Revolutionary Spacing: An Arendtian Recognitive Politics

by

Yasemin Sari

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Department of Philosophy

University of Alberta

Abstract

In this dissertation, I undertake a critical analysis of the conception of community at work in what is termed "identity-based politics." Working with Hannah Arendt's implicit argument about place and visibility, I develop a theory of recognition in order to rethink the nature of community. The ultimate aim of my project develops a *recognitive politics*, a two-tiered theory of recognition, which takes into account social identities as the condition of possibility for the free political action that so animated Arendt. If we require a place to act freely, in other words, we are visible to one another in that place.

My theory of recognition aims to illustrate that traditional philosophical accounts of self-disclosure in political action (including those of Hegel, Marx, and Arendt) do not aim to offer a pure political agency stripped of social identities. Such an understanding of the political as the self-disclosure of our unique identities is possible only if social identities are granted visibility and the possibility of being heard in the first place. Claims such as Arendt's "right to have rights" consequently understate this vital condition of visibility. In turn, I argue that the condition of "artificial equality" arises from its *spatial* aspect. The link between visibility and the "right to have rights" is crucial in establishing the conditions of a non-violent and non-identity-based politics. On my view, 'recognitive politics' is based on epistemic responsibility in political judgment, which becomes a reflection of our responsibility to affirm plural human existence in the world.

Dedication

To my parents, and always with love.

Acknowledgments

The present project is inspired by what Arendt succinctly called a "love of the world." This love of the world involves a gratitude for the world and those who create it. It is on this note that I want to express my gratitude to those who contributed to this attempt at a kind of world-creation, and those who shared this world with me.

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The present project can be understood as such a walk—and there remain many others to whom I am grateful for sharing this walk with me. I thank Jonathan Pickle for always posing the best challenges to my work, and for being the brilliant thinker that he is. Jay Worthy deserves special thanks for literally his being-there and being-with me, and almost all the time. I thank Hande Tuna for being a most wonderful friend and a diligent interlocutor and for her sustained support in both academic and non-academic terms. And I thank Vladimir Dukić for his companionship, and for the world he created with me.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my dad Hüseyin and my mom Yurdanur Sari for teaching me the value of freedom and for enabling me to go about in the world with a sense of trust and ever renewed interest in its plurality and joy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WORKS BY HANNAH ARENDT

BPF   *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968)
CR   *Crises of the Republic* (San Diego, New York, London: Harvest Books, 1972)
HC   *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958)
OR   *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1963)
OT   *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([United States]: Benediction Classics, 2009)

WORKS BY MARTIN HEIDEGGER

BT   *Being and Time* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1962)
BPP   *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982)
IM   *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959)

WORKS BY JEAN-LUC NANCY

BP   *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993)
BSP   *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000)
CW   *The Creation of the World* or *Globalization* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003)
EF   *The Experience of Freedom* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993)
FT   *A Finite Thinking* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003)
RP   *Retreating the Political* (London: Routledge, 1997)
SW   *The Sense of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998)
TD   *The Truth of Democracy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010)

Introduction

"Power is indeed of the essence of all government, but violence is not. Violence is by nature instrumental; like all means, it always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues. And what needs justification by something else cannot be the *essence* of anything."[1]

With this compelling statement, Hannah Arendt points to the difference between violence and power, specifically with regard to her understanding of "the political." She aims to recover what she calls the "reason of being" of the political—or what she otherwise calls freedom—because she contends that when understood in instrumental terms, the political space becomes a realm of violence where human freedom cannot occur. In other words, for Arendt, if the "political" is to be free of violence, it must be a realm of freedom, and not one of instrumentality. She relates the idea of the instrumentality to the activity of production because production has a certain beginning and a certain end, with the activity in between, working in service of the end. The activity of production aims at an end product, a tangible reality in the world so that this end product can be judged by its utility. By contrast, political action does not produce an outcome that can be regarded as a stable, tangible thing in the world.

Instead, political action is properly understood as an auto-telic performance rather than as a production. For Arendt, endorsing mere instrumentality in politics leads to judging political action according to the goal realized at the end of political action, where this outcome itself can then be reduced to further means to other ends. When political action is conceived of in terms of production, or a "making," two problems follow: 1) Action turns into a striving for pre-conceived ends, which attempts to cover

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[1] Hannah Arendt, "On Violence," in *Crises of the Republic*: *Lying in Politics; Civil Disobedience; On Violence; Thoughts on Politics and Revolution*, (Hereafter *CR*), (San Diego, New York, London: Harvest Books, 1972): 150, *my emphasis*.

