



HANNAH ARENDT AND THE POLITICAL

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ABSTRACTS AND CV/BIO

Margarida Gomes **Amaral** (margarida-amaral@dix.pt), with a degree in Philosophy, teaches philosophy at High School and is presently working on her doctoral degree about the concept of *Time* in Hannah Arendt, at the University of Lisbon.

Abstract

Title: **Political shipwreck: authority and the end of revolution**

The term end is to be understood here in a double meaning: goal and temporal end of revolutions. The option is justified by grasping that the temporal end of modern revolutions did not coincide with the realization of their goal. The goal of any revolution is to ground political freedom, but it is also legitimate to argue that its goal is also that such a change acquires unquestioned durability. The two dimensions, novelty and durability, represent a temporal tension present in any revolutionary process: if the desire of novelty is limited by a past that revolution wants to cut the present from, the will to durability sees its possibilities questioned by the unexpectedness of the future. Revolution is the struggle of novelty against the stability of the past, but simultaneously an attempt to make novelty become the stability in the future. According to Hannah Arendt, revolution is consummated only if the new beginning of freedom assumes itself as durable and the stability of this freedom imposes itself in a promising and continuous form. Revolutionary process accomplishes its goal if the importance of authority is recognized and, joined to the law, makes power possible, that is, concert action among men. The present paper tries to clarify how modern revolutions have dealt with the relation between authority and freedom, but also to show that we are living today a crisis of authority whose origin goes back to the fact that the temporal end of modern revolutions have not coincide with their ultimate goal, whether because of a lack of constitutional authority in France, or because of political representation in America. That is why the treasure still seen by modern revolutionaries, the construction of a common world, appears today as unrecognizable. If to find again that treasure depends upon the recognizing of legislative authority it is urgent to question: is the treasure hidden or irretrievable lost?

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Abstract

Title: **"Anything is possible and everything is permitted" psychoanalytic reflections on Hannah Arendt's Elements of Totalitarianism**

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) is perhaps best known for her report of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, undertaken as a journalist for the New Yorker. Arendt's book on that trial is subtitled '*The Banality of Evil*' to draw attention to the idea that these acts were carried out *not* by passionate monsters who we can think of as extreme and outside ordinary experience but by a mentality that is in many respects frighteningly ordinary, quotidian, in her telling phrase 'banal'. The administrative machine that designed and managed the concentration camps was, as she saw it, staffed by men whose minds were empty of thought and devoid of passion.

The character of Eichmann the bureaucrat provided Arendt with a model of a devastating pathology of the mind - and she insists that such a mind must be appreciated and understood for what it reveals to us of the processes that underlie totalitarianism.

Arendt, in her principal work *The Elements of Totalitarianism*, traces the various historical currents that lead to totalitarianism. But further, she carefully examines the elements that constitute what might be called a 'Totalitarian state of mind'.

In this paper I will attempt to show that Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism is rich in psychoanalytic content. In her work she gives a great deal of attention to a process that she termed 'thinking', a process opposed to and therefore opposed by, totalitarian states of mind. Her conception of thought and thinking, of the factors that support or oppose it, has a natural kinship with certain contemporary psychoanalytic ideas principally derived from the work of Bion and this will be further explored in the paper.

Thomas **Berns** (tberns@ulb.ac.be) est chercheur au Centre de philosophie du droit de l'Université libre de Bruxelles (ainsi que chercheur invité au Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance de l'Université de Tours en 2005-2006) et enseigne le droit naturel à l'Université de Mons-Hainaut. Philosophe du politique et spécialisé dans la période la Renaissance, il est l'auteur de *Violence de la loi à la Renaissance*. L'originnaire du politique chez Machiavel et Montaigne (Kimé, 2000) et de *Souveraineté, droit et gouvernementalité*. Lectures du politique moderne à partir de Bodin (Léo Scheer, 2005). Ses recherches actuelles portent sur la naissance de la statistique. Il est aussi l'éditeur scientifique de *Le droit saisi par le collectif* (Bruylant, 2004), *Humanités* (Ousia, 2005) et *Philosophie de l'impôt* (Bruylant, 2006) et membre du comité de rédaction de la revue *Multitudes*.

Abstract

Title: **Violence et fondation, Hannah Arendt face à l'enigme machiavélique**

Hannah Arendt pointe avec raison le fait que pour Machiavel « la fondation était l'action politique centrale, le grand acte unique qui établissait le domaine publico-politique et rendait la politique possible », le rapprochant pour cela des Romains, qui seraient les seuls selon elle à avoir eu un concept de l'autorité, justement basé sur la tradition, sur un acte de fondation dans le passé, et en cela l'unique véritable concept d'autorité, puisque le seul à s'émanciper tant de la persuasion qui présuppose l'égalité, que de la force qui présuppose que l'autorité a échoué. Mais là où, en fonction de ce même concept d'autorité, Machiavel échouerait malgré tout, selon Arendt, c'est en faisant de cet acte de fondation, non pas comme les Romains « un événement du passé », mais une « 'fin' suprême » pour laquelle « tous les 'moyens', et principalement les moyens de la violence, étaient justifiés ». Machiavel comprendrait ainsi, toujours d'après Arendt, « l'acte de fondation entièrement à l'image de la fabrication »¹, c'est-à-dire selon ce qu'elle définit par la métaphore de l'artisan-spécialiste, ouvrant la porte à la tyrannie, et propre à Platon et à l'échec grec dans sa tentative de fonder l'autorité. Nous montrerons 1) combien la spécificité de la relation praxis/poiesis déployée par Machiavel (par laquelle il se situe encore un stade au-delà de la tradition romaine quant à une compréhension pratique du politique) échappe à Arendt et pourquoi ; 2) en quoi et surtout pourquoi Hannah Arendt reste ainsi prisonnière de la traditionnelle conception machiavélique de Machiavel, alors que chez lui, il ne subsiste aucune extériorité de la violence par rapport à la fondation. Contre l'interprétation arendtienne, et en exploitant quelques textes majeurs de la philosophie contemporaine (Benjamin, Derrida, Lefort, Taminiaux...), nous montrerons combien l'idée de fondation ne peut être interprétée ni en termes d'événement du passé, ni en termes de fin suprême.

Marieke **Borren** (borren@dia.uva.nl) is affiliated to the Germany Institute at the Department of Humanities, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She's currently preparing a PhD on Hannah Arendt's political philosophy of friendship. Her research interests include issues in the realms of political and feminist philosophy such as solidarity, identity politics, cosmopolitanism, etc. She regularly publishes articles and reviews on these issues in Dutch philosophical and feminist journals.

Abstract

Title: **Community and Politics of Friendship in Arendt's Work**

One of the most urgent questions Arendt's work raises is: how are people – citizens – to relate for a human world to emerge? What are they *to do*? And what does their *bond* have to look like? I argue these questions bring Arendt to reflect upon the 'problem of community'. She rejects both the totalitarian, the traditionalist (communitarian) and liberal individualist 'solutions' to this problem – since each of them (though for different reasons) destroys plurality and therefore erodes the common world – and suggests 'politics of friendship' might offer a more adequate alternative. Although Arendt explicitly claims her debt to Aristotle, I argue her concept of political (or civic) friendship is decidedly modern, since the 'problem of community' she observed is typical of modern political conditions: totalitarianism and modernity (notably liberal individualism, the nation-state system, the human rights regime).

