensus communis* can, in my opinion, hardly explain the occurrence of evil. By way of conclusion I would like to elaborate on this. In order to do so I return to *Eichmann in Jerusalem* for the last time asking whether a well-functioning *sensus communis* would have prevented Eichmann from committing his crime. The answer can only be affirmative, if the concept of *sensus communis* would imply the respect of the plurality of human beings and everybody’s cosmopolitan right to existence. But does it really? Does *sensus communis* necessarily have that meaning? Why could it not just mean the common sense of a given society, e.g.

the one Eichmann lived in? One of the frightening facts that emerged during the trial was the moment in which Eichmann declared that the most potent factor that soothed his conscience was the simple fact that he could see no one, no one at all, who was against the Final Solution. Apparently, as Arendt writes, “evil in the Third Reich had lost the quality by which most people recognize it – the quality of temptation.” The law of Hitler’s land demanded that the voice of conscience no longer said: “Thou shalt not kill”, but “Thou shalt kill”.⁶² Even if Eichmann had enlarged his thought and put himself in the place of the ones belonging to what he considered “his society”, he would not have encountered other opinions. The prevailing German *sensus communis* of the time would have underlined the rightfulness of his acts rather than the contrary. Reference to *sensus communis* would then have added to the defense: Eichmann just carried out the moral convictions of his society, brought to him by common sense. And Eichmann’s lawyer, Servatius, would then have rightfully argued that Eichmann committed acts for which you are decorated if you win and go to the gallows if you lose.⁶³

The problem we are confronted with here is not so much the problem of the sense, but rather of the “common”, namely the determination of who does and who does not belong to the community. According to Nazi ideology the Jews do not belong to the human community and their voice should therefore not be part of common sense. Now, the undesirable conclusion that common sense contributed to the crimes rather than preventing them can be avoided either by extending the meaning of the *sensus communis* beyond any given historical common moral conviction so that it includes all members of the human community, or by giving it up all together as the source of knowledge of good and evil. As we can see by Shira Dossa’s unsuccessful attempt to rescue the concept of

sensus communis by arguing along the first line⁶⁴, only the second option remains open.

Following the lines of Arendt's interpretation, Dossa argues that in this particular situation not only was Eichmann's individual *sensus communis* silenced, so was that of the Nazi society as a whole. In this case, the *sensus communis* of the society as a whole was transformed into a collective *sensus privatus*, which is, as we have seen, a collective insanity. This then would explain Eichmann's problem that he did not encounter anyone who objected to the Final Solution. In the proper sense the public realm in Nazi Germany was no longer political. Unfortunately, Eichmann did not realize that he was not participating in normal politics.⁶⁵ This attempt to rescue the concept of *sensus communis* by arguing in favour of a collective loss of *sensus communis* in the Nazi era is only successful if one accepts the price: are we still able to convict Eichmann? How can Eichmann be held responsible for this loss of *sensus communis*? If Nazi Germany was completely insane, how could Eichmann be put to trial? Can the trial against him be anything but a political show against a symbol of the society that lost sight of all "true" *sensus communis*? For could we reasonably expect Eichmann to have extended his sense of community far beyond the boundaries of what he regarded as his community? In order to convict Eichmann, we blame him for not having taken into consideration other ideas than the ones he found in his own community alone, and we reproach him for not having respected the plural community of humans. But if this is the meaning of *sensus communis*, it functions as a categorical imperative and could be formulated as follows: always act in such a manner that under all circumstances the human plural status be respected. Such a drastic reinterpretation of *sensus communis* could no longer be grounded in reflecting on the historical facts of human beings living in plural, but would transform *sensus commu-*

nis into a moral concept, which derives its validity from practical reason rather than from the “fact” of plurality.⁶⁶ Political philosophy would lose its affinity with aesthetics and be brought back into the realm of moral philosophy. There would no longer be a need to search for a hidden, unwritten political philosophy in Kant’s writings.

Now it would seem that we have moved far away from Arendt’s understanding of Eichmann’s evil. But this is not the case. Remember Arendt’s formulation of the verdict. According to her, Eichmann deserved the death penalty because he violated the human condition; to be more precise because he carried out a policy of not wanting to share the world with other nations, “as though you and your superiors had any right to determine who should and who should not inhabit the world”. Apparently, it is not arbitrary whether this human community is constituted with or without the Jewish nation and the other nations the Nazis intended to annihilate. Arendt’s verdict is based on the moral conviction that no one has the right to decide who is to inhabit the world and who not. In this, she could have relied on Kant: no one originally has any greater right than anyone else to occupy any particular portion of the earth.⁶⁷ Arendt accepts as categorical the duty to respect the plurality of the human existence. This categorical imperative remains valid even if all human beings around us were to argue in favour of its violation. Arendt confirms this in the final pages of her book: “in the postwar trials we have demanded that human beings be capable of telling right from wrong even when all they have to guide them is their own judgement, which, moreover, happens to be completely at odds with what they must regard as the unanimous opinion of all those around them.” Perhaps Arendt wanted to avoid the metaphysical⁶⁸ implications of this statement, since this Kantian approach is immediately obscured by what follows: “Those (few) who were still able to tell right from wrong went

really only by their own judgements, and they did so freely; there were no rules to be abided by, under which the particular cases with which they were confronted could be subsumed. They had to decide each instance as it arose, because no rules existed for the unprecedented.”⁶⁹ Kant would not have written such lines. However unprecedented the situation may be, it is nevertheless accompanied by the rule that the maxim of my action must be such that I can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.⁷⁰

In connection with the last quote there is still another sense in which Arendt’s report on the banality of evil has not lost its significance. Arendt pays attention to the novelty of what happened in the Nazi era, but tries at the same time not to mythologize it. Totalitarianism confronted human beings with the possibility that a society could manipulate beliefs and convictions to an extent far beyond earlier possibilities, even beyond human imagination. For this reason, the tendency existed and still exists to mythologize the horror of the Holocaust and to deny its human origin. Perhaps it was Jaspers who taught Arendt not to do so. After having read Jaspers’s *Die Schuldfrage* she wrote him that the guilt of the Nazis transcended any juridical conceptualization: “Diese Verbrechen lassen sich, scheint mir, juristisch nicht mehr fassen. ...Das heißt, diese Schuld, im Gegensatz zu aller kriminellen Schuld, übersteigt und zerbricht alle Rechtsordnungen”. Jaspers replied that he did not quite agree. He considered it important to resist the temptation to put the Holocaust beyond human understanding or to describe the horror in terms of myths, legends and demonic forces, adding the further point that: ‘we must take things in their full banality – “Bakterien können völkervernichtende Seuchen machen und bleiben dennoch nur Bakterien”.’⁷¹ In her answer to Scholem, already mentioned, we find an echo of those words. Arendt underlines that evil is never “radical”, but

that it can spread like a fungus on the surface and thereby overgrow and lay waste the whole world.⁷² The horror of the Holocaust is not the result of demonic forces, but of the power of totalitarianism to silence morality and to overcome the animal pity by which normal men are affected in the presence of physical suffering.⁷³

Arendt, among others, teaches us the important lesson of the mechanisms that established legal, moral and spatial distances between perpetrators and victims and connected seemingly innocent actions with much belated devastating consequences. With her work, Arendt contributed to the understanding of the ambiguities of modernity, namely that there exists no straightforward relation between modernization and rationalisation of society on the one hand and morality on the other.⁷⁴

Notes

¹ I wish to thank the participants of the Arendt-symposium in Jyväskylä, November 1996, and especially Jussi Kotkavirta, Simona Forti and Tuija Parvikko. I also thank Carol Pfaff for her profound correction of my English.

² A small insight into this aspect is offered by D. May, *Hannah Arendt*, Harmondsworth 1986, 109-112.

³ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* (2nd. Ed.), Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1992 (originally 1963), 125, 282. Arendt refers here to Raul Hilberg's classic *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Chicago 1961.

⁴ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 119 (orig. 1963: 105).

⁵ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 287-8, 252.

⁶ R.J. Bernstein, Did Hannah Arendt Change Her Mind? From Radical Evil to the Banality of Evil, in: L. May, J. Kohn, *Hannah Arendt Twenty Years later*, Cambridge (Ma.) 1996, 127-146, 129.

⁷ I do not want to let go unmentioned here Emil Fackenheim's

rejection of Arendt's thesis on the banality of evil (in: *To Mend the World, Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought*, Indiana 1982, 247, 237). Fackenheim writes about the single incident, which according to him clearly showed the untenability of the thesis: "The accused (Eichmann, Th.M.) had preserved a stolid composure throughout his trial. One day the courtroom was darkened and pictures of Eichmann's victims were flashed on a screen. Secretly, a camera was trained on him in the dark. Believing himself unobserved, Eichmann saw what he saw – and smirked."

⁸ In an answer to Gershom Scholem she wrote: "It is indeed my opinion that evil is never 'radical', that it is only extreme, and that it possesses neither depth nor any demonic dimension." (quoted in: H. Allison, *Reflections on the banality of (radical) evil: A Kantian analysis*, in: Idem, *Idealism and Freedom*, Cambridge UP, 1995, 169-182, 169.

⁹ H. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind, One: Thinking*, London 1978, 3-5. The second reason for being interested in mental activities was the wish to reflect on the counterpart of the *vita activa*, which she depicted in *The Human Condition*.

¹⁰ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 136; Because of the precarious character of the remark I also quote: Dov B. Schmorak, *Der Prozess Eichmann*, Wien, Hans Deutsch Verlag, 1964, 142: "daß das Prinzip des Wollens und Strebens des einzelnen "so sein muß, daß es jederzeit zum Prinzip einer allgemeinen Gesetzgebung erhoben werden könnte"".

¹¹ M. Pearlman, *The Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann*, London, Weidenfels and Nicolson, 1963, 533. Quoted by J. Silber, Kant at Auschwitz, in: G. Funke, Th. Seebohm (ed.), *Proceedings of the Sixth International Kant-Congress*, Vol. 1, Washington 1991, 184. In the rendering of D. Schmorak, *Der Prozess Eichmann*, 142: "Nein, das in keiner Weise ... Ich meinte damit, mit der, mit der, mit dem Leben nach dem Kantschen Grundsatz, soweit ich Herr über mich selbst bin und mein Leben nach meinem Wollen und nach meinen Wünschen einrichten kann"; H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 136.

¹² Because of the precarious character of what is said I quote the original as I found it in: D. Schmorak, *Der Prozess Eichmann*, 143; H. Arendt describes this episode in: *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 136.

- ¹³ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 136.
- ¹⁴ With this remark Arendt adds to the myth that the Nazi horrors were due to the servile mentality of the Germans. In his widely discussed *Hitlers Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, New York 1996, D.J. Goldhagen rightly remarks that such mentality could certainly not have been found in the Weimar-republic.
- ¹⁵ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 137.
- ¹⁶ I. Kant, *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung*, Akademie Ausgabe (=AA) Bd. VIII, 41; H. Reiss (Ed.), *Kant's Political Writings*, Cambridge UP 1970, 59.
- ¹⁷ I. Kant, *Über den Gemeinspruch*, AA VIII, 299; *Kant's Political Writings*, 81.
- ¹⁸ I. Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten, Rechtslehre*, AA VI, 319; *Kant's Political Writings*, 143; Or look at the following (320): "Der Grund der Pflicht des Volkes einen, selbst den für unerträglich ausgegebenen Mißbrauch der obersten Gewalt dennoch zu ertragen liegt darin: daß sein Widerstand wider die höchste Gesetzgebung selbst niemals anders als gesetzwidrig, ja als die ganze gesetzliche Verfassung zernichtend gedacht werden muß".
- ¹⁹ I. Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten, Rechtslehre*, AA VI, 322-3; *Kant's Political Writings*, 147.
- ²⁰ I. Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten, Rechtslehre*, AA VI, 371, I. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (ed. M. Gregor), Cambridge UP, 1991, 176.
- ²¹ I. Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, AA V, 99n; I. Kant, Religion within the boundaries of mere reason (Tr. by G. Di Giovanni), in: I. Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, (in: The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Kant, ed. P. Guyer, A.W. Wood), Cambridge UP 1996, 134n.
- ²² I. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, AA V, 155-6. According to J. Silber (Kant at Auschwitz, 211) Kant would give another example had he to write this Kritik anew. He would probably have chosen the story G. Weisenborn told in his *Der lautlose Aufstand*: Two boys are drafted for the SS at the end of the war, but they refuse to sign up. They are sentenced to death and this is what they wrote at their families: "we two would rather die than burden our conscience with such terrible

- things. We know what the SS must carry out". Arendt mentions this story too: *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 104.
- ²³ G. Patzig, Die logischen Formen praktischer Sätze in Kants Ethik, in: Idem, *Ethik ohne Metaphysik*, Göttingen 1971, 109.
- ²⁴ I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 421, 403 (using Paton's translation).
- ²⁵ I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 448.
- ²⁶ I. Kant, *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung*, AA VIII, 35; *Kant's Political Writings*, 54.
- ²⁷ Here I rely on: J. Ebbinghaus, Deutung und Mißdeutung des kategorischen Imperativs, In: *Gesammelte Aufsätze, Vorträge und Reden*, Hildesheim, Olms 1968, 87-8.
- ²⁸ Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 421, 429; See: H.J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative. A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy*, Philadelphia 1947, 133, 165.
- ²⁹ I. Kant, *Über den Gemeinspruch*, AA VIII, 292; *Kant's Political Writings*, 75: "weil er dadurch sich selbst des Rechts, einen Contract zu machen berauben, mithin dieser sich selbst aufheben würde".
- ³⁰ In this context it is relevant to remember the story Hans Jonas wrote: "When in 1945 I reentered vanquished Germany as a member of the Jewish Brigade in the British army, I had to decide whom of my former teachers in philosophy I could in good conscience visit, and whom not. It turned out that the "no" fell on my main teacher (Heidegger, Th.M.), who by the criteria which then had to govern my choice had failed the human test of time; whereas the "yes" included the much lesser figure of a rather narrow traditionalist Kantian persuasion, who meant little to me philosophically but of whose record in those dark years I heard admirable things. When I did visit him and congratulated him on the courage of his principled stand, he said a memorable thing: "Jonas", he said, "I tell you this: without Kant's teaching I couldn't have done it." Quoted in Emil Fackenheim, *To mend the world, Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought*, 269 n.
- ³¹ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 285
- ³² H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 263, 264, 267-8, 283, 286, 288; 275: a crime that could not be explained by any utilitarian purpose.

- ³³ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 459; Compare H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago 1958, 241.
- ³⁴ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 276
- ³⁵ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 114.
- ³⁶ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 287-8.
- ³⁷ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 49.
- ³⁸ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 85, 108.
- ³⁹ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 252. Arendt's answer to Scholem (quoted in: H. Allison, Reflections on the banality of (radical) evil: A Kantian analysis, 169).
- ⁴⁰ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 47, 49.
- ⁴¹ Cnf. H. Allison, Reflections on the banality of (radical) evil: A Kantian analysis, 172.
- ⁴² I. Kant, *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, AA VIII, 27; *Kant's Political Writings*, 50.
- ⁴³ But not as its head, I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 433.
- ⁴⁴ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Ed. R. Beiner), Sussex, Chicago 1982, 27-28.
- ⁴⁵ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 13. Compare: "Annehmlichkeit gilt auch für vernunftlose Tiere; Schönheit nur für Menschen, ...; Das Gute aber für jedes vernünftige Wesen überhaupt" (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, AA V, 210).
- ⁴⁶ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 27.
- ⁴⁷ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 71.
- ⁴⁸ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 40.
- ⁴⁹ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 43, 49. It is not clear how Arendt conceptualizes the relation between *sensus communis* and imagination. This point is very interesting and connected with her interpretation of crucial passages in *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. I will not go into detail here, but restrict myself to the following: on the one hand Arendt calls imagination a "faculty", which enables the enlargement of the mind, suggesting that *sensus communis* results from imagination. On the other hand it seems as if *sensus communis* enables us to enlarge our mentality by means of imagination and reflection. Yet the entire appendix to the *Lectures* is devoted to imagination, with reference to the account of the

Schematism in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 43, 73, 79-85.

- ⁵⁰ Reflective judgment as distinguished from determinant judgment. In judging determinantly, we apply general concepts, provided by reason (in the broad sense: as “*Verstand*” and “*Vernunft*” together). In judging reflectively we deal with particulars. We have to find the relevant general concept by reflecting on these particulars. For example, when we call a rose beautiful, this judgment is not the result of applying the general concept “beauty” to this rose, but of reflecting on different beautiful things (which is, as I am aware, an ambiguous way of formulating things). Only in this reflective mode does “judging” really takes place, according to Arendt. An interesting account of the background of this conviction can be found in: A. Wellmer, Hannah Arendt on Judgement: The Unwritten Doctrine of Reason, in: *Endspiele: Die unversöhnliche Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, 309-329.
- ⁵¹ I deliberately call this viewpoint (with H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 44) “general” and not universal, because this viewpoint refers to the community of human being and not the community of rational beings. Purely moral philosophy should according to Kant go further and reach a universal point of view by excluding any anthropological findings; see e.g. I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 390-1.
- ⁵² H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 43: According to Arendt this would mean adopting the position of Kant's world citizen.
- ⁵³ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 64, 71 with reference to Kant's *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, AA VII, 219.
- ⁵⁴ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 64-5. Also: H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 277.
- ⁵⁵ H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 465-6.
- ⁵⁶ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 279
- ⁵⁷ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 261.
- ⁵⁸ H. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 75-6, with reference to Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden* which, in its third definitive article, emphasizes the cosmopolitan right, i.e. the

- right of every stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone's else territory. This right is based on the original right of all men to communal possession of the earth.
- ⁵⁹ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 268
- ⁶⁰ Nevertheless Arendt admired the judges for not allowing themselves to be accused of holding a show-trial in favour of the Jewish nation. They rightfully concentrated on the accused and his deeds.
- ⁶¹ H. Allison, Reflections on the banality of (radical) evil: A Kantian analysis, 173.
- ⁶² H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 116, 150; A macabre confirmation of this can be deduced from the three case-studies (of police batalions, Jewish labour, death-marches) in Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*.
- ⁶³ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 22.
- ⁶⁴ S. Dozza, Hannah Arendt on Eichmann: The Public, the Private and Evil, in: *The Review of Politics* (46) 1984, 173-4
- ⁶⁵ S. Dozza, Hannah Arendt on Eichmann: The Public, the Private and Evil, 173-4.
- ⁶⁶ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 7
- ⁶⁷ I. Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden*, AA VIII, 358; *Kant's Political Writings*, 106.
- ⁶⁸ Metaphysics not in the sense of deducing morality from a doctrine on being, but in the Kantian sense of an ethics which is originally metaphysical: I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, 388
- ⁶⁹ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 294-5.
- ⁷⁰ I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, AA IV, 421
- ⁷¹ *Hannah Arendt – Karl Jaspers Briefwechsel*, 1926-1969, (ed. L. Kohler, H. Saner), München, Zürich 1985, 90, 98-9.
- ⁷² Arendt's answer to Scholem, quoted in: H. Allison, Reflections on the banality of (radical) evil: A Kantian analysis, 169; Also in: R. Bernstein, Did Hannah Arendt Change Her Mind?, 131.
- ⁷³ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 106; see also: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 447-57.
- ⁷⁴ Z. Bauman's important *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge 1993) draws some of the consequences implicitly present in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.

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Robert Fine

The Equivocations of Politics

*On the Significance of Totalitarianism in
Hannah Arendt's Political Thought*

There is a great tendency to explain away the intrinsically incredible by means of liberal rationalisations. In each one of us, there lurks such a liberal, wheedling us with the voice of common sense.

Until now the totalitarian belief that everything is possible seems only to have proved only that everything can be destroyed.

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of
Totalitarianism*, 439 and 459 respectively

Introduction

The concept of “totalitarianism” was developed by political philosophers to face up to a new and previously unthinkable social reality: the experience of Nazism and Stalinism in the middle years of the twentieth century. It was bowdlerised by those who locked it in the conceptual armoury of cold-war anti-communism, but in

its true form it expressed a brave, often marginalised, collective effort to avoid averting our eyes from horror.

Beneath its apparent self-identity the concept of totalitarianism was in fact used quite differently in different theoretical contexts. The conventional usage contrasts both types of totalitarianism with liberal democracy in order to reaffirm the institutions and practices of representative government. The more radical usage implies a confrontation with both liberal democracy and official “Marxism”, in order to question on the one hand why liberalism was unable to resist the rise of totalitarianism in the west and on the other why “Marxism” came to justify barbarism in the east or at least end up as what Claude Lefort called a “reformed totalitarianism”.¹ The first of these responses leaves liberal forms of representative government intact as the unfortunate victim of malevolent external forces; the second puts representative government (in both its parliamentary and Party-State modes) into question as a responsible and no longer innocent actor in the death of politics.

Where Hannah Arendt stood in relation to these two traditions of political thought has been a matter of some contention. While she was alive, her theory of totalitarianism was often treated (especially by Marxists) as if it were a conventional apology for American-style representative democracy², but this misreading of her work has now been overturned by a new generation of interpreters who have sought to uncover the radical character of her politics.³ There now seems to be general agreement that Arendt’s theory of totalitarianism had nothing to do with uncritical apologetics for liberal values or with the restoration of representative government. On the contrary, as far as Arendt was concerned, the experience of totalitarianism cast a dark shadow over all claims of liberal thought to innocence and challenged head-on the “hardened prejudice” which associates representative government with political freedom.

In the current literature, however, do we not find a certain one-sidedness, albeit one which perhaps reflects Arendt's own emphasis. She is generally acclaimed for her determination to "reclaim the practice of politics from representative, state-centered and state-centering institutions" (Honig 1993, 124-125); or as Dana Villa put it, "Arendt makes no attempt to escape 'the true predicaments of our time' by appealing to platitudes concerning reason, will and the institutions of representative democracy" (Villa 1996, 269). This inversion of the traditional reading of Arendt is well taken but it downplays the most original and distinctive aspect of Arendt's politics: that it combines the critique of representation with the critique of the critique of representation. It was the duality of Arendt's criticism that was crucial. In her use of the concept of totalitarianism, there was a double significance: Arendt was far from rationalising the liberal-democratic state but also far from rationalising the activist politics of resistance to which disillusionment gave rise.

The Equivocations of Liberalism

The recurrent theme of *Origins of Totalitarianism* was the legitimate disgust which every thinking being feels over the chasm between liberal concepts of peace, freedom, justice, human rights, etc. and the existence of world war and mass slaughter, colonial expansion and racial terror, class inequalities and impoverishment, ethnic nationalism and the stateless, etc. The failure of liberalism either to live up to its own ideals or to resist those who decried its ideals seemed to Arendt to be a clear and distinct lessons to be taken from this whole disaster. In *The Eggs Speak Up* (1951) Arendt expressed her conviction that liberalism had "demonstrated its inability to resist totalitarianism so often that its failure may already be counted among the historical

facts of our century” (EU, 282). We might look back on the heyday of the liberal tradition with a certain nostalgic affection, she added, but not pretend that “the past is alive in the sense that it is in our power to return to it” (EU, 282). She reminded those ex-communists who wanted to return after the war to the “democratic way of life” that it is “the same world against whose complacency, injustice and hypocrisy these same men once raised a radical protest, where the elements which eventually crystallised and have never ceased to crystallise into totalitarianism, are to be found” (EU, 281).

Arendt’s determination to confront the “burden of events” in the twentieth century was at once a confrontation with liberalism’s claim to innocence: not to “explain away the intrinsically incredible by means of liberal rationalisations” and not to allow ourselves to be “wheedled with the voice of common sense” (OT, 440). Thus the contradictions of representative government appeared among the elements which crystallised into totalitarianism. Behind all the conventional political parties, she argued in *Origins*, lay “slumbering majorities” who were invisible as long as focus was placed on the parties themselves but emerged as “one great unorganised, structureless mass of furious individuals” as soon as the party system went into crisis (OT, 315). One of the reasons why totalitarian movements were the beneficiaries of the crisis of parliamentary democracy, she suggests, is that the ground was prepared for them by a representative system of government which left most people atomised, malleable, at best politically indifferent and at worst brimming with resentment at the invisibility of their sufferings.

What we call democracy, Arendt wrote ten years later in *On Revolution*, is “a form of government where the few rule, supposedly in the interest of the many” and where “public happiness and public freedom...become the privilege of the few” (OR, 269). Political parties, she argued,

serve primarily as instruments through which “the power of the people is curtailed and controlled”, their programmes are “ready-made formulas which demand not action but execution” (OR, 264), they turn political life into a specialist vocation and reserve for representatives alone the opportunity to engage in those activities of “‘expressing, discussing and deciding’ which in a positive sense are the activities of freedom” (OR, 235). Arendt shared Jefferson’s foreboding that representative democracy formally gives “the people” power but without giving them “the opportunity of being republicans and of acting as citizens” (OR, 253). Normally this division between representatives and the represented may not be a matter of concern except for those committed to a principle of participation; in “dark times”, she suggests, it may become the source of great danger.

Arendt’s critique of representative government was, however, more nuanced than it first appears. She distinguished, for example, between the relative stability of the British two-party system, which gave it some protection from anti-democratic forces, and the hidden authoritarianism of Continental multi-party systems which made them so vulnerable to totalitarian movements. The difference between them, as she saw it, was that in the multi-party systems the state stood above the disparate parties and claimed to represent the nation as a whole, while the two-party system unified state and party in the sense that the ruling party was both representative and governmental. Since multi-party government was formed via party alliances, no one party could take responsibility for government and the parties never transcended particular interests to become parties of government managing the public affairs of the people as a whole. Public affairs were then monopolised by state executives beyond the reach of the parties and the citizens they were meant to represent. At least in its Continental form, she concluded,

representative government was among the origins of totalitarianism.

This contrast between the “Continental” and the “Anglo-American” was later developed in Arendt’s comparison of the American and French revolutionary traditions. She acknowledged one achievement of the American revolution that was lacking in the French: its formation of a lasting constitutional and institutional framework to guarantee the rights and property of individuals and a government based on the consent of the people. However, she also saw in the American tradition a source of the same political indifference, atomisation and conformity which she had discerned in *Origins*. While for example she recognised that the Bill of Rights offers a crucial defence of the private realm against public power, she argued that in a bourgeois society, where the principal source of corruption derives from the colonisation of the public realm by private interests, it is the public realm which is in most need of protection. To remedy this lack, a different kind of solution was required: an institutional and constitutional framework designed to guarantee public life as well as private rights. The decision to place all guarantees on the side of private right and the failure to consolidate institutions of popular participation deprived public life of its space and right to be.

At no time did Arendt equate the liberal state (even in its most authoritarian variants) with totalitarian regimes; such an elision could not have been further from her mind. Thus she took great pains to specify the temporal and geographic boundaries of totalitarianism, Russia from 1929 to 1953, Germany from 1933 to 1945, and not to stretch the concept beyond its proper usage. She characterised the difference between totalitarian regimes and even the most authoritarian bourgeois states not as one of degree but quality. At the same time, however, she traced the origins of totalitarianism deep within the

antinomies of the modern state and “normal” political life. If we are to keep both sides of her approach in view, we should say that her use of the term “totalitarianism” was a long way both from its use in conventional political theory and its use in a vulgarised “postmodernism” which draws too straight a line between modernity and the Holocaust.

The Equivocations of Radicalism

It is in the context that we can begin to understand Arendt’s analysis of “European nihilism” not as a pathological state of mind of a few destructive individuals but rather as a valid philosophical expression of the “dark times” which followed the First World War. The problem, as Arendt saw it, was previewed in Nietzsche’s analysis in *Will to Power* where he defined nihilism thus:

What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; “why?” finds no answer.⁴

Nietzsche sought to capture the *fin-de-siècle* mood of irredeemable decline when the values and beliefs that had been taken as the highest manifestation of the spirit of the West had lost their efficacy and validity. He believed that this loss of values, born out of the falseness of liberalism, bred a destructive and spiritless radicalism, full of “hostility to culture” and images of destruction.⁵ This sense of “coming barbarism” which Nietzsche experienced at the turn of the century, was perceived in even stronger form for Arendt in the inter-war period.

Arendt shared the sense of revulsion felt by all those who confronted the gulf between liberal values and the experience of mass slaughter, poverty and racism, and never ceased to declare how well founded it was.

Simply to brand as outbursts of nihilism this violent dissatisfaction with the prewar age...is to overlook how justified disgust can be in a society wholly permeated with the ideological outlook and moral standards of the bourgeoisie. (OT, 328)

Nihilism was the spectre haunting Europe, not because it was pathological but on the contrary because it was grounded. However, Arendt also shared Nietzsche's concerns over the kind of radicalism which was being generated out of disillusionment. What was called the "front generation", she wrote, were completely absorbed by their desire to see the ruin of this whole world of fake security, fake culture and fake life. This desire was so great that it outweighed in impact and articulateness all earlier attempts at a "transformation of values" such as Nietzsche had attempted... Destruction without mitigation, chaos and ruin as such assumed the dignity of supreme values. (OT, 328).

What Arendt perceived was the destructive nihilism which could declare with one of Nazism's sympathisers: "When I hear the word culture, I draw my revolver". Its source was disgust with all existing standards, with every power that be; its hope was that everything they knew, the whole culture and texture of life, might go down in "storms of steel" (Jünger). For this "front generation", Arendt argued, war was the truth of the existing world-order and the father of the new. In the words of Thomas Mann, war was the means of "chastisement" and "purification" in a corrupt age, the "great equaliser" in a class-ridden society, the arena of "selflessness" which obliterated bourgeois egoism and satisfied Bakunin's plea "I do not want to be I, I want to be we". It was the site of Nechaev's "doomed man", the anti-bourgeois with "no personal interest, no affairs, no sentiments, attachments, property, not even a name of his own". War was the ground for the philosophy of action

whose principle was that “you are what you have done” and whose existential dream was of escape from society into the world of doing something, heroic or criminal, which was undetermined. (OT, 326-331)

While Arendt wanted to affirm how “justified disgust can be in a society wholly permeated with the ideological outlook and moral standards of the bourgeoisie” (OT, 328), she was also repelled by the “anti-humanist, anti-liberal, anti-individualist and anti-cultural instincts” of an “elite” which elevated violence, power and cruelty as the supreme capacities of humankind.

Since the bourgeoisie claimed to be the guardian of Western traditions and confounded all moral issues by parading publicly virtues which it not only did not possess in private and business life, but actually held in contempt, it seemed revolutionary to admit cruelty, disregard of human values, and general amorality, because this at least destroyed the duplicity upon which the existing society seemed to rest. (OT, 334)

In the twilight of double moral standards, she argued, it seemed radical to flaunt extreme attitudes: “to wear publicly the mask of cruelty if everybody...pretended to be gentle”. She cited the case of Céline’s *Bagatelles pour un Massacre* in which he proposed the massacre of all Jews, and the welcome which André Gide gave to it, not of course because he wanted to kill the Jews...but because he rejoiced in the blunt admission of such a desire and in the fascinating contradiction between Céline’s bluntness and the hypocritical politeness which surrounded the Jewish question in all respectable quarters. (OT, 335)

The desire to unmask hypocrisy, Arendt commented, might have been a rebellion against the double standards of the bourgeoisie, but it was also welcome to those bourgeois tired of the tension between words and deeds and ready to remove their masks in favour of a naked brutality.

In short, Arendt saw this new outbreak of “European nihilism” as a shallow radicalism. It channelled contempt for political parties into a doctrine of “movements” that suppressed all forms of representation except that of the totalitarian movement itself. It exposed the double standards endemic in the separation of *citoyen* and bourgeois only to attack the very separation of public and private life in the name of the “wholeness of man”. It revealed the false trust on which representative institutions are based only to promote a philosophy of universal distrust. It turned the untruths of the bourgeois system of rule into a repudiation of the very distinction between truth and falsehood. It exposed the hypocrisy of bourgeois society only to espouse a violent cult of “unmasking” as its solution. Its contempt for facts as such, she wrote, preceded the determinate lies of totalitarian movements, its cult of unmasking preceded the reign of terror. Concerning this wave of European nihilism, Arendt’s view might be summed up in the proposition that its insight into the poverty of modern politics everywhere yielded false conclusions.

To be sure, Arendt’s critique of the “front generation” did not lead her to embrace hollow notions concerning the guilt of nihilism “as if Nietzsche had submitted meekly to the nihilistic trends of his time, or, on the contrary, was to blame for the rise of Nazism” (EU, 431). Her argument refused to embrace these palliatives. Disillusionment with democracy certainly impelled many intellectuals, some of whom were influenced by Nietzsche and Marx – into either the Nazi or Stalinist movements and doubtless played a part in their rise to power. But totalitarianism was basically an anti-intellectual movement which sometimes devoured its former intellectuals, sometimes expelled them, sometimes marginalised them, but always ignored their ideas. What was far more important than the destructive radicalism of nihilistic ideas was the destructive nihilism of society itself.

When Arendt excavated the political ground on which the devaluation of all values flourished, what she found above all was imperialism. For the first time in human history, she argued, imperialism freed power from all restraint and expansion for expansion's sake became the credo of the age. The unlimited accumulation of power became the political corollary of the unlimited accumulation of capital.