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over the indeterminacy of the outcomes of political action, and 2) Such action understood as "making" does not allow for a plurality of voices, where each and every political actor supposedly has to aim to realize the one end.

It is not a novelty to assert that plurality is a fact of existence. However, putting it forth as a condition to be created and preserved in political action is what presents political action as a properly public endeavour, which manifests the freedom of the human beings who can enact certain principles in the world and recover their world in common. The political can, then, give us a world in common; it can let us concentrate on how to organize public space such that this space can be understood as political space, that is, as space which rests on neither an individual's private affairs nor collective identity-oriented concerns. Through the plurality of opinions, and the equality of the participants, the world is presented to the actors in political action as a world that they create and sustain. This political space, then, does not operate within pre-determined rules and laws, but only through worldly principles that bring people together in equality and plurality. In the end, because the world articulated through political action allows for political judgment that is different from instrumental reasoning, the political should be world-oriented and not utility-oriented.

Arendt's recovery of what she deems the reason of being of the political—that is, freedom—does not emerge from out of a vacuum. The question of how to organize a political community, hence, a political space has been a central question since Plato took up the relationship in terms of how to understand the virtue of justice in his *Republic*.[2] What is more prominent for our current Western tradition of understanding the political is the focus on the question of the relationship between socio-economic

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[2] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by G. M. A. Grube ([United States]: Hackett Publishing, 1992).

structures and political systems. Following a Kantian-Hegelian tradition, this has markedly happened with concern to articulating the rights of the human being. It is in this sense that there has been a critical reception of how to promote the enhancement of certain rights of individuals, as well as groups. If we understand the mere enhancement of rights, or in other words, a "social betterment" as the goal of political action, however, we face the danger of turning political action into a production aimed at the satisfaction of certain rights, which are in turn produced and possessed. In this setting, political action becomes judged by the outcome of its utility—that is, the fitness of these rights in question.

For Arendt, however, political action should rather be judged according to the political actor's manifestation of freedom—where this freedom belongs to the act of beginning something new rather than trying to produce what was ideally conceived beforehand.[3] This is why Arendt differentiates between the activity of *poiesis* (production) and the activity of *praxis* (political action) because only the latter can properly manifest the indeterminacy of the outcomes of political action and hence its humanly character. The humanly character of political action, as that which reveals the conditions of plurality and equality of political actors in the political space, is related to an articulation of recognition, which does not rest on an identity-based politics that understands recognition in terms of the abstract recognition of equality of human beings. The articulation of recognition that I offer in this dissertation focuses instead on the public appearance of the human being—which is based on an artificial equality that is enacted in space—where the human being is recognized as enacting worldly

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[3] For Arendt, the human being with its ontological capacity for novelty—to begin something new—is the ground for understanding a political action that is *not* devoid of a motive and a goal, but whose outcome still cannot be determined beforehand.

principles that reveal the "whoness" of the human being.

My aim here, then, is not to offer an Arendtian critique of liberalism (or so-called liberal rights), but to get to the root of the question of recognition, as it relates to the recognition of individual rights and liberties. The role played by the recognition of such rights and liberties is to delineate the private and public spaces in understanding human freedom in connection to the fine line separating (or failing to separate) these spaces. To do so, I follow an Arendtian line in carving out the condition of the human being's right to have rights, rather than letting the inalienable universal human rights in the abstract inform our theory.

As Geraldine Mühlmann states in her article "Hannah Arendt and the Liberal Tradition: Heritage and Differences,"[4] Arendt

> [s]earches, not for the entirely liberal protection of private spaces against political space, but for the thought of the public itself, of the *res publica*: a thought that valorizes this public good and the participation of the citizen in its radiance, and not a liberal reflection on the importance of protecting the individual from the political.[5]

Arendt's concern about the turn to the "pursuit of happiness" as a turn away from the "pursuit of public happiness" lies at the heart of her understanding of the political.[6] The political, understood as properly public, does not merely concern itself with personal/private happiness based on private interests. Notwithstanding the importance of individual rights in the formation of a political community, however, my aim in this dissertation is to turn to the relationship between the community and the individual in

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[4] Geraldine Mühlmann, "Hannah Arendt and the Liberal Tradition: Heritage and Differences," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, (Volume 28, No. 2, 2007): 117-138.