Kushanava **Choudhury** (kushanava.choudhury@yale.edu) is a PhD student in Political Science at Yale University. His dissertation is on Hannah Arendt's concept of superfluous people. Before coming to graduate school, Choudhury worked as a journalist in India.

Abstract

Title: **Superfluous people**

In *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt observed that the new feature of the political in modernity was to render groups of people superfluous. Unlike criminals or traitors, such groups are not targeted by the state because of some fault of their own, but because they are in the way of a broader agenda. They are not enemies of the state, but rather are the collateral damage of a larger plan.

Superfluity is both a political and a phenomenological condition. To be

Rendered superfluous is to no longer be of this world. Such a person is in a limbo beyond life and death.

Politically, the superfluous fall into a category of those who no longer count juridically. It is not that they are coerced, but that they may be coerced. Once thus categorized, they may be displaced, interned or exterminated incidentally as part of a larger state vision.

Arendt's concept of the superfluous person as one who is beyond the binary of life and death echoes Giorgio Agamben's homo sacer, or who may be killed but not sacrificed, as well as Zygmunt Bauman's wasted lives of the Others of modernity. Arendt, Agamben and Bauman all view the concentration camp as a paradigmatic space in modernity, and offer comparable analyses on the fate of the subject within that space.

However superfluity is not a feature of totalitarianism alone. The danger of the corpse factories and holes of oblivion is that today, with populations and homelessness everywhere on the increase, masses of people are everywhere rendered superfluous if we continue to think of our world in utilitarian terms, writes Arendt in *Origins*, Totalitarian solutions may well survive the fall of totalitarian regimes in the form of strong temptations which will come up whenever it seems impossible to alleviate political, social or economic misery in a manner worthy of man.

The rise of executive power in bureaucratic forms in modern democracies has given states the means to carry out mass displacement or internment schemes. While Agamben has argued, in a deterministic fashion, that the camp is the nomos of the modern, Arendt's anticipation of superfluity in non-totalitarian conditions is more nuanced. Michel Foucault's concepts biopolitics and governmentality along with James Scott's analysis of the failures of well-intentioned planning by high-modernist states reveal how the strong temptations to alleviate political, social or economic misery? Have reproduced superfluity is in the aftermath of the camp. This paper explores the logics by which superfluity retains its place as a key feature of the political in modernity even in liberal-democratic contexts.

Lee **Cooper** (lacooper@lamar.colostate.edu) teaches in the Philosophy Department and Honor's Program at Colorado State University. He has also taught at Ohio University and the University of Colorado. He has degrees from M.I.T. and Columbia University. His publications and presentations include work on Hannah Arendt. The most recent, in April 2006, was a paper, "Hannah Arendt on Plato's Degradation of Politics," which was given at a meeting of the American Philosophical Association

Abstract

Title: **Arendt's View of the Political: How Crucial is it to Human Happiness?**

Most of the substantial commentary on Arendt's work has focused on her theory of political action and her insistence that a fully human life, one that is not "dead to the world," requires a public "space of appearances." However, Arendt also provides some important caveats to what many interpreters have viewed as an unmitigated glorification of politics. I argue that Arendtian political participation, properly construed, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a fully realized life, that a life given over entirely to action misses some crucial, even essential, dimensions of human existence.

The paper first examines Arendt's four-fold justification for a politics involving active citizen deliberation and debate. An authentic politics makes possible (1) the revelatory disclosure of "who" we are, our irreducibly unique self, through speech and action; (2) the confirmation of our self-identity and the assurance of the reality of the world; (3) the joy of acting together with our peers and beginning something new; and (4) the display of human excellence and greatness, and the satisfaction of our passion for distinction.

Despite the importance that Arendt attaches to the public realm, she also stresses the significance, albeit quite different, of the private realm and private property. She speaks of public happiness as a part of complete

happiness and asserts that the sphere of politics, "its greatness notwithstanding, is *limited*—it does not encompass the whole of man's and the world's existence." (BPF, p. 253, emphasis mine).

First, the private sphere provides a hiding place, as it were, for those human emotions, e.g., love and compassion, which are either destroyed or distorted when they become guiding principles in the public realm. And it offers a place where children can grow and mature, protected from the glare of the world.

Second, the private sphere, and private property in particular, viewed as "privately owned share of a common world" (HC, p. 257) has traditionally been seen as a *sine qua non* for political membership and legal protection. Understood as a tangible, relatively permanent place in the world, it also acts as a constraint on the ever-increasing process of industrial growth and transformation of the world.

Arendt's approach may be labeled as "pluralistic" in the sense that each of man's activities—labor, work, action, thinking, love, friendship, "points to its proper location in the world." (HC, p. 73) Thus the private realm has its own depth and meaning, beyond that of public realm. "A life spent entirely in public, in the presence of others, becomes, as we would say, shallow." (HC, p. 71, 199).

Even laboring, which Arendt views as a repetitive, cyclical activity that leaves nothing behind but that is required to sustain the biological life process, has its value. While Arendt says that a life spent *merely* in laboring (and consumption) is ultimately a futile life, she claims that there is an elemental, lasting happiness and vitality to be derived from labor that cannot be found in any other activity. The blessing or joy of labor occurs "only where life's processes of exhaustion and regeneration, of pain and release from pain, strike a *perfect* balance." (HC, p. 134, emphasis mine)

The paper also references Arendt's essays in "Men in Dark Times" and her correspondence to underscore the value she attached to human activities outside the political sphere.

Annelies **Degryse** (annelies.degryse@hiw.kuleuven.be) studied Law and Philosophy at the Catholic University of Leuven. She wrote her thesis on Hannah Arendt's Theory of Judgment, and was rewarded for it by the University for Humanistics (Utrecht). She is currently working as a PhD student on a research project (2005-2009) that is titled *The Role of the Constitution in the Postnational Constellation. A Contemporary Analysis of Kant and Schmitt*. Set against the background of Kant's proposal for a constitutionalization of international law, its main aim is to examine the feasibility and politico-sociological conditions of a 'postnational constitution'. The project is part of a larger research project –bringing together several Faculty members– on the meaning of sovereignty and democracy in a postnational constellation.

Abstract

Title: **Hannah Arendt and Judgment : The Faculty and the Duty to Judge**

Hannah Arendt died before she could write 'Judging,' the third and concluding part of her work *The Life of the Mind*. However, some of her other writings indicate which direction she would have taken in her investigation of judgment. In her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Arendt explains how our faculty of judgment functions and explains why Kant's esthetics should be regarded as constituting part of his political writings. However, also in other texts, hints can be found on how to understand this activity. 'Judging' can be seen as 'mentally traveling,' for which the 'sensus communis' or community sense is essential. This community sense does not only make political, historical and moral judgments possible; it also proves that we are essentially social beings. Arendt's essay 'Thinking and Moral Considerations' demonstrates her belief in the importance of judgment:

[Judging is] the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And this indeed may prevent catastrophes, at least for myself, in the rare moments when the chips are down.'
(Hannah Arendt 2003: 189)

In my presentation, I want to present an account of Arendt's judging concept that is wider than the concept read in the lectures. I begin by explaining how the faculty of judgment functions according to Hannah Arendt. This will necessarily include an overview of the evolution that the concept of judgment undergoes in her philosophy. Next, I explore the difference between judging and acting, another key feature of her philosophy, and sketch the dynamic relation between thinking, judging and acting. I end by arguing that Arendt would have agreed with the claim that there is a duty to judge.