Expansion as a permanent and supreme aim of politics is the central political idea of imperialism, it is an entirely new concept in the long history of political thought and action. The reason for this surprising originality is simply that this concept is not really political at all, but has its origin in the realm of business speculation. (OT, 125)

It was here, in the political rule of the bourgeoisie, that Arendt discerned the "will to power" first emancipated from all moral or political constraint. Here Arendt discovered the foundations of a power which "left to itself can achieve nothing but more power" and a violence which "administered for power's sake turns into a destructive principle that will not stop until there is nothing left to violate" (OT, 137). To be sure, liberal institutions and practices of the nation-state at home, as well as nationalist movements in the colonies, provided obstacles to the growth of imperial violence, as a result of which "the conscience of the nation, represented by Parliament and a free press...was resented by colonial administrators in all European countries" (OT, 133); but this resistance was either eroded from within by the racialising of the nation or swept aside from without. No wonder liberalism entered into disrepute. No wonder too, Arendt added, that European nihilism found an open door in the corridors of power and a ready audience among the new rulers.

Two Sides of the Same Medal

The two-sidedness of Arendt's polemic was already prefigured in the Preface of *Origins*. Here she rebelled against a liberal spirit which could do no more than hope for "an eventual restoration of the old world order...to take that which was good in the past and simply call it our heritage, to discard the bad and simply think of it as a dead load which by itself time will bury in oblivion" (OT, viii - ix). But she also rebelled against that kind of radicalism which, though justifiably repelled by the gulf between liberal values and the experience of cruelty and suffering, could only find expression in a politics of destruction. As Arendt put it, "Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal" (OT, vii). The onus on political philosophy, as she saw it, was to protest both against the tyranny of conventional values which had lost their credibility in the face of totalitarianism, and against the tyranny of a world devoid of values where the only gods that rule are egoism and violence. She experienced contemporary political philosophy as caught between "pious banalities which have lost their meaning and in which nobody believes any longer, and the vulgar banality of *homo homini lupus* which as a guide to human action is utterly meaningless" (OT, 459).

This predicament was not treated by Arendt as an *aporia*, as if there were no way out, but as a *diaporia*, the "difficult way" was to take her on a long and complicated journey in search of a political spirit whose *raison d'être* is freedom rather than violence. The primacy of experience over theory was her compass. What was important to her was that we face up to the "burden of events, neither denying their existence nor submitting meekly to their weight as though everything that in fact happened could not have happened otherwise" (OT, xiv). The "event" of totalitarianism interrupted and disturbed all our standards of ethical and political judgement. Arendt could not fall

back on the apparently safe ground of liberalism because she saw liberalism's core concepts, those of humanity, progress, reason, duty, representation, etc. – as all implicated in totalitarian justifications.

The consolation of “humanity” which Kant had offered for the death and suffering which befall individuals, that violence and barbarity play their part in the Progress of Humankind toward mastery of its own destiny, this sign of the “unsocial sociability of man” could no longer be upheld. Totalitarianism turned the liberal faith in progress into a vision of a new world order and of a “new man” emerging out of storms of destruction. For Arendt, however, it was no more possible to “write off the death camps as work-related accidents in the victorious advancement of civilisation” as it was for Adorno.⁶ The victims of the Gulag and the Holocaust could no longer be chalked up to progress.⁷ The wounds inflicted on individuals in the death camps of totalitarianism could no longer be compensated by any grand narrative. In answer to the question Valéry posed after the First War, “Knowledge and Duty, are you then suspect?”, totalitarianism had given an affirmative answer.⁸ The extermination of Jews in this “unworld” was conceived as the triumph of duty over instinct, moral commitment over both hate and pity, the “laws” of life and history over feeling and mere sentiment. Its execution was conceived in the manner of a scientific experiment, complete with white coats and racial theoreticians, resulting in a seemingly methodical, industrialised system of murder. In this context, terror is not that of the pogrom but rather, as Arendt put it, “the realisation of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action” (OT, 465). The movement, its Leader and the secret police(s) represented themselves as the law of life or history incarnate.

For Arendt anti-totalitarian politics had to go beyond conventional forms of anti-Stalinism or anti-Nazism if it was to face up to and resist those ideas which had crossed the boundaries between normal politics and totalitarianism: the idea of Man rather than people in their “infinite plurality”, the idea of Progress rather than the spontaneity and actions of individuals, the idea of the People rather than debate, disagreement and the exchange of opinions, the idea of Reason rather than the reasoning of thoughtful persons, these were the “elements of totalitarian thinking which exist today in all free societies” (EU, 309). In totalitarianism the dominance of abstractions over flesh and blood individuals, a dominance which Hegel and Marx had already perceived in embryo in the formation of the modern state – turned into a monster far worse than Arendt’s forebears could imagine. The phenomenon they all confronted, however, was the same: the rule of abstractions over real human beings in the modern age.

In the face of the “disaster” Arendt was clearly no more content than Hegel or Marx with a “cold despair” which recognises that in the actual world things are bad or at best indifferent, but that nothing better can be expected here.⁹ “Keep your mind in hell, and despair not” would have been a more fitting epitaph for her engagement with totalitarian politics.¹⁰ But what does it mean in this context “not to despair” when opposition was as implicated as that which it opposed.

The Originality of Totalitarianism

For Arendt politics now meant facing up to the “horrible originality” of totalitarianism: that it broke the “thread of tradition” and the possibility of renewing it. This was not because “some new idea came into the world, but because its very actions constitute a break with all our traditions;

they have clearly exploded our categories of political thought and standards for moral judgement” (EU, 309-310). In *Tradition and the Modern Age* she embraced the same theme when she quoted Tocqueville, “the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future”. What was in evidence in the totalitarian event was not the “result” of the rationalisation of society or the “product” of modernity, an end which can only be read backwards, but “the beginning of something new whose outcome is unpredictable” (EU, 429). It does not mean that “elements of the past have received their final, definite form, but that something inescapably new was born” (EU, 326). In this sense totalitarianism belongs to the future insofar as its emergence can “never be deduced from its own elements but is caused by some factor which lies in the realm of human freedom” (EU, 326).¹¹ What was needed was to grasp the specificity of the new, not to dissolve it into its elements. Between the analytic question, what are the elements which crystallised into totalitarianism, and the synthetic, why did these elements crystallise in this particular form, there is always a space where human potentiality and freedom meet. Totalitarianism is more than its origins. What is important is what differentiates it.

In power, Arendt suggests, totalitarianism had little in common with the architectonic of the modern state whose rationality and contradictions Hegel had first diagnosed in the *Philosophy of Right* and Weber had defended in the face of its impending collapse. The totalitarian multiplicity of administrative organisations had little in common with the rule-bound hierarchies of a singular bureaucratic apparatus:

Knowledge of whom to obey and a comparatively permanent settlement of hierarchy would introduce an element of stability which is essentially absent from totalitarian rule (OT, 401).

Totalitarian appeals to the laws of life and history had nothing in common with any system of formal legality:

Positive laws are primarily designed to function as stabilising factors for the ever changing movements of men. In the interpretation of totalitarianism, all laws have become laws of movement (OT, 463).

Totalitarian appeals to scientific justification depended on pseudo-sciences (like eugenics) and vulgarised versions of “Marxism” and “Darwinism” which had little in common with the original articles. Its mode of representation, through the movement and the Leader, had nothing in common with the party system of liberal democracy:

The Leader represents the movement in a way totally different from all ordinary party leaders; he claims personal responsibility for every action, deed or misdeed, committed by any member or functionary in his official capacity (OT, 374).

And finally its employment of terror and “power-ideology” was devoid of any of the rational calculations which govern the exercise of violence even in the most authoritarian of states:

Totalitarian terror is no longer a means to an end; it is the very essence of such a government (EU, 305).

Arendt referred to the “so-called totalitarian state” precisely because it was no longer a state in the proper sense of the term that governed society; totalitarianism was the self-propelling and self-destructive triumph of movement over structure, not the realisation of the “totalising” universalism of political modernity. It is one thing to trace the elements of totalitarianism in a preceding liberal order, another to tar the liberal values of reason, science, bureaucracy, law,

progress etc. with the over-stretched brush of total domination.

The “lesson” Arendt took from the experience of totalitarianism contained both these elements: on the one hand, intensify our sense of “the gap between past and future”; on the other, neither forget nor reject traditional concepts and theories but “distil from them anew their original spirit”. It was a difficult tension. Arendt’s description of Benjamin’s “poetic” thinking, that it works with “thought fragments” it can wrest from the past, applies very much to her own.

What guides this thinking is the conviction that although the living is subject to the ruin of time, the process of decay is at the same time a process of crystallisation...some things survive in new crystallised forms and shapes that remain immune to the elements.¹²

In this sense, at least, traditional concepts and theories are not “dead”, but precisely what things from the past have survived in “new crystallised forms” remains to be answered.

One answer we find in Arendt, and is developed by many of her contemporary commentators, points to performative notions of action. This direction was spelt out in an early article on the experience of totalitarianism which I mentioned above: *The Eggs Speak Up* (1951). Here Arendt took up arms against the hoary old chestnut beloved of official Communists, “You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs”. Speaking up for the eggs, she argued that a simplistic proverb like this only has appeal because it expresses in a vulgar form “some quintessence of Western political thought”. What was this quintessence? Arendt’s answer was that it derived from the element of destruction inherent in all technical activity, like “you can’t make a table without killing a tree”, but an element of destruction that becomes all the more pronounced when applied to political activity. Its application to politics, she

insisted, was not a monopoly of totalitarian thinking; totalitarianism only drew the final consequences from the realm of modern politics. The difficulty facing us as political actors, she suggests, is no longer to think of ourselves “in this tradition of human handiwork” (EU, 283) as *homo faber* or even less as *homo laborans*, but as actors enjoying the “miraculous” human capacity to create something new.

In this regard, Arendt’s “anti-totalitarian” politics was designed to break from the notion of “making men good”. This is why she criticised both Aristotle and Rousseau for continuing to conceive man as *homo faber* in spite of all their gestures toward action, participation and performance.¹³ But Arendt herself (from her discussion of ancient notions of political freedom to the modern revolutionary tradition) constantly encountered the same problem. When she wrote of the “crystallisation of elements” or in a more active mode of the “distillation of spirit”, it is the indeterminacy of origins and outcomes in the first case and the skill of the worker constructing her handiwork in the second that is expressed in these metaphors. The link between labour, work and action, if you wish, between politics and production, is not easily severed. The production of a society in which totalitarian movements have no place and in which, as Alain Finkielkraut put it, individuals become the “guardians” rather than the “means” of humanity, remained within her compass.

Arendt’s difficulty takes us back to *Origins*. The significance of totalitarianism in her analysis lay not in its reduction of politics to the technology of fabrication, but rather in the fact that “the totalitarian belief that everything is possible seems to have proved only that everything can be destroyed” (OT, 459). Totalitarianism was not about making but destroying, not about power but violence. Its highest achievement was the death camp, but it does not take much to kill people, far less than to build something,

anything, that is new. People are relatively easy to kill, witness the lack of relics in the death camps of Sobibor, Belzec, Chelmo... Auschwitz itself was hardly the “final consequence” either of the politicisation of modern technology or of the technologisation of modern politics. In *Modernity and the Holocaust* Zygmunt Bauman used the metaphor of the gardener removing weeds to describe the genocide, but whatever plans the Nazis had to transform the landscape of the east into a German “garden”, these were all abandoned as the “law of killing” substituted for their failure. The totalitarian project of making something new was in fact contradicted by increasingly frenzied efforts only to destroy, to kill, to create the simulacrum of power where real power was absent.

The difficulty Arendt had in “facing up to and resisting the burden” of these events is that, as a particular political form, “anti-totalitarianism” is inclined to mimic aspects of that which it most opposes: the broken promises of a “new beginning”, the devaluation of political liberalism, hatred of bureaucracy, the self-aggrandising myth of “total domination”, the sacralisation of “radical evil”, not least the subordination of work and labour to a certain kind of political “action”. There is perhaps no sense of doing without the concepts of totalitarianism in order to destroy totalitarianism. To quote Derrida out of context, “we can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest”.¹⁴ Arendt’s strength, as I see it, lay in the constant battles she fought to free herself from this mimetic relation: not so much to offer a solution in the form of a “purified” theory of action, but a relentless questioning and radical equivocation.

Notes

- ¹ See Claude Lefort, “Le concept de totalitarisme”, paper presented at the Social Theory Centre, University of Warwick, 1997.
- ² See for example Eric Hobsbawm, “Hannah Arendt on Revolution”, in *Revolutionaries: Contemporary Essays*, New York, Pantheon, 1973, 201-208.
- ³ See for example, Benhabib, Seyla *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, Sage London 1996; Bernstein, Richard, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*, Polity, Cambridge, 1996; Canovan, Margaret, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought*, CUP, Cambridge, 1994; Hansen, Phillip, *Hannah Arendt: Politics, History and Citizenship*, Polity, Cambridge, 1993; Hinchman, Lewis and Sandra, *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, SUNY, Albany 1994; Honig, Bonnie, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993; Villa, Dana, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1996.
- ⁴ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Press, 1969, 9.
- ⁵ In a passage from *Untimely Meditations* Nietzsche captured the experience of “devaluation” thus:

Now how does the philosopher see the culture of our time? Naturally quite differently than those philosophy professors who are satisfied with their state. When he thinks of the universal haste and the increasing speed with which things are falling, of the cessation of all contemplativeness and simplicity, it almost seems to him as if he were seeing the symptoms of a total extermination and uprooting of culture. The waters of religion are ebbing and they are leaving behind swamps or ponds; the nations are again separating from one another in the most hostile manner and they are trying to rip each other to shreds. The sciences, without any measure and pursued in the blindest spirit of *laissez faire*, are breaking apart and dissolving everything which is firmly believed; the edified classes and states are being swept along by a money economy which is enormously contemptible. Never was the world more a world, never was it poorer in love and good. The educated

classes are no longer lighthouses or sanctuaries in the midst of all this turbulent secularisation; they themselves become more turbulent by the day, more thoughtless and loveless. Everything, contemporary art and science included, serves the coming barbarism. (Nietzsche 1983, 148-9).

⁶ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, Verso, 1974.

⁷ It is this intuition that makes the viewer so uncomfortable with the final, triumphant scene of *Schindler's List*.

⁸ This was quoted in Alain Finkielkraut, *Remembering in Vain: The Klaus Barbie Trial and Crimes Against Humanity*, Columbia University Press 1992, 29. From Paul Valéry, "La Crise de l'esprit", in *Variété* 1, Gallimard, 1978, 15.

⁹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Preface.

¹⁰ Quoted by Gillian Rose in *Love's Work, Chatto and Windus*, 1995, from Staretz Silouan.

¹¹ See by contrast Zygmunt Bauman's misreading of Arendt in *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge, Polity, 1991. He writes of the Holocaust as "a rare test of the hidden possibilities of modern society", that it "arose out of a genuinely rational concern and was generated by bureaucracy true to its form", was "witness to the advance of civilisation", was based on the "applied technology of the mass production line", was "the product of modernity", etc.

¹² Arendt, "Introduction" to Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, Schocken, New York 1968, 39.

¹³ Aristotle wrote: "the main concern of politics is to engender a certain character in citizens and to make them good and disposed to perform noble actions". *Ethics*, 1099b, 30.

¹⁴ J. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", in *Writing and Difference*, 280.

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Jussi Kotkavirta

Observations on Arendt, Kant and the Autonomy of Political Judgement

Hannah Arendt is one of the important authors who have radically questioned conventional philosophical views on politics. Her conviction was that a foundationalist and cognitivist philosophy of politics, which in various forms has very much dominated the tradition, suggests a fatally misguided picture of the political. For Arendt, the Platonic move from the cave, from *doxa* to *episteme*, is a move from a political space to metaphysics and there is, or should be, no way back to a theory of the political. In Arendt's paradigm it is Socrates who as gadfly and midwife practiced political judgement publicly and pressed his fellow citizens to do the same. Arendt tends to contrast Socrates' activity as a major threat to the dominant power elite with Plato's founding of the Academy in order to do *theoria*.

Since Plato such metaphysical views on politics and political philosophy have been defended, e.g., in numer-

ous theories of natural law as well as in versions of modern liberalism and socialism. Common to them is the idea of politics as a part, and usually as a subordinate part, of some larger social, historical and conceptual totality. In some way or another the principles of the political are derived from a non-political source. One could perhaps call these views naturalistic by making an analogy with ethical naturalism, which has defined the ethical or moral in metaphysical, theological, biological, sociological, linguistic etc. terms.

There have been attempts, however, to think of political life as well as thought in terms of politics itself. One may in fact already find elements of a conception of politics from Aristotle in terms *phronesis*, i.e. of an ability to deliberate and act prudentially in political questions or situations – although it can also be maintained that for him, politics is just one part of a larger practical totality aiming at the realization of *eudaimonia*. In ethics, at least, Aristotle argues for a kind of naturalism. Additionally, there are authors like Machiavelli, Burke, de Tocqueville and Nietzsche who have all criticized the conventional philosophical discourses on political principles and truths, suggesting a more radical autonomy of the political.

These critical perspectives, Aristotle's included, have aroused major interest during the last few decades while the foundationalist theories of politics have been under various attacks and deconstructions. Even though authors like Machiavelli, de Tocqueville and Nietzsche certainly have operated with varying motives and diverse conceptual strategies, the aspiration to perceive politics as something rather self-sustaining or autonomous is common to them all. Thus, they all tend to oppose reductions or translations of political 'principles' into non-political terms, be it metaphysics, religion, economics, sociology, or moral philosophy. Instead, politics as a mode of common deliberation, or perhaps as a kind of art, is interpreted in its

own terms. One should be especially careful not to reduce principles or rules of political action into cognitive or epistemic rules, which would then supply a universally rational foundation for political decisions.¹

But if the constitutive and normative rules for political action and discourse should not be derived or justified from any non-political source, they must somehow be generated within the political space. And if that space is itself without a hierarchical structure or a foundation, as it seems to be for these thinkers, then the principles for political deliberation, action and discourse have to be produced in the course of the political action or discourse itself. This is essentially the problematics to which many of the questions concerning political judgement are related. If politics should be thought of as something autonomous and self-sustaining, then how should we conceive the political judgements? If in practising political judgement it is not possible to find orientation in the form of a cognitive or moral judgements, then what are such self-sustaining political judgements.

These kinds of questions are also relevant in Hannah Arendt's work. It is questionable whether she herself would have thought of them in these terms, because for her there could be no *theory* of political judgement. But in any case the current interest in her work indicates its relevance for discussions concerning the principles of the political and political judgement. In the following, I will first briefly outline how Arendt's highly original thought on the autonomy of political questions develops. Secondly, I will discuss her views on political judgement and comment on some of her interpretations of Kant's *Kritik der Urteilsskraft* as containing a theory of an autonomous political judgement. My comments on these topics are partly critical. Finally, I will briefly endorse a more holistic picture of political judgement with its connections to cognitive and moral judgements.

Arendt and the Autonomy of Political Judgement

Hannah Arendt's thoughts on the principles of political action and discourse are certainly of major importance. However, the frame in which she discusses questions related to them is highly peculiar and also highly variable, making her even more difficult to conceive. For Arendt traditional political philosophy has in fact little to say about politics because it has discussed politics so much in terms of knowledge, thus disguising the specific dynamics of political action and thought. The model for Arendt's conception of political space is of classical Greek and Roman origin, not modern. Politics for Arendt is a matter of action and judgement in a public space within the human world. Her ways of conceiving politics change, not so much because of this model, but rather because she becomes increasingly pessimistic about the possibilities of the political, i.e. of its application in the modern world. For her, social and economical activities and institutions become increasingly dominant in the modern world. Thus, as far as modernity tends to close political space, it becomes totalitarian. Not only the Holocaust, after which the human condition in general could no longer be thought as it had been, but mass-society as whole seemed to exclude the individual ability to think and judge politically and express public responsibility towards others in common affairs.

Thus, Arendt's theory of the political space is inherently a critique of modernity where the social, with its privatizing influences on the common world, becomes increasingly dominant. Analogously, her insistence on the autonomy of political judgement and action is simultaneously a commentary on the corruption of judgement in our time. Seen from this perspective then, her book on totalitarianism and the Eichmann-book are among her most

essential contributions on thinking the political judgement. In addition to material about the collective decay of judgement, they contain some positive examples of the exercise of political judgement.²

In *The Human Condition* one does not yet find an unequivocal picture of Arendt's views on the notion of political judgement. There she introduces certain conditions for her view while distancing from foundationalist and historicist theories, presenting the sphere of actions as radically separate from those of work and labour. In many ways her distinctions follow Aristotle, but above all the Aristotelian idea of the *polis* as an ethical community seems alien to Arendt. This is perhaps so because she eventually writes about modern times and could not imagine what such a community would presently mean. Even more generally, she emphasizes the plurality of the political in the sense that it tends to exclude all versions of ethical and political communitarianism. In any case, Arendt's notion of political action, as many commentators have noted, contains inner tensions and is quite difficult to apply.³ In the first place, she could exemplify it further by such exceptional situations as revolutions or founding states. Or, what she increasingly does in her later work, by restraining the practice of political judgement to the perspective of a spectator.

Arendt's last work *The Life of the Mind* contains some more answers to questions about the nature of the political. One of the distinctions, which is essential to understanding her notion of political judgement, lies between logical reasoning and cognition on the one hand and thinking on the other. This distinction is already presented in *The Human Condition*, but it is developed even further and made systematic use of in the first volume of *The Life of the Mind*.⁴ Behind this distinction there is the more general contrast between intellect and thinking, which is Arendt's version of Kant's contrast between understand-

ing and reason. While intellect works with the necessary conditions of knowledge, “thinking deals with invisibles, with representations of things that are absent”.⁵ Opposed to knowledge, thinking fabricates meanings and stories upon which the other noncognitive faculties of mind, willing and judging, are essentially dependent. These latter faculties are essential to understanding political action.

Reasoning for Arendt means a kind of labor of the intellect which may be applied to various materials; it is formal, unreflective, repetitive and consists of strict rules, procedures and proofs. It is very dissimilar to political judgement. On the other hand, cognition for Arendt is a kind of intellectual work that is directed towards certain goals. It is thus teleological and instrumental activity which aims at establishing useful economic, technical, historical, psychological etc. truths. It produces knowledge and it, too, is very different from what, in her view, political judgement is about. Finally, by thinking Arendt means something not quite so remote from political action. For thinking is not instrumental, not directed towards external goals, not established by some methods or rules. In Arendt’s view, one does not think in order to prove anything in the logical sense, nor in order to develop a piece of knowledge. Thinking consists of thoughts, it gives rise to works of art and to – new thoughts. Its model is the use of reason in the Kantian sense, not understanding.

For Arendt there is a close connection between thinking, acting and judging. For her judging is a kind of thinking that takes place in the political space. Thus neither thinking nor judging is oriented towards discovering some truths inside or outside the political space. In her essay ‘Thinking and moral consideration’, Arendt writes: if “thinking, the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue, actualizes the difference within our identity as given in our consciousness and thereby results in conscience as its by-product, the judging, the by-product of the liberating ef-

fect of thinking, realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances... The Manifestation of thought is not knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly.”⁶ Thus, for Arendt politics is not about knowledge and truths, but rather it is about sharing interpretations and meanings, sharing values and norms, views on good and bad, right and wrong, views that make possible common deliberation and action. In this context Arendt says that political thinking and judgements aim at “the world of appearances”, i.e. at a kind of public communicability.⁷ Political thinking and judging cannot be accomplished individually in the same sense in which one can reason and cognize alone. Political judgements aim at a meaningful assertion about an action or situation, and the validity of those judgements is rather particular and specific than universal. Judgements aim at understanding and interpreting situations, not at connecting them with any universal truths.

Consequently, one cannot give any strict proof or a demonstration of one’s political judgement. At most, one may give good grounds, arguments, or “reasons”, and in doing so one may attempt to persuade one’s listeners or readers. Political judgements presuppose a communality which Arendt, following above all Kant’s discussion on the judgements of taste, calls ‘common sense’. By this she conveys that people tend, or perhaps should tend, to see political issues at least to some degree in the same way and to share interpretations. If they do not share any opinions and interpretations of meanings concerning the world of appearances, it becomes very difficult to imagine how they could judge and act politically. For Arendt, common sense is obviously both a presupposition and a result of practising political judgement, of what she, following Kant calls, “enlarged mentality”.⁸

It is not easy to characterize Arendt’s overall view on political judgement, because her writing contains several

tensions. Most notably there is the tension between actor's and spectator's perspectives, which only partly corresponds to the tension between her earlier and later thinking. In a way, she seems to mean that these are two perspectives which everyone has to make use of, but she expands on this idea much more in her later work. In *The Human Condition* she maintains that politics should be dealt with in terms of action and as part of *vita activa*, not of *vita contemplativa*. For only in this way one is able to understand the incompleteness, impermanence and radical contingency characteristic to political action as distinguished from the spheres of labor and work. Only by admitting the ultimate unpredictability and plurality of the political space may one understand what politics is about. If one attempts, as philosophers traditionally have done, to construe and justify a 'view from nowhere' to the sphere of political action, one inevitably loses touch with the political.

However, this is only one side of Arendt's thoughts on politics. In *The Life of the Mind*, and especially in its unfinished ending on Kant and judgement, she discusses politics mainly from the perspective of a spectator who seems to be fairly detached from political actions and responsibilities. In this work, she discusses political judgement as something belonging to the life of the mind, i.e. in some sense as belonging to the *vita contemplativa*. Her growing skepticism towards possibilities of practising political judgement and acting on judgements in the contemporary world may be among her motives for this move more away from first person perspective of actors, to the more distanced perspective of a spectator. On the other hand, one may speculate, perhaps she was merely changing her theoretical perspective. In any case, one may read the book on Eichmann-trial as well as her reflections on the connections between modernity and totalitarianism as also documenting her motives for this tendency to think of politics in more distanced and also, in a sense, in more tragic terms.

Arendt's Reading of Kant and the Autonomy of the Political Judgement

In some sense, *The Life of the Mind* with its triple structure of thinking, willing and judging is parallel to Kant's three critiques. However, there are also severe differences between them. First of all, Arendt builds a very strong contrast between cognition and thinking: "To expect truth to come from thinking signifies that we mistake the need to think with the urge to know. ... Truth is what we are compelled to admit by nature either of our senses or of our brain", she writes.⁹ Although the distinction between *Denken*, *Erkennen* and *Wissen* is important for Kant's critique of dogmatic metaphysics and skepticism, one cannot construe such an opposition from his work. In fact, Kant's first critique deals on the whole with questions of cognition, i.e. of knowledge and rational faith.¹⁰ Comparably, Arendt's treatment of willing is mainly historical and does not have much to do with Kant's metaphysics of pure and good will as the only possible foundation for universal morality and practical freedom. This radical moral demand is virtually absent from Arendt's work. In Arendt's lectured version of the volume on judging she discusses various questions related to her ideas about Kant's political thinking, but begins a systematic discussion of the third critique no sooner than the tenth session (of thirteen). Consequently, the relations between various faculties are in fact not at all modelled along the Kantian architectonics.

Although it was clearly not Arendt's intention to produce in any sense a faithful interpretation of Kant, but rather to make use of certain Kantian thoughts, conceptions and distinctions in her original thinking, it is meaningful and informative to point out some of the differences in their contributions. Through such differences one may see Arendt more clearly. A major part of Kant's

critical philosophy may be read as a transcendental theory of various forms of judgement. The cognitive judgements are most fundamental to his critical project, at least in the sense that philosophy as a theory of judgements ultimately is a cognitive enterprise. Moral judgements, however, have the highest status in the whole architectonics of Kant's philosophy, because his image of the world is ultimately a moral one.¹¹ The much debated question is, then, what is the status of the aesthetic and teleological judgements in relation to willing and thinking.

These judgements, which Kant studies in his *Kritik der Urteils kraft*, are reflective, i.e. they do not determine or subsume their object under a concept, but rather grope after principles in the practice of judgement itself. Thus, unlike cognitive and moral judgements, their universality is not conceptual. What Kant explains when he develops his solution to the antinomy of taste is much weaker. But although for Kant, aesthetic and teleological judgements are autonomous in relation to determinant judgements, his intention clearly is to indicate how they are both morally and cognitively significant and may support other types of judgement.¹²

In *Kritik der Urteils kraft*, Kant examines such phenomena which do not fit into the frames of the two first critiques because of their inner purposiveness. In the first part he studies aesthetic phenomena which are subjectively purposive, and in the latter part he studies above all phenomena of organic nature which is objectively purposive. He is not adopting any classical teleological notion of beauty or life here, however, for he maintains that we only have "purposiveness without a purpose". We cannot know and explain these phenomena by appealing to their purposes, i.e. by formulating determinate judgements about them. Instead we must operate with reflective judgements, without universals under which we could subsume the particulars. With such judgements we attempt

to reach something universal or general, but not in the cognitive or moral sense.

According to Kant, in an aesthetic judgement a flower, e.g., arouses in us a spiritual delight, an experience of purposiveness, which is caused by a free play of our mental capacities. Secondly, for Kant an aesthetic judgement is not based on sensual pleasure, as some British empiricists had thought. It is based on reflection, and it is exactly for this reason that there is a special form of subjective universality inherent in these judgements. Finally, Kant maintains that aesthetic judgements are disinterested, i.e. neither our mental nor physical well-being is directly affected by them. Whereas understanding is the faculty for cognitive judgements and reason for moral ones, imagination is the capacity which is at work in the free lawfulness characteristic to aesthetic judgements.

Arendt became increasingly fascinated with *Kritik der Urteilskraft* because she obviously detected there a theory of judgement as an autonomous faculty in respect to knowing and willing. For her, politics and public fabrication of cultural meanings are the major contexts for practising judgement. There are especially three interconnected themes in Kant's book which interested her from a political point of view.¹³ First there is the connection between the plurality specific to the political space and the specific universality or generality of judgements of taste. In developing his answer to the antinomy of taste, Kant, too, appeals to the notion of common sense, but he gives it a complicated and peculiar interpretation.¹⁴

Kant maintains that some kind of common sense must be presupposed if an aesthetic judgement is claimed to have general validity within a community. He writes: "...they must have a subjective principle, which determines only by feeling rather than by concepts, though nonetheless with universal validity, what is liked or disliked. Such a principle, however, could only be regarded as a com-

mon sense”.¹⁵ Kant and Arendt understand this notion rather differently. Kant emphasizes that by common sense he does not “mean an outer sense, but...the effect arising from the free play of our cognitive powers”, i.e. a transcendental condition of the general validity of judgements of taste. The validity of these judgements is not conceptual but “exemplary”, like that of “an ideal standard”.¹⁶ Arendt, on the other hand, understands common sense more in empirical as a presupposition and consequence of judgements. Thus she writes: “One judges always as a member of a community, guided by one’s community sense, one’s *sensus communis*. But in the last analysis, one is a member of a world community by the sheer fact of being human; this is one’s ‘cosmopolitan existence’.”¹⁷ She tends to distinguish further between its ideal and corrupted forms. In every case, she is far from reflecting and arguing transcendently in the Kantian sense.¹⁸

The second important theme for Arendt is the particularity of political judgements. A political judgement should not subsume its object under a general concept, but should leave it in its particularity, just as an aesthetic judgement (“This rose is beautiful”) does according to Kant. Such a judgement renders its object an exemplary validity, just as judgement about significant political issues or events should do in Arendt’s opinion. This is analogous to the principle of plurality which according to Arendt is most essential to politics. One should be aware, however, that Kant is really arguing for the transcendental conditions of aesthetic judgements, whereas Arendt is speaking about political judgements on a fairly empirical level. Arendt implies that such a plurality would necessarily be excluded from the cognitive and moral discourses, but it is very difficult to say in what sense this could be Kant’s opinion. Similarly, the question of what Kant himself would have thought about such an analogy of aesthetic and political judgements remains open.

Thirdly, Arendt emphasizes the primacy of the retrospective perspective of a spectator in respect to the perspective of actors. For her this is analogous to the contrast on the aesthetic level between taste and genius, or judgement and activity. In her reading of Kant only a spectator could legitimately be impressed by the French revolution, whereas all those who had prepared for it were condemned. For Arendt, the fascination with the idea of reading Kant's aesthetics as a theory of political judgement is essentially connected with the melancholy and even tragic figure of a distanced spectator. As an intellectual, she herself identified more with the spectator, whom Kant describes when he comments on the French Revolution.

Arendt writes, quoting Kant: "Assuming that history is nothing but the miserable story of mankind's eternal ups and downs, the spectacle of sound and fury 'may perhaps be moving for a while; but the curtain must eventually descend. For in the long run, it becomes a farce. And even if the actors do not tire of it – *for they are fools* – the spectator does, for any single act will be enough for him if he can reasonably conclude from it that the never-ending play will be of eternal sameness."¹⁹ For Arendt herself the important point is that from the spectator's perspective there are only very thin lines between judgement and action. For her interpreters, however, this point has caused great difficulties.