[5] Mühlmann, 118.

[6] Arendt discusses the distinction between the two in Chapter 3 "The Pursuit of Happiness" in her work *On Revolution*, (Hereafter *OR*), (New York: Penguin Books, 1963): 115-140. Mühlmann also alludes to the distinction in her essay in trying to show Arendt's "marriage" of liberalism and republicanism (Mühlmann, 124).

order to understand the notion of recognition anew.

On the liberalist account, an individual's freedom becomes a matter of a subjective manifestation without a view to the individual's appearance in the community. One is understood as able to realize one's freedom through self-actualization as a certain production of oneself: the production of a social identity. Recognition of one's freedom relates to recognition in one's "whatness," as one's gender, national, ethnic identity—each of which are given "equal" standing in the liberal context. However, these identities are subsumed under certain universals, which do not reveal the unique identity of the human being: her "whoness." On my view, recognition is not complete at this point. In Arendt's account, one's unique identity, which we will see to be one's properly political identity, is revealed only in relation to others and in and through their concrete recognition. Such an identity, Arendt contends, cannot be understood as "what" somebody is, but rather must be understood as "who" somebody manifests herself to be. I maintain, however, that the recognition of one's "whoness" is intimately connected to the visibility of one's "whatness" understood broadly as one's social identity. The recognition of one's "whoness" which brings about the possibility of showing one's individuality rests on the condition of being visible and active in the public realm, and in turn, maintaining the possibility of plurality in the community.

In this way, the political neither solely presents politics in relation to the space in which it happens, which lies outside of the private sphere, nor in relation to the private sphere of the individual, which is in need of protection. Rather, the political concentrates on the condition of plurality in forming power rather than attributing

power to a sovereign (the State, the individual, etc.). In this dissertation, then, I speak to two problems that occur in the realm of politics: a) Identity politics: every collective identity group (social, racial, gender, etc.) rightly claims an appearance in the "world," since each group needs a certain visibility in order to assume these rights; and b) Violence: the suppression/oppression of the "other" (non-identified) identity groups leads to the erasure of plurality in the political and the public realms.

Broadly understood, my dissertation undertakes a critical analysis of the conception of community at work in what is termed "identity-based politics." I turn to Arendt's work in order to develop a new theory of recognition that is based on the articulation of the relationship between political space and political community. My theory problematizes the general assumption within an identity-based understanding of communities, according to which there are essential properties that a certain group of people share, which shared properties must be in place prior to the formation of a community. Problematically, a community based on the common properties of individuals turns recognition into an abstract process by virtue of which everyone is equal insofar as they are a member of a group, and unequal otherwise. Furthermore, such abstraction risks lending itself to totalizing and exclusionary practices on the part of those involved in community life and on the part of those responsible for instituting laws and policies oriented towards the recognition of rights. In contrast to identity-based accounts of community, my project argues that a political community has to come together not on the basis of people's shared social identities, but in virtue of a worldly concern for human existence, especially those concerns related to the manifestation of freedom in this world.

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Making sense of this possibility calls for a new theory of recognition that takes possibilities of realizing freedom to be central to community life and thus does not limit itself to a form of recognition related simply to the sharing of essential properties. As a citizen of the Republic of Turkey living in Canada, I can confidently say that this issue is a pressing practical concern. It is not simply a theoretical mistake in our thinking, but one that can be corrected by an effort to, as Arendt says, "think what we are doing,"[7] and thereby overcome problems besetting identity-based politics.

The project situates itself at the intersection of two currents in the secondary literature. The first, exemplified by Dana Villa and Andreas Kalyvas, is primarily concerned with Arendt's theory of principled political action and its relation to the creation of meaning in the political space; the second, exemplified by Peg Birmingham and Christoph Menke, concerns theories of recognition in the political space more generally. The ultimate aim of my project is to develop what I call a *recognitive politics*, in other words, a two-tiered theory of recognition, which takes into account the recognition of social identities as the condition of possibility for the recognition of the unique political identities of individuals in their *visibility* to one another.