Lisa **Disch** (ldisch@umn.edu) is Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. She is author of *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cornell 1994) and *The Tyranny of the Two-Party System* (Columbia 2002), as well as several articles on contemporary political thought.

Title: **How can Hannah Arendt worship the American Revolution but disdain political representation?**

André **Duarte** (andremacedoduarte@yahoo.com.br) has obtained his Ph.D in Philosophy at Universidade de São Paulo (USP, 1997) and lately has been granted a CNPq's Scholarship to develop research as Visiting Scholar at Universidad de Barcelona (2002-2003). Since 1998 is full-time Professor of Philosophy at Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR, Brazil). Has published *O Pensamento à sombra da ruptura: política e filosofia em Hannah Arendt* (Paz e Terra, 2000) and edited (among others) *A banalização da violência: a atualidade do pensamento de Hannah Arendt* (Relume-Dumará, 2004). Has translated into Portuguese Hannah Arendt's *On Violence* (Relume-Dumará, 1994) and *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Relume-Dumará, 1994). His most recently published articles include: "Biopolitics and the dissemination of violence: the Arendtian critique of the present. *In*: Garrath, W. (ed.) *Hannah Arendt. Critical Assessments of Leading Political Philosophers*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2006, v.3, p. 408-423; "Heidegger y el Otro: *Ser y Tiempo* como ética postmetafísica" in *Daímon*, vol. 37, 2006; "Hannah Arendt e a crise política da modernidade". *In* Codatto, A. (org.) *Tecendo o presente: autores para pensar o século XX*. Col. Paço da Liberdade, SESC, 2006.

Abstract

Title: **Hannah Arendt and eccentric politics**

Present text assumes Arendt's diagnosis about the politics crisis in modernity, defined as a increasing loss of autonomy in relation to the realm of economic needs and its strategically and privatizing imperatives. Such phenomena give birth to de-politisation, but also often reduce politics to violence. To face these problems, one must evaluate Arendt's reconstitution of phenomenological features of political action and public space, and to question: what politics can be deduced from that reconstitution? The underlying hypothesis in this text is that Arendt thinks genuine democratic political action as *non-teleological and eccentric*. For Arendt, political action is an end in itself and not a mere means to bring about pre-determined ends, a feature that causes a transfiguration of the being of political agents and public space where they appear. Democratic political action, being *non-teleological and eccentric*, transforms the private solipsistic character of modern bourgeois subjectivity: the democratic political actor, defining himself *in* and *from* the relation to a plurality of agents, is no longer the centre, justification and goal of his acting. Such action and such politics escape therefore to the requirements of moral grounding, correction of truth and exigency of consummating any historical goal.

Lídia **Figueiredo** (lfigueiredo@sapo.pt) is a researcher at the Centro de Estudos de Filosofia, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Lisbon, and was a Professor at the Instituto Superior de Educação e Ciências, Lisbon. She received the Ph.D. degree in Philosophy from the University of Navarra in 1998 and developed a post-doctoral research on Hannah Arendt sponsored by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia during the years 2000-2003. Her research is mainly concerned with Ethics and Political Philosophy. She is the author of *La filosofía narrativa de Alasdair MacIntyre* (1999). At present she lives in Oporto. Has published "O Legado de Hannah Arendt". *Diacrítica*, 2006 (forthcoming).

"Pensamento, mundo e religião em Hannah Arendt: um apontamento", *Humanística e Teologia*, Ano 26 / 2, 2005, pp. 249-255. "O Pensamento Político de Hannah Arendt: Uma Revolução Copernicana?", *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, 58/2, 2002, pp. 379-400. Has presented papers "Hannah Arendt, Tocqueville e a democracia americana". III Annual Conference of the Portuguese Political Science Association. Lisbon, March 30-31, 2006.

"O Abismo da Liberdade: Arendt vs. Kierkegaard e Sartre". International Conference "Pessoa e Sociedade: Perspectivas para o Século XXI". Braga, November 17-19, 2005. "Arendt, Sartre e a Voz do Século". Round Table on "Sartre, a Voz do Século". Universidade Lusófona, June 1, 2005.

Abstract

Title: **Hannah Arendt, *bios politikos* and political reason**

It is revisited the Arendtian understanding of *bios politikos*, from Aristotle's *Politics*, translated from the Greek into classical and medieval Latin as *vita activa*, and the use Hannah Arendt makes of it in her political philosophy or, as she prefers to say, political theory. The author of *The Human Condition* associates the Aristotelian concept of *bios politikos* with freedom and action in the public-political space. On the notion of political life as a free activity situated in the public realm Arendt builds her political theory. In this framework, she conceives of power as the human capacity of acting *in concert*, never individually. Power is not based on a discourse supported by an enlightened or neo-enlightened notion of universal reason, but on the established agreement between plural opinions, legitimated by the acknowledgement of the coexistence of different viewpoints.

In connection with the Arendtian conception of political life lies political reason. Although the expression "political reason" cannot be found in Arendt's writings, reason and politics are in them indissolubly intertwined: politics is the *locus* of plural rationality and interactivity. Arendt's notion of political reason has the following notes: reason's freedom and plurality; the prevailing of opinion over truth and of persuasion over dialectic; and the consideration of political action as an end in itself, not inserted in a teleological model. The outline of Arendtian political reason distinguishes itself from other contemporary views such as those of Raymond Aron, Jürgen Habermas or Michel Foucault.

Anne **Hewitt** (annie_hewitt@yahoo.com) received her PhD from the Government Department at the London School of Economics in 2004 under the supervision of Professor Janet Coleman. She received an MSc there in the Philosophy Department, and her BA, also in philosophy, at Vassar College. She is currently an assistant professor of philosophy at the City University of New York. She recently published an article in the journal, *History of Political Thought*, entitled 'Aristotle's Poetics as an Extension of his Ethical and Political Theory'.

Abstract

Title: **Arendt and Thucydides on freedom**

Both Disch and Euben identify significant similarities between the political thought of Arendt and that of Thucydides. In the proposed paper, I build on their insight focusing specifically on a 'Thucydidean-Arendtian' conception of human freedom. I begin with Arendt's assumption that a man's freedom cannot rest on his becoming 'sovereign' over his world. Rejecting this assumption, Arendt identifies freedom with the idea of 'initiative', with 'beginning something new'. More specifically, freedom is manifested in *action*, in the individual who 'risks self-disclosure' within that web of human relationships found in a political community. To be human is to be inescapably 'embedded'—embedded in a particular time in history, raised in a distinct social milieu—thus man's expression of his freedom can occur only amongst others. This condition of 'plurality' makes the political sphere indeterminate, the consequences of any action are always unpredictable, even indefinable. A man's freedom therefore cannot be identified with the capacity to achieve systematically and without fail his intended aims. For Arendt however, this fact is not an obstacle to man's freedom, but its precondition. Human beings are free when they can act reasonably and creatively *within* the political realm, despite the elements in their lives that lie outside their control. Freedom is expressed in action that is not dogmatic, dictated by isolated abstract principle, nor is it a mechanical response to the actions of others. Freedom is compatible with the fact that human beings are inherently social and inevitably fallible if it is understood in Arendt's terms—that is, as reasonable, creative action with others.