Why should we after all confine the possibility of a genuine political judgement only to the perspective of a historian, a storyteller, or a passive spectator? It is in fact difficult to make sense of this thought in general terms.²⁰ In any case, this is by no means Kant's entire opinion on the matter. Arendt, however, is insistent in her understanding this idea from Kant: "The spectator, not the actor, holds the clue to the meaning of human affairs – only, and this is decisive, Kant's spectators exists in plu-

ral, and this is why he could arrive at a political philosophy.”²¹ Arendt almost completely skips Kant’s “official” political philosophy, i.e. his historical and political writings and especially *Metaphysik der Sitten* where Kant discusses politics from the moral point of view. Instead she proposes the idea of his aesthetics as the source of a theory of political judgement. This idea has certainly proved fruitful and has been developed further by Vollrath, Beiner and others.²² Her reasons for this insistence mainly have to do with her *Weltanschauung*, however, i.e. with her emphatic claim that politics, after all, is a matter of judging appearances, not any purposes or concrete situations. Behind this view is her judgement about the collective crisis of meaning and judgement in the contemporary age, when the economic and social modes of behaviour gain ever more dominance.

It is thus fair to say, I think, that Arendt’s discussion of Kant is not intended, and should not be read, as a faithful explication of his political philosophy but rather as an original contribution of a sympathetic reader.²³ Although she makes several important points in her *Lectures*, which have initiated a new way of reading his “inofficial” political philosophy²⁴, she seems to build her discussion on Kant’s political philosophy on distinctions and premises that only partly could have been conceded by Kant himself – or more broadly, would have found a place within his moral image of the world of human beings. Generally, Arendt operates with such stringent distinctions between knowledge, morality and judgement that all of the possibilities for cooperation between them seem to be closed. For her, as we have seen, questions of knowledge are radically distinct from questions of thinking and judgement. Although Kant himself is also famous for his sharp distinctions it is beyond dispute that during the 1790’s he was striving to indicate how the various faculties of the mind may cooperate and how different spheres of culture

could support each other in efforts to promote its ultimate moral ends.²⁵

Arendt, on the other hand, thinks that there is eventually only one faculty of judgement in the proper sense, i.e. a reflective judgement. It may be practised aesthetically, politically or perhaps in other ways, but she never in fact employs the terms ‘aesthetic’ or ‘political judgement’.²⁶ The difference from Kant is very clear indeed. While Kant is thinking of how to make his moral image of the world more explicit in ‘the world of appearances’ and how to find *Übergänge* – a notion which he elaborates systematically in his *Opus postumum* – e.g. from his causal picture of nature to the demands of cognizing living organisms or principle of human history, Arendt is indicating that the unitary faculty judgement is basically autonomous or independent of the cognitive and moral considerations. This fundamental difference is also present in their different perspectives on the autonomy of the political, as well as in Arendt’s insistence of the melancholy and even “tragic” figure of the spectator.

From the perspective of such a spectator, Arendt passes her judgement on the Eichmann-trial, with the central claims concerning the prevailing thoughtlessness and the resulting banality of evil. It is difficult to speculate on Kant’s possible judgements in such a case, but it is sure, I think, that he would not have expressed his judgement in these terms.²⁷ Kant would probably have said much more about our moral obligations, which one cannot escape even as an actor in a situation where people’s sense of those obligation seem to be terribly weak.

Notes

- ¹ See e.g. Steinberger (1993), 1-47.
- ² Cf. Wellmer (1993), 311-312.
- ³ To mention one, Passerin d'Entrèves (1994) argues in his impressive book that she conceives political action on the one hand as tending towards communicative and participatory democracy, and on the other hand as tending towards a expressivistic and heroic notion of politics. In *The Human Condition* the latter tendency is dominant, whereas in the book *On Revolution* the former dominates, but according to his reconstruction Arendt never resolved this tension.
- ⁴ See *The Human Condition*, 168-174; *Thinking*, 45-65.
- ⁵ *Thinking*, 193.
- ⁶ *Thinking and Moral Consideration: A Lecture*, 446.
- ⁷ See esp. *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 40-41.
- ⁸ In *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 27 she summarizes: "Men (in plural JK) = earthbound creatures, living in communities, endowed with common sense, *sensus communis*, a community sense; not autonomous, needing each other's company even for thinking ("freedom of the pen") = first part of the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. See also *Thinking*, esp. p. 50.
- ⁹ *Thinking*, 61.
- ¹⁰ Wellmer suggests that Arendt's position is "in accord with modern mainstream epistemology, even if in naturalized guise. The "brain" stands for logical deduction and demonstration, the "senses" for empirical evidence or sensual intuition" (Wellmer 1993, 318). Wellmer maintains, importantly, that Arendt is caught up with the "the model of a singular cognitive subject (or organism) confronting an external world which leaves its imprints in the internal representations of this subject, the corresponding primacy of cognition over language, and the idea of rational compulsion or logical proof", from which, then, follows the compulsion to locate "the common world of men opened up by speech, the world of politics and poetry, of thinking and judging, *beyond* and *above* the sphere of cognition" (318-319). As far as he implies that this model with its strong dualisms come from Kant, I disagree with him.

- ¹¹ See esp. Henrich (1992)
- ¹² In the contemporary debates on the relations between moral and aesthetic judgements there are indeed various positions: some of them present the latter as irrelevant for the former, some marginal, some as compensating, some as perfecting, some fundamental. Most of these positions appeal also to Kant, thus creating a very incongruous picture of him. See Früchtl (1996).
- ¹³ Cf. Paul Ricouer, *Jugement esthétique et jugement politique*. In Ricouer (1995), 154-157.
- ¹⁴ Josef Früchtl (1996), 423-444 has a very good discussion of its various aspects.
- ¹⁵ Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 238; *Critique of Judgement*, 87.
- ¹⁶ Op.cit., 239; 89.
- ¹⁷ *Lectures*, 75-76.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Beiner 1997, 26-27. See also Reist (1990), 287-293, and Villa (1996), 193-207.
- ¹⁹ *Thinking*, 95; italics by Arendt. The Kant-passage is from the essay *On the Common Saying: 'This May Be True in Theory, but It Does not Apply in Practice'*.
- ²⁰ See esp. Steinberger (1993), who quite convincingly argues for a conception of political judgement combining cognitive, moral and political elements from a reflective perspective of the actor.
- ²¹ *Thinking*, 96.
- ²² I find especially noteworthy Schmitz (1990), 413-434, where the author argues convincingly that the great majority of Kant's articles in *Zum Ewigen Frieden* may be justified from the imperative of *Klugheit*, i.e. that or enlarged way of thinking, instead of the categorical imperative.
- ²³ This is emphasized by Beiner (1994), and especially Beiner (1997).
- ²⁴ The distinction between Kant "official" and "inofficial" political doctrines come from Ernst Vollrath (1977, 1987) who has made a major work in developing further the Arendtian ideas.
- ²⁵ On the connections between his ethics and *Kritik der Urteilskraft* see esp. the important book of Guyer (1993).
- ²⁶ See Beiner (1994), 378-379.

- ²⁷ As Henry E. Allison has shown, Arendt understood Kant's discussion on evil metaphysically in the sense it was not intended, which at least partly explains the curious phrase of the "banality" of evil. See Allison (1996), 169-182.

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Tuija Pulkkinen

Jean-Francois Lyotard on Political Judgement

In the two books which both were published in 1977, *Rudiments païëns* and *Instructions païënnes*, Jean-Francois Lyotard sketches something that he then calls paganism. He defines paganism as a view that does not accept the notion of one God, one truth or one way of progress but is for a multiplicity of Gods, truths, and perspectives. He calls for Nietzschean “active nihilism” or “decadence” in relation to three categories: the truth, the unity and the finality. It is a decadence of a certain type of rationality, of unitary socio-cultural space with a central discourse, and of eschatological, finality-oriented temporality. The result is a condition of impiety.

He then specifies, that the object of his pagan instruction is “justice in the condition of impiety”. This combination of the concern for justice and consciousness of there being no absolute criteria for it, is the Lyotardian theme in matters of political judgement. He especially directs his instructions to the former Marxists, whom he asks to leave the discourse of truth and correct theory in politics.

I have elsewhere argued that it is essential for understanding Lyotard to realize that he is posing his questions from inside the framework of the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology. For example Seyla Benhabib misses the point in her critique of Lyotard, when she accuses him of interest-pluralism. My claim is that Lyotard operates within the political ontology that differs significantly from the liberal one which allows for the notion of interest-group pluralism. Lyotard actually is interested in disinterested judgements in the condition of impiety. (Pulkkinen 1996, 124-133)

Paganism means for Lyotard, that the ideal of rational politics is over, and that it is impossible to gain true knowledge of social and political facts, at least insofar as they would imply political judgements and decisions. The pagan situation is a situation where one judges without criteria.

Lyotard's problematics winds around the issue of how to avoid the thought of planning the society and simultaneously fight injustices politically, make political judgements, and act moral-politically for change. This all happens in the condition of agonistics which does not include a horizon of solution.

Lyotard's position is supposed to be that of a post-Marxian. The central feature of the Hegelian-Marxian political ontology is the assumption of a single communal subjectivity. The community is conceived of as a will (a single mind or consciousness) that is supposed to be autonomous, to govern itself. The crucial question for any post-Marxist position, I think, is whether it is able to dispose of the assumption of communal subjectivity (see Pulkkinen 1996). Also Lyotard's political thought finds its culmination point in the conception and presentation of communal subjectivity. In the Hegelian-Marxian political universe a political judgement is made in the name of the communal subject. A political actor, in the process of making a political judgement is ideally conceived of as approxi-

mating identity with the abstract general will of the community. The communal subjects in the national and socialist thought are conceived of as real subjects, which may either remain dormant or then be awakened. As an example the Finnish nation was “awakened” last century, the working class could be/may be awakened to consciousness, women as a nation may be awakened and gays and lesbians as a nation may be awakened to realize the oppression and gain heightened consciousness. (See Pulkkinen 1996)

For Lyotard, as a post-Marxist, the pattern of thought which founds a communal subjectivity and claims for its self-knowledge and self-determination has become problematic. A political judgement within this thought is aimed at the future of community and it is done in the name of community. The problem for Lyotard is how to figure the judgement when the idea of the project has been abandoned, when the idea of the communal will and its self-command as an indispensable element of political judgement has been rejected. (Lyotard 1977; 1985; 1993)

My interest in this paper lies in inquiring more into the problematics of subjectivity in the Lyotardian scheme: what actually happens to the communal subject in it? Does Lyotard succeed in abandoning the idea of communal subjectivity? Is Lyotard’s concept of communal subjectivity related to his concept of individual subjectivity? The three discourses Lyotard makes use of in expressing problematics of mind are: first, his peculiar phrasal philosophy, with its vague links to linguistics; second, the psychoanalytic frame; and third Kant’s third critique, the aesthetical judgement. I am going to briefly touch each of them, the first two especially in connection with Anne Tomiche’s interesting article “Rephrasing the Freudian Unconscious: Lyotard’s Affect-phrase” published in *Diacritics* spring 1994. The aim is to problematize Lyotard’s success in getting rid of communal subjectivity as a source and horizon for political judgement.

Phrastics

In *Le Différend* Lyotard starts to offer a philosophy of phrases as a general frame for presenting his thought. Even if the term phrase evokes grammar and linguistics, Lyotard's phrase is not the linguist's sentence. As Tomiche notes: A phrase is not defined in terms of meaning and signification: it is a pragmatic entity that is defined by – and defines – the situating of its instances with regard to one another. Rather than conceiving of individuals speaking sentences, Lyotard conceives of phrases as events taking place. As they happen, these phrases-events present universes. The subjects (addressors and addressees) thus do not preexist the phrase universe: they do not exist outside or independently of it; they are positions within the universe presented by the phrase. (Lyotard 1983, 194; Tomiche 1994, 44)

The phrase interests Lyotard insofar as it is a pure occurrence, before representation, signification, and the subject: it is what merely happens, the presentation of the universe, before the question can even be raised of what has happened, before the question of the universe presented can be raised. The status of this pure occurrence is complex, however: it happens now, but taking that now as the referent of other phrases inevitably loses it as event. From the perspective of the phrase as event, even silence makes a phrase, since the refusal to phrase is itself an occurrence that “happens”, and affects have to be analyzed as phrases. As Tomiche says “There is therefore nothing before phrases, and there is no such thing as an absence of phrase.” (Tomiche 1994, 45)

Since there is no such thing as an absence of phrase and since it is impossible not to phrase, it is therefore necessary that a phrase be linked to another phrase: another phrase cannot not happen. But while to link is a necessity (it is not an obligation, a *Sollen*, but a necessity, a *Müssen*), how to link is a contingency. Linking of a phrase brings us

to the issues of political judgement, because, as Lyotard writes: "The social is implicated in the universe of a phrase and the political is its mode on linking" (Lyotard 1983, 141).

Differend

There are instances where linking phrases is not simple. Lyotard's *Le Différend* takes its name after a special situation, which is central in Lyotard's theorizing of political judgement. Lyotard calls a differend a situation of wrong (*tort*) where a damage (*dommage*) is accompanied by the loss of the means to prove the damage" (Lyotard 1983, 5). He writes: "I would like to call a differend the case where the plaintiff is divested of the means to argue and becomes for that reason a victim" (*ibid.*, 9). "A case of differend between two parties takes place when the regulation of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom" (*ibid.*). "The differend is the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be" (*ibid.*, 13). "This state is signaled by what one ordinarily calls a feeling: one cannot find the words..." (*ibid.*).

Lyotard names differend a situation of radical exclusion or imbalance resulting in a wrong which is hard to express in the hegemonic language. An ordinary case of injustice may be taken to a court as a case of litigation in a situation where both parties share the same language-game. In a case of a "differend", however, there is an injustice, yet the victim is unable to put the wrong done in phrases because the justice functions within the discourse of the party that has committed the injustice.

Lyotard's examples refer to the radical imbalance of cultural power. A citizen of a French colony cannot take a

case of the injustice done to her culture to any court because they function as part of the French judiciary system. A wage-laborer may take a case about the labor conditions to court. But it is impossible to bring up a case about the wrong done to her by the economic system which forces her to sell her labor. The means of expressing the wrong done have in these cases been taken away from those to whom it is done. Another example that Lyotard takes up is the differend of women in a male-dominated world. There is extreme injustice, but it is very hard to express in the valid language, which is permeated with the same hegemony. (Lyotard 1977; 1983; 1985)

With the concept of “differend”, I would note, Lyotard grasps the nature of injustice and phenomena of power within structures elsewhere often referred to with such large diffuse concepts as “colonialism”, “capitalism” or “patriarchy” and, one could add “heterosexual hegemony”.

For Lyotard the judgement that phrases the wrong done in these circumstances is done on the basis of a feeling. A feeling of a wrong done, a feeling of injustice. Also, generally for Lyotard, in a conditions of paganism, where there is no criteria for political judgement, judgements are made on the basis of feeling. One judges like choosing a friend, not arbitrarily, but not with a criteria. (Lyotard 1983; 1985) Feeling, thus, is a very central term in Lyotard’s analysis of judgement. Feeling, in terms of phrases “the affect-phrase”, also connects to several discourses.

Psychoanalysis

Anne Tomiche pays attention to the link to the psychoanalytical discourse in the case of Lyotard’s affect-phrase. She notes, that for Lyotard, the unconscious happens in phrases, hence as phrase, but as inarticulate phrase. The inarticulate phrase, she says is a nonsignifying, nonaddress-

ing, and nonreferenced phrase. However, it points to a meaning that is only of one type: a feeling (of pleasure and/or pain: anxiety, fear, and so on). The inarticulate phrase thus does not “speak of” anything but “says” (without articulating) that there is something, without signification, reference or address. The inarticulate phrase “says” that there is something here and now, insofar as this something is not anything, neither meaning, nor reference, nor address. The something that the inarticulate phrase “presents” is its own “presence”, its “being-there-now”. To say that “the unconscious happens as inarticulate phrase” thus means that it happens as a pure “it happens”, a pure presentation without anything being presented.

Tomiche argues that Lyotard with inarticulate phrase returns to Freud, and his notion of unconscious affect. She contrasts him to Lacan, for whom the signifier represents (manifests) the subject, whereas Lyotard’s inarticulate phrase, insofar as it is a pure occurrence, comes “before” not only representation or signification but also the subject. The inarticulate manifests itself a “presubject” what Lyotard calls the infant. (Tomiche 1994, 46-48)

Tomiche here studies Lyotard’s more recent work: his article “Emma” (*Nouvelle revue de Psychanalyse* 39), his books *Heidegger and the Jews* (1988), *The Inhuman* (1988) and *Lectures d’enfance* (1991). Lyotard argues his case through Freud’s case of Emma and the issue of primal repression and seduction. Emma was touched with sexual intention at the age of 8 by a shopkeeper, but only at a later event of a slightly similar situation did she feel the traumatic effect, because, according to Freud at the time of the first, prepuberty, event she was not able to understand the sexual nature of the deed, which then occurred to her at the memory of the event caused by a slightly similar occasion after her puberty. With this case Lyotard comes up with the notion of “pure” possibility of being affected, pure in a sense that the possibility of being affected by an

event is independent from the possibility of representing the event. Such a pure possibility of being affected is what Lyotard calls passibility. Passibility is not passivity. Passivity is opposed to activity, passibility is not: active/passive opposition presupposes passibility.

The scene of Emma and the shopkeeper can therefore be described as the scene of an encounter between two kinds of phrases: an articulate phrase (the shopkeeper's sexual aggression) on the one hand and Emma's inarticulate affect-phrase on the other. The affect-phrase and articulation can meet but cannot link up, since Emma's inarticulate phrase does not allow for any kind of linkage. Between this affectivity and articulation, the differend is inescapable. Lyotard also says, that such a differend is not only irreducible but also ineluctable "one could not avoid it". The adult articulate phrase always comes to awaken (excite) passibility." What Lyotard's rephrasing of primal repression thus suggests, according to Tomiche, is the principle of an originary, ontological "seduction" that consists less in a physical aggression to which a passive child is being subjected than in the intrusion of articulation into the child's universe of inarticulate and affects, a seduction that is thus the awakening of passibility. (Tomiche 1994, 50-57)

I would pay attention here to the very word that Lyotard makes use of here: "awakening". He emphasizes the originary traumatic and seductive nature of the "touch". But in his terms, what makes the encounter traumatic is the impossibility of linkage – the shock stems from the incommensurability between the two types of phrases – and what reveals that the encounter is seductive is that it awakens the infant's passibility and produces a "pure effect".

Tomiche also pays attention to the linkage between Lacan's concept of the missed encounter and Lyotard's theorizing. She says that in it is precisely the Lacanian

concepts of the Thing and of the missed encounter that can be compared to Lyotard's affect-phrase and differend.

According to Tomiche Lacan's Thing emerges as the pure "this" of the object without properties – *quod* without any *quid*. In relation to Freud's distinction between what is "inside" and what is "outside" the subject, Lacan's Thing emerges as the excluded interior, that which is excluded inside. Tomiche writes: "Like Lacan's Thing, which constitutes a primordial exclusion at the center of the subject's unconscious (the Thing is at the heart of the unconscious but is there as excluded, as a hole, a cut around which the signifier structures reality), Lyotard's affect is excluded inside: it inhabits articulated discourse while being its radical other" (Tomiche 1994, 59; Lacan 1986, 87, 122).

Tomiche further analyses: "For Lyotard the encounter between the affect-phrase and the articulated phrase can only be a missed encounter" (Tomiche 1994, 60). This is where I disagree with her otherwise enlightening presentation. A differend is not doomed to muteness according to Lyotard. On the contrary, Lyotard presents an obligation to try to put differends to phrases. He literally says this in several texts: "What is at stake in a literature, in a philosophy, in a politics perhaps is to bear witness to differends by finding idioms for them" (Lyotard 1983, 13). "In the differend, something asks to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away" (*ibid.*). The dimension of witnessing, which is a central one in Lyotard, often is underestimated when attention is paid to the theme of unrepresentability, which is such a central one in his work. (E.g. Bennington 1988; Readings 1991)

Despite of this omission, Tomiche, I think is right, when she concludes, that although Lacan and Lyotard think the unconscious from different perspectives, they share a basic assumption about the construction of "psychical reality": beyond, beneath, and in "psychical reality" there

is something that cannot be reduced, something around which “reality” is constructed. For Lyotard what is at stake is doing justice to the event, the pure happening of the affect-phrase. Being attentive to the Real, doing justice to the event necessarily entails a reduction, a betrayal of the nature of the real, an injustice: such is the paradox of the obligation toward the irreducible. (Tomiche 1994, 61)

The two figures that stand out for me in Tomiche’s analysis of Lyotard’s recent psychoanalytic work, are first: the figure of awakening of an infant’s passibility, and, second, the figure of excluded interior, the inside as a hole. Both of these I would like to link to the problematics of the communal subjectivity where I started from.

Let’s consider again differends such as colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and the heterosexual matrix. The figure of awakening evokes the thought of the passibility of the communal subjectivity and the touch of the oppressor which (in a succession of time and because of its radical differend) awakens political consciousness: in these cases the consciousness of the colonized, of the working class, of women, of the homosexuals. What is disturbing to me here – besides the infancy metaphor – is the frame of the potential subjectivity in the community. The possibility of emergence of political agency is already there in the community, as passibility. This potential agency is located in the community already before any situation of power.

The potential subjectivity in the community – which is uncontrollable – is the one that does not find its expression, that has no possibility of becoming conscious of itself, that is inarticulate, but that nevertheless is there in the heart of the subject, as the excluded center (as the Lacanian Thing). What is disturbing to me there, is that even if this core of subjectivity is a hole, even if nothing can be said about it, even if it is uncontrollable, it nevertheless, in this theorizing, is there – it has a site. For me it seems to be, that a thoroughly post-Marxian (and I would

say postmodern) description of community cannot be made with this interior hole (in mind). That is why I would say, that Lyotard stands at the edge of the postmodern.

But, let me consider another angle to the same problematics. This is the angle of Kant's *Kritik der Urteils-kraft*. Lyotard, just as Hannah Arendt, takes Kant's third critique as his inspiration when theorizing about political judgement. Kant's aesthetic judgement is a special kind of judgement: it is made without criteria. Kant distinguishes what he calls reflective judgement from what he calls determinate judgement. A determinate judgement presupposes a law or a regulation, but for reflective judgement there is no pre-established criteria for judging. (See e.g. Kant 1974, 15-17 [XXV-XXIX]; 113-147 [113-162])

According to Kant judging is a faculty, and an a priori principle governing its operation is the "formal purposiveness of nature". In a judgement without criteria, one judges as if what one judges is purposive, even if one is not able to exhibit, as in the case of a determinate judgement, the objective validity of the judgement (ibid., 17 [XXVIII]). In an aesthetic judgement taste is the feeling of the natural destination of the faculties to subjectivity; the principle of such a nature being universally valid, the feeling of this destination must also be so; this is why aesthetic pleasure can legitimately claim to be universalizable by demanding the consent of everyone. (Ibid., 197-205 [234-246]; Lyotard 1992; Beardsworth 1992)

Kant thinks that reflective judgement resides in a subject's feeling. However, by "feeling" Kant does not mean a purely subjective affect. Kant argues that the feeling that accompanies reflective judgement, despite the fact that it cannot be objectively presented, is not subjective in the sense that a sensation or a private opinion is subjective. Rather, it implies a common sense to all, a *sensus communis*, which is a capacity shared by all. *Sensus communis* brings us back to community (Kant 1974, 144-147 [157-161]).

Lyotard emphasizes that *sensus communis* cannot be presented as a transcendental subject, as in the case of a knowing subject. There simply is no aesthetic transcendental I. As Lyotard writes: At the most a pre-I, a pre-cogito, some sort of floating synthesis between the faculties, whose I isn't in charge, but "nature". Lyotard, in recasting political judgement as analogous to a Kantian aesthetic judgement, underscores that "it should not be said, either, that the community will have an interior once the subject is born, that we will move from feeling to concepts, from art to philosophy, from *sensus communis* to *intellectus communis*, which is the I think. For this move does not exist." (Lyotard 1992, 22)

I would emphasize that Lyotard's main concern with respect to the idea of communal subject is the possibility of its command. The issue is whether the subject can be present to itself and in control of itself. The issue is not whether there is the communal subject or not. This means that Lyotard criticizes the Hegelian-Marxian tradition of the urge to control social subjectivity. He is critical of the claim of anyone to "know" or being able to "represent" or "present" the communal subject. He is actually critical of the entire notion of autonomy in the sense of German Idealism's tradition for its implications for political thought, much in the same manner that Hannah Arendt is (cf. Pulkkinen 1996, 224-231). – But is he critical of the very notion of communal subjectivity? When he writes "The community has no interior that needs protecting" (Lyotard 1992, 22), does he stress "needs protecting" rather than "has no interior"?

For Lyotard there remains Kant's "natural substratum" in the subject that makes an aesthetic judgement. This is, if we follow Tomiche's analogy, the Lacanian hole. Of that Lyotard writes: "Thus it is a region of resistance to institutions and establishment, where is inscribed and hidden what happens "before" we know what it is and before

we want to make it into anything at all. This pleasure is an inscription without support, and without code by which it can be read off. The task is to...reinscribe it, without filling it full, and without getting rid of it." (Ibid., 24)

Transferred into the realm of political judgement this means listening to the interior (will) of the community (nation), being attentive to it even if resisting the definitive description of it or prescriptions on the basis of knowledge of it. For me, crucial is that the communal subject remains there as the pattern of thought.

There are also (uncontrolled) expressions of the (hidden) communal subjectivity according to Lyotard, at least momentarily: In the article "A l'insu" (translated as "Unbeknowst") he writes about "the thing that inhabits the *polis* unconsciously". He condemns political praxis for trying to know it, to catch "it", but he seems to be fairly willing to acknowledge its expressions, which (not surprisingly) are spontaneous uprisings of "the people": He writes: Revolutions, all revolutions, are attempts to approach it, to make the community more faithful to what, unbeknowst to it, inhabits it."

Lyotard writes that the community has no interior that needs protecting, but there still is a site for that interior in his thought, the site of the interior that is not there to be described. This is the Lacanian excluded interior, the hole, which simultaneously is the source of pure affects in the Freudian sense.

For Lyotard, I think, this means only a partial separation from the tradition of Hegelian-Marxian political thought. To envision a possibility to think of political judgement without the notion of the communal will is, I would say, the interest of a post-Marxist or postmodern political thought. Even if there is only the site of the communal subject as an inside hole, it provides for a horizon of communal will as a criterion for judgement, which, I think, is undesirable for postmodern pursuit.

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Articles

Maija Setälä

Referendum, Agenda-Setting and Models of Democracy

Majority Rule in Different Models of Democracy

The legitimacy of the results of referendums is based on the belief that they represent the will of the majority. However, according to William Riker's (1982) *Liberalism against Populism*, the results of social choice theory may be used as a critique against majoritarian theories of democracy. These results imply that democracy cannot be defined as the fulfilment of the will of the majority, because the whole concept of the majority will is meaningless.¹ The problems of the intransitivity of the majority rule come up when there are at least three alternatives and three voters. In most cases referendums are held between two alternatives when the problems of the majority rule should not emerge. However, in addition to the two alternatives put forward to the voters, there may be an underlying infinity of policy alternatives. This underlines

the importance of the agenda-setting stage, in which the issues are defined, the number of alternatives is cut down, and the voting procedures are determined.

There are several justifications for the majority rule, based on different interpretations of democracy. Rae (1969) has given an individualist justification to the majority rule, according to which the majority rule increases individual autonomy by maximising the probability that an individual has his way in collective decision-making. This result is valid only if it is assumed that all individuals are as likely to be on the winners' side as on the losers' side, which is rarely the case in real-world societies. Buchanan and Tullock (1962), on the other hand, have given a more critical account on the majority rule as a decision-making method, arguing that it may bring about Pareto-suboptimal outcomes and cause overproduction of public goods.

According to the 'Rousseauan' or epistemic interpretation of democracy, the majority rule is a means to define correct answers to political problems. This line of argument was developed by Condorcet (1765/1976), and more recently it has been discussed in so-called jury theorems which deal with the decision-making in juries and the interpretation of laws (Grofman & Feld 1988; Grofman 1993). Rousseau's theory is based on the assumption that there is a correct solution to those political problems which are universal in character, i.e. which affect the whole society similarly. The correct solution reflects the common good, the general will. According to Rousseau, the general will is indestructible and exists objectively and independently of what people think. Majority rule works as a mechanism which balances out the biases in the individuals' judgements on the general will, if the voters are more likely to right than wrong in their judgements. Furthermore, Rousseau argued that individual judgements on the general will should be formed independently, without communication with the others.

Rousseau and his contemporaries believed that democracy was only possible in small and homogenous communities, because in these people's judgements are not too much affected by self-interest. Rousseau was also rather pessimistic about people's ability to make sound political judgements in large societies. As an answer to this problem, some writers (e.g. Condorcet 1785/1976, 61) have suggested that in large societies decision-making should be delegated to the representatives. The representatives may be considered to be better judges of the common good, because they may be more devoted to promote the public interest than the citizens. Furthermore, because of the complexity of modern societies, public decision-making seems to require such expertise that the citizens do not have, and hence the political decision-making is better to be left for the representatives. However, as Budge (1993) points out, even the representatives are 'living beyond their intelligence' when making decisions on issues with far-reaching consequences. The other obvious problem with delegation is that it does not take into account the possibility that the representatives act upon their own, specific interests.

Rousseau's theory points out the issues which are appropriate to be settled by referendums: issues which are not divisive and which affect the whole electorate similarly, and, therefore, in which it is possible to talk about the common good. Buchanan and Tullock (1962) have argued that individuals' interests may differ from each other for other reasons than those of ignorance. Indeed, the idea of underlying common interest does not seem to be applicable to many of the public issues in large, complex societies in which there seem to be genuine interest conflicts. Some political problems may be characterised as zero-sum-games in which there are losers and winners. In fact, many modern theories of democracy do not give a very central role to the majority rule. They

consider democracy as resolution between conflicting interests rather than as defining the objective common good, and they are, in fact, concerned about the fact that the pure majority rule should *not* prevail.

Protection of individual freedom from the potential tyranny is a crucial element of liberal democracy. One form of tyranny is the one imposed by the majority. Dahl (1989, 171) has described the importance of the limits on the power of the majorities for the democratic process: “But the democratic process isn’t completely open-ended. If a majority were to deprive a minority, or even itself, of any of its primary political rights, then in the very act of doing so it would violate the democratic process.” In liberal democracy, the power of governments is limited by regular elections, the function of which is not the determination of the majority will but to work as a popular veto on the governments, and other institutional checks and balances, such as constitutional rights, bicameral legislature and supermajority requirements. Sartori (1987, 271) has described liberal democracies so that the people “stand for a long process of both innumerable adjustments and innumerable checks”, and that the people “actually resolve themselves in a multi-actor, multi-step and multi-filtered decision-making process”.

Pluralist theories of democracy share many similarities with liberal theory as it was represented above. These theories are also concerned about the limited power of majorities. Dahl (1976, 18) distinguishes between two visions of democracy: decision-making by the sovereign majority and pluralist democracy. The emphasis of pluralist theory is on the social conditions and institutional arrangements which prevent any of the majority coalitions from being dominant on all issues. The long-term stability of the political system is based on the fact that the composition of decisive coalitions is changing. In Dahl’s (1976,

24) words, there are “multiple centers of power, none of which is wholly sovereign”. This may be because of constitutional regulation which defines the spheres of public regulation and private and semi-public organisation which restricts the powers of nation-wide majorities. Furthermore, those in the minority are provided different channels of negotiations and veto powers which encourage to achieve policies more acceptable to all. For these reasons, the society should not be divided into those who are permanently on the losers’ side and those permanently on the winners’ side. (Compare with Miller 1981.)

Participatory theory of democracy is based on the assumption that human beings are social and political by nature: political participation is seen as a precondition of individual self-fulfilment. The other fundamental assumption of participatory democracy is the philosophical idea of fallibilism. As a contrast to Rousseau’s epistemic conception of democracy, the ideal of participatory theory is not achieving a correct political decision, but rather enhancing public deliberation. In participatory theory ‘reasonableness’ of the opinions is considered as an ideal instead of ‘objectiveness’ of Rousseau’s theory. The reasonableness of political opinions is a result of citizens’ participation in democratic discourse. Reasonableness does not mean that consensus would be approached – rather it means that the citizens take into account the vital interests of their fellow citizens as they are put forward in an open discussion.²

Benjamin Barber (1984) suggests certain institutional arrangements which increase the opportunities of citizens’ participation and deliberation, among others the initiative and the referendum. In participatory democracy, the public agenda is open to issues raised by citizens who are involved in decision-making on issue-by-issue basis. According to Barber, the participatory institutions should be

instituted alongside with the liberal institutions, and all simultaneously, because they have mutually enforcing effects in building community and developing political discourse.

Institutional Classification of Referendums

Agenda-setting may be defined as the selection of i) the issues on which collective decisions are made, ii) the possible policy alternatives on these issues, and iii) the procedures by which the social choices are determined. There are two reasons why it is so important to analyse the agenda-setting stages of referendums. First, the agenda-setting stages may be more important in referendums than, for example, in parliamentary and committee voting, because it is easier for the voters to have direct information on the other voters' preferences and to communicate with one another when the number of voters is small. The information on preferences is a precondition for strategic voting which can be used to counteract the power of the agenda-setters. Therefore, the participants of nation-wide referendums are in a disadvantaged position with respect to the power of agenda-setters compared to the voters in smaller decision-making bodies.