In response to the first current I mentioned above, I will revisit Arendt's conceptions of truth and revolution, in order to first show the possibility inherent in Arendt's understanding of the relationship between political space and political community as the place of responsibility. My intent is to rethink Villa's emphasis on the aestheticization of Arendtian political action so as to undo the Heideggerianism Villa finds in her account. As a result, I show that her account does not lack a normative

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[7] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Hereafter *HC*), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958): 5.

force that would preclude violence in the political realm. Parallel with this, I develop the foundation of freedom that lies at the core of Arendt's account of revolution. My reading accommodates Kalyvas' articulation of her account of extraordinary politics, by underlining the performative aspect of the founding of freedom and emphasizing the power that is formed in a plurality of individuals. Then, in relation to the second current, I show the merit of a two-tiered recognitive politics. Such a politics fills in the gap Birmingham and Menke identify in Arendt's account, and helps square Arendt's account of a "right to have rights" and the relationship between social and political identities in such a way that overcomes the aporetic structure Arendt diagnoses in her criticism of the discourse of human rights.

My way of approaching the question of recognition has been, for the most part, entirely different from how Arendt's work has been taken up in different camps situated in both philosophy and political theory. My approach is grounded in bringing to focus the philosophical coherence of what is otherwise understood as Arendt's un-system. It is true that Arendt did not offer her reader theories, or a vision—a term I borrow from Sheldon Wolin, whose unsurpassable volume entitled *Politics and Vision* has been a pillar in my thinking.[8] While Wolin only mentions Arendt in passing and does not deal with Arendt's *oeuvre* itself, this is not because her thought is not worthy of such investigation.[9] It is, instead, the telling absence of a political vision in Arendt's work that distinguishes her from other political philosophers.

I read this absence of vision in Arendt's thought as the absence of utopia (no(t)-place, no-where, Gr. *ou-topos*). Utopia offers us a non-place to which political thinking

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[8] Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004).
[9] Ibid. 425, 426, 456, 457-8.

leads us, and which mainly remains as a projection onto a future that is not within our grasp. The ungraspability of a future thus laid out marks the turn to understanding human action as production, which is reduced to the making of historical and material laws, or to put it in different terms, to a teleological process which should go where it should go given its inherent logic.

By contrast, Arendt rethinks the place of human action as the condition of spacing of freedom itself. This is not a mere celebration of the freedom of the individual in willing an action, but rather a rethinking of human freedom in spatial terms. The merit of Arendt's absence of vision in turn is what allowed me to pursue this project, one that cannot understand itself without articulating the spatial performance of anything that it takes up as a question.

In Part I, I explore the relationship between political space and political community through the distinction between truth and meaning. I offer a criticism of Heidegger's notion of political decision that is operative in understanding the relationship between political space and political community, in order to show that such decision is dependent upon an originary truth. In response, I appropriate an Arendtian line according to which political decision—connected with political judgment whose possibility lies in the condition of plurality—is the manifestation of the human being's freedom, which underlies meaning-creation in the world.

In Chapter 1, I show the possible danger of Heidegger's productive/instrumental understanding of the *Volk*, which is based on the collective owning up to the destinal message of a people. The danger stems from the instrumentality of his account, which cannot eliminate the element of violence in the *production* of a political community.

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This goal of realizing—that is, producing—a common identity, I contend, leads to the erasure of plurality in the political space. More importantly, I argue that the authority given to the "essence of truth" ("*Wesen der Wahrheit*") in the setting up of a world through the artwork leads to Heidegger's prioritization of the spatiality of art—such that art that opens up and founds political space in which the people is gathered—which then reduces politics to the merely *intstrumental* production of community. My analysis demonstrates that such reduction of the relationship between political space and political community to an instrumental understanding is intimately linked to the erasure of meaningful speech in the creation of political space. Speech, as the condition which creates and preserves plurality of human existence, becomes submerged under the appropriation of an originary truth.

In chapter 2, I turn to Arendt's work in order to work out her understanding of the relationship between political space and political community, where the creation of political community, which rests on the condition of plurality, is explored in its relation to factual truths and meaning. Arendt's account stands as a corrective to the foreclosure inherent in an essentialist and productive understanding of political community. Arendt's account, as I argue, becomes the *topos* of responsibility in the creation of the world in and through plural human togetherness. While Arendt's articulation of political action as open-ended has left her account vulnerable to charges of immoralism, in showing the coherence between her articulation of principled political action and pluralistic meaning-creation, I respond to criticisms that understand her account as inherently an-archic. I do this by developing what I will call a principle of *epistemic responsibility*, which I suggest extricates her account from the charges of moral

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irresponsibility that would leave her account open to the claim that it is inherently violent. In my account, epistemic responsibility becomes a guiding principle in political action, one that connects the seemingly disparate realms of truth and knowledge, and decision and judgment. Epistemic responsibility rests on a thin notion of truth that can provide a more robust account of political action understood as being accompanied by speech and deed.