I then suggest that this understanding of human freedom is reflected in Thucydides' *History*, in the very structure of the text itself. The fact that Thucydides makes no attempt to remove the 'actors' from their political contexts seems to recognize the human condition of 'plurality' Arendt proposes. The men represented in the *History* attain no objective standpoint from which they can judge what should be done. Instead they make decisions and act given only incomplete knowledge—they do not know, nor does Thucydides reveal in advance, what the consequences of their actions will be. This representation of men acting together based only on partial knowledge should not lead the reader to conclude that the men Thucydides describes are simply automatons caught in a causal chain. Instead Thucydides' vivid representation encourages the reader to engage actively, yielding insight into the ways in which different *kinds* of men respond better or worse to their condition: there are those such as Cleon, who are not free but trapped (often unknowingly) by their circumstances and characters. Such men cannot be free for they are not initiators, they do not begin anything new but simply react to each other, or apply abstract rules crudely to nuanced and complex situations. Then there are those such as Brasidas and Pericles who are able to recognize their limitations as well as their distinct strengths as human beings. They are capable of forgiving and starting anew, their actions

reveal an attentiveness which allows them to break from their customary practices when particular situations demand letting them be reasonable and creative—in Arendt's sense, such men are free.

David **Kaye** was Born in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A in 1975 (kayed237@newschool.edu) received his B.A. in philosophy from Towson University in Baltimore in 2003, where he graduated summa cum laude. In 2006 David received his Master's degree in philosophy from The New School for Social Research in New York City. He is currently a Ph.D. student in philosophy at The New School for Social Research, and an adjunct professor of philosophy at St. John's University in New York. David's areas of expertise are 19th and 20th century continental philosophy, early modern philosophy, and political philosophy. He is the author of *French Feminisms and the Crisis of Identity: From Beauvoir to Irigaray, Kristeva, and Cixous* and *The Crisis of European Humanity as Seen Through the Eyes of Husserl and Heidegger: A Question of Forgetfulness*.

Abstract

Title: **Levinas and Arendt on Violence and Conscience: The Disharmony of Everyday Life**

From where does our wrath towards others spring? What is the psychical well from which totalitarian violence, as seen in the past century, emerge? Further, what are the structural frameworks that contribute to the menace of totalitarian violence? Of course, these questions have, in large measure, dominated the philosophical landscape since the Holocaust. Many contemporary continental philosophers such as Derrida and Blanchot have argued that the events that occurred during the Holocaust must remain fundamentally opaque and incomprehensible. Two students of Heidegger, however, Levinas and Arendt, offered dramatically different visions for what was at the root of said violence, what conceptual framework was at stake, and what could quite possibly preclude this new incarnation of aggression towards others by means of a non-totalitarian framework. In this essay, I will briefly explore Levinas' conception of violence primarily through his work *Totality and Infinity*, and Arendt's conception of violence primarily through her work *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, paying close attention to what I see as conceptual inadequacies, while asking particularly what role 'conscience' and 'inner-peace' or 'tranquility' play in the debate. All the while, these terms, themselves, will be considered in light of the very contexts with which they inhabit: liberalism via modernity itself. While, of course, Heidegger is not consumed with the problem of totalitarian violence, I will appeal to his conception of violence as seen in *Being and Time*, so as to elucidate one further articulation of the problematic which will hopefully shed light on the whole.

Catherine **Kellogg** (Catherine.Kellogg@ualberta.ca) teaches political theory at the University of Alberta. Her areas of specialization are: contemporary continental philosophy (especially post-Hegelian French political thought), Marx, the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, psychoanalysis, feminist theory. Her current research entitled 'After Sovereignty: The Future(s) of Political Messianism' investigates what's at stake in various contemporary reflections on the political theology at work in the canonical notion of sovereignty. Her major publications are the monograph *Tracing Politics: From Hegel to Derrida* (Under second review at State University of New York Press) and refereed articles as Love and Communism: Jean-Luc Nancy's Shattered *Community Law and Critique* Volume 16, Issue Number 3 pp 339 – 355 Special Issue on Jean-Luc Nancy, edited by Thanos Zartoulidis. Making History: Representation and 'Forgetting to Forget' *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 2005; 1: pp. 103-118. The Three Hegels: Kojève, Hyppolite and Derrida on Hegel's Philosophy of Language in *Hegel's Philosophy of Language*, Jere Surber ed., State University of New York Press. 2006; Mourning the Law: Hegel's Metaphorics of Sexual Difference, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol 29, No. 4, 2003 pp. 361-374. Translating Deconstruction. *Cultural Values* Vol. 5, No. 3, July 2001 pp. 325-348. The Messianic without Messianism: Derrida's Marx and the Question of Justice. *Cultural Values* Vol. 2, No. 1, January, 1998, pp. 51-69. Other publications include book reviews: Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory by Frederick Neuhouser in *Philosophy in Review* Vol. XXII, no. 2, April, 2002 pp. 134-136. The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls by Karen Dubinsky. In *Resources for Feminist Research* Vol. 29, Summer 2001. She also published book chapters: Democracy in Janine Brodie and Sandra Rein (eds.) *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics: Third Edition* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 2004) pp. 21- 31. Justice in Janine Brodie and Sandra Rein (eds.) *Critical Concepts: An Introduction to Politics: Third Edition* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 2004) pp. 44-56.

Abstract

Title: **Arendt and the political: freedom after sovereignty**

This paper explores the contemporary relevance of one recurring dimension of Hannah Arendt's political thought her criticism of the 'sovereign' models of power. For Arendt, any notion of freedom that understands it as a property of the 'will' – an I-will, or an I-can – is caught in the trap of conceiving political power as sovereignty, which is to say, in the image of individual will power. Specifically, in her important text *What is Freedom?* she argues that this "identification of freedom with sovereignty is perhaps the most pernicious and dangerous consequence of the philosophical equation of freedom and free will" (p. 164) and that freedom was first conceived in this way in late antiquity as an interior place of absolute freedom, by those who had no place of their own in the world, as a kind of property for those deprived of property. On her account, before it became an attribute of thought or will, it was understood to designate the status of men who were free to meet and act with others who shared it. Against the 'sovereign' model of power that imagines freedom to be the property of the propertyless, Arendt invites us to think freedom as action, best illustrated by Machiavelli's concept of *virtu*. The virtuosity of our action, the improvisation we make in the public sphere, she says, "is actually the reason that men live together in political organization at all" (p. 146). Among two of the most interesting respondents to Arendt's criticism of sovereignty (and there have been many) are Jean-Luc

Nancy and Jacques Derrida. In his text *The Experience of Freedom*, Nancy suggests that while the historical accuracy of the move from an 'external' to an 'internal' model of freedom is questionable, it may be necessary, from the 'interior' of the tradition itself, to posit an "originary form of freedom as a free space of movements and meeting before being an internal disposition". On his view, for Arendt, "freedom appears as precisely the internal exteriority of the community; existence as the sharing of being" (p. 75). As he says, "freedom withdraws being and gives relation" (68). Against this reading, in the last text written before his death, *Rogues*, Jacques Derrida expresses 'suspicion' about the very retreat (retrait, or retracing) of being Nancy draws on here. Specifically, he expresses a reservation that it risks saving the very 'I can' of freedom, that makes it the very property of the will that Arendt so roundly criticized fifty years ago (p. 45). At stake in these interpretations of Arendt, is precisely the question of a notion of freedom that is 'after' (or before) sovereignty. The paradox I want to explore, in this paper then, is what comes 'after sovereignty,' in the sense of what follows it. For while the contemporary debate about sovereignty pursues a notion of freedom that does not tie it to sovereign power, it is also, in another sense 'after sovereignty,' or pursuing a just version of sovereign authority, and the freedoms with which it has always been associated