Second, the practices of referendums differ considerably from each other. The most significant differences are due to i) who initiates the referendum, and ii) who defines the agenda of the referendum. Political actors have different roles at the initiation and the agenda-setting stages of the referendum depending on constitutional provisions for referendums and also on the other characteristics of the political system. The differences between referendums explain political actors' interests and motivations to promote or object referendums, and they should be taken

into account in the comparative studies and in the normative argumentation on referendums.

When referendums are held within the context of different forms of representative democracies, there must be some specific reasons for the representatives to initiate a referendum or to adopt a provision for a referendum in the constitution. After all, the settlement of an issue by a referendum, rather than in the parliamentary manner, means the delegation of the decision-making power from the representatives to the citizens – even the results of consultative referendums are normally respected. Furthermore, the possibility of a referendum has wider consequences to the political system, for example, in terms of the influence of the parliamentary majorities, minorities and interest groups. Finally, not just actual referendums are important. Sometimes the fact that certain political actors promote a referendum may change the course of political events even if the referendum never actually takes place.

Following the distinction put forward by Gallagher and Uleri (1996), referendums may be *law-promoting* or *law-controlling*. Law-promoting referendums are initiated by the same political actor(s) who puts forward the law proposal to be voted upon, whereas law-controlling referendums are not initiated by the proposer of the law. Law-controlling referendums may be triggered by a constitutional requirement, in which case the referendum is *mandatory*. *Non-mandatory* law-controlling referendums may be initiated by a parliamentary minority, by a certain number of citizens, or some other actors (president, regional authorities etc.). Law-promoting referendums are non-mandatory, and they may be initiated either by the parliamentary majority or some other actor in the representative government, or by a certain number of citizens, as it is the case in the popular initiative. Furthermore, using Suksi's (1993) terminol-

ogy, the referendum is *active* when it is initiated by a certain number of citizens, and *passive* when it is initiated by a certain actor in the representative government.

The word popular initiative 'plebiscite' is sometimes used to refer to popular votes used to reinforce and legitimize the power of the political establishment. There are many examples of referendums in which large majorities have supported the position or the policies of those in power. Silvano Möckli (1994) uses the word plebiscite to refer to all *ad hoc* referendums which are used in situations when those in power find it suitable. With the word 'referendum' he refers to enduring and constitutionally regulated institutions. As it has been argued earlier, the distinction based on the constitutional regulation may not be functionally that relevant, because most of the optional referendums regulated by the constitution are not that different from the *ad hoc* referendums which are not constitutionally regulated. Although it is easy to agree with Möckli that *ad hoc* and optional referendums have distinctive functions from other forms of referendums, there are two reasons why the word plebiscite may have too strong negative connotations to describe all *ad hoc* and optional referendums. First, there are cases for *ad hoc* and optional referendums in which the results of referendums have not been in accordance with the expectations of its initiators, for example referendums on EEC and EU membership in Norway in 1972 and 1994. Second, as it will be shown later on, the *ad hoc* and optional referendums used in parliamentary democracies have also other functions than that of legitimizing the existing government.

The following table describes referendums according to their possible initiators, and whether they are law-controlling or law-promoting:

Table 1. Types of Referendums

Initiator of the Referendum	Law-Controlling	Law-Promoting
Constitutionally Required	mandatory	-
Passive	abrogative and suspensive	'ad hoc'/optional referendum
Active	abrogative and suspensive	popular initiative

The following characterises the place of each type of the referendum in the decision-making processes in representative democracies (the symbol * stands for the actor who initiates the referendum; 'p' refers to the actor who makes the legislative proposal; and 'd' refers to the actor who makes the final decision):

a) Law-Controlling

1. Mandatory (law-controlling, decisive)
 government(p) -> (constitution)* -> referendum(d)

2. Non-mandatory

2.1 rejective

2.1.1 *suspensive* (law-controlling, decisive)

passive: government(p) -> parl. majority ->

parl. minority*/head of the state*/other* -> referendum(d)
 (decisive)

active: government(p) -> parl. majority -> citizens* -> referendum(d)

2.1.2. *abrogative* (law-controlling, decisive)

passive: government(p) -> parl. majority(d) -> parl. minority* /head of the state*/other* -> referendum(d)

active: government(p) -> parl. majority(d) -> citizens* -> referendum(d)

b) Law-Promoting

2.2 *passive: ad hoc or optional* (law-promoting, advisory/in some cases decisive)

government(p) -> parliamentary majority*/president* ->
referendum -> parliamentary majority(d)

2.3 *active: popular initiative* (law-promoting, decisive)

citizens (p)* -> (government) -> referendum(d)

Gordon Smith (1976) introduces the concepts of *controlled* and *uncontrolled* referendums in order to characterise the influence exercised by governments over referendums. He argues that optional and *ad hoc* referendums are the most controlled forms of referendums because the representatives are able to determine the issue on which the referendum is held, the alternatives put forward, and the timing of the referendum. Law-controlling referendums are, in Smith's terms, semi-controlled, because they are initiated either by a constitutional requirement or by some opposition group, and the technical details concerning their organisation are also constitutionally regulated. However, law-controlling referendums may only come up on laws promoted by the government and passed by the parliamentary majority. Therefore, they do not considerably counteract the agenda-setting power of the representatives. Furthermore, the government may anticipate law-controlling referendums and try to avoid defeats on the ballots by taking into account the opinions of the opposition in the formulation stages of laws. Finally, popular initiative-based referendums are, according to Smith, the most uncontrolled forms of referendums, because they allow a certain number of citizens to initiate the referendum on an issue they want to raise on the political agenda. Therefore, the popular initiative counteracts the agenda-setting monopoly of the representatives.

The distinction between controlled and uncontrolled referendums describes the extent to which referendums increase the real influence of the general public over the political process. All forms of referendums give the electorate a say in political process, but the extent of which the representatives control the agenda and the processes varies by the institution. The distinction between controlled and uncontrolled referendums gives an idea of the extent to which referendums incorporate the general public into the political process and thus enhance 'direct legislation' and popular sovereignty. As Smith (1976) has argued, controlled referendums tend to be 'hegemonic', which means that they tend to reinforce the position and the views held by the government, and uncontrolled referendums 'anti-hegemonic'. Because the parliamentary majority supporting the government is able to decide which issues are submitted to a controlled referendum, they are prone to be used only in situations in which they are expected to give support to the position and views held by the government, whereas uncontrolled referendums may be held also in situations in which it is not in the interest of the government.

In sum, the way in which referendums are initiated by different political actors is crucial for the analysis of the referendums as a social choice method. Furthermore, different forms of referendums have been justified by arguments based on different conceptions of democracy. The following table (see following page) summarises the normative arguments for and against different referendums, and the most interesting aspects of the agenda-setting processes. It describes the 'built-in properties' of referendums, and the justifications and objections given to referendums:

Table 2. Properties of Referendums

Type of Referendum	<i>Ad Hoc</i> and Optional	Popular Initiative	Mandatory	Abrogative and Suspensive
Justifications	increasing popular self-government; participation and deliberation; civic education			
	legitimizing decisions; consulting the people's opinions on issues	popular self-government; anti-elitist agenda-setting	check on the legislature; correcting misrepresentation of the majority will	check on the legislature; protection of minority interests
Objections	citizens' inability to solve political problems; tyranny of majority; inconsistencies of policies; problems in representation			
	manipulation by the government; undermining the responsibility of representatives	dominance of well-organised interest groups	protection of the <i>status quo</i>	<i>pro-status quo</i> , decreasing the efficiency and consistency of decision-making
Strategic Features	strategic use by the representatives	collective action problems of making initiative; representatives reactions to initiatives	anticipatory effect on parliamentary decision-making	representatives' reactions to the threat of referendum; collective action problems

Ad hoc and Optional Referendums

Optional or *ad hoc* referendums are the most wide-spread type of referendums. They are passive law-promoting referendums initiated by the parliamentary majority, or by some other actor of the representative government. Following the distinction made by Gallagher and Uleri (1996), optional referendums are constitutionally regulated whereas the *ad hoc* referendums are not. Therefore, those law-promoting referendums which are not initiated by the parliamentary majority, such as the ones initiated by the president or the prime minister, tend to be optional, whereas the referendums initiated by the parliamentary majority may be either optional or *ad hoc*. When the referendum is initiated by the parliamentary majority, the distinction between the optional and *ad hoc* referendums does not have much significance, because in both cases the parliamentary majority, which typically means the party or coalition supporting the government, defines the issues and alternatives to be voted in a referendum, and also decides upon the other procedural matters, such as the timing of the referendum. *Ad hoc* and optional referendums are typically not legally binding. This means that the representatives have the final say on the issue submitted to a referendum, although at least a clear result of a referendum is for the parties politically quite difficult to overcome.

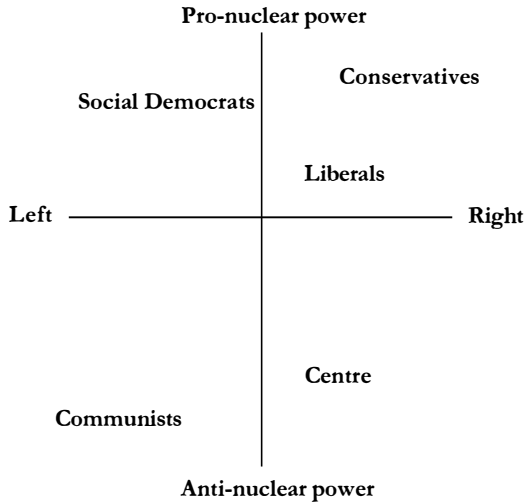
It seems to be the case that the normative arguments put forward for and against referendums do not always provide very good explanations why certain issues are submitted to *ad hoc* and optional referendums and others not. There may also be some strategic reasons be based on political actors' interests. Because *ad hoc* and optional referendums are typically initiated by the parliamentary

majority, parliamentary parties and party cleavages are the relevant political actors at the initiation stages of the referendum. The question is now, why the parties want to eliminate certain issues from a representative decision-making agenda, and rather have them settled separately in a referendum? The answer for this question may be found by looking at the issues submitted to referendums, and the divisions within the parties or coalitions.

It may be argued that the parties aim at maximising certain policy preferences, and that they also aim at achieving governmental 'office' and maximising their electoral support (Strom 1990). These motivations may be used to explain the use of *ad hoc* and optional referendums. Referendums may be used to defuse issues for two different reasons. First, referendums are used to remove issues from an electoral agenda. The referendum option is typically used on high-salience issues on which party's supporters are divided, and which may therefore seriously harm the party's electoral success. Second, referendums are used to avoid confrontations within parties and coalitions. The emergence of a new issue may create problems within parties or among the traditional coalition partners. In order to maintain the unity of the party or traditional coalition patterns, the parties may decide to submit the issue to a referendum. In this case, the referendum may be seen as a means to defend the unity of the party or the coalition.

A good example of the party-political reasons for an optional referendum is the nuclear power issue in Sweden in the 1970s. The following figure describes the parties' positions on the issue and on the left-right-continuum (Compare with Laver and Hunt 1992, 303-320):

Figure 1. The Main Swedish Parties in the Left/Right and Pro-/Anti-Nuclear Power Dimensions in the 1970s



In this situation, the Centre Party raised the nuclear power issue in the 1976 electoral campaign. The nuclear power issue was raised to appeal to the public opinion which was more critical about the nuclear power than the parliamentary parties. It was also an attempt to undermine the unity and the electoral success of its main rival, the Social Democratic Party, whose supporters were divided on the issue. The Centre Party's vote-maximising strategy was successful in that respect that the Social Democrats lost their dominant position in the election, which may partially be explained by the party's standpoint in the nuclear power issue. Later on, the nuclear power issue proved to be problematic for the Centre Party itself in the coalition government with the Liberal and the Conservative Parties (1976-8). In this coalition government, the referendum option was used to remove the divisive issue from the governmental agenda. The referendum was used as a mediating device to maintain the governmental co-operation

between the divided coalition partners. When the nuclear power referendum finally came about in 1980, it was mainly promoted by the Social Democrats, which did not want to repeat the situation of 1976 in the 1979 election, especially when the public opinion had turned even more against nuclear power. For the Social Democrats the referendum was a tactical move to remove the issue from the electoral agenda. Analogous situations may be found for example in Norway in 1972 and in 1994, in Denmark in 1972 (integration issue and the Labour and the Social Democrats), and in Britain in 1975 (Labour Party and the membership in EEC), where the dominant parties were divided on salient issues.³

The other reasons for initiating optional referendums are related to the policy outcomes they are expected to bring about. These kinds of reasons are expected to come up only when the opinions of the parliamentary majority do not perfectly correspond the opinions of the popular majority, or when there is a parliamentary supermajority requirement. In these kinds of situations the governmental coalition may try to achieve the support in an extra-parliamentary way. This is also typical when there is a minority government. An example of this is the Danish referendum on the Single European Act (1986) initiated by the Bourgeois minority government. Seeking support for a certain issue position by promoting *ad hoc* and optional referendums is also a strategy used by the opposition parties, but these aspirations are obviously often frustrated because of the lack of parliamentary support.

Law-Controlling Referendums

All law-controlling referendums, i.e. mandatory, suspensive and abrogative referendums, function as a check on the laws passed in the parliament. They have been motivated

by the fear for unlimited powers of transitory parliamentary majorities, especially on constitutional issues and other issues of specific importance. In other words, law-controlling referendums have been justified in terms of liberal constitutional thought, which is concerned about the limitations of power.

Law-controlling referendums have been adopted in constitutions to maintain some kinds of constitutional checks and balances on the parliamentary majorities. In Denmark, for example, the mandatory constitutional referendum was adopted in 1915 to replace the requirement that constitutional amendments should be accepted in two subsequent parliaments. This provision was a compromise between the Radical Liberals (*det Radikale Venstre*), who supported the referendum and the initiative and the Conservatives (*Højre*), who were concerned about the protection of minorities. The other forms of law-controlling referendums (suspensive referendums, referendums on transfers of powers) were adopted in the Danish Constitution in 1953 simultaneously with a constitutional reform in which the bicameral parliament, *Landsting*, was replaced with the unicameral *Folketing*. The law-controlling referendums were regarded as a substitute to the bicameral legislature, and they were promoted especially by the Liberals (*Venstre*) and the Conservatives. (See Suksi 1993, 183-186; Svensson 1996, 34-35.) In Sweden, on the other hand, law-controlling referendums have been promoted by the political right, and especially during the post-war period this has been motivated by the willingness to limit the power of the dominant Social Democrats. However, the Social Democratic parliamentary majorities frequently voted down the proposals for law-controlling referendums, and only since 1979 the Swedish Constitution has included a provision for a law-controlling referendum, which has not been put to practise so far. (Hermansson 1993.)

Mandatory referendums function as a veto on laws promoted by the government and passed by the parliamentary majority. Mandatory referendums have an anticipatory effect on the legislators: “knowledge that electorate would have the right to pronounce upon a bill might encourage MPs to seek improvement in legislation so that it becomes more acceptable to the electorate”. (Bogdanor 1981, 14.) Mandatory referendums may also be considered as corrective with respect to the misrepresentations of the public opinion, when a certain issue dimension may not be correctly represented by the parties competing on the dominant dimension (e.g. left–right)⁴. There may be important issues on which decisions are taken and, yet, which have not influenced the electors’ choice. It may be argued that the mandatory referendums are a cure for the misrepresentation of the public opinion at least in some issues. This may have been the case in Denmark, where the *Folketing* has not always represented correctly the attitudes of electorate towards the European integration process. Because the constitution defines the issues on which mandatory referendums are required, there should not be any political dispute over the use of the referendum. However, the interpretation of the constitution may turn out to be disputable.

The other two forms of law-controlling referendums, abrogative and suspensive referendums, are initiated by some sort of opposition against a law put forward by the government. The referendum may be initiated by a certain number of citizens or representatives, or by regional authorities. The difference between abrogative and suspensive referendums is that abrogative referendums are held upon laws which have been passed in the parliament and enacted as a law, whereas suspensive referendums are held on law proposals which have been approved in the parliament but not yet enacted. This distinction is important in explaining why the Italian abrogative referendum differs

considerably from other law-controlling referendums, because they may be held on laws regardless of when they have been enacted, although the Constitution rules out certain types of issues which cannot be submitted to a referendum.

The provision for the abrogative referendum was adopted in the Italian Constitution already in 1953, but it was implemented only in 1970. The reason for the implementation was that the ruling centre-left coalition government was divided on the issue of divorce. The Christian Democratic Party agreed to approve the divorce law only if the law on the abrogative referendum is implemented. The first abrogative referendum was, consequently, after many delays on the repeal of the law on divorce in 1974. As a consequence of the referendum, the law was not repealed (40.7% yes-votes, turnout 87.7%). Later on the Italian abrogative referendum has got some features of the popular initiative, because it entails the opportunity for the political actors (popular movements, interest groups) to raise issues on the political agenda in an extra-parliamentary way. (Uleri 1996)

When there is a possibility of an abrogative or a suspensive referendum, the support of the parliamentary majority may not be sufficient for passing a law proposal, because the law may be submitted to a referendum. This forces the governments to consider the opinions of the potential promoters of the referendum and the popular opposition, and to adjust their policies accordingly. The most important effect of suspensive and abrogative referendums may be the increase of the bargaining power of those opposition groups which are capable of making credible threats to initiate a referendum. The credibility of the referendum threat depends on, at least, two factors, the organisational power of the group, which explains the group's ability to lead the referendum campaign, and the magnitude of the popular opposition against the policies

pursued by the ruling coalition. Sometimes a threat of a suspensive or an abrogative referendum may be effective even if the promoters of the referendum would not be able to get the support of the popular majority. The mere costs and delays caused by the referendum may be a sufficient incentive for the government to make some policy concessions.⁵

In general, the most important aspect of the law-controlling referendums may be the fact that they force the majorities to seek consensus with the opposition groups in order to avoid referendums or to achieve the popular support in them. As Swiss researcher Neidhart (1970) has argued, the impact of abrogative and suspensive referendums in Swiss politics is that the potential proposers of referendums are integrated to the political process, because the government tries to avoid direct confrontation in referendums. (See also Trechsel and Kriesi 1996) Therefore, it may be argued that law-controlling referendums turn out to be rather consensual than majoritarian by nature.

Popular Initiative

The institution of popular initiative has been promoted by 'radical democrats' and by those supporting the idea of popular sovereignty. In the American states it has been adopted because of such democratic movements as Progressivism early this century. In Switzerland the federal-level popular initiative has been influenced by local and cantonal traditions, but also by the ideas of French revolution (Möckli 1993; Linder 1994). The popular initiative has also been supported by theorists of participatory democracy. Their arguments are based on the fact that the popular initiative opens the public agenda to the citizens. It allows the citizens to determine at least some of the

issues raised on the political agenda. Barber (1984, 181) has described the significance of the popular initiative:

A people that does not set its own agenda, by means of talks and direct political exchange, not only relinquishes a vital power of government but also exposes its remaining powers of deliberation and decision to ongoing subversion. What counts as an “issue” or a “problem” and how such issues or problems are formulated may to a large extent predetermine what decisions are reached.

Barber argues that voting on issue-by-issue basis in referendums is a cure for the intransitivity of the majority rule which is due to outcomes scaled on a multidimensional policy space. Multidimensionality is more typical for representative democracy, because the voters choose between parties and candidates who represent positions on multiple issues whereas in referendums people vote on separate issues. Arguments for the popular initiative have also been put forward by the representatives of the economic theory of democracy, who consider efficiency as the most important criterion for political decisions. For example, according to Frey (1992), the popular initiative counteracts the monopolistic and rent-seeking tendencies of the political elites, and allows the citizens to raise issues which the elites would rather avoid. A major problem of popular initiatives is, however, that the resources for raising issues and achieving policy reforms by popular initiatives are very unequally distributed in the society. Both in the American states and in Switzerland where the popular initiative is used, there are accusations of initiatives being ‘purchased’ by resourceful interest groups.

Nation-wide popular initiatives are only used in Switzerland, where the constitutional provision for partial revisions of constitution was adopted in 1891. Currently, the initiative for a constitutional amendment requires the support of 100 000 citizens eligible to vote within 18

months. It is questionable whether it is possible to draw such conclusions from the Swiss experience of popular initiatives that would be applicable also to more parliamentary forms of democracy. As Linder (1994) puts it, the Swiss political system is rather based on power-sharing than competition between the parties. The composition of the Swiss government has remained the same since 1959, which has decreased the electoral competition between the main parties. It is possible to speculate that the power-sharing character of the Swiss government enhances cartelising within the political elites, and therefore the popular initiatives, as well as different forms of law-controlling referendums, are crucial in counteracting these tendencies.

Furthermore, Swiss popular initiatives are not as 'uncontrolled' as it is assumed in Smith's typology. The initiatives do not automatically lead to referendums, and the submission of the initiative is followed by negotiations on the withdrawal of the initiative between the promoters of the initiative and the government. Sometimes the purpose of popular initiatives is not to win in the referendum, but to achieve policy concessions in the negotiations with the government. Some initiatives have also been made in order to gain publicity, to raise discussion on a certain issue, and thus to affect the public opinion. A good example of initiatives of this type was the one on the abolition of the army, which also gained a remarkably high support in the referendum in 1989, 35,6% of the votes.

Conclusions

Referendums are considered to be steps towards 'direct democracy'. They are, however, regarded rather as a supplement than an alternative for representative institutions. The common element in all forms of referendums is, in-

deed, the opportunity of citizens' participation and influence in political decision-making. The adoption of referendums in constitutions and the initiation of referendums on specific issues are, however, promoted by various political actors with both ideological and strategic motivations. This must be taken into account when analysing the role of the referendum in representative democracies. Different constitutional provisions give the initiating and the agenda-setting power for different political actors. The way in which the referendum is initiated and the agenda is defined has certain consequences on how the referendum function in relation to the other political institutions. The crucial question is why and under whose control people's opinions are consulted.

In this respect, the popular initiative most clearly increases citizens' participation in politics. The popular initiative also represents the most classical interpretations of democracy because it, at least theoretically, enhances citizens' political equality by providing a formal channel to raise issues on the political agenda. It is motivated by the idea that all citizens should participate in public agenda-setting and decision-making, not just the representatives. Law-controlling referendums, on the other hand, have been adopted as a check on parliamentary majorities, usually on constitutional issues to protect the most fundamental rules of the political game from the transitory opinions of the parliamentary majority, which may also be in conflict with the public opinion. Therefore, they have been justified in terms of liberal constitutional engineering.

Law-promoting referendums are more majoritarian than law-controlling referendums, which function as a popular veto on parliamentary decisions. *Ad hoc* and optional referendums are probably most prone to be manipulated, because they are the least constitutionally regulated and most controlled by the governments. *Ad hoc* and optional referendums may also be the most difficult to be justified

in terms of normative theories of democracy, although even they allow the citizens to participate to the decision-making – or at least to voice their opinion through an official channel. The agenda-setting power of the representatives, however, raises some questions of the capacity of optional and *ad hoc* referendums to bring about results which reflect the will of the majority. The governments may manipulate the results by selecting the alternatives, formulating them in a certain manner, and selecting the time of the referendum. The possibilities of manipulation seems to be bigger in *ad hoc* and optional referendums than in other forms of referendums which are held under stricter constitutional restraints. Another criticism against referendums is that they may divide the society, and that they enhance rather adversary than reasonable public discussion. *Ad hoc* and optional referendums may be especially bitter experiences, because they are used occasionally, on issues of high salience, and under the governmental control. Based on the arguments of pluralist theory of democracy, the experience of being on the losers' side in a referendum may be less dramatic if there are prospects of being on the winners' side in another referendum on an equally important issue.

Bogdanor (1994, 65) has argued that in Switzerland, as well as in Italy, "the most important referenda...have been those that have not been held." This means that the existence of direct-democratic institutions change the nature of interaction and power relationship between political actors even in cases when it is not actively used. It may be argued that this is also true with respect to other countries as well: the mere possibility of resorting to the referendum option may change the course of the political process. The constitutional regulation seems to be crucial with respect to the functions of referendums in representative democracies. However, other features of the political system are also important, such as the structure of the par-

liament (bicameral or unicameral), the electoral and the party system, and the importance of different interest groups. Furthermore, when the political elites are united and high interests are at stake, the interpretation of the constitutional rules may remain quite flexible. Therefore, the constitutional regulation as such does not solve the problems of manipulative uses of referendums, but it sets certain limits to the behaviour of the political actors promoting their own political goals.

Notes

- ¹ Riker's argument is based on the possibility of cyclical majority preference relations which is also central in Arrow's General Impossibility Theorem, according to which no preference-aggregation method fulfils certain conditions of rationality and fairness. The contradiction between the conditions emerge when the majority preference relation has a top cycle, eg. $x P y P z P x$. Arrow's theorem's implications to theories of democracy are discussed in Eerik Lagerspetz's article 'The Philosophy of Democracy and the Paradoxes of Majority Rule' in *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought, Vol 1* (1997).
- ² Different conceptions of democracy have been discussed in Anthony Giddens' essay 'Two Theories of Democratization' in *Beyond Left and Right* (1994). In this essay Giddens contrasts 'deliberative democracy', which has certain similarities with Barber's model, with 'epistemic democracy', attributed to Rousseau and Condorcet.
- ³ In fact, the explanation for controlled referendums turning out to be anti-hegemonic, which was the case in Norway in 1972 and 1994, may be that parties are so willing to defuse the issue that they take the risk of losing in a referendum.
- ⁴ The fact that representative democracy may give distorted representation of the opinions of the popular majority in multi-issue elections has been proven in so-called Ostrogorski Paradox. See for example: Rae, Douglas W.; Daudt, Hans:

'The Ostrogorski Paradox: A Peculiarity of Compound Majority Decision', in *European Journal of Political Research* (1976).

- ⁵ Elisabeth Gerber (1996) suggests that the legislators try to avoid popular initiatives by anticipating the issues raised by the potential promoters of the initiatives, and adjusting their policies accordingly. In Gerber's model the popular initiative is assumed to have similar anticipatory effects as abrogative and suspensive referendums. Gerber analyses the anticipatory effect of an initiative as a multi-stage game between the Legislature, the Median Voter, and the Proposers of the initiative. The Legislators try to legislate so that the Median Voter favors its position to the Proposers' best response.

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Toivo Nygård

Historians on Finland's Status in the Russian Empire

The Historian and Time, Politics and Political History

History in itself is important for researchers and citizens of a nation. Some problems, events and phenomena of history, however, tend to catch the attention of the public more often than others. When referring to them, the motto of the historian of today telling that the human being is important to history although he/she does not belong to any party, ideology or strand of development has always been forgotten (Rahikainen 1996, 20, 22, 24). The abstract state risen above the individual has acquired a personal character and has operated as a subject in historians' minds and texts. Its interest has become the contents of politics and the standard object of study (Kettunen 1990, 167, 169). Sweden has its period of greatness, Norway has its Diet of Eidsvold, the Germans have their Bismarck, the French have their Revolution and the Russians have the Peter the Great.

The landmarks of national history of Finland have traditionally been the annexation of the country to Russian Empire (1809), the years of oppression ('russification') 1899–1905, and of course, the period of 1917–1918, when Finland waged a Civil War and became independent. Becoming a part of Russia, the development of Finland's status in the 19th century, and the fear of losing it at the turn of the century have all created a most complicated problematic in the history of Finns and of Finland. In a certain sense, the teaching and the study of Finnish political history has been regarded as based on the learning, interpretation and its changes of this particular period. Finnish political history as discipline has largely been the product of the 19th century idea of the state and the defence of Finnish autonomy during the years of oppression (Jussila 1983, 13-16). These phenomena have affected the character and urge to change within the discipline. Even today political history of Finland does not acquiesce to the view that it would be high time to give up linear understanding of history (Kettunen 1990, 163). The political 'fate' of Finland is understood and narrated as a continuum, the highlights of which are those dramatically paramount events listed above.

The years of the turn of the last century in Finnish history explains also the popularity of political history, in spite of its methodological conservatism. The greatest problem in the essence of Finland has been political. The political history's solutions are always an answer to the very same question: how is it possible that Finland is an independent state. And this is connected to another question: how is it possible that Finland has become an independent nation. The latter question has dominated the problematic of Finnish political history for decades. The approach has been rather tendentious and almost always also pragmatic.

History impregnated by a particular conviction has easily become a weapon in grounding important political arguments. The particularity of Finnish past, the separation from Sweden, for instance, the annexation of Finland to Russia and the preservation of the Swedish language, has made language, class and politics identical and concerned the historians (Engman 1990, 39-41). In spite of political change, the basic setting has stayed the same: a small nation, later a state, lived in the shadow of a bigger and more powerful state or as its neighbour being afraid of – generally justifiably, sometimes not – losing its own existence and identity.

The critical periods in Finnish-Russian relations have been the crux of the argument also in research until today. Quite recently this has been brought again forward in debates concerning what would have been the line of development of Finland if Finland had stayed with Sweden. Or, to put it more simply and unscientifically: has the time when Finland was annexed to Russia (1809-1917) been a period of 'progress' or 'regress'?

The line of political development that has been the moot question was, in general terms, largely as follows. According to the agreement of Tilsit (1807) the Tsar of Russia, Alexander I, had to persuade Sweden to join the continental economic blockade against Great Britain. Because Sweden was one of Britain's most important trading partners, it did not agree to it. Alexander took to force and launched a military campaign against Sweden. Russia was to occupy Finland until Sweden would accede to Alexander's demand. As the occupation proceeded smoothly, and as the expansion at the expense of Turkey – the main foreign political goal of Russia – seemed improbable, Alexander changed his mind and transformed occupation to invasion. On August 23rd, 1808, Finland was declared a permanent part of Russia and an oath of allegiance was

taken from the Finns in the name of the new ruler. The war ended with the peace treaty of Hamina on September 17th, 1809. According to it, Sweden had to secede Finland to Russia along the line of the rivers of Tornio and Muonio. The peace treaty was indisputable and Finland hardly featured in Russian-Swedish relations ever since. Objectively gauged, the constitutional status of Finland was clear. Formerly Finland had been a part of the Swedish state, after the peace treaty of Hamina it did not share the sovereignty of the Russian Empire.

The contention over the status of Finland and its foundations at the end of the 19th century was caused by another event that took place already before Hamina treaty. Due to its ambiguous nature, it provided avenues for later, contestatory interpretations. It so happened that while the Russian invasion was still going on, the Emperor, urged by his advisors, convened the Estates of Finland to a Diet in late winter to Porvoo (a little town of Finland), 1809. In this meeting of Estates Finland gained the administrative and constitutional structure connected to its autonomous position. In his pledge the Emperor announced that he would guarantee the religion of Finland, the constitutional laws and the privileges of the Estates of the times of the Swedish rule (1155–1809) (Nygård 1996, 107–108; Jussila 1987, *passim*). The other part of the act was the oath of allegiance given by the Estates, i.e. by the nation, to the ruler.

The new constitutional status was not actually questioned before the end of the century, when the peculiar characteristics of the nation, representative system, offices and state's bureaus, money, territory, language, the system of higher education, religion, even the customs barrier against the Empire had developed quite far and had become peculiar to Finland. However, they were largely based on modern Swedish system of the state dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries. This fact brought

to the discussion on the status of Finland a particular inherent dimension which created a language divide among the participants.

The Language Question and National Indebtedness

Basically, the contention was also about history and the way Fennomen (Finnish nationalistic) used history as a powerful weapon in it. This was the case especially since the 1860s as the Professor of history Georg Zachris Forsman (Yrjö Sakari Yrjö Koskinen) became the leader the Fennomane movement (Tommila 1989, 94-95). His ideological background and view of history were largely based on the philosophy of J.V. Snellman, although it shows distinct traces of von Herder's and Geijer's, too. Mediated by Snellman Yrjö Koskinen's ideas are connected to Hegel's views on historical process and on the part nations (states) play in the progressive development of world history (Nygård 1968, 145-152, esp. 47-54). However, Yrjö Koskinen was an empiricist, not a theoretician, so that the roots of his ideas and reasoning have to be traced back to Leopold von Ranke's inductive-empiricist method (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 41, 45). In Finland, the thinking and attitudes of the historians were complicated in that as the Fennomane movement called forth the Svecomane (Swedish nationalistic) movement, also the historians became divided notwithstanding their basic views of history and readiness to study were almost totally the same (Engman 1990, 41, 49, 51). This relates also to the question of the debts of gratitude to Sweden which has been the basis also for later speculations.

Without doubt Finnish historians were at the end and partly also during the latter half of the 19th century in trouble. The current view of history emphasized the mean-

ing of the state as a factor creating history, as its acting subject (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 45). Also Snellman could not accept any other history than political history, a part of the history of the whole humankind. A nation had the right to exist only when performing its world-historical mission. Snellman's emphasis on the nation offered salvation because according to the current view the Finns had not formed a state so that they could not have their own history (Nygård 1968, 53-55).

The concept of history meant other things for the 19th century historians than it means now; it was narrowly defined as political history. And to that definition appealed also the Swedish-speaking historians in Finland, or, it provided a starting-point for them. The contribution of Fennoman movement to historical studies was that – if we may say so – it, starting from purely national-political objectives, successfully demanded the enlarging the contents of history (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 53-55), although different spheres of history remained very vaguely interpreted and encompassed. For instance, depending on the author, the history of learning and ideas, description of the life of the common people or the development of various institutions of society were understood as cultural history.