In Part II, I take up the question of a spacing of freedom by exploring the relationship between revolution and the criticism of human rights, in order to make explicit the "recognitive" aspect of such spacing in its performance. As such, this part is aimed at showing the relationship between a non-violent political space and recognition.

In Chapter 3, I explore the relationship between the spacing of freedom and revolution. My argument is twofold: First, I turn to Jean-Luc Nancy's articulation of sense-making, which is the condition for the appearance of freedom—or, the creation of a world—that requires a plurality of perspectives. Taking my cue from such sense-making capacity, I argue that reading Nancy and Arendt together can help us develop a "political imperative," which relates to the creation of the world. Coupled with Nancy's insights on the affirmation of incommensurability, taking seriously Arendt's concerns about beginning and the foundation of freedom in *On Revolution*, I argue that Arendt's thought can help us develop the scope and limit of the responsibility for the creation of the world in common that is found in beginning something new. I propose that we think this creation as a principle of *democratic* responsibility, which underscores a rethinking of democracy in terms of the performance of becoming a *demos*. I demonstrate what

this democratic responsibility—which creates and preserves the condition of plurality in the creation of a political space—looks like in giving an account of the 2013 Gezi Park Protests that took place in Istanbul.

In Chapter 4, I deepen the discourse framing Arendt's thinking about human rights by elucidating my two-tiered theory of recognition, or what I call an Arendtian "recognitive politics," which is based on the condition of "artificial equality," understood in its spatial aspect. I argue that Arendt's conception of the right to have rights can only be understood as a performance of visibility. After a preliminary investigation of Marx's critique of the demand for "universal equality" in the *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen* of 1793, in which equality emerges as problematic, I show there are similar grounds in Arendt's argument pertaining to her double-sided critique of "human rights" in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. In order to overcome this problematic conception, I develop a conception of "artificial equality," which becomes the condition for my two-tiered theory of recognition, according to which 1) the performance of visibility in relation to the recognition of one's social identity is what in turn allows for 2) the possibility of having one's political identity recognized in the political space. In conclusion, I demonstrate how this theory of recognition can be understood by turning to the 2011 Uludere Airstrike (also known as the Roboski Massacre) that took place in Turkey.

Finally, my two-tiered theory of recognition aims to illustrate that Arendt's account of self-disclosure in political action does not aim to offer us a pure political agency stripped of social identities. On the contrary, her search for worldly concern in the political space in contradistinction to private interests shows us how political

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actions that are based on our subjective or collective social interests are instrumental, and hence, non-political. In light of this, I argue that Arendt's understanding of the political as the self-disclosure of our unique identities is possible only if social identities are granted visibility and the possibility of being heard in the first place. This theory of recognition aims to fill a gap in current Arendt scholarship by tying the concept of an Arendtian "right to have rights" to the condition of visibility, and hence, to *concrete* "recognition." This link shows itself to be crucial in putting forth a non-instrumental and non-identity-based politics, which will comprise what I have referred to as 'recognitive politics' based on epistemically responsible political judgment.

PART I: HEIDEGGER, ARENDT, AND THE '*TOPOS* OF RESPONSIBILITY'

Aim: A Topos of Responsibility

In this first part, I demonstrate how we arrive at the two conclusions mentioned above (identity politics and violence) in order to raise the question of the *topos* (place) of responsibility in relation to *logos* (language, ground, or speech), a relation which is articulated in both Arendt's and Heidegger's accounts of political community in relation to political space. On my view, we can put into relief Arendt's articulation of political space (created by political action) to be something distinct from a product, where the metaphorical understanding of political space—and with it, political community—as a work of art is entailed by a problematic of identity politics, and can only be achieved by means of violence. Arendt's argument is as follows:

> Since all acting contains an element of virtuosity, and because virtuosity is the excellence we ascribe to the performing arts, politics has often been defined as an art. This, of course, is not a definition but a metaphor, and the metaphor becomes completely false if one falls into the common error of regarding the state or government as a work of art, as a kind of

collective masterpiece. In the sense of the creative arts, which bring forth something tangible and reify human thought to such an extent that the produced thing possesses an existence, politics is the exact opposite of art—which incidentally does not mean that it is a science.[10]