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<http://www.unipv.it/deontica/seminari/lawlorra.pdf> (April 2004), the Brave New World Graduate Conference in Political Theory (June 2004), and the Stirling Political Philosophy reading group (June 2004). She will also present a paper titled 'Recognition, Democratic Legitimacy and the Political' in September 2006 and the Manchester Metropolitan Workshops in Political Theory, http://www.hlss.mmu.ac.uk/news/docs/wpt06/wpt06_programme.pdf

Abstract

Title: **Identity and the Political: The Importance of Hannah Arendt for retrieving a constitutional locus for agonistic political action**

It is not uncommon within the expansive literature on multiculturalism to present the politics of difference purely as a problem for 'normal politics', and to fail to acknowledge the extent to which the problem of difference is essentially constative for democratic politics. Recent interpretations of pluralism frequently understand the challenges presented by identity related forms of difference in analogous terms to moral pluralism and forms of structural disadvantage already made familiar through class politics. The tactic of construing difference and politics as just another, albeit unfamiliar form of pluralism effectively domesticates the politics of difference and focuses attention on discussions about the scope of rights and the limits of public policy. The politics of difference is also in a more fundamental sense, a problem for constitutional politics. I suggest that the main strength of recent versions of 'agonistic democracy' has been their attempt to take seriously the potential for conflict between popular sovereignty as a legitimating principle of democratic constitutionalism and the phenomenon of

pluralism. The idea of constitutionalism that has become dominant since the nineteenth century is a narrow legalistic one. On this view legally entrenched rights must always be given priority over collective political goals. On this view, the constitution is understood as a guaranteed framework of rights and as an essential constraint upon political power. However, this interpretation downplays two important features of constitutionalism, which it is helpful to recover if we are to offer a more comprehensive treatment of the idea of citizenship in modern conditions of pluralism. The first of these themes is the idea of the constitutive power as the positing or founding power, which survives the dissolution of governments. The second is the tense and ambivalent relation that this constitutive power bears to the order that it authorises. While some recent versions of 'agonistic democracy' have usefully contributed to debates about identity and difference by attempting to take these two insights seriously in appealing to 'the political' as an expression of a basic ontological concern with constitutive relations of human societies, their plausibility as alternative 'models' of democratic politics is limited. These limitations are due to their inability to comprehend as clearly as did Arendt, the importance of law and constitutionalism in facilitating and sustaining possibilities for agonistic political action.

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Abstract

Title: **The Place of Thinking: Arendt on Moral Foreignness**

I will look into Arendt's different attempts to obtain universal criteria for judgement of the morality of actions. An ancient view of the philosophical activity of thinking compares it to one's being a foreigner both in the psychological landscape of affects and ideas, and in the natural and cultural, public environment. As an exiled female, Hannah Arendt could speak well about this complex strangeness. She makes this explicit in her *The Life of the Mind*, where she examines the relation between mind and will. Many sections of her book contain a reflection about the 'strangeness', if not plain 'foreignness' that one experiences when immersed in states of reflection. Arendt asks: *Where* are we when we think critically, when we philosophise, when we ask ourselves for the meaning and origin of the beliefs and values that we hold? I will consider whether this question expresses a non-Cartesian formulation of the question about self-identification. Non-Cartesian to the extent that the question of how one forms one's consciousness of oneself is presented as being deeply entwined with the question of how one forms a conscience of one's own. For Arendt, we face the gulf between the 'inner space' of thinking, judging, willing, feeling, and the 'outer space' of natural and cultural events in which we are expected to belong effectively – and we face also the constant challenge of making ourselves responsible for such belonging.

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Abstract

Title: **H. Arendt : Le temps de la révolution.**

Nous nous proposons d'apporter un éclairage sur la pensée politique de H. Arendt du point de vue des structures temporelles qu'elle met en œuvre et ce, en particulier, à propos de l'ouvrage *On Revolution*. La distinction célèbre entre le travail, l'œuvre et l'action (morale et politique) repose pour une part importante sur un examen de divers régimes de la temporalité de l'existence humaine, en y distinguant le temps cyclique

de la vie biologique, la durée de la chose produite des mains de l'homme et l'inauguration de nouvelles séries d'événements dans l'espace public, sous le postulat, kantien, de la liberté. Au demeurant, c'est aussi dans les termes de l'analyse du temps de l'existence que H. Arendt s'arrête à l'analyse de l'éducation (l'éducation étant appelée par la venue au monde, dans un monde déjà humain, de nouvelles existences humaines) et de la tradition. Cette perspective peut amener à nous interroger sur les rapports entre l'analyse temporelle du *bios politikos* arendtien et la temporalité existentielle de Heidegger dans *Etre et Temps*.

L'angle d'attaque temporel permet de considérer l'analyse arendtienne du phénomène de la révolution et, cette fois, dans la perspective du temps de l'histoire. Dans son étymologie, la « révolution » se réfère au modèle cyclique du temps. Pour Arendt, elle signifie plutôt, dans la ligne de l'action politique, un commencement historique nouveau. Comme elle l'écrit au début de son essai sur la révolution : « The relevance of the problem of beginning to the phenomenon of revolution is obvious. » C'est ainsi que nous considérerons la proposition arendtienne selon laquelle la révolution est un phénomène historique spécifiquement moderne. Il est manifeste que le croisement entre le thème du temps et celui de la révolution conduit à considérer l'apport de Arendt à la philosophie de l'Histoire. Dans ce sillage, Arendt prend position à l'égard de Hegel chez qui il y a lieu de se demander si, en dépit du mouvement dialectique, le temps fondamental n'est pas celui de l'éternité, de l'immobilité temporelle. Or, tout au contraire, Arendt dégage une philosophie politique de l'Histoire tout à fait originale en ancrant dans le phénomène de la naissance l'irréductible nouveauté que chaque existence peut apporter à l'espace public, en particulier historique. La révolution signifie-t-elle dans l'espace public de l'histoire ce que la naissance signifie dans l'espace politique d'une société donnée ? Telle est la question que nous voudrions traiter.

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Abstract

Title: **Political Responsibility and Public Happiness: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Political**

My aim is to clarify the close relationship between political responsibility, which is common to all, and political action, which is unique and one-time-only, in Hannah Arendt's political theory, though many critics find the gap between them. The former is closely tied in with '*Amor Mundi*' (love for the world), i.e., the ontological affirmation of the world which we all share and exist in, whereas the latter is a particular response to appearance of certain others in some particular time and place, i.e., "*Volo ut sis*" (I want you to be). Our responsibility always remains a mere potential ideal which is immanent in and can be actualized in a unique action only while it is being performed. Every action is a fragile and incomplete one and thus needs to be taken over; not an actor but actors carry on their common responsibility, since not a Man but men exist in this common world.