The time-perspective of the Fennomen was limited, for e.g. Yrjö Koskinen was searching for “political” greatness for the Finns from the period earlier than the Swedish rule. The impact of Z. Topelius, paradoxically the Professor of Finnish History since 1854, as a writer, lecturer and author of historical novels was enormously bigger than as methodologist in history. As a Romantic he saw history as a dialectic of thesis/antithesis – as a battle which, according to the Hegelian formula, ended with a synthesis guided by the principle of Providence (Noro 1968, 207; Nygård 1968, 124 ff.). In his paper called “Äger Finska folket historia” (Do Finnish people have a history)

read at the anniversary meeting of the Ostrobothnian Student "Nation" he had answered the question in the negative (Topelius 1949, 489-516): the Finns had not formed a state before joining the Russian Empire. Because of this handicap, their history was provincial, at the most.

Although Topelius later smoothed his stance, he did not adopt Yrjö Koskinen's view. But as Snellman and Yrjö Koskinen and all other Finnish historians irrespective of language, Topelius recognized the unique meaning of 1809 and the Porvoo act to the Finnish history. It was a landmark that initiated the real history of the Finnish state. Perhaps the uniqueness and esteem of political history is best depicted by the characterization which the Swedish-speaking historians gave of Yrjö Koskinen's work called *Oppikirja Suomen kansan historiasta* (Textbook in Finnish history). Of the work, empirical in detail but national in interpretative framework, it was said that it was like a game of chess in which the pawns tried to mate the king and the queen (Engman 1990, 50; Tommila 1989, 92).

This was the way in which the message of Yrjö Koskinen's work was being employed by his cousin, fervent Svecomane, the Professor of Literature, C. G. Estlander. This criticism may describe the intention of the work, and of Yrjö Koskinen's view of national history and of its premises most accurately. It put in a nutshell the power of Koskinen's conviction. It was Yrjö Koskinen himself who had stated that a nation had history if it wanted to own it. Namely 'will' proved that a specific nation-subject was in existence (Yrjö Koskinen 1876, 1-9; Tommila 1994, 232-233).

The Fennomane movement was split by different evaluations of the solution of the year 1809. Amazingly enough, the dividing factor was a trivial one, namely age. The so called older, respectable Fennomane agreed with the Swedish-speakers that the Swedish rule had lifted the Finns from the shade to the light. Sweden had given the

institutions of cultural and social life and in connection with Sweden the Finns had become accustomed to political activity, and risen to the leading ranks of the Western civilization to perform its mission to guard against the Eastern barbarity in the fringes of Europe (Topelius 1931, 467-468; Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 34, 35, 39-40). Although the idea was not expressed in these words, it was cherished by both the Swedish-speaking and the older Finnish-speaking cultural elites. In their opinion, it was not at all certain whether the period following the year 1809 would fit in with the period of the Swedish rule to form a positive continuity in Finnish history.

Also the younger generation of the Fennomen, led by Yrjö Koskinen and those intellectuals who had adopted Snellman's nationalist philosophy and drawn practical conclusions from it, watched the march of history from the loophole of the Diet of Porvoo. However, it was not the starting-point of Finnish history and a deviation from the positive development for them. On the contrary, for instance, Yrjö Koskinen put it bluntly that the Swedish period was one of exploitation, utilization, burdens and the building of the greatness of the mother country. He also distinguished independent Finnish development in various fields, and evaluated events, and especially the workings of the Swedish government from the angle of how they had hindered or encouraged the rise of Finnish national consciousness and the strengthening of their self-consciousness. Telling signs he found from eras and areas which were being regarded or are regarded as the worst of swedification or institutions of 'Great Sweden', e.g. the 17th century or army. In his studies also Sprengtporten, the leader of the opposition against the King Gustavus III, and the "Finnish separatism" of the 18th century acquired the Finnish-nationalistic interpretation which prevailed among the Finnish-speaking historians until the end of the 1940s. Sprengtporten was not a traitor or an insig-

nificant daydreamer but a national fighter and great man. On the other hand, the Swedish kings had rarely understood Finnish interests. Also Gustavus Vasa received negative marks from Koskinen (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 27, 32-33; Yrjö Koskinen 1870; Tommila 1989, 92). The upshot was that at the end of the Swedish rule the Finns had risen onto the level of the rest of the world culturally and in civilization. The mature national spirit had started to demand a special constitutional status.

Yrjö Koskinen declared also openly that the historians' task was to awaken national consciousness. Since language was the main instrument of national life, practical work had to be concentrated on furthering Finnish in order to make it the leading language in the country. Also the Swedish-speakers were looking for the clue to the past of the nation, but they proceeded rather in liberalistic, not in the Hegelian mood. Typically, C. G. Estlander, the aforementioned critic of Yrjö Koskinen's work and M. G. Schybergson, who wrote the so called official Swedish rejoinder to it, found the leading motif of Finnish development in the developing freedom of the citizenry. The Swedish-speakers highlighted the loyalty of the Finns towards Sweden and argued that Yrjö Koskinen's tendency to find some peculiar Finnish national feeling in Finnish history was erroneous (Tommila 1989, 95-96; Tommila 1994, 233).

The interpretations of the Finnish- and Swedish-speakers differed greatly from each other in spite of the fact that both based their work on the tradition of idealistic philosophy of history. The Swedish-speakers leaned on Swedish-Swedish idealistic philosophy of the state, the Finnish-speakers on the German philosophy of history moulded by Snellman. Since Finland became independent (1917), Finnish-nationalistic history continued on the same line stressing that the study of history of independent Finland was unthinkable without present-

ing the achievement as the goal of all previous development (Danielson-Kalmari 1919, 63-91; Tommila 1989, 92-95; Engman 1990, 52). The Swedish-speakers could not accept this view.

The views referred to above were not only the property of a few historians or intellectuals at the time but they were quickly disseminated through school history books of the basic schools and gymnasias, and in this way they made a lasting impact on wider readership. Since the independence the schools books depicted the annexation to Russia as a turning-point. Before 1809 Finland had been only an easterly province but the Porvoo Diet had made the Finns almost independent as they had been “lifted among the nations” (Nummila 1997, esp. 37).

Defending the Autonomy

Finnish historians’ view of what was the status of Finland in the 19th century and what it meant for national development, was dependent on their image of Russia. In this, the experiences of the years of the constitutional contention, the first (1899–1905) and second (1908–1914) periods of oppression, proved decisive. In contrast, Finland did not arouse attention before the end of the 19th century in Russia.

The pressure that was put on Finland from the end of the 19th century was from the Empire’s point of view actually strengthening the internal integration by means of making the administration more effective and in that way seeking a better strategic position (Paasivirta 1978, 298-299). For Finland the new policy meant destruction of national institutions and assimilation of the country into the Empire. By actively defending those institutions Finnish historians at the same time took a stand towards the events in the beginning of the 19th century. The reali-

ties of the times and national interest provided the background for their interpretations. The foremost of the historians were also politicians; in this sense scholars performed an important national task, namely defended the status of the country as a state by pleading history. It is against this background that we have to study the ideas of the historians of the turn of the century. Although J.R. Danielson (Danielson-Kalmari), for example, held to his views ever since so that his interpretations cannot be regarded merely as political and tactical instrument but they reflect, at least in part, his scholarly convictions (Jutikkala 1983, 83-84).

The starting point was that the Finns did not recognize that the problem concerned the Empire and autonomous Finland. Russia had been pushed aside in Finnish thoughts. They considered the issue of what the words and actions of the Emperor did mean for Finland. The view was correct in the sense that the part the Emperor had played in the change of the status of Finland had been dominant (Ylikangas 1995, 22-24).

Defending the constitutional status of Finland was in itself a sufficient factor for a very tendentious interpretation of history. Historians were bound to scholarly traditions and schools of historical research of their times. Political history was popular in many European countries, and it was customary to seek support to state's policy from the past. Tendentious conclusions followed which was also the result of the one-sidedness of the evidence. The Russian onslaught which provoked Finnish defense emanated from the interest Russian liberals and reactionaries had in Finnish matters. Finnish historians held that the reforms carried through in the second half of the nineteenth century could be a model for the whole of the Empire. The nationalist Russians considered Finland a conquered land which had, for some peculiar reason, been able to develop to a direction which ran against Russian

interests. This negative view was to be brought forward in historical studies.

The forum for the literary onslaught on Finland was the paper called *Moskovskaja Vedomosti*, but the main reason for the Finnish counter offensive was the book *Pakornie Finlandij* (1889) by the Counsellor of the Court, K. F. Ordin. Its title “The Conquering of Finland” already suggested that it argued that Finland had been annexed to Russia on the basis of the Hamina peace treaty without any conditions referring to autonomy, i.e. Finland was a land that had been conquered in a war. At the turn of the century there was a group Russian historians (S. Petrovkij, E. N. Berents, M. M. Borodkin) who specialized in Finnish history. That they published their work in the years of the debate was an accident because the political situation blinded the Finnish historians who overlooked the merits – e.g. the perusal of Russian documents – of their work.

The defense of the Finnish historians was led by the Professor of General History, J. R. Danielson. He held also a central position in the Old-Finns’ party. Aroused by Ordin’s argument, his main goal was to unravel how the autonomy of Finland was born and what form it took at the moment of its birth. Answer to this question would have solved the problem concerning the political status of Finland, too. The problem overshadowed all other themes. J. R. Danielson’s counter-attack consisted of four books written in an incredibly short time: *The Incorporation of Finland to the Russian Empire* (1891), *The Internal Independence of Finland* (1892), *The Restoration of the County of Viborg to Finland* (1894) and *The Finnish War and Its Soldiers in 1808 and 1809* (1896). He also published quite a few articles on the issue. He was supported heavily by Kustavi Grotenfelt, E. G. Palmén and Torsten Hartman, among others. In addition to books, the debate was carried on on the pages of the two most important reviews in Finland, *Valvoja* and *Finsk Tidskrift*. Support and acknowledgement to the his-

torians' interpretations was given also by high-rank officials and politicians (Tommila 1989, 91).

Ordin, however, had taken the lead and defined what was it all about and how to conduct the debate. Was the constitutional status of Finland decided in Porvoo or Hamina? In his view, the former did not mean a thing. Instead, in the peace treaty of Hamina, Finland had been severed from Sweden and the Swedish king had given up his rights to the conquered counties (Finland) which had then been annexed to Russia by full possession. There was no autonomy because there was not a single word about it in the peace treaty. Autonomy was supported by Finns only, not by the documents. Danielson, on his part, set out from the view that all had been decided on already in Porvoo. In the Diet a dual act was performed; the Finns and the Emperor made a contract. The Emperor could not rule autocratically but according to the old 'constitutions' of Finland. He had conceded to keeping them in force. What was emphasized was that Finland was not annexed to Russia as a province – a view actively spread also in schools (Nummila 1997, 37). As the Tsar and Finnish Estates made an agreement on the fate of Finland in Porvoo, Russia as a state had nothing to do with it. Only the Tsar meant something.

This idea included also the answer to the question whether Finland was a "state" or merely a "province". The negative answer of the Russians made the Finns to take stand also to the problem whether Finland had a constitution which the Emperor could have confirmed. In these questions the Finns agreed but in considering what was the nature of the relation between Finland and Russia, all did not accept Danielson's view. For instance, one of his party fellows and leader of the Finnish party, the Professor of Finnish, Nordic and Russian history, E. G. Palmén, remarked to his colleague, Danielson, that in the book *The Internal Independence of Finland*, he had strayed

too far away from history and theorized too much. In Palmén's thought, the existence of Finland was hanging on a too thin rope if its tenability was weighed with such a subjective and arbitrary arguments (Palmén 1892, 233-235). The Finns rather had to defend themselves "on a firm historical ground". A theory of law and state could always be disproved with another, but unambiguous historical acts could not be questioned and annulled by jurisprudence.

The interpretations of birth and essence of the autonomy worked out by Danielson and his colleagues were sanctified and were mediated to later research almost intact. The image they had provided was easily inscribed in the minds of historians and the reading public. It flourished and lived long, and this was not so only because of day-to-day problems caused by the Russian oppression. The answer lies in a wider ideological setting and atmosphere. During the late years of the autonomy a picture of persevering, law-abiding and -loving Finns was painted, and they were compared to unreliable Russians who had internalized Oriental values and concept of law (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 29-30; Torvinen 1965, 201-202). As much as the Finnish interpretations concerning the birth of the autonomy written during the period of oppression contained tendentiousness, some sort of judicial pettyfogging and, above all, seeking of political justification, they quite pointedly reflect the frame of mind which the people of the times shared, and the way how they experienced the Russian oppression.

In recent discussions concerning the period of oppression, one essential point has been missed. The Finns, historians and the reading public, living during the oppression were convinced that autonomous Finland was born in Porvoo Diet as a result of the mutual act of the Emperor and the Finnish Estates. In their view, the Russians appeared to want to turn the wheel of history back-

wards. They wanted to abolish the institutions, e.g. national army and the Diet which were regarded as making Finland an autonomous state (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 30). In doing this, the Russians took on themselves, or at least strengthened, the image of reactionary chauvinists who were hostile towards Western culture. This image has left its mark in how the Finns had evaluated the meaning and nature of the period of autonomy in Finnish history.

The students and friends of Danielson continued the work of their master and idol. Some of them took a critical stance towards the reorganization of the status of Finland (1809) as a part of general European politics. These studies, e.g. by U. L. Lehtonen, were written from the standpoint of general history (Poland in Russian politics) but were connected to the problematic of which the 'Porvoo solution' was a part. The most important of them was perhaps Lehtonen's *From Tilsit to Hamina: A Study of the Policy of Alexander the First in Regard whether It Caused the Conquering of Finland* (1908). The title reveals the main subject of the study, and the interpretation of Lehtonen became the standard one in Finnish historical writing and view of history. Alexander had, against his will, had to conquer Finland. Alexander's foreign policy had not been expansive, as it had been suggested in former studies.

Lehtonen's line of study was continued by Erkki J. Osmonsalo whose doctoral thesis (1932) dealt with border politics of Finland. His contribution is contained in his work called *Suomen valloitus* ("The Conquering of Finland"), the results of which corroborated Lehtonen's interpretations. Osmonsalo emphasized that Finland was given its own General Gouverneur already on the first of December, 1808, which virtually meant autonomy.

Osmonsalo's later work is connected to the third phase in debates concerning the birth of autonomy of Finland and Finland's status in the Russian Empire. His synthesis came out in *Suomen historian käsikirja* (1949, "The Hand-

book of Finnish History”) which was – also meant to be such (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 25-26; Kettunen 1990, 178-179) – the symbol of the new direction in Finnish historiography after the World War II. He wrote extensive articles for it which dealt with the foundation of the Finnish state and the period of autonomy until the years of oppression. According to him, the times of Nicholas I were not only of the “black reactionary” kind, as the earlier liberalistic interpretation of Finnish history had had it, but a period of positive developments in many areas. Osmonsalo was the harbinger of the reevaluation of the period of autonomy.

Osmonsalo analyzed also the history of national institutions, a theme picked up by K.W. Rauhala, who specialized in these studies. His starting point and goal were national. One had to study the history of the institutions which were the most important in the formation of the autonomy and to show to Finns and others the state-like nature of Finland and its organized political power.

The generation of the Swedish-speaking historians who studied 19th century history was somewhat younger than the Finnish-speaking one. The work of Carl von Bonsdorff proved fundamental. He took up the history of autonomy slightly later than J. R. Danielson. Most probably he was egged on by his cousin E. G. Palmén in his studies on the history of administration and economy. Because of the Russian pressure university teaching in history orientated towards emphasizing the constitution handed down from the period of Swedish rule. During the years of debate this proved advantageous also tactically. As straightforward criticism of the Empire was impossible in public, comparison between the Swedish and Russian systems made the same impact, even more clearly. Bonsdorff expanded his studies from the history of the university of Turku to cover the history of public opinion and politics. He stressed the importance of biography. In this he was

followed by B. Lesch, whose leaning to biography took him to studying Sprengtporten and Finnish separatists, so called the men of Anjala¹ and their objectives. He could not find common ground with the national Finnish interpretations (Engman 1990, 44, 52-53; Jutikkala 1983, 85). In the works of the historians who studied the Gustavian period (1772-1809), the birth of autonomy and its early decades, the impact of great men in reorganizing the status of Finland was prominent.

“The Realists” and The National Interest

After the World War II Finland had to arrange its relations with Russia on a new, “firm” basis. The transition was reflected also in historical writing. It has been highlighted (Kettunen 1994, 81; Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 21) that history joined the ranks of cultural conservatism and mental reconstruction. The goal was to ensure national continuity. The objective was to maintain room for life for history by cutting those visions that allowed too much room for various interpretations and did not fit the mood and the “realities” of the times from it. It was they that had presented Russia, the predecessor of the Soviet Union, as a natural arch-enemy of Finland. History also wanted to react to the challenge coming from the social sciences which became influential after the war. Positivism and its presupposed ‘exactitude’ of social sciences was countered by emphasizing the centrality of historical sources (Kettunen 1990, 183-184, 191-193).

The “Handbook” was, according to its editor, Arvi Korhonen, a crutch for historians in a threatening situation. It offered for all the people “an essentially more realistic” image of history. However, the yardstick for its main contributors were national values which were now threatened not by officials of the Tsar but by the Soviet

Union and communism. The endurance of the Finnish backbone presupposed revision of the old visions that had lost credibility and cool understanding of the images of threat. Historians also had to impress the readers' minds the new political and geo-strategic realities, a phrasing that became highly valued in Finnish politics for a few decades to come (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 25-26).

In the circumstances prevailing the memory of the people had to be cultivated and its inner strength and cohesion had to be enhanced. Because of these new goals and necessity the studies and their themes which had been fashionable before the war, e.g. Finnish middle-ages, the Finnish separatism of the Anjala men and – most important in this connection – the years of oppression, had to be abandoned or they were reinterpreted. The years of oppression (1899–1905) became the years of 'frost' and the chauvinist, expansive regime of the Tsar an ordinary great power with its wide "legitimate interests of security" and "justified" geostrategic goals.

The contributors of the "Handbook" were chosen according to the main goals. Those left outside, foremost of them Professor Jalmari Jaakkola, the "visionary" of Finnish national history, did not abstain from making their stand towards the value and historical sense of the new line of studies clear (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 27). Jaakkola was right in pointing out that a positivist view of history without firm convictions could be appropriate in studying so called intimate problems of political history but it changed with the inspiration aroused by the "Handbook" into an internal norm or a self-supporting value in history. In 1964 Professor Kauko Pirinen wrote that the politics of Russia had become more pivotal as a problem concerning Finnish national existence. According to him, this field of studies had experienced a remarkable reorientation. In studies dealing with the years of oppression – or if this denomination was to be avoided – of the

Russian policy of integration, only the tip of the iceberg was to be seen so far (Pirinen 1964, 125-128).

The question remains: what had happened that made this argument – justified as it, by all means, was – possible? The articles of the “Handbook”, also those which had been left unfinished, did not, also in Pirinen’s own opinion, justify this conclusion. “The years of oppression” were simply shown by means of juridical and political research and their evidence to be a misleading concept. It was being replaced by a neutral, so called impartial expression ‘politics of integration’ or ‘Russian-Finnish conflict’.

Here we come across a quite significant revision which was not the result of only political change, although Paasikivi and Kekkonen quite powerfully pointed to some boundaries of research for the historians (Kettunen 1990, 176-178, 184-185). The image of the period of autonomy was redrawn because of new research material which became available as the Finnish historians started to consult archives abroad. The framework for the studies of the period of autonomy remained, however, as it had been. Finland still was a “question” to its eastern neighbour. The initial results of the scholarly revision were presented to the reading public at the beginning of the 1960s. The formation of the Grand Duchy of Finland was dealt with Päiviö Tommila (1962) and Keijo Korhonen (1963) in their doctoral theses. Korhonen’s work divided opinions sharply. The opponent of his thesis, prof. Vilho Niitemaa, for instance, referred to works of Russian emigrant historians used by Korhonen, and concluded that Ordin’s and Borodkin’s views were returning to Finland by a roundabout route (Niitemaa 1963, 312-321; Kettunen 1990, 187-188).

Was the trace of Ordin’s argument so prominent in Korhonen’s work that it was worth special emphasis? Korhonen had argued that the atmosphere of the years of oppression and constitutional contention had affected the

interpretations of period of autonomy. In his view, Alexander I and Speranski had surely had such a quite clear idea of the status of the privileged border-lands under separate administration within the Russian Empire that they could have applied it also to Finland. However, only the rise of liberalism as the leading ideology in the 1860s and the years of oppression made the question whether Finland was created a state or not in 1808-1809 a dominant one (Korhonen 1963, 19). Even less of 'ordinianism' would have caused a row. As a matter of fact, the debate returned to its starting-point. Essential was, however, also that Korhonen's study provided ground for the "realistic", timely and opportunist line of Finnish policy towards Russia, the origin of which could appropriately be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century. The Paasikivi-Kekkonen-line of foreign policy was later officially marketed as traditional as this.

Korhonen's, and partly also Tommila's interpretation, which was widened by Aira Kemiläinen's study on the concept of nation, paved the way to Osmo Jussila's studies on scientific but above all on attitudinal level. Jussila purported in his doctoral thesis (1969) and also in many other contexts (Jussila 1979, 1987; Tommila 1962) to show the interpretations of previous historiography false, or at least suspect by arguing that the Finnish state had been born in 1809. In his opinion, the tendency in previous studies was to interpret important documents the stability and continuity of the autonomy of Finland since the Porvoo Diet in view.

Revision seems to have been amenable to creating or at least to supporting the view that the period of autonomy was favourable to the general development in Finland. It showed, as the title of one of Jussila's works hinted at, that Finland had developed from being a province to being a state. In other words, the period of Russian rule was no interval or a period of stagnation, but it was during

that very period that foundations for independence (1917) were laid. It was then that the institutions which suited well a sovereign Finland were organized. Seen from the point of view of demand of the revision it was very logical that the period of oppression and the personalities involved in it became the subjects of study. Besides, the so called Old-Finn policy of concessions, to the leadership of which also Paasikivi himself had belonged, was bound to be restored to its value. From the angle of the so called history of independence this line of thought was not popular (Kettunen 1990, 188).

The years of 'frost' and their background was clarified by Lauri Hyvämäki (1964), Pirkko Rommi (Yrjö Koskinen's Policy, 1964), Eino Murtorinne (The Clergy and Regime during the years of 'Frost', 1964) and Taimi Torvinen (J.R. Danielson-Kalmari as a Defender of the Finnish Autonomy, 1965). These studies helped to reconcile the legalist and concessionary lines of policy to form an up-to-date model of national integration.

A Wider Perspective

Arguably, the great changes in politics at the beginning of the 1990s have motivated the Finns into a reevaluation of the permanent problems of the history of the period of autonomy. Also many practical factors of research started to exert influence on the interpretations and generalizations only in the 1990s. Studies into the structures of the history of administration in Finland demanded comparison with the administrative system in Russia in the 19th century. The reading public began piecemeally to get used to the idea that autonomy was not conceded to Finland because of Alexander's liberal policy, gallantry of the Finns themselves, the pacifying of the north-eastern corner of Europe or because of the security needs of St. Petersburg.

Explanatory factors were sought also in the power- and administrative structures of the Russian Empire. Subjugation of Finland to a Russian province would not simply have succeeded because the Empire of the early 19th century lacked empire-wide, modern bureaucracy, the administrative organ to accomplish it. Russia was an autocratic state with a chaotic central government. The best and at the same time the only possible procedure was to allow the conquered countries to retain their former governmental systems, and to annex them with all their administrative machinery via the only integrating power in Russia, the Tsar, to the Empire (Ylikangas 1995, 23; Nygård 1996, 109-110).

In the light of the abovementioned view, the dawn of Finnish politics in the 1860s can be seen as a result of changes in the regime. Alexander II sought support in the bourgeoisie, and the Diet, for instance, was a concession to the middle-classes. There remains the paradox that it was the very development in the efficiency of the administration of the imperial system and the acquiring of the nature of *Rechtstaat* that led Finland and Russia on the road to conflict since the end of the 19th century. Both Russia and Finland were quite different at the end of the century from what they had been in the days of the Porvoo Diet. Russia was now able to rule the countries it had conquered, a condition not fulfilled at the beginning of the century.

Unscientific Evaluation

In the end of the 1990s, a debate was started whether the period of autonomy had been a 'bad' or a 'good' development. It was not, however, based on new research. On the background of the debate one can discern the development of European integration and the "whims" of the Aland Islands. Bringing forward the problem has, on the

one hand, led to subjective outbursts and many historical 'ifs and if not's'. On the other hand, it has tried to restore the reevaluation of the status of Finland to the starting-point at the middle of the nineteenth century. The task is not very difficult, if personal feelings, predilections and the national prejudices suffice. It does good for research to break up myths and revise old interpretations critically. The dark side of autonomy has to be reconsidered, too, because it was that very task which was forgotten during the debates of the Finnish historians after the World War II (Vihavainen 1997; Salminen 1997b; Nortamo 1997; Salminen 1997a).

The largely unscientific debate carried on in *Helsingin Sanomat*, a Finnish newspaper with the widest circulation in Finland, was ignited by a book which is scientifically reliable and interesting, namely *Finlands Historia, vol. 3, Kejsartiden* ("Finnish History, vol. 3. The Imperial Time"), written by the expert of the period of autonomy, Professor Matti Klinge. The book was reviewed in *Helsingin Sanomat* in the end of December, 1996, by the former Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Jaakko Numminen. He described the book as "the Rehabilitation of the Imperial Era", and it was this very label which motivated the ensuing debate, although Kerstin Smeds had earlier reviewed Klinge's work under the title "Imperial Age – Finnish Golden Years?" in *Hufvudstadsbladet*. Despite the fact that Smeds had lifted one of main topics of the later debate in view, the review itself did not cause wider discussion. The reviews of Numminen and Smeds had been very laudatory. Instead, the review "The Imperial Age was not only a success story" by Dr Martti Häikiö in *Helsingin Sanomat* (2nd of February, 1997) contained the sharp opinion that the period of autonomy had been one of reaction and stagnation.

Klinge's book is largely a superb synthesis of the insights of his previous work, and it utilizes the most

recent research. It does not bring into light much new data, but the interpretations are personally clear-cut. In view of the topics discussed here, it is central that the Klinge's book successfully combines the history of Finland with both general European and Russian developments. The cornerstone of Russian-Finnish relations was the trust Russians had in Finns as good and loyal subjects. The basis for this, in turn, had been laid by organizing and developing the autonomous status of Finland. The Tsar Alexander the First had to pacify the Finnish front for the troops were needed elsewhere. It was best to leave the Finns to organize their government within the provided framework (Klinge 1997, *passim*). This view does not contain much new in comparison to what has been earlier put forward. The gist of the matter was the way Klinge emphasized the importance of Tsardom, and perhaps the way the meaning of the so called loyalty was expressed. It is very likely that all of the reviewers had not even read the book through (cf. Päiviö Tommila's review of Klinge's book in *Kanava* 1997, 449-454, esp. 450).

Those reviewers for the *Helsingin Sanomat* who had evaluated the period of autonomy in a positive way, focused their attention to the practical matters concerning the particular status of Finland. For instance, the Russians living in Finland did not have citizens' rights in Finland, the Finns, on the contrary, had their own laws, own language, own system of taxation and their revenue was to be allocated and spent in the Grand Duchy. The autonomous status Finland had was a rarity in Europe though not totally exceptional in the Russian Empire. In the nineteenth century there were six so called quasi-independent territories (counties) in Russia which enjoyed, for historical reasons, separate national status. They were not integrated into the Russian administrative system (Manninen 1997, 129).

In the latter half of the nineteenth century Finland developed into being more of a civil society, and in the beginning of the twentieth century the most democratic representative system (the Eduskunta) of the times and in the world was implemented. It has also been reminded that it is impossible to draw a parallel between the conditions and the way of life in Finland and Russia in the period of autonomy. Furthermore, it has been argued that it would have been impossible for Finland to enter into such dualistic and equal, federal relations with Sweden as were in place in Austria-Hungary or in Sweden-Norway. If connected to Sweden, Finland would have been a precarious borderland with its suspect and separatist, dangerous population. In exchanges of views, the starting-point has usually been that the objectives of the measures of oppression at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries were to “normalize” the relations between Finland and Russia and to give the citizens of the Empire an equal status with the Finns in Finland (Vihavainen 1997).

In future reconsiderations concerning the development of Finland during the period of autonomy, the focus of interest may be directed to the fact that the Finland which separated from Russia in 1917 was, taken the circumstances of the time into account, constitutionally and socially a rather highly developed Finnish Finland (Nygård 1996, 114). It was a state in which things Russian were pretty marginal and in which 'Swedishness' was settling to its “relative” position in respect to Finns it deserved. The odds for the secession – no matter what its reasons actually were – would have been a lot meager if Finland had belonged to Sweden. Projection into history or not, Finland gained “fitness” for independence during the period of autonomy.

Notes

- ¹ Anjala was the manor in the eastern part of Finland, where the supporter of Sprengtporten 1788 decided to stop the war, which King Gustavus III had begun against Russia.

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Matti Hyvärinen

The Fictional Versions of 'Valta' (Power)

*Reading Aleksis Kivi, Arvid Järnefelt and
Juhani Aho Conceptually*

Introduction

The gradual birth and widening of Finnish polity during the 19th century renders a very particular case for conceptual history¹. Written Finnish was established during an astonishingly short period of time, approximately from the 1840s to 1870s. Far from being a centuries long experimental process, the creation of the conceptual bases of Finnish political culture took place as a conscious project lead by a fairly narrow nationalist elite. One of the great paradoxes of this process was embedded in the strictly limited political freedom and space of politics under the tsarist Russian power, which meant that the invention of language was both a sensitive and scrupulously inspected process. The Finnish word for 'power', *valta*, was appar-

ently one of the most sensitive concepts in terms of censorship, but otherwise it seems to be a deviant case of the general model. It was not coined, translated or circulated to the people by the elite but was an age-old Germanic loan word from the same root as *Gewalt*. For this reason, *valta* has its own, popular history on the level of vernacular. To get grip on this history, I have studied the leading 19th century Finnish novelists Aleksis Kivi, Arvid Järnefelt and Juhani Aho. Reading these writers conceptually, I argue, offers perspectives on the two-way traffic of meanings of *valta*: both from the vernacular to the elites, and from the European debates of the elites to the vernacular.

Until 1809, 'Finland' was hardly more than a name for the northeastern provinces of the Swedish empire. The political, cultural and administrative language of the entire empire was unquestionably Swedish, and Finns had to change both their language and names before receiving formal education. After the Russian army had occupied the province, and Tsar Alexander I had promised 'Finland' both autonomy and its own estate Diet as a Grand Duchy of Russia, the formation of a distinct nation was ready to set out. When the Finnish nationalist movement, the "Fennomen"², was born and gained momentum from the 1840s onwards, the direction of primary protests was against the language of the *previous* empire, not directly against Russia or Russian. In order to find, educate and love the Finnish people, the Fennomen first pursued the creation of the written Finnish language and poetry, then the Fennification of the whole Swedish-speaking administration, public arena and political culture.

In the first place, there were two actual opponents of this national project, the old Swedish-speaking aristocracy and the reactionary Russian government. A significant part of the established elite understood the national issue in terms of a conflict between Swedish culture and Russian

backwardness. For them, any attempt to foster the uncivilized Finnish language might jeopardize the continuity of the historical Swedish heritage and pave the way for the Russification of the province. The old elites were successful, at first, in presenting much of the Finnish endeavors as a political threat to the peace of Russian empire. The Crimean War (1853–56) and the rise to power by Alexander II consequently changed this pattern. Hence the Swedish language began to signify contacts with a foreign threat, and support for the Finnish language, culture and economy was understood by the Russian government as an attempt to separate “Finland” more thoroughly from its Swedish linkage and therefore as an opportunity for the further unification of the empire. For these reasons, at least the moderate aspirations of the Fennoman movement had a partial ally and supporter in the Russian government almost until the end of century, even if all attempts to popular mobilization were tightly inspected and controlled (Liikanen 1995).

Under these circumstances of substantially limited political freedom, the history of *valta* as a potentially critical concept becomes particularly interesting. During the period of time under study, from about 1870 to 1917, conceptual changes seem to occur on three different levels: i) the location or site of power (i.e. which phenomena are or can be discussed in terms of *valta*) changes; ii) the characterization of *valta* changes over time; and iii) the plurality and diversity of usages of *valta* grows over time.

There are two further reasons to consult fiction in the case of power, one general and one particularly Finnish. Firstly, even among the concepts of political theory, power appears as exceptionally intangible and flexible. To get a better grip on this ambiguity, theorists of power have repeatedly told more or less convincing stories and anecdotes of power. At times, readers have been likened to observers at the billiard table or compared to occasional

on-lookers and traffic officers who have been thought to orchestrate traffic (Ball 1988; Clegg 1989; 1993; Dahl 1958). Michel Foucault (1977) dramatizes his *Discipline and Punish* by contrasting the public play of power, manifested in a brutal execution, with the secretive and disciplinary power embedded in the model prison of the Panopticon. It seems to me that theorizing on power repeatedly calls for such stories, which in terms of Kenneth Burke (1969) might be named as *representative anecdotes*, and which accordingly allow for radically different vocabularies of power. The debate on the numerous “faces of power” has been partly a debate on the representative case of power: what is the scene, who, and of what kind are the agents, what is done, and for what purpose.