Acting for the sake of common responsibility brings a particular kind of "pleasure" into an actor. It is the delight inherent in human action to affirm other beings, "*volo ut sis*", sharply distinguished from any private desire or self-interest; in this sense, Arendt says that "acting is fun". This kind of pleasure can be shared among people who act out of the will to live together in the mode of acting and speaking, for example, by the faculty of forgiving or making promises: Arendt calls this shared pleasure "public happiness". The feeling of pleasure is also concerned with the act of judgment; each great action, which actualizes the will to affirm in an excellent way, may bring some pleasure into spectators and inspire them to act in their own way. And vice versa: the denial of responsibility for the world, the destruction of human plurality, may make us, if not all of us, displeased. It is the case of Eichmann; Arendt insists to make him hanged, since "no one can be expected to want to share the earth" with Eichmann, who took part of "a policy of not wanting to share the earth" with the other people. Her judgment is as incomplete as any other human action, and thus needs to be taken over, critically or radically, by successors.

Politics, for Arendt, is a constant effort to carry on common responsibility for the world; through this effort, we can cultivate our feeling of pleasure and can be ready to welcome newcomers, who will be born in order to be pleased to live together.

Marcin **Moskalewicz**, (moskalewicz@gmail.com) studied history at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland (1999-2004) and at University of California at Berkeley (in 2003). After the graduation I started a PhD program at my home university in the Section of Methodology of History and History of Historiography, with my PhD thesis devoted to Hannah Arendt's philosophy of history. Currently I also participate in the EU Marie Curie program "European Doctorate in the Social History of Europe and the Mediterranean". Thanks to Marie Curie fellowship I spent half of 2005 at Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, where I am also about to work for 6 months in 2007. Until now I have presented the outcomes of my research in University College London (twice in 2005), and in Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (twice in 2005). I have also published articles in journals: *Teksty Drugie*, *Filo-Sophija*, *Kultura Współczesna* and *Rethinking History* (in print).

Abstract

Title: **Politics as Substance of History. On Hannah Arendt's Critique of Ideology**

In the presentation I wish to explore Arendt's concept of the political in the context of the role it plays in her critique of *philosophy of history*, and the consequences for our study of the past that it entails.

The point of departure would be the concept of the *who* from *The Human Condition*, which is thought of in opposition to the dominant picture of western subjectivity that Arendt wishes to overcome. The non-essential and non-self-sufficient who, with the associated concepts of action/freedom/power/public sphere, constitute the space where the politics proper is being enacted. My point would be that the a-historical conditioning of Arendtian subject - given in the form of the structure of the *vita activa* - reveals a crucial tension. It is because Arendt's man needs *real* history to disclose himself and acquire a unique identity, which however will not be given to him in the form of self-consciousness. In this way the temporalization of politics brings us forward onto the level of history.

The recognition of this non-substantial politics as the main substance of the proper historical process would have major consequences, for it implies the indeterminacy of relationship between past and future (in contradistinction to e.g. *social* history). I want to argue that it was precisely Arendt's chief concern to preserve this indeterminacy and to protect the present as the primal dimension of time.

Her major adversary here was *philosophy of history* (or of politics), i.e. metaphysically burdened reflection. That she somehow could not avoid it was my first point. Nevertheless, what I refer to as *ideology* (taken from *Ideology and Terror*, and connected with the concept of homo faber) would be a radical version of this kind of thinking, exemplified most poignantly in totalitarianism. It would operate on two levels: first, on the level of real history (when being fabricated), and second, on the level of representation of it. Substitution of understanding for explanation in the form of widely acknowledged method of storytelling was a way of dealing with this problem. At the end I would like to pay attention to the inherent ambivalence of the method, which was about to give justice to contingency of the past (i.e. to avoid the pernicious teleological implications), while at the same time to provide our reconciliation with this past.

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Abstract

Title: **Truth and Lies in an Arendtian Sense: Confronting Derrida's Discussion of "Truth and Politics"**

In "History of the Lie," Derrida writes, "the concept of the lie to oneself, of self-deception, for which Hannah Arendt has an essential need so as to mark the specificity of the modern lie as absolute lie, is a concept that is irreducible to what is called, in all classical rigor, a lie.... It requires...another name, another logic, other words..." Referring specifically to her essays "Truth and Politics," and "Lying in Politics," Derrida credits Arendt for providing the outlines for a needed "history" of the lie, but he worries that she ultimately adheres to traditional philosophical assumptions, remaining unable to reveal the gulf that separates the traditional lie from so-called "self-deception." Although I agree with Derrida that this distinction must be grappled with if we hope to address the political dangers of the "modern lie," this paper will argue that Arendt's two essays—especially when read in light of her other philosophical work—do indeed subvert the conventional views of what self-deception means in a political context. The arguments of both "Truth and Politics" and "Lying and Politics" stem from Arendt's concept of plurality, elaborated in *The Human Condition*, as well as her sophisticated understanding of contingency, which appears throughout her oeuvre. Plurality, actualized by intersubjective actions and words, grounds Arendt's notion of factual truth, reality, and what she calls "defactualization"—a term that this paper will closely consider. While plurality renders facts fragile and dependent upon testimony, contingency is the defining feature of factual truth; it is contingency's resistance to being absorbed into any theme that makes facts so stubborn. From an Arendtian standpoint, "self-deception," an unavoidable feature of systematic lying within a democracy, belongs strictly to the theme of "defactualization." By insisting upon her definition of factuality, which hinges on plurality and contingency, Arendt eschews the traditional connection between deception and self-deception, insofar as this conception relies on ideas of the ego and the will. By suppressing or denying meaning to contingency, defactualization produces a fundamentally unstable state of affairs and can only occur through continuous intersubjective social practices. Defactualization is conceptually distinct from theories of the unconscious and ideology; it does not name a psychological problem, nor does it represent the phenomenon of false-consciousness. Contrary to Derrida's reservations, Arendt's use of the concept of self-deception neither falls back on outmoded philosophical-religious habits, nor are her questions made redundant by Marxian and psychoanalytic thought; rather, Arendt offers an apposite approach for investigating how deception takes hold.

Luke **Plotica** (plotica@jhu.edu) received a Bachelors of Arts degree from James Madison University with a major in political science and a minor in philosophy, and a Master of Arts degree from The George Washington University with a major concentration in political theory. I am currently a Doctoral candidate and Dean's Fellow at The Johns Hopkins University, engaged in teaching and dissertation research.

My teaching experience includes work as a graduate assistant to Professor Melissa Schwartzberg (previously of The George Washington University, currently of Columbia University) in a course on Ancient Political Thought covering Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Cicero, and Aquinas. At The Johns Hopkins University I have served as a graduate teaching assistant to Professor Richard Katz in a course on Democracy and Elections focusing on the connections between democratic theory and practical applications of electoral formulas in democratic states.

I have served as discussant in the Johns Hopkins Graduate Colloquium in Political Science, a recurring workshop consisting of graduate students and professors. The paper, "On Styles Of Dealing With Problems In Political Theory: an Essay In Metapolitics" authored by Thomas Donahue and Paulina Ochoa Espejo, examines methodological approaches and conflicts in the field of political theory. I will be presenting an unabridged version of the conference paper I shall be presenting in Lisbon on Hannah Arendt and Ludwig Wittgenstein at the Johns Hopkins Colloquium in mid-September.

RESEARCH AREAS AND INTERESTS: My own research focuses on the imbrications of philosophies of language and action, moral philosophy, political individualism, and ancient and modern skepticism, and attempts to operate across the perceived conceptual divide between continental and analytic philosophy. In ongoing discussion with Professors Richard Flathman and Jane Bennett I have worked to incorporate notions of human finitude and separateness into an account of the individual as a political and moral agent that is characterized primarily by linguistic and ontological separateness, yet always exists in-relation to others. It is in service of this connection between the individual and the other that I begin from an emphasis on language and its relations to the moral and the political. Thinkers of particular importance to this project include Ludwig Wittgenstein, Stanley Cavell, Immanuel Kant, Michael Oakeshott, Hannah Arendt, Thomas Hobbes, Friedrich Nietzsche, Ralph Waldo

Abstract

Title: **Public and Private: The Sense of the Political In Wittgenstein and Arendt**

Hannah Arendt's conception of the political is primarily derived from her distinction between the public and private realms of human life. Only in the public realm, the realm of speech and action founded upon the "in-between" of the common, fabricated world, is politics enacted. In order to clarify the limitations of Arendt's materialist conception of the realms of human life and the vision of politics they generate I shall undertake a parallel reading of the late Wittgenstein. In doing so I shall focus on an analysis of the two thinkers' divergent understandings of the scope and essence of language, their conceptualizations of "public," "private," and "privacy," and the visions of the political that such conceptual understandings articulate.

Arendt's philosophy of language, to the extent that she offers one, centers around her concepts of "speech" and "action." Her philosophy of speech and action, and thus her political philosophy, rests upon a prior distinction between the public and private realms. The public realm is the space of human reality and freedom, whereas the private realm is the space of the darkness of human subjectivity and the bonds of necessity. Such a rigid and explicitly material distinction constrains her view of politics to a conception that excludes much of what matters most in the lives of individuals. Her treatment of civil disobedience and the limits of the public expression of one's inner life furnish significant examples of the limits of her political thought.

Wittgenstein's vision of language as essentially public (i.e. grounded upon attunement in shared forms of life) facilitates a critical reading of Arendt that opens her conception of the political to aspects of human life that her philosophy of speech and action excludes. Treating the political as a set of related language-games rather than a material, ontological space allows for a reconceptualization of the public and the private as interconnected aspects of human life rather than as completely separate domains of being and non-being. Reading Wittgenstein in this way, against Arendt, I attempt to redraw the boundaries of the political that Arendt constructs and seek reconciliation between the darkness of the human heart and the bright light of publicity in which the expression of the inner life of the individual can be relevant to the political.

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Abstract

Title: **Civil Disobedience, Individual Conscience and the Political**

In this communication we will attempt to analyze the conceptualization of civil disobedience, activity which Arendt understands in a political perspective rather than in an ethical-judicial one. However, the fact that the political nature of civil disobedience is not associated to an explicit reference about the political has, as a consequence, some apparent inconsistencies in its conceptualization. For example, if a large part of Arendt's argument about the political nature of civil disobedience lies in refusing the biggest mistake in understanding it, founded in the individual conscience, her explanation for the constitution of groups ends, paradoxically, by understanding them as the result of a sum of individual consciences. In fact, the common conscience referred to in "Civil Disobedience" is a result of Arendt's admittance that an objection justified in the scruples of conscience could have a political meaning when these scruples are found in a certain number of consciences, and these objectors decide to have their voice heard in public. But, she advances, that this is not an individual case, as the decision taken *in foro conscientiae* becomes henceforth a part of public opinion. And even if those who practice civil disobedience justify it in terms of a conscious voice, they do not only count on that force. The judgment of conscience transformed itself into an opinion that is no longer distinguishable from other opinions. And the strength of that opinion is not distinguished from the conscience but from the number of those who share it. In this case the common conscience is nothing more than the universalization of the individual conscience whose content are the non-universalized negative statements.

In order to elucidate the nature of civil disobedience in Arendt's thought we will enunciate its political nature in the first part of the communication. In the second, we will point to some apparent inconsistencies in its reflection, and in the third we will confront both the underlying political conceptions to that reflection and the contribution of civil disobedience to concept of the political.

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Abstract

Title: **The Boundaries of the Political: Arendt and Rancière**

Hannah Arendt addressed herself to the problem of the political in a variety of ways. And, at a minimum, she championed the *vita activa*. Nevertheless, Arendt was at pains to "purify politics of a whole host of supposedly nonpolitical phenomena, such a rule, violence, sovereignty, embodiment, sentiment, and many others" (as Patchen Markell has noted). In this essay, I stage an encounter between Arendt and Jacques Rancière, who also limits "the political," albeit in a very different way. For Rancière, the political is a relatively rare occurrence. Among other things, it involves events of subjectivization. As he puts it, "there is no pure politics." Rather than disclosing the opposition between "a political and non-political life," which he sees as "precisely the presupposition of the police," politics is a function of extraordinary episodes: "There is politics when the boundary separating those who are born for politics from those who are born or the 'bare' life of economic and social necessity is put into question." Yet despite their disparity with respect to the boundaries of the political, Both Arendt and Rancière addressed themselves in a similar way to the problem of human rights. Arendt has focused on people who have been forced out of political communities and thus possess nothing but their "humanity," having lost the qualities that position them for political and moral solicitude. Rancière treats those who reside within political communities but are not counted as political beings, until and unless they engage in acts of subjectivization to demand being recognized as people whose actions require a political accounting. Rather than simply siding with one or the other thinker's conceptions of the political, or attempting a mediating synthesis, I will instead look at instances of political subjectivization – for example a historical one treated in the film, *Bread and Roses*, which is based on a moment when Mexican janitors, working in a Los Angeles corporate building demanded rights and privileges – and show the ways in which both Arendt's and Rancière's perspectives on the political allow us to see such episodes as that treated in the film as exemplary of a significant dimension of modern politics.

Meghan A. **Robison** (megrobi@hotmail.com) recently finished her B.A. in philosophy at The New School in New York City. While there, she became increasingly interested in the work of Hannah Arendt. For her thesis she focused on the complex relationship between Arendt and Aristotle, examining each scholar's categorization of human nature, power, speech and freedom. Meghan's philosophical interests remain largely within the Continental horizon, particularly in the work of Plato, Aristotle, Heidegger, Arendt and Derrida. Problems such as violence, "social justice," representative politics, and fundamental ontology continue to orient her studies. Currently, Meghan attends the *Cours de Langue et Civilisation Françaises de la Sorbonne* in Paris. She looks forward to beginning a PhD in the forthcoming semester.

Abstract

Title: **Speaking and the Spoken – an investigation of the politics of speech**

In hannah arendt's human condition

Early in the *Politics*, Aristotle claims that man's naturally given *logos* facilitates his ontological state as a particular political creature (*zoon politikon*). Logos is valorized with this role for Aristotle because of the content it expresses (*aesthesis*), a view generally shared by others within the community. Thus, the particular kind of political community that is common only to man is made possible through the expression of logos, understood as the communication of shared moral perceptions within an already existent community. This classification, made early in the history of political theory, will provide the backdrop for the proposed examination of Hannah Arendt's categorization of speech as articulated in *The Human Condition*.