It is here that literature comes in. I take it that novelists tell very similar stories and anecdotes of power, stories which posit power in time and place, and in a net of relationships. In telling stories, the authors of fiction have apparently the same power of visualizing, reflecting as well as changing the usage of this concept. There are, of course, some reservations to be made when we speak about novelists as “theorists of power”. Authors may also have explicit theories and attempts to describe processes of power without the vocabulary of power (Linna 1990). I have no interest in these authorial theories as such, only the actually written and vocabularized world of power interests me in this study. On that level, not only do we recognize the explicit theories of power that the authors may have, but also the authors’ recognition of possible fictional and or mimetic languages that the characters employ in different contexts.

Secondly, the creation of Finnish literature was, of course, one of the key political objectives of the nationalistic movement. “Literature” and “politics” were far from such separate spheres as they appear nowadays, after the modernist breakthrough³. Such prominent writers as

Järnefelt and Aho personally knew and socialized with a significant part of the Fennoman political and cultural elite. As a journalist, Aho himself was an active politician and radical Fennoman.

The Two Realms of 'Valta' (Power)

What do I mean by the “location” or “site” of power? Perhaps it is best to begin with the prehistory of *valta*. During the Swedish power, a number of legal statutes and religious texts were translated into Finnish. This old usage appears to be extremely divided, as if there had been two distinct spheres of *valta*: it appears either in the meaning of ‘authorities’ (the German word ‘*Obrigkei*t’ better transmits the Lutheran meaning of the word), or in the meaning of *subjective right* or entitlement. The first of them, *esivalta*⁴, seems to have governed as an undivided and unquestioned anonymous agent above all of the mundane actors. It is quite obviously a permanent power, which cannot be legitimately challenged, resisted or struggled for. *Esivalta* is not a tool, method, or resource, it is the totality of the combined moral action of the Ruler and the Church, no matter whether it actualizes itself in the capital city or in the smallest countryside village. The word for a regional totality of this *esivalta* was empire, *valtakunta*⁵ (German ‘Reich’ and Swedish ‘rike’ bring the meaning closer).

The opposite and counterpart of this massive agent *authorities* was the strictly personal, subjective right, *valta*, power to do what one pleases within specified circumstances. The 1820-22 Statutes, for example, put it this way:

The master shall have the power (*valta*) at any time he wishes to sign his hirelings for still a year’s service onwards and advance the hiring fee to validate this contract.

The location of *valta* is here interestingly narrative, as in many other status of that time. This is a power that a king, a master, or any single person can have. For example, the Statutes repeat that “nobody” has the power to demand a horse, or anything else, from an innkeeper, if one is not capable of paying for these services. Within conventional limits, defined by various narratives of *valta*, it offers almost absolute freedom of action. As regards the legal discourse, this *valta* clearly precedes the usage of ‘right’, and outnumbers it still at the beginning of the 19th century.

The old way of conceptualizing *valta* as entitlement seems to have at least two separate sources. Firstly, it is not so far from the biblical usage of power. J.A. Lopmeri (1944), in his study on old Finnish and Estonian toponyms, suggests a second and local source. According to him, big estates were called ‘powers’, and therefore several old names had the affix *-valta*. In this old usage, *valta* was able to mean a village or even the population of a village (Itkonen et. al., 1975). All of this seems to allude to a state of affairs, where the owners of an estate or even the inhabitants of a village were entitled to decide relatively freely about things within the limits of their premises. At least they had a regional entitlement to act, which was called *valta*. By the end of the Swedish power, this power as entitlement seems to be reduced – possibly from a political system with its own foundation – to the power of the master within his farm.

It is quite evident that a significant number of features that we nowadays inscribe into the sphere of power evade this bipolar system of ‘*esivalta*’ and ‘power as entitlement’. Neither of them genuinely conceptualizes power from the perspective of resources, neither of them conceptualizes power as a tool to be used, neither of them allows speculation on the division of power. *Esivalta* is far from the Foucauldian effectiveness of disciplinary power.

These gaps seem to inform of the lack of genuine political space and struggle. *Valta* does not catch the institutional structure of the Grand Duchy of Finland: it is either a feature of separate individuals or it is the unchallenged totality of Ruler and Church. Power *is*, it is not struggled for. The birth and enlargement of political space can thus have been as a process of marginalizing the area *esivalta* and broadening the area and applicability of *valta*.⁶ So far, my selection of novels is limited to the time under Russian power, and is not, of course, exclusive.

The Power of Seven Brothers

Alexis Stenvall (1834–1872) published the first Finnish novel *Seven Brothers* in 1870 under the Finnish pen name Aleksis Kivi, and since then he has maintained his position as either one of or *the* key figure of Finnish literature. Stenvall studied at the University of Helsinki, and had socialized with the group of nationalist *Fennomen*. The young student was the first winner of the State Prize of Finnish Literature, and was therefore both a celebrated (by the young nationalists) and hated (by his older competitors) figure before the publication of his novel.

In order to outline the national importance of this novel, I offer a schematization of the three major stages in the reception of this book. Immediately after its publication, the book was fiercely attacked and even condemned by the leading Finnish intellectuals. The book gave, said the critics, a totally crude, uncivilized and unidealistic picture of the Finnish people and peasants. This lack of spirit and an overarching ideal made the book totally unfit for the program of Finnish nationalism. The Swedish elite had continuously maintained that only the Swedish language could guarantee a cultural tradition. In terms of this conflict between new and old elites, the wild and

carnevalistic life of Kivi's brothers was an insult to the finest aspirations of the new Fennoman elite.

Towards the end of the century, when the position of the Finnish language and the new elites was established, this reception was radically rejected and Kivi was erected as a lonely and romantic hero of the Finnish nation. If anybody, Kivi knew the Finnish soul and its connectedness to nature and its wild, indigenous life. Kivi's novel was now interpreted as a story of growing national maturity, consciousness and responsibility after a wild period of life. Only recently (Kinnunen 1987, for instance) has a picture of Kivi as a splendid applier of popular humor and irony partly replaced the old romantic reception. It is easy to see how this third way of reading Kivi makes the first much more understandable: Kivi was originally criticized and even hated partly because of his daring plebeian humor and irony.

The frame of the story is simple: seven youngish brothers carry on an unruly and lazy life on their farm in Southern Finland. However, they cannot marry without learning to read, at least the catechism. Due to the crude way of teaching by the parish clerk, the brothers decide to escape all civilization by retreating into the forests and living there as hunters and cultivating fields by clearing and burning woodland. After ten years of wild solitude and a series of conflicts with the village people, the brothers decide to return to the village again and gradually change into responsible citizens. What makes Kivi's book so exciting is that the author thoroughly knew both his peasants and his Cervantes, Virgil and Shakespeare. Therefore, he seems to radically escape the political dilemma – and even tragedy – of Finnish nationalists, who had constantly declared and demanded the love for the Finnish people, but who had, at the same time, maintained a purely idealized image of humble, assiduous and silent people. The people had to be loved and praised, not heard.

As the first Finnish novel, and as a book rooted so thickly in peasant culture, *Seven Brothers* is an exceptionally valuable book in terms of the conceptual history of *valta*. Even if the book was written during the great translation project of political and social vocabulary, it still employed and documented older, popular usages of the Finnish language. The perspective of Helsinki, the capital city, and its intellectual elite dominated this novel less than any of its immediate followers. Kivi's particular position and way of using *valta* is easily recognized by reading the two published English translations (by Alex Matson, 1952, and Richard A. Impola⁷, 1991). Once, after a conflict with the minister, and under the compulsion to learn to read, the oldest of the brothers, Juhani asks, after cursing:

Hasn't a man a power (*valta*) to live in peace and... (Kivi, 1972, 95)⁸.

Alex Matson translates this section as follows:

A thousand flaming goblins! Hasn't a man the *right* to live his own life as he likes in peace, when he stands in no one's way, tramples on no one's rights? (Kivi, 1973, 94, italics mine)

It is noteworthy, that Kivi uses both 'valta' and 'oikeus' (right) in the same sentence. Impola, then, puts the same section thus:

One thousand fiery devils! *Can't* a man live by himself in peace and freedom if he meddles with no one, hurts no one's rights? (Kivi, 1991, 84, italics mine)

Conceptually, Matson is somewhat closer to Kivi's lost world, even if 'right' is here a much narrower concept than *valta*. For Kivi, a master and a man should have their own room and *valta*. Similarly, when brothers decide to rent out the southern part of the farm and escape to the

forests of the northern part of their farm, the deal which they made promised the brothers

...the power to do and live as they please. (Kivi, 98)

According to Matson *valta* is translated

In the northern section of the farm's holding, around Impivaara, the brothers were *free* to do and live as they pleased, this applying both to the clearings and the forest. (Kivi, 1973, 96-97, italics mine)

Impola again chooses a less conceptual approach:

They *could* have the northern part of the farm around Impivaara *at their disposal*, to do as they please in field and forest. (Kivi, 1991, 87, italics mine)

Right seems to be the most common translation for this old conception of *valta*, but the translators use also the words 'entitlement', 'domination', 'freedom' and the modal verb 'can'. The translations miss Kivi's conceptual world perhaps most radically at the moment of brothers' return to their old home. Recalling the regional background of *valta*, and its vital connection to the role of a master, it is consequential that Kivi writes:

It is a pale day in September, when brothers have decided to go to reach their previous *valta* in Jukola farm. (Kivi, 299)

Impola, changing even the weather of the day, puts it this way:

The date set for *repossessing* Jukola farm, which the brothers had not seen for nine years, was a clear day in September. (Kivi 1991, 280, italics mine)

Matson emphasizes the same point of possession:

It is a pallid day in September, the day on which the brothers are going to *take possession* again of their former home... (Kivi, 1973, 278, italics mine)

Possession may be reached by a decision, or by a fairly distinct act. But masters have legal, moral and practical obligations to fulfill before again reaching their previous *valta* in their farm. As the story goes on, the brothers learn that their fields and the house have fallen into disrepair. I presume that by *valta* Kivi alludes to even this kind of control and domination over the practical life of the farm, the need for proper tending and care of their possessions. Indeed, the brothers did not just go to take over the *valta*, they want to *reach* it.

So far, I have tried to characterize one aspect of Kivi's – and as I maintain, a more generally Finnish – usage of *valta*. The radicality of the conceptual change of *valta* since Kivi is quite evident in the sheer fact that neither of the current translators have translated *valta* into *power* in any of these instances. I have no reason to accuse Matson or Impola of poor translations, they only illustrate the clear conceptual change since Kivi. However, my point is not to maintain that Kivi and his contemporaries are just outdated and that they discuss and conceptualize totally different things with their *valta* than contemporary speakers would do. There are areas of continuity and overlapping. I will next discuss an episode, which is, in slightly different forms, repeated three times in the book. This story introduces the ironic and apparently politically suspicious Kivi. In my analysis, these episodes are stories about *establishing potestas*, a social and political order out of wild chaos, in a parallel way as the westerns analyzed by John Nelson (1996).

To understand Kivi's ironic radicality, we need to remember the clear bipolarity between the public *esivalta* and private *valta*, which was the state of affairs when Kivi wrote his book. A story about establishing potestas, therefore, is apparently a provocation. Kivi's literal and political ingenuity manifests itself in his way to insert this classical republican theme into the arguments of seven, backward brothers. The discussion about this politically explosive theme takes place in the most innocent-looking and ironic context. Nevertheless it does take place. The typical course of action is that Aapo, whose role is to be the ponderer among the brothers, even to the point of self-importance, opens up the discussion about the need for an organized life. Power and leadership must be given to one of the brothers, and every time it is naturally offered to the oldest brother, the headstrong Juhani. At first, Juhani is fascinated with his power over his brothers, and how to punish the disobedient hard enough. Balance and peace is never attained, for the rest of brothers do not accept the humiliations that Juhani holds for them. Alex Matson's version of the first episode, right in the beginning of the book, goes as follows:

AAPO: One thing, however, we must do now. The case is this: if we wish for order and a firm foundation for our household, let one of us be leader and master. This right and duty, we know, is Juhani's both as his birthright and by our mother's command.

JUHANI: Ay, mine's the right, the power and the strength.

AAPO: See then that you use them mildly for the common good.

JUHANI: I'll try my best. If you'll only obey me without the whip or a clout in the face. However, I'll do my best.

AAPO: The whip?

JUHANI: If it so be needed.

TUOMAS: Speak to you(r) dogs of the whip. (Kivi, 1973, 21)

As we can see, in this more modern context 'power' is used in both translations. The next discussion takes place in the woods, in their temporary hut in Impivaara⁹. This time, the term *valta* is not openly used, instead Aapo demands that someone must be "chief, leader of our councils, settler of our quarrels" (Kivi, 1973, 106). However, the brothers are soon thinking about appropriate punishments for obstinacy. Juhani, again, has his ideas:

JUHANI: I'll shut him in one of the caverns on yonder height, and carry a heavy pile of rocks to close up the cavern's mouth. There he can sit a day or two, as matters and circumstances demand. Ay, there he can suck his nails and ponder over what causes his solitude.

LAURI: I won't agree to that for one.

TUOMAS: Nor I.

TIMO: Am I then a wrinkly-faced badger, whose home is a stuffy mountain cave? Far from it. (Kivi, 1973, 107)

A modern commentator would probably say that Kivi is introducing here both the theme and a critique of *usage* of power. However, this is a term which does not surface in any brother's speech, nor in the whole book, and it is because *valta* is not yet regarded as a tool to be used. It is important to remember here both sides of *valta*: power as an entitlement and right, and as *potestas*. Every master, every man shall have the first as a part of his identity. However, social and political order seems to necessitate punishments, but the crudity of these punishments seem to endanger the identities of free men, making poor animals of them. Kivi seems to maintain that as far as there is a real danger of the loss of identity – or the old *valta* – there won't be any real social and political order.

Kivi's intertextual irony seems to emphasize the conscious character of his political provocation. Above, in the first version of establishing the *potestas*, he makes Juhani utter the important words:

JUHANI: Ay, mine's the right, the power and the strength.

Above we can see that Juhani doesn't take anything less than the position of God, the Church and Ruler, that is, he takes the position and glory of *esivalta*. Unmistakably, we can hear the subtext of the Lord's Prayer, and in particular the words:

But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
And the power
And the glory,
Forever.¹⁰

Similarly, the idiom "power and strength", in one order or another, is repeated once and again both in religious texts and the legal statutes of 18th and 19th centuries. In the case of Juhani, we can trust in his earnest will to take on this impossible position of the authority; Eero, the youngest of the brothers would have ridiculed, with the very same words, the authorities consciously (see Kinnunen 1987). Kivi, as the author, at any rate is laughing at the pomposity of *esivalta* by putting its self-important way of speech into the mouth of a stubborn and illiterate peasant. Juhani's words seem to carry a double meaning conceptually. In the first place, they document the generally positive attitude towards *valta*: it was possible to declare: "The power is mine!". However, Kivi pushes, by his usage of wording, this old positive and identity-bound *valta* into the territory of *esivalta* and gets reasons to ridicule both Juhani and his models.

The parallels between Kivi's anecdotes and the Arendtian conception of power are illuminating. Quite obviously, above we have been discussing about "the power generated when people gather together and 'act in concert,' which disappears the moment they depart" (Arendt 1958,

244). Power grows out of a joint enterprise, of the need to act together, and to bear the growing individuality of the brothers. As long as their parents are alive, the problem of authority is solved in paternal terms. However, the foundation of power is consensual only on the level of statement. The brothers go as far as to express and celebrate their social contract, nevertheless it is only a truce, and they immediately get into new struggle and conflict. The consensual bases fall in pieces, and only very slowly and only through repeated conflicts and misfortunes can the real power grow out. In Foucauldian terms, as far as the brothers tried to contractually establish clear relationships of domination, their attempts failed, but when they were ready for more strategic and free relationships of power, they succeeded also in the village. (Hindess 1996, 98-104)

During every version of this episode, the cruel punishments are about to change the power back to the use of sheer force: "Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal..." (Arendt, 1958, 200). Interestingly, in the second episode, the brothers are capable of agreeing on a punishment for permanent obstinacy: it was the dismissal from the common house of brotherhood, out of the common sphere of power.

The relevance of Arendtian forgiveness, as an obligatory precondition for political space of power and action, is also thematized in the third and final episode. The brothers have been hunting bears, when an enormous herd of bulls pursues them, and forces the brothers to seek refuge in a huge rock. The bulls don't go away, but beset the brothers day after day. In this case, Aapo first gives the metaphor of a ship, and then of a besieged fortress for the need to establish order and leadership. The brothers badly need order, for they have no food and drink left, with the alarming exception that Lauri had saved a flask

of spirits for himself. Lauri drank continuously, without sharing a sip, and was driving the rest of the brothers crazy by mocking them and their efforts as provocatively as only a drunken man can. This time, the brothers were soon able to agree on the fatal punishment for the lack of discipline: the disturber will be cast down, to the mercy of the bulls. Juhani tells Lauri to be quiet, but Lauri continues and continues to irritate everybody. Matson's version is this:

JUHANI: Lauri, must I now say the dread word that turns you in a twinkling to hash? And that merciless word is this: let him be thrown to the bulls. Shall I say this?

LAURI: Say nothing, but sing while I dance a Jussian jig. Hih!

JUHANI: Let him be thrown to the bulls, and may God be with him! Amen. Now it's said. Let him go.

LAURI: Let's all go together, hand in hand out of this vale of starvation – Life!

TUOMAS: Let the law be fulfilled, and go to your death.

JUHANI: What the hell, Tuomas!

TUOMAS: Down from the rock, lad!

JUHANI: Stop, for Heaven's sake!

Even if Juhani was ready to manifest his power and determination and to condemn Lauri to death, he was far from prepared to put the sentence into force. Unfortunately, Tuomas, the physically strongest man among the brothers, decided to take the “final” decision earnestly. The five men had a terrible job to stop him, and stay, at the same time, on the rock with the absurdly drunken Lauri. – Later on, the brothers badly need this very same forgiveness when they are ready to come back to the village, for they have killed all of the forty bulls to save their lives, they have publicly mocked the minister, and fought on the public roads.

Kivi's figure of seven brothers establishing a new if transient order and power among themselves was totally

alien to the imagery of the Fennomen (Liikanen, 1995). Where is the educated elite, which alone was able to lead and teach "the people" on its Hegelian way to self-consciousness, and to find the deepest roots and traditions of the Finnish people? Where is the permanent and solemn peace after the social contract? *Seven Brothers* apparently was a book, which was written from the wrong perspective.

The most outstanding feature of Kivi's anecdotes is the trial to establish negotiated power and economic order in a fictional space. Even if Juhani, as the oldest, repeatedly and formally gets the power of the master and leader, negotiation and struggle takes place immediately among brothers, giving everybody a say in the practical course of action. This contractual basis maintains that the overall character of power is still positive: gaining power and gaining identity are parallel and almost equal processes. Kivi is very strict in confining the usage of *valta* within this positive area. No episodes narrating the conflicts with the minister, church clerk or other authorities, utilize the terminology of *valta* or *esivalta*.

A Fennoman Considers his Youth

Arvid Järnefelt (1861–1932) represented the next generation of Fennomen, and had an absolutely different social background than the tailor's son Kivi. Järnefelt's mother belonged to the Russian aristocracy, and his father was a successful Finnish officer in the Russian army before he was assigned to Finland to oversee various administrative tasks. His career in the Russian army did not prevent him from sharing the ideas of Fennoman movement, and later on, as the Governor of Mikkeli and Kuopio, he immediately chose Finnish as the language of administration. The home was, at least in the Finnish context, exceptional in

its orientation towards the arts, education, and the Finnish language. His mother was the inspiration, a daughter of an artistic family, whose theories of art seem to have an impact on Juhani Aho, for instance¹¹.

The differences with Kivi do not end here. Järnefelt, and similarly Juhani Aho, belonged to a generation that had witnessed the partly opening political arena since the 1860s, and themselves participated in the struggle of the Young Fennomen over the “power” in the Student Union with the Swedish-minded activists. Järnefelt’s first novel *Fatherland* (published in 1893) critically evaluates his youthful activism, and his “love” for the Finnish people. Järnefelt’s book offers, as a reflection of his intellectual career, a plethora of abstract concepts such as the Fatherland, the people, education (the German *die Bildung* again better transmits the Hegelian idea), society, and power. The book is a *bildungsroman* of a farmer’s son, Heikki, who is sent to the Finnish capital city Helsinki to acquire higher education. Heikki tries to return to his home farm after his studies and period of Fennoman political idealism, but soon realizes that he is dismissed both from belonging to “the people” and the idealistic naiveté of the past movement. The almost absolute separateness of the worlds of countryside life (“the people”) and the idealistic fervor of the students in Helsinki (“the love for the people”) is the painful message of the book.

With regard to *valta*, the change of the tone since Aleksis Kivi is dramatic. *Valta* has ceased to be a positive part of a master’s identity. Typically, the critical term “lust for power” appears as a contrasting concept for ideal and moral pursuits. Järnefelt refers below to the leading Finnish Hegelian figure, J.V. Snellman, who began his political career in student life in the 1830s, was a publisher of relatively radical journals in the 1840s, before becoming a more moderate-minded professor in the 1850s, and later a Senator and organizer of Finnish economy in the 1860s.

The youth understood Snellman's doctrine word by word as a great and mighty demand to abandon all desires for vanity, social reputation, *power*, wealth, and personal happiness, and to solely pledge oneself to the service of the people... (Järnefelt, 1953, 26, italics mine)

Of course, we must recognize the almost cynical tone of the narrator, and realize that we are speaking here about something which is past at the time of the narration, and something which was sadly naive. Still the list of rejected superficial features is compelling: vanity, social reputation, richness, personal happiness, and power. The ideal and good souls seek something greater and more essential than power, they want to serve the people. The idealism of Hegel and Snellman seems to offer to the young students the conceptual contradiction of *Ideal and Power*. Ideal was now needed for a solid identity, not *valta*. The only apparently positive formulation is based on the primacy of Spirit, but not even here is it without a trace of irony:

And they had to wonder at the great *power* of Spirit which thus had come into their hands. (Järnefelt, 1953, 24)

This repeats, of course, an old biblical usage of the term. One of the oldest ambiguities of the concept may be in the paradox that fear, sin, lust, spirit, laziness or whatever may *have a power* over a person, or vice versa, a person may have these things in his or her power. However, it is clear that Järnefelt's *valta* is predominantly a negative and critical concept. What is of importance here is that he introduces a number of new fora for power, beginning with the village and parish. The original reason for sending the young protagonist to Helsinki was a competition between two leading farmhouses.

Thus, the master of Vuorela had understood the minister's words about that new *power* in the world which was called

cultivation – and accepted the minister’s proposition for a new battle plan against the Niemeläs... and so that would mean the end of the Niemeläs’ *power*. (Järnefelt, 1953, 22, italics mine)

The result of this arrogance is eventually quite the opposite: Heikki turns into an ambiguous idealist who has no interest in farming, and no professional position in Helsinki. As we can see, every master no longer had a *valta* but it belonged to the one who was the strongest. In sharp contrast with the contractual projects of establishing *valta* by Kivi, power is now plainly struggled for. *Bildung* was the particular sort of strength which was useful in this struggle. Järnefelt’s zero-sum power is apparent in the two, politically central episodes he recounts in the beginning of the novel:

Even the older people carefully followed the news about those stormy student meetings where the Finnish language and the Finnish Spirit were making their first exertions to gain sovereignty (*ylivalta*) over the Swedish language and the Swedish Spirit. (Op.cit., 26)

As it was, they were already defeated, those Swedes, downhearted they wandered out of the Student House where up until now they had had the sovereignty. (*ylin valta*) (Op. cit., 27)

Järnefelt’s power is nowhere as physically present as in the struggles in the Student House. There is a permanent dose of melancholic irony in all of these stories. The greatness of these moments is gone, and no one is idealistic enough any longer. Was the struggle worth all of this fervor, were the great speeches made in vain and vanity?

Järnefelt’s representative anecdote of power includes an important new feature, the mobilization of idealistic supporters. Power needs struggle, opposition, ideas, great

talks, and mobilization. The story now includes the clear and programmatic opposition between the Finnish and Swedish speaking parties. The word for political party, *puolue*, was itself a result of the translation program, and it interestingly comes out in the same story. Heikki, the protagonist, was invited to the inner circles,

... where they delivered their most heated patriotic speeches and hammered out their most courageous political party stands. (Op. cit., 27)

Because of the fact that there are only the two parties struggling for the zero-sum power, the power itself turns into domination (*ylivalta*, or over-power). The sharing or division of power appears as a totally impossible conception from Järnefelt's perspective. Järnefelt seems to reject the necessity of power from parallel reasons. The descent from the high Hegelian spirit and atmosphere of the student years of the early 1880s to the practical resolutions of life was apparently the trauma of a generation (Viljanen 1953). Economic and social vistas for a relatively prosperous life opened for a growing part of the educated Finnish minority which decreased the interest in ceremonial speeches. In the 1880s, the key figure of earlier young Fennomen, Yrjö Koskinen, was nominated to the Senate. As a Senator, Yrjö Koskinen was condemned to make a distance from his most enthusiastic young followers and allies in the student circles. Political space was limited from two different directions: the 'old ones' with Yrjö Koskinen were neither supposed to express all of their ideas publicly, nor to trust in such a direct mobilization of people as they were used to in the 1870s. The young followers, on their side, were not too enthusiastic about appreciating or understanding such a pragmatic play of politics, it was just deformation of their ideas. A normal fraction or political party formation might have solved

this dilemma, however, the “Finnish cause” was understood and maintained to be just one common non-party affiliation. (Liikanen, 1995)

Järnefelt had experienced a Tolstoyian conversion just two years prior to publishing his *Fatherland*. So he rejects both the cold pragmatism of the 1890s and the overly abstract love of the people of the 1880s. He looks for a deeper and more genuine love of the people, and there is no room for *valta* in this project. The reasons to send Heikki to Helsinki were wrong in the first place – to struggle for power – and the idealism of the 1880s had its dirty and unidealistic side, the struggle for power. Together the idealistic Hegelianism and the idealistic Tolstoyianism produces a very critical conception of power, which does not give much space for politics proper. In the matrix of Järnefeldian thought, it would have been utterly despicable to enter into a political struggle for power. Perhaps for similar reasons, the entire sphere of *esivalta*, the authorities, is politely put aside. The Student House of Helsinki is the highest forum of vocabulary of power. The Senate, the Diet, the Russian presence in Helsinki are not mentioned, at least not in terms of *valta*.

In Järnefelt’s work, *valta* has decreased to be a subjective right or entitlement. From the purely individual or regional level of an estate, it has moved into a village and to the Student House in Helsinki. Neither of them, however, is an immediate part of the germinating political organization of the Grand Duchy. The political structure proper is left aside, and *valta* lives in other fora where struggles and opposition divide the Finnish people. – A comparison with his friend from the student years, Juhani Aho, may help to locate some reasons for his particular usage of *valta*.

Juhani Aho: A Fennoman Grows to a Liberal

Juhani Aho (1861–1921) was born in a pietistic countryside vicarage in the same year as Arvid Järnefelt, and got to know him and his family in Helsinki. They experienced the very same national awakening of the 1880s. In spite of all of his later criticism of the 1880s, Aho endured in the Fennoman movement and gained an undisputed position as a novelist as well as a writer of patriotic, educational texts and as a leading literary authority. He is worth discussing most of all because of his central national position, not because of his particular artistic qualities. For decades, Aho has been considered representative of Finnish literature in all school instruction.

Aho discussed his relationship to the idealism of the 1880s in his novel *Kevät ja takatalvi* (Spring and Winter Again), published in 1906. Aho's story takes place in the 1840s, during the first national awakening of the young intellectuals. Snellman is still a school principal and radical publisher who is deported to countryside, bereft of any officially recognized position. Only a small group of students is interested in studying Finnish, and searching for the real heritage of the true Finnish culture and its folksongs. The basic drama and tension of the book is set between two different national popular awakenings, between the educated Hegelian awakening coming from "above", and the more popular religious awakening inspired by pietism¹². Both of these movements run into conflict with the authorities, but differently: the students in a naive and arrogant way, the pietists, in a devoted and respectable way.

Aho's vocabulary of power is much richer than Järnefelt's. The lust for power surfaces every now and then, however, there are no traces of such moralistic *pa-*

thos as in Järnefelt's work. In a typical instance, a Swedish-speaking professor reprimands Snellman as follows:

He is a conceited, *power-hungry* man who thinks he understands and is able to rule over all matters better than anybody else. (Aho, 1944, 58)

It is easy to recognize the moralistic criticism of the struggle for power used as an argument against a whole person. In spite of this similarity, Aho does not follow Järnefelt's lead here. The moralizer above is the character, not Aho, because Snellman is one of the undeniable heroes of the book. Similarly, in clear contrast to Järnefelt, Aho has maintained the older, positive connotations of *valta*. In the second part of the book, just after the Russian authorities have forbidden all Finnish publications except religious texts, a hunter and recluse declares his prophecy to the student protagonist:

Still it will be for our eyes to see that this Finnish language will attain such strength and *power* that there will be no other language heard. (Aho, op.cit., 399, italics mine)

The usage above is undeniably positive, and again carries intertextual traces from biblical and legal phrases from the 18th century. On the other hand, *valta* is used here in the particular Finnish way of referring to a preponderance or the hegemonic position of majority (Hyvärinen 1997). As a noun, this expression gives the word *valtakieli* ('the power language'; the preponderant language)¹³. The power of a master and a house appears twice in the book, and in a partly critical context. In the end of the book, the old minister wants to arrange a space for dancing during the wedding party of his daughter. His son, now a keen pietist, accuses him of sin. The father's answer includes both aspects of *valta*:

– Ah yes, there it is now! You yourself cannot say what is sin in innocent joy...and you don't even want this for any other cause but that you would everywhere be able to demonstrate your *power*, – it is nothing but a fanatical *lust for power* which wants to cast everything into the same mold so that you could everywhere boast of its victory...

You will not be content of having to wean me from my parish with your friend Helander, but now you yet wish to deny me the *power* of the master in my own house. But I say that I will not allow myself to be terrorized by one anymore than the other and that in my own house, I still have such power that I can wed my own daughter as the proper ancient custom demands. (op.cit., 535)

The first part of the quotation shows once again, how the birth of social, political and religious movements also produced conflicts and accusations of lust for power: the opponent is understood and described in terms of *valta* (negative) and the lust for power. A similar pattern is discernible in Santeri Alkio's *Puunkojunkkarit* (1894). In a sense, one can see here a more delicate application of the Järnefeltian contradiction between idealism and power. In particular, those actors who present themselves in terms of ideal – here religious – objectives, are soon and keenly resisted by the accusations of lust for power.

The amazing thing in Aho's episode is his open usage of conflicting connotations of *valta*. In the latter part we can see the old, typically Kivian, usage of the *valta* as an element of identity. The house, the autonomy of the master, and *valta* are used together as interconnected properties of a valid identity. Aho seems to maintain that, even if the old minister did not want to live along the lines of pietism, his identity should have been protected from the attacks of the young, fanatical converts. In his acceptance and usage of the old, identity-power, Aho differs radically from his moralistic friend Järnefelt. Aho had a thicker

background knowledge and experience of popular Finnish than his aristocratic friend of the people. The Kivian positive power survived well into the 20th century, and the one-sidedly negative power of Järnefelt seems rather to result from his Russian and elitist background, together with Tolstoyian idealism.

Aho's book was published in 1906, that is, a year after the General Strike of 1905, and the subsequent parliamentary reform¹⁴, and the general enlargement of the political freedom. Therefore, the book contains a couple of daring conceptual openings, even if the events described take place in the totally different political climate of the mid-1840s. Aho does not forget and pass the *esivalta* (the authorities), quite the contrary. He puts his characters both to support, criticize and make proposals to the authorities. This was something that the literary and political radical Kivi was not able to imagine doing, instead it was the moderate conservative Aho who opened these perspectives. In the first instance, it is the local chief constable who introduces the term *esivalta* and the theme of how to consider it:

– The best policy is that each and everyone obeys the authorities (*esivalta*) and does as he is told. That is the way to be serve our Emperor and Fatherland. And a toast to that! (op.cit., 208)

Even this harmless statement suggests the alternative of not obeying the authorities. The unquestioned legitimacy of the authorities is over, and the maxim of “best policy” does not dispel the embedded paradox of the statement: the genuine perspective of politics is never just to obey. The police chief has unfortunately stepped into a misguided and suspicious vocabulary, where his point will automatically be inconsistent and doomed to fail. The same problem concerns the wicked opponents of the pietists,

who repeat their demand that the authorities should forbid "such meetings". The authorities are supported, and they are expected to react into pietists' disquieting activities. All of this means an active, political attitude towards the authorities, not in an unquestioned and passive respect. Be it support or criticism or embarrassed questions, all of them add to the erosion of the old unitary *esivalta*.

The climax of the book, as well as the criticism of the authorities, takes place in a final trial against the pietists for trespassing on a farm in a situation when the use of the church was forbidden to them, and the congregation was looking for a path to a hill where they could arrange their prayer meeting. Aho opens the chapter with clear class concepts:

Opposite to each other, as two different worlds, sat the masters and the peasants in the courthouse, on different sides of the judge's bench. (op.cit., 500)

A number of pietists are accused of arranging meetings without a permit, trespassing, and breaking a fence, and finally for gnawing at "the authority of the superiors". The accused deputy minister defends himself by turning the accusations around:

In the proceedings I am accused of contempt for my superiors and thus, allegedly, degrading the status of the authorities (*esivalta*) in the eyes of the people. But if anything, are not these court sessions held for this purpose liable to shake the status of the authorities (*esivalta*) in the eyes of the people. (op. cit., 506)

Similarly, the young protagonist of the novel steps forward as a witness. During his longish monologue, he says:

The authorities (*esivalta*) and the Church stand, again as many times before, armed against their own, in their blindness

they don't see, and in their stupidity they don't understand that by wanting to suppress this movement they, at the same time, suppress what is best and most noble in our people. (op. cit., 511)

The contradiction and political opposition between the authorities and the people is now openly declared. *Esivalta* is studied, evaluated, questioned, and challenged. The automatic respect for its unitary action is gone, and its individual representatives can be opposed with its more general, or imperial good will. If Kivi wrote anecdotes about the contractual foundation of *valta*, Aho has written an impressive anecdote about the erosion of unchallenged *esivalta* as *Obrigkeit*. Apparently there is a good deal of anachronism in Aho's vocabulary in the sense that he has projected the new liberties of resistance of 1905 back to the 1840s. Be it as it may, my point is that the direct conceptual challenge of *esivalta* has become possible at least after the General Strike of 1905. When the acts of particular bureaucrats are put under the discussion and consideration, the whole critical repertoire of the "use of the power" is opened, and the tools to discuss and criticize those who "have the power" are enlarged. Aho's novel does not clearly open this new repertoire, nevertheless its position seems to be as far as on the threshold of the new vocabulary.

Aho did not leave the territory of *esivalta* untouched. His abundant literary production gives interesting support to my theses on the negotiated site *valta*. Indeed, he published journals of his travels to Italy in 1893. In the context of Italy, and its Roman history, *valta* is now used freely on a very general level. Outside of Finland, Aho can thus employ the standard European discourse of international politics where states and societies in totality are discussed in terms of power. After visiting the catacombs, Aho puts it this way:

Thus, here in these confined closets developed and grew that *power* that tore down those temples and statues whose miserable remains we only recently saw in the Forum... (Aho, 1921, 201, italics mine)

Aho has no difficulty in describing and naming the clerical power (*pappisvalta*) in Italy. It was obviously possible to ask who had the power in Italy or in any other foreign country, not yet in Finland. During the years of Russian oppression of Finnish autonomy (1899–1905), Aho wrote a collection of short patriotic writings (*Katajainen kansani/ My Sturdy and Persevering People*), most of them relatively naïve parables of unity and resistance. The last text, however, was written in November 1905, just after the General Strike, and it was entitled “*To my free pen*”. Now, for the first time in my literary material, *valta* refers to something which is directly connected to the Russian authorities. The territory of *valta* has expanded at this particular moment of national arrogance, and the meek and humble vocabulary of *esivalta* is pushed, temporarily, aside:

You tremble for joy for you know you are free...

You now must obey yourself, you must draw up your laws and instructions from your own understanding and intellect. Until now, you have had to be used to circle around the law of arbitrary rule (*mielivalta*) and violence (*väkivalta*) and your greatest satisfaction, and often your only purpose, has been to deceive your guardians. Before you were under another command, now may you have your own discipline, before you were pressed as an outward threat only a material fine, now you are pressed from within by moral compulsion. Yesterday the specter of a stranger loomed over you, now your foundation is your own obligation.

There is your new freedom. Tremble for that, don't as before you trembled for *power*: for hatred and anger for the degrading feeling of oppression, but the greatness of the feeling of your own liability for respect for the higher powers [*voimat*, ‘forces’ in Finnish] of your own self – and for the joy for you finally being free! (Aho, 1921, 173-174)

The power in this declaration has no connection to the old Kivian concept of *valta* as entitlement. In spite of the emotional tone of the text, it is as far from the Järnefeltian moralistic criticism of power. Instead, it is easy to recognize the dramatic, liberal dichotomization of power and liberty. Power is now related to “fear”, “chains”, “warder”, “arbitrary rule”, “other’s command”, “outward threat”, “a foreign intimidation”, and “oppression”. Power is now unmistakably *domination*, it is power over “us”. The task Aho takes to himself as a writer, and to Finland in a metaphorical meaning, astonishingly resembles the self-contradiction built “into the liberal idea of power”, as Barber says, “the beast who is father to the individual needs to be both tamed (controlled by power) and preserved (insulated from power)” (Barber, 1988, 31). The need for domestic law, order and peacefulness is as strong as the feeling of freedom, a freedom *from* the foreign power.

In his other works, Aho manifested a good capacity to employ a pluralistic conception of power, even within one and the same episode. Why this sudden one-sidedness, why the rejection of the positive aspects of *valta*? I suggest a dual answer. I think, that immediately after the depressive years of Russian oppression, it was enjoyable just to name the Russian power as power. The liberal dichotomy of power and liberty just fits so well to the high atmosphere of that moment. However, the whole collection consists in educational, patriotic parables. The obvious point is to teach and guide the ordinary readers into a good, national direction. From this perspective, the General Strike was far from an innocent event. The event was a strike, and thus the decisive entrance of the working class and landless tenants into the new political arena. Within this national horizon, it is probably more convincing to project *valta* only on to the foreign oppressor, forget the theme of domestic powers altogether, and speak about “moral obligation”, “responsibility” and “own law” instead.

Be that as it may, the extract above manifests an obvious move ahead of the strong Hegelian and Snellmanian inheritance of the Fennoman movement towards the rhetorics of liberalism. As such, the move is evidently one element in the process in which the old connotations of entitlement and self-determination are wiped out of *valta*. However, Aho does not give up the paradoxical character of *valta* but tries to deal with it by new a finer distinctions. In the summer of 1917, after the Russian February Revolution, the political situation in Finland was growing increasingly unstable. The troops of Russian army which still remained in Finland were not necessarily loyal to local authorities but socialized with “the people”. Aho, as an active fisherman, writes a short story “To Fish – Nyet”. For years, he had fished on the Huopana falls in Central Finland. The falls were privately owned, and fishing was only allowed to a group of fishermen who had rented it. Now, because of the ongoing war, Russian troops were building fortifications around. At the same time, the soldiers had decided to “occupy” (*vallata*) the falls. When the fishermen are approaching the falls, a local “hooligan”, who had been jailed for theft, but was a “best buddy” with the new masters, runs and “commands” them to visit the officer. The “hooligans” want the falls to themselves, and disgracefully with the help of foreign army. However, one of the fishermen succeed in phoning to the local Chief Constable, who arrives in fury.

Thus begins a mighty riotous scene. The Finnish constabulary takes the offensive against brutality and – is victorious. ... “You people here have no kind of right to police (*poliisivalta*), you have nothing to do besides dig your ditches, but I answer for the road and the travellers...,” declares the triumphant Chief Constable. (Aho 1921, 532)

Aho’s conceptual contrasts half a year before the Finnish Civil War (1918) are illuminating. He has the list of revo-

lution (*vallankumous*), occupation (*valtaus*), people's power ("*kansan valta*") only within quotation marks, and he describes the time as "the worst period of lawlessness and violence (*väkivalta*) (op. cit., 533), and the contrasting concepts of *järjestysvalta* (power as order, or 'ordering power') and *poliisivalta* (rights of police). The growing violence, capriciousness and threat of revolution, Aho argues, call for a new power as order. The vocabulary is now much more direct than in 1905. "Own discipline", "moral compulsion", and other expressions of self-regulation were inadequate during the escalating conflict.

Aho's short story seems to offer a closure to the old divide between *valta* and *esivalta*. The new power-as-order Aho is demanding resembles astonishingly the old *esivalta*. However, now the concept seems to be a more direct equivalent of English 'authorities' or German *Herrschaft* than the German *Obrigkeit*. *Järjestysvalta* is not for Aho any unquestionable or immovable power above "us"; it is something "we" must somehow produce and be part of. In other words, the pure existence of *esivalta* is not enough, it must be legitimate. The dangerous family of occupation, revolution and violence, in contrast, seems not to condense all the risky connotations of causally effective power (or German *Macht*). The short anecdote does not just reflect the question who has the power, it is as much about what is the power.

In conclusion, Juhani Aho's work manifests an important paradox: the anecdotes of power he narrates in his works are mutually incompatible, and they might ground considerably different theories of power. In this sense, Aho is a modern intellectual as compared with Kivi or with young Järnefelt in his consequently moralistic condemnation of power (Hyvärinen 1997).

The Power of Anecdotes

In this article, I tried to elaborate the suitability of literature, and novels in particular, as a material in my study on the conceptual history of the Finnish *valta*.

The stories that the three early Finnish novelists told about power, obviously provided a foundation and vocabulary for radically different theories of power. Kivi emphasized the contractual-and-conflictual foundation of *valta* as a positive entitlement, Järnefelt introduced a morally reprehensible *valta* in the context of conflicting and unapprovable motives, Aho instead offered a changing plurality of possible theories, as well as the capacity to shift fluently from one conception to another.

Power was a tricky and dangerous concept at the time of the emerging political space and freedom in Finland. At first, the scope of the *valta* as entitlement was quite narrowly confined to individuals. The birth of first religious and political movements generated conflicts and the need to criticize “the lust for power”, and the parish and Student Union appeared as new forums of power. The need to resist politically, rather than any need to analyze objectively, has given the decisive impetus to enlarge the area of applicability of this concept. On the national level, the concept first referred only foreign countries, and ‘Finland’ only after the General Strike and parliamentary reform of 1905. This development seems to allude to the possibility that the concept may have been so explosive politically that the questions of power had never before been openly raised in the context of the Russians, the Tsar and the *esivalta*. Through the Period of Autonomy, the meaning of *esivalta* changes from the Lutheran “*Obrigkei*” to the liberal “authorities” which needed to be legitimized.

In spite of this growing number of applications, some contemporary and popular ways of discussing power are still missing in this material. The authors were not ready to conceptualize power as a resource, not at least as a resource which might be accumulated. The theme and possibility of the division or share of power did not surface. For fairly obvious reasons, the normative discourse of the “people’s power” was not yet apparent but hegemonic (Hyvärinen 1997).

Notes

¹This paper is part of an ongoing study on the conceptual history of *valta*, which in turn, is a part of larger research project, “Concepts in Motion. The Conceptual History of Finnish Political Culture”. With regard to its methodological sources, the project mostly relies on the work of Reinhart Koselleck (1979; 1997; see also Palonen 1997) and Quentin Skinner (see 1989). Richter (1995) is a good survey on the field. – An earlier version of this paper was presented at the workshop on “Political Myth, Rhetoric, and Symbolism” at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., August 27, 1997. I am very grateful to Suzanne Duval Jakobitti, John Nelson, Kari Palonen, Risto Alapuro, and Susanna Noki for their gracious comments.

²The name was originally pejorative, meaning Fenno-maniacs (Liikanen 1995)

³The last Finnish trial against “blasphemy” in fiction took place as late as in the 1960s.

⁴“Esi” is an old Fenno-Ugrian word whose basic meaning is “(something) in front of” [‘edessä oleva’], also “interest” or “profit”. In compound nouns, however, “esi” seems, in some cases, to follow its Swedish equivalent “före”. For instance, “Model” is in Finnish ‘esi+image’ = *esikuva*; in Swedish ‘före+image’ = *förebild*; “superior” (boss) is in Finnish ‘esi+man’ = *esimies*; in Swedish it is ‘förförman’. “Example” is

in Finnish 'esi+sign' = *esimerkki*. Interestingly, *esivalta* is constructed without a direct Swedish model. The word was first used in written Finnish by Mikael Agricola, a student of Luther and the translator of New Testament.

- ⁵ The most common modern meaning of '*kunta*' is municipality. However, 'fire brigade' is in Finnish '*palokunta*' (fire+kunta) and the name for the whole profession of teachers is '*opettajakunta*' (teacher+kunta). In this sense, its meaning resembles the German and Swedish affixes *-schaft* and *-kår*: Flexible as it is, it does not allow for any strict interpretation of its 'original' meaning in this compound noun. However, a shorter version of *valtakunta* (empire) could simply be *valta*, a close predecessor of the modern meaning of state.
- ⁶ In my previous article (Hyvärinen, 1997) I tried to schematize the current 'repertoires of *valta*'. Without repeating the whole scheme here, I just note that I have used it as a matrix of comparisons, and in order to clarify the newness of particular new expressions. I hope that this "implicit methodology" does not hinder the reading of this paper excessively.
- ⁷ Impola's translation was published by an American-Finnish association, and his name is a typical combination among the second generation Finnish immigrants (Richard+ Finnish family name), whereas Matson was a well-known Finnish writer and translator.
- ⁸ Quite obviously, the power of the master is a gendered phenomenon. However, it does not mean that the mistress would not have her particular *valta*, as well.
- ⁹ The name of "Impivaara" lives strongly in Finnish political imagery. For instance, every now and then the opponents of European Union were accused of "Impivaaraism", of a retreat from common social reality and civilization. The name itself means "the hill of virgins".
- ¹⁰ Matthew 6:9-13. The New Encyclopædia Britannica, 15th edition (1992), Vol. 7, p. 478. The older, Protestant wording of the prayer.
- ¹¹ As an old man, Järnefelt published his biographical novel, "My Parents' Novel" (1930), which is an invaluable source on the history of the family and Fennoman cultural circles. Its vocabulary, however, is so distinct from the literature of

the Period of Autonomy, that I have to confine myself here to the work of young Järnefelt.

- ¹² Lauri Kivekäs, the most prominent leader of the Young Fennomans of the 1880s, actually tried to negotiate for a political alliance between radical Fennomans and the pietists. The attempts failed badly. (Liikanen 1995)
- ¹³ To corroborate its character as preponderance, I can refer to similar expressions, such as *valtameri* ('power-sea'; ocean) or *valtatie* ('power-road'; main road).
- ¹⁴ The old Diet, based on the representation of the four estates, was replaced by a one-chamber House of Representatives and universal franchise.

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Review Article

Kari Palonen

Liberty Is Too Precious a Concept to Be Left to the Liberals

Quentin Skinner (1998): Liberty before Liberalism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 142 p.

“I hope shortly to publish a monograph on the republican idea of liberty...” Quentin Skinner wrote as early as 1984 (Skinner 1984, 231). Some years later, responding to a circular query among the historians in the *Times Literary Supplement* he spoke more specifically on the topic, but left the question of whether he himself was engaged in such a work open (Skinner 1989, 690).

I was quite sure that he had already shifted his attention to other problems, such as rhetoric, which he dealt with in his great work *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Skinner 1996). For those already familiar with the magnitude of Skinner’s work, there already exists a number of interconnected and overlapping essays on republican liberty. The first was published in a 1983 issue of the Australian journal *Politics* and was followed by the

consistent publication of other essays until the first half of the nineteen nineties (Skinner 1984, 1986, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b, 1993). These essays are rich enough to make republican liberty a thematically separate area of Quentin Skinner's intellectual itinerary and to make him a participant in the contemporary discussion on liberty who cannot be neglected.

However, in October, 1997 I received a postcard from Skinner, in which he wrote that he will be publishing a "tiny" book called *Liberty before Liberalism* (below: LBL) next month. This was, indeed, the case, although with the publishers' old trick "First published in 1998". Was it, then, the monograph Skinner had promised almost 15 years earlier?

There are good reasons to say that LBL is not that book. Skinner has, at least for the specific subject dealt with in the book, renamed the concept from the "republican" to the "neo-roman" theory of liberty. Initially, the book was not planned by Skinner himself, but suggested to him by his editors at Cambridge University Press as a way to expand his Inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History into a book. This small book is neither a summary of nor a revision of his old arguments on republican liberty, which concentrate on the oeuvre of Machiavelli, but is an entirely new text concentrated on English writers around the critical year 1656.

Thus, while from the sixties onwards Skinner had mainly dealt with Hobbes, he now focuses his analysis on his contemporary adversaries: John Milton, James Harrington, Marchamont Needham, Francis Osborne, George Wither, John Hall, John Streater as well as Henry Neville and Algernon Sidney. The shifting of the concept is justified because of the remarkable differences between the views of these contemporaries and Machiavelli and the Italian republicans with regard to liberty.

One of the characteristics of Skinner's republican writings since the eighties is that he uses them in order to simultaneously address several debates (while his critics were only usually aware of one or two of them). Moreover, he intended to shift the terms of the debate or to initiate new ones. All this can be clearly seen from his statement to the TLS, quoted here *in extenso*:

Among the moral and political writers of the Renaissance, it was widely agreed that the only way to maximize the liberty of the individual must be to ensure that everyone plays an active role in political affairs. Only by such participation, it was argued, can we hope to prevent the business of government from falling into hands of a governing class. Since the seventeenth century, however, the leading Western democracies have repudiated this view in favour of a strongly contrasting one. It has become an axiom of liberal theories about the relationship between government and the governed that the only way to maximize freedom must be to minimize the extent to which public demands can legitimately be made upon our private lives.

When and why did we come to change our beliefs in the way about the most fundamental concept in our political vocabulary? By answering these questions, a great work of history could, I think, be written of a kind that no one has hitherto attempted. Such a history would embody the kind of irony that the greatest historians have always particularly relished. For it is surely ironic that the development of Western democracies should have been accompanied by the atrophying of the ideal that the government of the people should be conducted by the people. Such a history might also prompt us, as the great historians have always done, to think anew about our present predicament. We might find ourselves reflecting in particular whether the distinction we have inherited between the public and the private is one that we ought to be upholding or seeking to revise. (Skinner 1989a, 690)

Quentin Skinner's primary interest here is to write a history of the decline of republican liberty from the perspective of doing justice to those who have lost the battle. Their names should be remembered again, in the same sense that Hannah Arendt has revoked this ancient *topos*. The past battles should be actualized in the present; here Skinner is almost following the paradigm of Walter Benjamin's *Geschichtsphilosophische Thesen*. In order to be able to write this sort of *Umschreibung* of the history of liberty in the Koselleckian sense (cf. Koselleck 1988), Skinner is obliged to reconstruct the very concept of liberty and shed new light on its origins.

These four tasks – the history of lost liberty, the reconstruction of the old concept, a reinterpretation of its origins and the assessment of its significance to the contemporary discussion on liberty – are also evoked by Skinner in *Liberty before Liberalism*. He is “bringing buried intellectual treasure back to the surface” (LBL, 112). In a footnote he also makes it clear that no nostalgia or even instrumental advocacy of the neo-roman theory of liberty is intended:

The point of considering this example has not been to plead for the adoption of an alien value from a world we have lost; it has been to uncover a lost reading of a value common to us and to the vanished world. (op.cit., 118 n. 29)

The perspective is now also altered in relation to Skinner's ‘Machiavellian writings’. The Roman moralists and historians – Cicero, Seneca, Sallust and Livy – remain the source common to both Machiavelli and the English neo-roman writers of the seventeenth century. For the English neo-roman writers, however, there is an additional source which is of utmost importance. Namely, the Roman legal tradition codified in the Justinian Digest, which

hardly plays a role in Machiavelli's *Discorsi*, shaped by the rhetorical tradition of the Renaissance (cf. esp. Skinner 1987, 1990a).

This difference of sources has a central significance in the dissimilarities in the very concept of liberty between Machiavelli and the English neo-roman writers. The legal inheritance led the English neo-romans to insist on freedom as a right, a view completely alien to Machiavelli:

...these writers generally assume that the freedom or liberty they are describing can be equated with – or, more precisely, spelled out as – the unconstrained enjoyment of specific civil rights. It is true that this way of expressing the argument is not to be found in any of their ancient authorities, nor in any of the neo-roman writers on the *vivero libero* from the Italian Renaissance. Machiavelli, for example, never employs the language of rights. (LBL, 18)

This concept was not only related to Roman law but also to the struggles on Reformation, especially to the 'Monarchomach' version of the right to resistance, dealt with extensively in the second volume of Skinner's *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. The insistence on freedom as a "birthright" and that "the state of liberty is the natural condition of mankind" also relativizes the sharp distinction between the contractualist and the republican modes of political argument present in Skinner's earlier writings.

The fact that a certain contractualist optimism in the view on human nature also touched the neo-roman theorists' language is noticeable throughout the LBL. Machiavelli used his specific anti-naturalism as a means to struggle against the almost inevitable human tendency towards corruption, which then led to the self-destructive use of liberty. This concept of freedom plays no definite role among the neo-roman theorists of liberty. Machiavelli's view is best explicated in the first of Skinner's republican essays:

The indispensable role of the law is thus to deter us from *corruzione* and impose on us the ‘artificial necessity’ of behaving as *virtuosi* citizens by making it ‘less eligible’ to follow our natural tendencies to pursue our own interests at the expense of the common good... In a strikingly Rousseauan phrase, he adds that all citizens ought ideally to be ‘chained by the laws’ as a means to coerce them into respecting the ideal of liberty and behaving ‘in a well-ordered way’. (Skinner 1983, 8-9)

Although at this point Skinner mentions Milton as a proponent of the idea “that people may have to be *forcé d’être libre*” (LBL, 33 n.101), this type of consciously political use of laws as instruments of increasing the *Spielraum* of action by making it “less eligible” to follow ‘natural tendencies’ seems to be alien to the neo-roman writers. Engaged politically, above all, against the royal prerogatives, they tend to regard the law as a limitation of arbitrary power and not as a means of republican politicking against people’s own self-destructive tendencies. In this sense the neo-roman theorists resist the tendency to see liberty and politics as counter-concepts less radically than Machiavelli and the programmatic republicans. Correspondingly, with the contemporary example of Cromwell in mind, they tend also to view the Roman and Machiavellian ideals of glory and greatness as political aims with suspicion (op.cit., 65).

The ‘Opportunist’ Horizon of Liberty

For those interested in Quentin Skinner’s intellectual itinerary, the footnotes of the “tiny” volume are worth careful examination. For example, Skinner now admits in one of his footnotes that Philip Pettit has persuaded him to change his views concerning the quarrel with the contemporary advocates of liberalism. He writes that what “is at issue” not only consists of a disagreement about the con-

ditions of securing liberty – or, to use Skinner’s earlier jargon: of the “range of reference” (cf. e.g. Skinner 1979) – but also concerns the fact that the two schools of thought do in fact disagree about (among other things) the meaning of “liberty itself” (LBL, 70, n. 27). The question is thus not limited to the relationship between individual and public liberty, but the heart of the matter is the understanding of what counts as ‘liberty’.

The difference (from) to Machiavelli makes it clear that there is a remarkable common ground between the neo-roman writers and that concept of liberty advocated by their contractarian opponents, above all by Hobbes. This concerns, above all, the use of coercion as a counter-concept to liberty:

...the exercise of force or the coercive threat of it must be listed among the forms of constraint that interfere with individual liberty. (op. cit., 83)

Skinner’s point, however, is to insist that the significance of this common ground was decisively reduced given the fact that the neo-roman theorists also were aware of other forms of constraint, namely, dependence:

What the neo-roman writers repudiate *avant la lettre* is the key assumption of classical liberalism to the effect force or coercive threat of it constitute the only forms of constraint that interfere with individual liberty. The neo-roman writers insist, by contrast, that to live in a condition of dependence is in itself a source and a form of constraint. (op. cit., 84)

It is here that the role of the Roman legal heritage of the English writers becomes most clearly visible. Dependence is used as a kind of translation of the Justinian concept of slavery into the contemporary context and is presented in it as a counter-concept of liberty (op.cit., 39).

According to Skinner, the neo-roman writers by no means reduced liberty to a counter-concept of dependence in a manner echoing later writers, such as Kant. Rather, they introduced dependence as another dimension of constraint, which is not reducible coercion or interference. Slavery could be used as a paradigm for a lack of liberty in cases in which dependence was a result not of the interference by the master to the slave's freedom of movement, but of the difference in status. The master was a *sui juris*, while the slaves were held to be *in potestate domini* (op.cit., 40-41). The point of neo-roman authors was to show that there were forms of dependence which were analogous to slavery in the contemporary world, and which also deserved to be treated as expressions of coercion.

We can now sketch the conceptual horizon of the two neglected concepts of liberty in order to accentuate their relations to the contemporary discussion. Both the republican and the neo-roman theories of liberty remain within the confines of the 'negative' understanding of liberty, as opposed to the 'positive' view, represented classically by the Aristotelian and scholastic view and in contemporary discussions by the so-called communitarians. Skinner has, in clear words, recurrently distanced himself from the critique of liberalism in the name of a substantialistic, 'positive' view on liberty (cf. e.g. Skinner 1986, 232; 1993, 408).

He now repeats this more or less explicitly, but moves on to criticize the whole famous distinction between positive and negative liberty proposed by Isaiah Berlin:

Berlin in effect equates (or confuses) the 'negative' idea of liberty with the classical liberal understanding of the concept, and then contrasts this understanding with what he calls the 'positive' concept of liberty as self-realisation. I agree that the 'positive' view must account to a separate concept. Rather than connecting liberty with opportunities

for action – as in the neo-roman as well as in the liberal analysis – the ‘positive’ view connects liberty with the performance of actions of a determinate type... Whether the understanding of liberty as (in Charles Taylor’s terms) an ‘exercise’ and not merely an ‘opportunity concept’ can be vindicated is a separate question, and one with which I am not concerned. (op.cit., 114, N 22)

We could take this quotation as a suggestion to revise the vocabulary of the concept of liberty in terms which would be more historically accurate but also rhetorically provocative enough to analyze the politically crucial conceptual distinctions. Thus, the opposition between positive and negative liberty could be, by further accentuation of Skinner’s implications, renamed as an opposition between the ‘opportunist’ and the ‘determinist’ view. The point of this vocabulary can also be seen there, in that it establishes a link between freedom and contingency.

Skinner’s discussion moves only within the opportunist horizon. While Berlin spoke of negative liberty as if it were a single and homogeneous concept, Skinner is able to distinguish four different variants within the opportunist horizon of liberty. Let us name them the Hobbesian, the autonomist, the dual and the Machiavellian views. The relationships between them can be recapitulated in the following manner:

- in the Hobbesian view only coercion or interference counts as a constraint of liberty
- for the autonomist view only dependence counts as a constraint of liberty
- for the neo-roman dual view both coercion and dependence count as constraints of liberty
- the Machiavellian republican view moves on another level, which perhaps could be viewed as a combination of the opportunity and exercise concepts within the opportunist horizon.

This discussion remains within the conceptual struggles on the level of individual liberty. Another dimension in the debate, both in Hobbes' time and in ours, concerns the aforementioned "range of reference" of the concept and more specifically, the relation between individual and public liberty. In Skinner's earlier work the discussion of liberty has mainly been concerned with this relation (cf. esp. 1983, 1984, 1986, 1990b).

The neo-roman authors seems to presuppose a close parallel or even a necessary condition between individual and public freedom. They are, indeed, mainly interested in "common liberty", "free government" or even – in Needham's terms using the neologism (cf. Skinner 1989b) – "the free state" (LBL, 23-24). They use the metaphor body politic and speak of "the will of the people", which however, according to Skinner, can be interpreted nominalistically as "the sum of the wills of each individual citizen" (op.cit., 28-29). Their political ideal was "to enable each individual citizen to exercise an equal right of participation in the making of laws" (op.cit, 30), but in practice they accepted a representative government:

The right solution, they generally agree, is for the mass of the people to be represented by a national assembly of the more virtuous and considering, an assembly chosen by the people to legislate on their behalf. (op.cit., 32)

The contemporary threat to public freedom was due to royal prerogatives, the veto-power over the parliament and other forms of arbitrary power. All of these threatening conditions were actualized in the conflict of the House of Commons with Charles I in early 1640s. For the neo-roman authors, these conditions were expressions of "having its actions determined by the will of anyone other than the representatives of the body politic as a whole" (op.cit., 49). (He applied the idea of slavery to this situa-

tion with regard to the relations to both foreign and domestic powers.)

The point, in the Hobbesian sense, is that the freedom of the “Commonwealth” and of “particular men” are not at all related concepts. Freedom is a natural condition of men and is not lost by submission to the sovereign: “if he submits, he is acting freely” (quoted in Skinner 1990c, 148). Furthermore, Hobbes rejects the distinction between tyrants and lawful rulers as well as calls the ancient *poleis* ‘anarchies’:

...challenging the traditional distinction between lawful rulers and tyrants, and especially the alleged implication that it must be legitimate not merely to disobey tyrannical rulers but if possible to assassinate them. He (Hobbes, KP) regards this doctrine as typical of classical and humanist theories of government, associating it above all ‘with Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch and all other admirers of the Greek and Roman anarchies’. (quoted from Skinner 1996, 315, with his translation of Hobbes’ Latin. The Latin version is contained in note 128 on this page.)

In a provocative example Hobbes holds, in Skinner’s formulation, that “we have no reason to believe that, as ordinary citizens, they have any more liberty than they would have had under the sultan in Constantinople”. For him it is “not on the source of law but its extent” that liberty depends (LBL, 85). This view did not remain unanswered. Skinner refers to the Harringtonian critique:

If you are a subject of the sultan, you will be less free than a citizen of Lucca, simply because your freedom in Constantinople, however great in extent, will remain wholly dependent on the sultan’s goodwill... The very fact that the law and the will of the sultan are one and the same has the effect of limiting your liberty. Whether the commonwealth be monarchical or popular, the freedom is not still the same. (op.cit., 86)

When invoking the above distinctions on the meanings of liberty it seems that both Hobbes and Harrington seem to hold two dimensions of freedom inseparable, although they take opposing stands on them: Harrington's advocacy of the idea of dependence as a constraint presupposes a necessary connection between public and individual freedom, while Hobbes simultaneously rejects both. This identification seems to be excellently suited to Hobbes' aim of discrediting both aspects of "neo-roman liberty" at the same time, while, on the contrary, it seems to have contributed to the decline of this liberty in the changing situation.

Skinner's account indicates that the problematic aspect of neo-roman theory was the way in which the theorists interpreted the expressions of dependency as analogous to slavery in the contemporary era. They certainly developed a critique towards some conspicuous forms of modern dependency, such as, in Sidney's jargon, "the corruption typical to those who made their career as advisers and ministers to the princes of the age" (op.cit., 90). The figure to which they were compared was "the independent country gentleman as the leading depository of moral dignity and worth in modern societies" (op.cit., 95). Skinner's main thesis on the history of the decline of neo-roman liberty concerns the anachronistic character of this ideal in an increasingly commercial age:

With the extension of the courtiers of the court to the bourgeoisie in the early eighteenth century, the virtues of the independent country gentleman began to look irrelevant and even inimical to a polite and commercial age. (op.cit., 97)

Thus, neither parliamentary debates nor free and regular elections were thought of as the primary political resources of individual freedom or as a source of independence

from slavish tendencies. On the contrary, they relied on a country paradigm of independence, in an age in which it began to lose its force. In this respect, I think, concerning the search for alternatives to the Hobbesian view on liberty in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Machiavellian republicanism, with its paradigm of the clever politician, would probably be a more relevant adversary than the neo-roman conception of liberty.

Contribution to the Contemporary Debate

Quentin Skinner's story of the neo-roman theory of liberty, as well as that of the republican theory in the Machiavelli essays, can be considered as a sort of prologue to the history of lost alternatives. His reference to the continuing signs of this view, for example in Marx and J.S. Mill, seem to be of lesser importance (op.cit. ix-x). What is essential in Skinner's story is the creation of a sketch of the history of discrediting alternatives. Skinner refers especially to William Paley, an important textbook author of the late eighteenth century (op.cit. 78-81) and Henry Sidgwick, who in his *Elements of Politics* (1897) explicitly denies a connection between individual liberty and the form of the polity, for according to him "it is perfectly possible for a representative legislature to interfere with the free action of individuals more than an absolute monarch" (op.cit., 98-99). Skinner characterizes the hegemonial situation – within the provinces of the Anglophone political theory – of this view, which is now referred to as liberal, in the following manner:

...the neo-roman theory has been so much lost to sight that the liberal analysis has come to be widely regarded as the only coherent way of thinking about the concept involved. (op.cit, 113)

The name Quentin Skinner is closely linked to his critique of anachronisms and to his attempt to recover the original point of the agents covered by an ocean of interpretations. Critics have often overstated his thesis as being an advocacy of a pure 'antiquarian' historicism, a claim which Skinner has always rejected and which he once again confronts in *Liberty before Liberalism* (op.cit., 106-109).

For me, as a non-specialist of English seventeenth-century politics, Skinner's writings appear more readable than the work of 'ordinary' historians. His work is always more than 'pure' historiography in that he makes a contribution to political theory through the utilization of case studies in a context in which he has the specialist's competence of an historian.