At first glance, the statement made by Arendt in the introduction to *The Human Condition* which argues, "[w]henver the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes man a political being"ⁱⁱⁱ, seems to agree with the abovementioned ancient perspective. However, the proposed paper will make clear that while Aristotle categorizes *logos* as political because of what it expresses, Arendt suggests a new political quality of speech, as it fundamentally reveals the speaker himself.

The proposed investigation will explicitly argue against Jurgen Habermas' description of Arendtian speech presented in his essay, "Hannah Arendt's Communications Aspect of Power". In this brief article Habermas categorizes the political quality of Arendtian speech as made possible by virtue of its reasonability or truthfulness; "the strength of a consensus brought about by unconstrained communication is not measured against any success but against the claim to rational validity that is immanent in speech."ⁱⁱ It will be argued that because Arendt understands politics as made possible by the active self-disclosure of a unique and distinct human speaker to others, and not the language-content it presents, she offers a strong challenge and alternative to the logocentric political theories of both Aristotle and Habermas.

Finally, questions will be raised regarding the stakes presented by Arendt's notion of speech as the foreclosure not only of the possibility of politics, but also, the particular human ability to create a shared meaningful reality. Since politics can never be presupposed within the Arendtian discourse, but must be activated through the speech act, Arendt's theory expresses a great urgency. This will be made clear through the consideration of the possibilities of censorship, from within her categorization of political action. Fundamentally, for Arendt, the foreclosure of speech is of a different consequence than the denial of the expression of a judgment, or the communication of a point of view. Pushing the Arendtian line, censorship primarily appears as the foreclosure of men's ability to disclose themselves to one another, and thus actualize their humanity.

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Abstract

Title: **Hannah Arendt and the concept of the political: the problem of political community and individual responsibility**

Throughout her work, Hannah Arendt holds up the ancient Greek *polis* as the paradigm of political organization. The attraction of the *polis* as a model for politics is that it represented a form of political organization based on human plurality, political action, and most importantly, human freedom. However, her use of the ancient Greek *polis* as a model for her theory of political action has come under considerable criticism. Seyla Benhabib, for example, argues that the public realm as defined by Arendt is too narrow because the "substantive content" – the issues that count as distinctly political, rather than administrative issues – are severely limited. For Arendt, it is only political matters concerning the founding and preservation of the polity's constitution are fit to appear in public. "Household matters" such as economic and social issues, must be restricted. The problem here is that Arendt wants to dictate or narrowly define the content of politics by excluding certain topics from deliberation in the public realm. Similarly, Hanna Pitkin asks: "what keeps these citizens together as a body? ... What is it that they talk about in the endless palaver of the *agora*?" What is the content of political deliberation and the impetus behind political action if not the issues of wages, inequality and injustice? For Pitkin, there is a "curious emptiness of content" that characterises Arendt's conception of politics and the public realm. This renders Arendt's political theory archaic, lacking in substantive content, and hence, untenable for the practice of modern politics.

In this paper, I argue that the substance or content of politics – what is talked about – is peripheral to Arendt's concerns. The point here is not so much what is discussed in this public space, but rather, the importance of such a space in and of itself. Arendt, I suggest, is concerned with establishing the conditions for the possibility of politics, rather than determining the content of what is deliberated in that space. For this reason, her work remains applicable and valuable to the modern experience of politics.

In presenting the polis as the paradigmatic model of political organization, Arendt seeks to rescue a set of criteria for genuine political action in order to restore the place of political action, human plurality and individual

responsibility. More importantly, it is an attempt at alerting us to the dangers of effacing the political space where such speech and action can occur. The examination of the ancient *polis* is not then of mere historical interest; nor does it signify nostalgia for a lost age, or an attempt to retrieve all aspects of the Greek political experience. Rather, it is an attempt to rescue certain types of human activity - most notably, speech and action – in order to restore the place of political community and responsibility.

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Abstract

Title: **Between Arendt and Lyotard: Unravelling the Différend.**

In *The Lectures on Kant's Political Theory*, Hannah Arendt argues that Kant's *Critique of Judgment* contains the seeds of a political theory. She relates the reflective judgment of taste to political judgment and action. Arendt investigates the political implications of Kant's critical thinking and the thought that critical thinking presupposes universal communicability. This communicability implies, according to Arendt, a concrete sociability. Kant's *sensus communis* would refer to an empirical community of social individuals, rising up spontaneously, provisionally and unexpectedly.

The task of the political in Lyotard's view, however, is to testify to the “différend”, i.e. to suppressed genres of discourse or voices. This crucial heterogeneity and dissensus is ontologically inherent to communication because in expressing one phrase you deny all other phrases to become manifest and therefore they cannot be taken into account. Every linkage, every phrase, is a triumph of one genre above all other genres of discourse. We shall argue that the different conceptions of Arendt's and Lyotard's acknowledgement for “difference”, lead to different views on togetherness and being-in-community. According to Lyotard, the Kantian *sensus communis* is a suprasensible Idea, a touchstone, without attaching any reality to it. In making the *sensus communis* concrete, the universality of the shareability, which lies at the basis of this *sensus communis*, would blatantly annul the differences between people. Lyotard wants to dismantle the illusion of a concrete community in order to avoid that one genre would wrong the other by solving the différend in the idiom of only one of both parties, i.e. that one genre becomes dominant and totalitarian and no longer testifies to the different genres. Because Lyotard radicalizes the “différend” in this way, the *sensus communis* can only be a suprasensible Idea and not a concrete sociability as Hannah Arendt presupposes.

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Abstract

Title: **Bakhtin and Arendt in Dialogue – Authority and Freedom in ‘Making’ the Political and the Language**

At the heart of his theories Bakhtin laid the language. Bakhtin saw the 'social' dimension of language as essential, and described it as inter-individual interaction, as a dialogue. This dialogical nature of language places it in the public sphere, mainly that of socialization. Arendt saw the political as the public common space. In her opinion only the political based on authority (as essentially different from tyranny, despotism, and totalitarianism) could create a common public space in which it becomes possible for any free man to insert himself by word and deed. Authority is a core issue in Bakhtin's theories of language also. It is actually the strength of authority that creates conditions for the emergence of a unique common language. This represents what Bakhtin calls the centripetal force of language. This is, however, continuously challenged by a centrifugal force, which is the expression of the natural tendency to heterogeneity and pluralism, or, in other words, of the natural tendency to affirm the free arbiter.

Beyond their specific content, the writings of Bakhtin and Arendt stand out for something deeper; by proposing a new understanding of the language (in the first case) and of the political (in the second) they introduced what Vico had called *nuovi modi di pensare*. Arendt's way of re-thinking the political is based on a kind of archaeology of concepts. She sought to re-give to the political its original function in the human society, by re-discovering its original meaning, as derived from *polis*. Bakhtin's way of rethinking language is an attempt to open up a dialogue between language and other structural levels of human society. The dialogical nature of language reflects the dialogical nature of human society, and the inherent need for any human being to be in dialogue with his fellow-beings.

Bakhtin and Arendt sought to find out *which was the possibility for human beings to create for themselves a common language and a common public space, without damaging their immanent heterogeneity and plurality*. A parallel analysis of Arendt's and Bakhtin's ideas can shed light on aspects hitherto not enough investigated. This intervention aims to question the ways in which Bakhtin and Arendt described *authority* and *freedom*, while seeking to find out how they modify our understanding of **the language** and **political**, on the one hand, and of the relationship between them, on the other.