He has, however, used other means as well, in particular the review articles in the *New York Review of Books* in the late seventies and early eighties on Rorty, Habermas, Geertz and others. These less known writings are valuable in helping to illuminate the links between Skinner's substantive historical writings and contemporary debates. The contemporary discussions then seem to offer him not only a horizon of choices of problems, but also heuristic devices to reinterpret the past, without 'functionalizing' past agents to some universal tendencies or global forces. The present volume contains some remarkable reformulations of Skinner's strategy of interpretation, especially the thesis that discontinuities are more important than continuities for the intellectual historian:

The continuities after all, are so omnipresent that they have made it all too easy to conceive of the past as a mirror. But the discontinuities are often no less striking values set in stone at one moment melt into air at the next. (op.cit., 111)

Reviving such strange currents of thought as the neo-roman theory of liberty should thus not be taken too literally,

as if it were a realistic contemporary alternative. In securing what should be obvious, he – in addition to the footnote quoted against a nostalgic use of the neo-roman theory – also refers to problems which should be taken into consideration in any contemporary debate on liberty:

They have little to say about dimensions of freedom and oppression inherent in such institutions as the family or the labour market. (op.cit., 17)

The value orientation – *Wertbeziehung* in the Weberian sense – of Skinner's writing concerns neither the neo-roman theorists nor the liberals themselves. It is of more general character and concerns both present-day politics and the politics of historiography:

The intellectual historian can help us to appreciate how far the values embodied in our present way of life, and our present ways of thinking about these values, reflect a series of choices made at different times between different possible worlds. The awareness can help to liberate us from the grip of any one hegemonal account of these values and how they should be interpreted and understood. (op.cit., 117)

Elsewhere I have characterized Quentin Skinner as a 'Weberian' thinker (Palonen 1997). The last quotation is a clear manifestation of this Weberian tone. Like Weber, he manifests an openness towards alternatives and a readiness to understand conceptual changes and their political point. Like Weber, he looks for struggles and politicking behind the apparent fixations in intellectual history and he questions the legitimacy of claims made in the name of coherence or truth. Like Weber, Skinner is a critic of the apolitical dimension inherent in liberalism.

Rhetoric and Republicanism?

There is, to me, one puzzling feature in Skinner's new book. Why does he not mention in his recent book on rhetoric at all? Rhetoric is not even mentioned in the index. The historical rehabilitation of the *ars rhetorica* as a constituent part of renaissance culture as well as a style or argumentation in *utramque partem* is, in my opinion, one of Skinner's most important achievements as an historian and political theorist.

Why does he keep the republican writings separate from the rhetorical ones? Has he already changed his mind on the significance of the renaissance rhetorical culture? Or was he simply tired of commenting again on rhetoric, a topic he has dealt more or less throughout the entire nineteen-nineties? Or did he, rather, notice a break just between the Hobbesian generation, still grown up in this rhetorical culture, and the generation of neo-roman theorists, who were already beyond its horizon? Or is the rhetorical style of politics better suited to a militant republicanism à la Machiavelli than to the legal language of the neo-roman theorists?

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Book Reviews

Identity and Storytelling

Adriana Cavarero: Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti. Filosofia della narrazione. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1997.

Adriana Cavarero teaches Political Philosophy at the University of Verona, Italy. She is a prominent figure of the Italian Feminism, in which she has been theoretically active since the early 1980s. *In Spite of Plato* (Polity Press 1994) was her first internationally recognized book, a feminist re-reading of four 'female figures' of the Greek tradition: Penelope, the Thracian Maid, Demeter and Diotima. Adriana Cavarero's thought shares with Luce Irigaray's the assumption, material and factual, of the sexual difference and develops it further combining this political assumption with the reinterpretation of themes and figures from Greek antiquity and early modern age. In *Corpo in Figure* (Feltrinelli 1995), her next book, Cavarero explores the ambiguity of the body-politics metaphor in the texts of Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes and Shakespeare. In her most recent work, *Tu che mi guardi, tu*

che mi raccontati. Filosofia della narrazione, Adriana Cavarero shifts her 'displacing focus' and engages in a propositive theory of the self.

In this interesting and challenging book Cavarero explores the possibilities of storytelling or narrative and applies them to the identity question. In times of post-modern fragmentation and proliferation of identities Cavarero vigorously affirms that identity is not multiple but one, besides, if the Subject is dead it might not be the same for our own, real, sense of uniqueness. The book is primarily a 'Philosophy of Narrative', that is, the attempt, paradoxical and complex as it may be, to give a philosophical account of storytelling. In times of 'philosophical exhaustion', when the debate around the main themes of philosophy seems to vanish into the great game of deconstruction, Cavarero attempts a recovery of these themes from a notoriously anti-philosophical perspective (as Plato teaches us), namely that of narrative.

Paradoxical but still convincing is Cavarero's attempt. First because of the innovative perspective, which, assuming (consciously) an 'ingenuous realism' as horizon, revisits the main themes of our tradition (from Oedipus and Ulysses to the Subject and Metaphysics) with a delicate but incisive argument. Cavarero is able to bypass the many layers of speculation that surround the matter by pretending to be a Thracian maid who observes the world with simple and realistic eyes. The Thracian maid tries to explain that behind every life there is a story and that this story is unique and not exchangeable or replaceable with any other. The uniqueness that testifies of our individuality is not exceptionality, not the heroic uniqueness of Ulysses or Achilles, but simply and plainly the matter of fact that each one of us is 'this and not another' from birth, as Oedipus strenuously affirms.

Birth and uniqueness are terms that remind us of Hannah Arendt. Cavarero openly pays the tribute to

Arendt's thought, but develops further its implications. Arendt states that birth and uniqueness are two fundamental aspects of our 'being in the world', they are the foundations of the *vita activa*, the public, concrete and shared dimension of politics as opposed to the isolated and abstract dimension of philosophical speculation. Philosophy deals with 'the Man', politics with the plurality of men. According to Arendt no philosophical definition is able to capture the unique and unreplaceable consistence of 'who' somebody is. Philosophy deals with qualities, with 'what' Man is, according to the empty and abstract category of 'human nature'. Storytelling, on the contrary, is a practice that stems from the common shared world of men. The real 'who' that appears in the public sphere is 'representable' only through the telling of his/her story. Only in the story of a life can all the infinite contingencies that characterise each single being be fairly assessed. According to Arendt the meaning of a life is its story, the natural result of action. Actions produce stories, as naturally as the craftsman produces objects. The public sphere of politics escapes time and futility through storytelling, each individual receives from the public sphere her/his identity: the story that somebody will tell about their actions. According to Arendt only the storyteller can fully grasp the meaning of actions as they are enacted in the public sphere; the acting agent cannot understand thoroughly the meaning of her/his actions while she/he is performing them. This is why the 'nature' of our identity is relational: we are only inasmuch as others see and hear us. Only if we expose ourselves to the public light of politics, to the presence of others can we gain a complete sense of reality and of ourselves.

It is this *exposed* feature of our being that Cavarero radicalizes, by positing the uniqueness of our being as a feature that is visible from birth. We are constitutively exposed to the glance and touch of others: first of all to the

glance and touch of the mother. The frail and contingent character of our appearing to the world gains reality only through the relationship with the other. The importance of this recognition becomes tangible in the story. This is the new and interesting aspect that Cavarero develops: not only are we unique beings from birth, not only is our identity visible to others (as in the Arendtian paradigm, where the complete sense of our actions become visible only after our death, only when our path is completed can the storyteller give a complete account of our life); as a consequence of our exposed frailty we need and desire somebody who tells our story. We perceive ourselves as *narratable*, as protagonists of a story that we want to hear from others. This desire for a story, for our story to be told, becomes the guiding element in the new approach to identity that Cavarero here offers. Our identity is not possessed in advance, as an innate quality or inner self that we are able to master and express. As Arendt says, the 'who' is visible only to others, it stems out of what we do and say in front of others. Cavarero adds: we have a primary need to receive this 'who' from others in the form of a narrative. Moreover: the narratable self longs for a story to be heard here and now since it is through the fulfilment of this desire that it perceives itself as real. Ulysses cries when he hears the story of his life told by the bard at the Phaeacian court; he perceives himself as a unity in the words of somebody else. Oedipus, in spite of the misfortunes that his story will bring him, is anxious to know his provenance, he desperately desires to hear the story of his origins from the blind Tiresias and from the other characters who know Oedipus' story. Both heroes react vigorously to the words of the storyteller, the desire becomes clear to them in the moment they perceive themselves as 'narratable', protagonists of a single and unreplaceable story.

The desire for narrative becomes, in this perspective, the foundation of a new kind of identity, which, with a

simple and clear gesture, gets rid of the abstract criteria of the philosophical Subject, its definitory normative, its supposed self consistency and autonomy. By needing the other as a fundamental part of reality, the desiring self does not postulate the other, defining her/him according to abstract criteria, but reciprocally interacts with her by telling her story as well. In this giving practice of exchanging life-stories (Cavarero calls it 'ethics of the gift' – '*etica del dono*') identity is entirely dependent upon the reciprocal relation between You and I. 'Who I am' is an external feature, it is created by the other, by the story told. Who I am, therefore, depends upon the many relationships I establish with others. Even if I perceive myself as unique and one I cannot be self-sufficient by telling myself my own story. Autobiography is banned from the narrative scene of reciprocity, since it is a 'narcissistic practice', an illusion of the memory, nurtured by the illusion of a self-sufficient and consistent Subject. Only the biographical practice is truly innovative, since it calls for the other, the concrete and present 'other' that I encounter and face, in order to understand who I am.

Cavarero does not doubt, as the Thracian maid wouldn't doubt, that the 'who' is unique and one (*'unico e uno*) since she is always the protagonist of her story. From a narrative perspective, therefore, the unity of the self does not imply a strong and compact subject, identical with itself through time. The unity is simply the narrative permanence of the protagonist ('This and not another') throughout life. The protagonist of many facts and contingencies – no matter how incoherent and discontinuous – will endure throughout the story; its uniqueness is indeed linked to such contingencies, since they obviously are different from the contingencies guiding another life-story. Paradoxical is the fact that this contingent and fluid aspect of each life-story is the necessary precondition of uniqueness. Not only is each life-story unique, that is,

different from any other, but as a result of its being exposed to the world, of its frailty, the story is also *one*. The paradox is easily solved: in spite of the incongruous and incoherent events that guide my life, its story will preserve the uniqueness and oneness that from birth has made me the protagonist of my life-story. I am the protagonist of my life-story in the sense that I am 'this and not another' from birth. My qualities and skills may change, evolve or disappear, but nonetheless I will always be part of a story. The unity that Cavarero posits is not psychological nor metaphysical, it is simply the permanence of a story whose protagonist recognizes herself as always present in it. The visibility and tangibility of the story become reality when others tell myself my own story. The voice and narrative of the other is the sole guarantee of reality for the desiring narratable self: only in the story that others will tell I do see my uniqueness and unity.

Cavarero applies these reflections to many texts, from Oedipus to Borges, from Homer to Karen Blixen, but, interesting enough, the text as 'content' is totally unimportant within the desiring perspective. Not only is the author dead, as Roland Barthes teaches us, but, according to Cavarero – who firmly goes against the French predominance – also the text as independent entity is dead. The narratable self is constitutively independent from the content of the narrative. The form, the unique and one life-story that we want to hear, is vital to our self-perception, to the revelation of our 'who', while the content becomes secondary. The narrative, the 'text' comes after the lived experience, it is not a product of the text, nor a rhetorical construct. The self must not be necessarily 'narrated' but it is constitutively 'narratable': perceiving ourselves as narratable means perceiving the unity and uniqueness of our life-story. In order for this perception to become real and tangible, there must be somebody else who actualizes this potentiality and creates a story out of our life.

The language of storytelling allows a different perspective on reality; it allows a recognition of differences and a respect of them. By paying a tribute to the art of storytelling, by exploring the paths of a different language (“a language that does not know general nouns”) Cavarero offers us a new and refreshing insight into old but still unresolved philosophical issues.

Olivia Guaraldo

The Concept of Pariah in Hannah Arendt’s Political Thought

Tuija Parvikko: The Responsibility of the Pariah. University of Jyväskylä: SoPhi, 1996.

Tuija Parvikko’s study makes an important contribution to understanding Arendt’s political philosophy by elucidating the intellectual history of a concept – pariah – that is pivotal to Arendt’s work. Although many scholars have noted the importance to Arendt of pariah figures such as Heinrich Heine, Charlie Chaplin, and the protagonists of Kafka’s novels, Parvikko is the first to do a “conceptual archeology” of the term (17). Her book traces its lineage from Weber, to Lazare, to Arendt, and then uses this conceptual history to shed new light on Arendt’s position in the Eichmann controversy. Parvikko contends that “without knowing Lazare’s notion of the partial responsibility of the pariah for her own acts and deeds it is hard to view Arendt’s interpretation of the role of the Jewish Councils in the Eichmann book in an accurate light” (17). Specifically, Parvikko seeks to refute the charge that Arendt, by her criticisms of the Jewish Councils, effec-

tively held the victims responsible for the crimes of the victimizers. She claims that this accusation unravels when it is situated in the context of Arendt's distinction - inherited from Lazare - between political responsibility and the responsibility of the pariah.

Parvikko begins her conceptual archeology with Weber, who appropriated the term "pariah" from its context in the Indian caste system to describe the privileged position of Jews in Europe. In the Indian context, "pariah" is a static designation, denoting the outcast status of ethnically subordinated groups. Weber first used the term to characterize the situation of Jews in 1915; in so doing, however, he transformed it. As a description of the outcast condition of the Jewish people, "pariah" carries with it a redemptive conception of history by virtue of the belief in the Jews' "providential mission and...specific honour before God" (39-40). Jewish pariah status is allied with an eschatological vision of history that justifies a withdrawal from, and abdication of responsibility for, worldly politics. Parvikko argues that Weber gives Arendt one way to think about the political vulnerability of pariah peoples: Weber uses the term "pariah" to designate the belief in exceptionalism that is manifest in the peculiar apolitical insularity and other-worldliness of diasporic Jewish enclave communities.

The core of the book and its most original contribution to Arendt scholarship is the chapter on Bernard Lazare. Parvikko's is the only sustained look at the intellectual influence of Lazare on Arendt, a relationship that is difficult to trace because even though Lazare's work was a central influence on her conceptualization of the political significance of Jewish identity, "Arendt never wrote an entire article not to mention a book-length study on Lazare" (115). Moreover, Parvikko argues that the Arendt-Lazare connection is of interest not simply to scholars who are concerned with Arendt's writings on Jewish identity but is

critical to understanding her conception of action more generally. Parvikko argues that the pariah is a “counterpart to the citizen-actor of the political realm” (213). Whereas the citizen undertakes politics in “normal” circumstances where actors have access to the public space of politics,” Arendt uses the pariah to theorize action in “extreme situations” (213). Parvikko contends that “without knowing her notion of pariahdom and its role in her political theory it easily begins to seem as if political initiative is something reserved for fully authorized citizen-actors, ignoring the existence of those who do not have access to the public sphere of politics” (214).

Parvikko argues that it is from Lazare that Arendt takes her notion of the partial responsibility of the pariah. Lazare, a French Jew born into an assimilated middle-class family, was a journalist and intellectual of the late nineteenth century who became committed to Zionism as a result of the Dreyfus Affair. Lazare’s was an unusual Zionism, rooted in the figure of the conscious pariah who does not “seek to rebuild a Jewish state in Palestine and conquer Jerusalem, but demands the right to dignity as a human being” by making a political space for the Jewish people on European soil (139). Parvikko notes that Lazare’s work engages Arendt for its rejection of the nineteenth-century view of Jews as “history-sufferers instead of history-makers” (131). She learned from Lazare to distinguish between the passivity of the parvenu and the active resistance of the conscious pariah and to hold that “every pariah who refuses to be a rebel is partly responsible for her own situation and therefore for the blot on mankind which it represents” (135).

In sum, Arendt follows Lazare in a characteristically unconventional turn, setting aside the more familiar question of what communities owe to their outcasts (e.g. the poor, the homeless, the uninsured, etc...), to consider the duties that even outcasts have to the world.

This unconventional move is at the root of what Parvikko claims sparked so much controversy over Eichmann in Jerusalem. She argues that a Lazarean concern with the question of pariah responsibility “directed Arendt’s attention to the role of the Jewish Councils as well as to the banality of evil in Eichmann’s case” (159). Parvikko wisely avoids recapitulating the controversy over Eichmann; instead, she uses it to elucidate the conception of “political responsibility” that Arendt’s less generous critics interpreted as Jewish self-hatred. Parvikko argues that to appreciate the subtlety of this judgment, it is necessary to place it in the context of the Lazarean framework that constitutes one of its “hidden ‘subtexts’” (157).

Arendt’s position rests on a distinction between political responsibility and pariah responsibility that, as Parvikko demonstrates, Arendt drew from Lazare but failed to elucidate in the Eichmann study. Political responsibility is a form of “collective responsibility” that is shared by every member of a political community regardless whether they are decision-makers or citizens (193). For Adolf Eichmann, serving under a criminal regime, “assuming political responsibility in traditional terms inevitably means participating in crimes” (197). Pariah responsibility differs from this criminal responsibility for the obvious reason that pariah peoples, by definition, do not partake in political responsibility. As Parvikko notes, “nobody is responsible for a community to which she does not belong” (199). Instead, “in the Lazarean-Arendtian framework the responsibility of the pariah includes evaluation of the deeds of her fellow pariahs” (199). In criticizing the role that the Jewish Councils played in expediting the “final solution”, Parvikko argues that Arendt was both exercising this responsibility as, herself, a pariah and holding the Jewish leadership to a standard of responsibility appropriate to them as pariahs. To anyone who read Arendt’s trial report with its Lazarean subtext in view, the

differences between her evaluations of Eichmann and the Councils would have been clear: Whereas Arendt held Eichmann politically responsible, accusing him of the crime of genocide, she charged the Jewish leadership not with a crime but with the pariah responsibility to rebel against a criminal regime.

Parvikko's book offers new insights into Arendt's understanding of political action by putting the pariah, who is typically read as a marginal figure, at the center of her study. As such, she reminds us that Arendt is not only a theorist of citizenship but also a theorist (in the words of Parvikko's title) "political action and judgement in extreme situations". Parvikko also makes an original and important contribution to understanding Arendt's intellectual lineage by charting the influence of Lazare. On this second point, however, it may be that Parvikko works too hard to make both Lazare and Arendt likeable to her readers.

For example, Parvikko makes an interesting choice in handling Lazare's early writings on Jewish politics, which some interpreters have read to be antisemitic. In these works, Lazare makes a critique of race-based notions of Jewish solidarity that Arendt echoes in her own post-War criticisms of Israeli nationalism. Parvikko quotes Lazare denouncing the notion of ethnic Jewish solidarity as follows: "What are they to me, an Israelite of France, the Russian money-lenders, the Galician inn-keepers and pawn-brokers, the polish horse-traders, the peddlers of Prague and the money-changers of Frankfurt...the Christians of Crete have as great a right to move me, and many others who are pariahs on this globe, without being Israelites" (125). Although Parvikko fully acknowledges what she calls Lazare's "Sephardic arrogance" toward eastern Jews, she insists that the import of this passage is to show the "first germs of Lazare's later distinction into conscious pariahs and parvenus" (126). It is difficult to read this litany of stereotypes without wondering whether Lazare

regarded himself, and French Jews generally, as what Arendt termed “exception Jews.” There is an eerie echo of Lazare’s categories in a letter of Arendt’s, written from Israel to Karl Jaspers on April 13, 1961, the eve of the Eichmann trial:

My first impression: On top, the judges, the best of German Jewry. Below them, the prosecuting attorneys, Galicians, but still Europeans. Everything is organized by a police force that gives me the creeps, speaks only Hebrew and looks Arabic... And outside the doors, the oriental mob, as if one were in Istanbul or some other half-Asiatic country. In addition, and very visible in Jerusalem, the peies and caftan Jews, who make life impossible for all the reasonable people here. (*Arendt–Jaspers Correspondence*, transl. Robert and Rita Kimber, 435).

This passage suggests that in addition to the lineage that Parvikko traces, there might be other, less politically acceptable, facets of Lazare’s legacy to Arendt. Exploring them as well would introduce into Parvikko’s fine study an additional critical perspective on Arendt and on the Eichmann controversy.

Tuija Parvikko’s book should be read by any scholar who wants to understand the full range of intellectual influences on Hannah Arendt, not just those who can be found in the traditional canon of political theory. Parvikko demonstrates beautifully how Bernard Lazare influenced Arendt’s political thinking. She also offers us an Arendt who theorizes the possibility of agency on the part of political outcasts, a possibility that grows ever more important with the proliferation of refugees around the globe.

Lisa Disch

A Critical Analysis of Liberal Political Philosophy

Sirkku Hellsten: In Defense of Moral Individualism. Helsinki: Philosophical Society of Finland, 1997.

This dissertation presents a probing analysis of several of the core moral and metaphysical premises of contemporary liberal political philosophy. Acknowledging the historical and current diversity of liberal theories, it appropriately focuses particular attention on the writings of John Rawls and their reception, as central to an understanding of contemporary liberalism.

Part I of the dissertation comprises an overview of contemporary liberal theory. It usefully clarifies the terminology in which much of this theory is expressed and isolates the types of epistemological and methodological issue that form the substance of the liberal-communitarian debate. Hellsten offers persuasive reasons for her claim that Rawls's attempt to detach his deontological and contrarian account of justice from any more comprehensive moral doctrine – in an effort to liberate it from any metaphysical commitments – leaves it exposed to many of the criticisms levelled against it by communitarian thinkers. This part of the dissertation contains important discussions of 1) the kind of individualism, and its shortcomings, implicit in the contractarian method, and 2) the respects in which the latter works to restrict individual autonomy. It also advances some grounds for distinguishing teleological moral reasoning from consequentialism.

Part II presents Hellsten's own conception of the moral and metaphysical premisses needed to overcome the deficiencies of deontological liberalism. This highly inventive conception is dubbed 'moral individualism' and its central feature is the insistence that personal autonomy be con-

strued as a project – something to be achieved – rather than an existential presupposition of political theorising. Its being a project *inter alia* implies a concern for substantive as well as formal equality. Current liberal theory, it is argued, is able to sustain its commitment to substantive (welfare) aspects of equality only by reliance on the evidently unwarranted assumption of the absence of restrictions on economic growth. An illuminating set of parallels is drawn between the moral subjectivism of liberal theory and the moral relativism of communitarianism.

Part III traces the historical evolution of liberal doctrine from Renaissance humanism to contemporary methodological individualism. Hellsten claims that a key development here is the inversion of the Aristotelian approach, which imposes limits on property ownership, into the modern liberal one which – from Locke onwards – effectively abolishes these limits. Good use is made of Macpherson's analysis to sustain this claim. This part also contains an acute assessment of the teleological elements in Kant's moral philosophy, and a probing comparison of Rawls's neo-Kantianism with Gauthier's bargaining theory – a comparison which elicits the importance of reciprocity for the former as well as the latter, and its significance in excluding non-contributors from the contractarian scheme. Hegel's critique of Kant – concerning the unsituatedness of his individuals – and its reflection in communitarian thinking, are well presented as is its metaphysical direction. Hellsten makes a strong case for the conceptual need to combine the Kantian metaphysical idea of moral agency with the communitarian demand for an ethical identity realizable only in a political society.

Part IV provides an extended elaboration of the concept of moral individualism. It draws heavily, and to good effect, on Aristotelian resources, discussing various notions of moral objectivity, the relation between theoretical and practical knowledge, the difference between de-

monstrative and dialectical arguments (and the latter's greater appropriateness as an instrument for establishing moral/political truth) and the distinction between pluralism and relativism. It offers a compelling case for using a teleological perspective to reconcile an ethical political theory based on individuals' moral judgement with the metaphysical singleness of the good.

In summary, the dissertation makes an original and significant contribution to contemporary political philosophy. It offers a careful analysis of the deficiencies of current liberal political theory, of the philosophical sources of those deficiencies and of how these might be remedied by a more overt and consistent use of philosophical tools which liberal theorists have allowed to fall from their hands in the course of their journey to the modern world. The dissertation very clearly engages with the most important literature in its field, grapples painstakingly with a whole series of arguments and counterarguments to be found in that literature, and constructively exposes their limitations to lay the groundwork for a distinctive alternative form of liberal political philosophy.

Hillel Steiner

Interpretive Methods for Political Science

Terrell Carver, Matti Hyvärinen (eds.): Interpreting the Political. New Methodologies. London: Routledge, 1997.

During the last two decades there was a remarkable boom of qualitative research methods and methodologies in the field of social and cultural studies. Many researchers obviously felt discontent with the traditional

standardized quantitative methods, realizing the specific limitations of these well established research strategies. In political science, the situation is somewhat different. Few efforts have been made to analyze the political by means of qualitative methods. The relatively small group of scholars trying to work out an interpretive approach, e.g. in research on political culture, are far from being regarded as part of the core of the discipline. Given this situation, a book developing “new methodologies” for “interpreting the political” must be quite welcome.

The editors state that the main purpose of the volume is to “further the new methodological pluralism in political science and political studies by employing interpretive methods” (1). In doing so, the main points of reference are approaches derived from semiotics and linguistics. The contributors apply theories and methods such as hermeneutics, discourse and rhetorical analysis, and deconstructivist perspectives. The common denominator of the papers is a special concern for language and its constitutive role for the everyday construction of the political. Consequently, the concept of the political cannot be determined in a fixed and essentialist way: the question of “what is political” must always be answered by “reading” and interpreting the concrete constructions used by people in their lifeworlds. Thus, according to the editors, defining the political by critical readings is in itself a political act (6).

The book presents papers from an ECPR workshop held in Limerick, Ireland, in 1992; some of the papers were already published in earlier versions. The authors illustrate the methodological constructivism not only by theoretical reflection but also by applying their categories and approaches to several concrete topics.

T. Carver analyses the subtexts and interpretive politics used by the protagonists in the famous Hill-Thomas hearings in 1991. He examines material delivered by the *New York Times* coverage, and his main point is that any

interpretation – whether by people within the field or by the researcher – is always driven by interests and strategic purposes. Carver shows that the Thomas camp was successful in constructing a variety of narratives about Hill that fit well into the expectations of a broader public already accustomed to media stories. These narratives, employing patterns from crime and courtroom drama as well as from TV sitcoms, were accompanied by statements on the relativity and plurality of ‘truth’; as a result, Hill’s accusations had no chance of acceptance.

But to point to the nexus of interest and interpretation is not sufficient to equate popular and scholarly interpretations. There is an important difference marked by Alfred Schütz through his concepts of first and second order constructions (Schütz 1932/1974). While the first are immediately bound to social practice, the second benefit from a certain distance and from criteria for methodological control. Of course, research is also situated in fields of power (cf. Bourdieu 1984). But the types of interest are located on different epistemological – and practical – levels of reality. This difference must be maintained if we don’t want to cultivate an “anything goes” attitude in political science.

M. Hyvärinen deals with the construction of political identities through autobiographical narratives. In his subtle and sophisticated analyses, the author probes and challenges the concepts of coherence, conversion and “thickness” (Denzin) by taking the discourse of the interviewees seriously and by avoiding hasty conclusions. The critical reading results in better defined and articulated concepts, e.g. a concept of coherence that allows for ruptures when there are persistent semantic oppositions structuring the biographical ruptures. The paper convincingly pleads for careful and cautious strategies of interpretation.

The discourse of the “Hite Reports”, with respect to interrelations among sexuality, language and power, is ex-

amined by *V. Mottier*. According to the author, the Reports bear a strong similarity to Foucault's genealogical approach. In her interviews, Hite produces a kind of counter-knowledge that can in turn help women work out their own sexual identity. A second analysis of 'scientific' discourse from a feminist point of view is given by *M. Keränen*. She re-reads Finnish behaviorist participation studies from the 60s. These studies maintained that women were always more passive and less politically "mature" than men. This gender myth, adapted from Anglo-American literature, persisted even though quantitative evidence clearly falsified the behaviorist researchers' assumptions.

V. Bresnihan develops a promising approach to political culture by combining hermeneutics and structuralism. She conducted intensive interviews attempting to reconstruct citizens' everyday theories of the political. Bresnihan identifies three basic models of politics, and each one can be connected to a distinct position in the history of ideas: the realist "politics of the fox", referring to Machiavelli; the "politics of containment", referring to Aquinas; and the "politics of the wounded heart", stemming from the liberal tradition of Hobbes, Locke, and Mill. The interpretations give some helpful hints for qualitative research on political culture. Nevertheless, two aspects of the essay deserve critical scrutiny: First, when pointing out certain contradictions within the models, Bresnihan reverts to some highly speculative elements of feminist philosophy and psychoanalytical thought in order to explain them. These speculative points are combined with normative statements in the case of the first Irish female president. The author would have been better off keeping her analytical perspective closer to the empirical data. Second, she introduces the "politics of the fox" by relying on only one interview. This may be legitimate for a case study or preliminary research, but instead the author claims that this case is representative: "Raymond refers to and identi-

fies with the largest political party in the country. Thus this model must have significant representative value” (66). It should be clear that a serious problem like that of representativity in qualitative research cannot be solved with a sleight of hand.

With less pretension and more interpretive sophistication *K. Palonen* describes how certain dimensions of the political, mostly neglected by political scientists, can be grasped and ‘read’ by using travelling as a methodological device. Palonen shows how German writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger, in his collection of essays “Ach Europa!”, discovers relevant forms of politicising and politicking. Travelling all over Europe, Enzensberger developed a peculiar sensitivity for the dimensions of language, space and time. This enabled him to uncover relevant aspects of the political. Palonen systematizes Enzensberger’s essayistic knowledge, pointing, e.g., to the naming of streets and cities, to letter boxes and their telling inscriptions, to the appropriation of urban space by means of graffiti, and to varying rhythms of time as indicators of different political cultures. Palonen gives the reader stimulating insights into the cultural complexity of the political in a modern world.

In contrast to these refreshing observations, *K. Sonderrmann’s* analysis of three national anthems as “textual icons” is somewhat disappointing. Sonderrmann right away categorizes his subject as “glorified triviality”, characterized through “pomp and kitsch” with “ridiculous pathos” (129). The author seems to have no questions but only firm opinions about national anthems, and this lack of methodological curiosity leads to a couple of problems. With regard to the large amount of literature on nations and nationalism, the author’s assessment of national anthems as dull containers for dull ideologies is, at the very least, an oversimplification. In calling the anthems “depoliticising”, he neglects the historical fact that they were highly politicising symbolic forms that gave the abstract concept

of “nation” sensible contours, thereby enabling many people to participate in political movements. As to the present, the author in no way shows how the anthems are used and appropriated by political agents and ‘normal’ citizens. To put it more concretely: one wonders why Sondermann does not mention the important fact that in Germany (one of the author’s three examples) only the third stanza of Hofmann von Fallersleben’s poem is officially performed. It would have been interesting to explore how this odd situation influences the status and the possible functions of this symbolic form. But this kind of questions remains out of sight in Sondermann’s essay.

More convincing is *J. Bleicher* in analyzing the different modes of “inventing” the European Community as a politically relevant construction of meaning. His typology ranges from ideological simulacra to creatively constructed projective images. Unfortunately the author does not consider Ulrich Beck’s stimulating essay on the “Invention of the Political” (1993) and recent contributions by Anthony Giddens on the same topic (1994). The final, rather short paper by *J. Der Derian* speculates about the negative impact of simulation techniques on the individuals’ sense of reality.

The book, with its plurality of methods and methodologies, offers many helpful hints that can encourage further interpretive research in political science. As is generally the case with anthologies, the heterogeneity of approaches is paralleled by a heterogeneity of the papers’ quality. But the main problem with the book lies elsewhere. Neither the editors nor the contributors contextualize their efforts within recent methodological discussions in the social sciences. Thus, e.g. questions of validity and reliability are not dealt with, and consequently procedures for proving the quality of the empirical research, such as triangulation techniques, are not taken into account. A reader seeking new methodologies should enter into the

particulars of these problems (see, for example, recent handbooks: Flick et al. 1991, LeCompte et al. 1992, Denzin & Lincoln 1994, Miles & Huberman 1994). Even within political science, there was a broad dispute over the possibilities of qualitative research methods when applied to political culture (cf. Welch 1993). It would have been helpful if the contributors had referred to these discussions, thus enabling a better assessment of the specific value of the suggested approaches.

However, the book is an important contribution to a discussion urgently needed in the discipline. It deserves broad attention by the scientific community so that critical discussion about methods and methodologies will go on, opening new ways to 'read' and interpret the political.

Andreas Dörner

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Contributors

Lisa Disch
Dept. of Political Science
University of Minnesota

Thomas Mertens
Department of Philosophy
University of Nijmegen

Andreas Dörner
Institut für Politikwissenschaft
Universität Magdeburg

Toivo Nygård
Department of History
University of Jyväskylä

Robert Fine
Social Theory Centre
University of Warwick

Kari Palonen
Political Science/Dept. of
Social Sciences and Philosophy
University of Jyväskylä

Simona Forti
Dipartimento di
Scienza Politica
Università di Torino

Tuija Parvikko
Political Science/Dept. of
Social Sciences and Philosophy
University of Jyväskylä

Olivia Guaraldo
Political Science/Dept. of
Social Sciences and Philosophy
University of Jyväskylä

Tuija Pulkkinen
Universität Greifswald
Institut für Philosophie &
Christina Institute,
University of Helsinki

Matti Hyvärinen
Research Institute for the
Social Sciences
University of Tampere

Maija Setälä
Dept. of Political Science
University of Turku

Jussi Kotkavirta
Philosophy/Dept. of Social
Sciences and Philosophy
University of Jyväskylä

Hillel Steiner
Dept. of Political Science
University of Manchester