Arendt's statement brings to focus the sharp contrast between politics—qua the political—and art (both as a process and as the work/product thereof) and signals, instead, the performative aspect of the former. In order to understand what sort of articulation of the political in relation to the work of art Arendt is arguing against, I turn to Heidegger. My turn to the latter is by no means an attempt to trace the origins of a kind of indebtedness of the student to her mentor. In doing so, I rather aim to verify the claim that Heidegger's account of political space and political community is primarily of a poietical (productive) order, but also to show how his account forecloses the pivotal role that speech plays in the formation of political community and of political space.[11]

As I shall argue, in Heidegger's account political space comes logically prior to the formation of political community—it becomes a condition of possibility of the latter, if one wills—where speech as the sharing of a plurality of opinions is not available to the people who create such community. In turn, his account of the poietical creation of a political space entails violent action, which becomes the locus of irresponsibility in his account. Against this background, I hope to throw into sharp

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[10] Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in *Between Past and Future*: *Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, (Hereafter *BPF*), (New York: Penguin Books, 1968).

[11] Two points to mention before I proceed with my analysis: 1) In my analysis, I will take up Heidegger's *Being and Time* as a set-up, and then tackle his works in the 1930s. I will do so not in order to find a justification of what happened later in the former work, but to trace his articulation of the relationship between political space and political community in order to reflect on the ramifications of a convergence of the anticipatory resoluteness of Dasein in his fundamental ontology, and the being of a people informed by the originary truth that is set up by the work of art later in the 1930s, and 2) The purpose of my analysis is not to accuse Heidegger of being a Nazi, but to genuinely take up the relationship between political space and political community that emerges from his philosophical thinking when it is put under scrutiny to respond to the world at a *spatial* level.

relief the contrast between an irresponsible politics—of the Heideggerian kind, which erases plurality in the world—and a responsible one that rests on the very fact of "worldly principles" in an Arendtian fashion.

To begin, I want to take up Heidegger's articulation of "logos" in his *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* which he describes as follows:

> The word, discourse, and *legein* means to speak, as in dia-logue, mono-logue. But originally *logos* did not mean speech, discourse. Its fundamental meaning stands in no direct relation to language.[12]

At first, Heidegger's statement seems puzzling. However, we can understand his negative definition of *logos*, as that which is not related to language in the first place, to show precisely its independence from language as the bearer of propositional content, which ordinarily gives us the justification for the states of affairs in the world. Heidegger signals, however, that the meaning of "logos" can only be uncovered as the "ground" of the "topos" (place) of Being. Heidegger's articulation of "logos" as belonging to the "hearing" of *logos* in the first place informs my analysis of the silent resolution in which the *Volk* has to take up its destiny, where discourse understood as political speech (both as a political actor's speech, and the political debate held amongst equals) becomes irrelevant in the gathering of a community.

Many commentators have taken up the issue of the essence of language in relation to the essence of truth in Heidegger's account, demonstrating that Heidegger's articulation of the essence of truth is not grounded in propositions.[13] Mainly, this

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[12] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, (Hereafter *IM*), trans. by Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959): 124.

[13] See Robert Bernasconi, *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1985); Jeffrey Andrew Barash, *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003); John McCumber, *Poetic Interaction: Language, Freedom, Reason* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), and *Metaphysics and Oppression: Heidegger's Challenge to Western Philosophy* (Bloomington

literature focuses on illuminating the relationship between the essence of language and the essence of truth as lying in the originary setting up of the world in the work of art. The world-setting essence of art in these analyses fall short of offering a clarification of Heidegger's articulation of political space that itself becomes productive of the political community that belongs to this space.

In my analysis, I aim to show the relationship between the essence of language and the coming-together of a community (*Volk*), where this coming-together is understood as the being-gathered-by-being of a people—a process made possible by the opening up of a space through the work of art. Instead of offering an exegetical justification of Heidegger's thought, I take up this inquiry in order to show the problem that I find in Heidegger's account of political community. Simply put, the problem lies in the priority of art in relation to politics, and the following analysis will show how this problem results in Heidegger's political community serving only instrumental purpose, one which is founded by an originary truth which dictates what/how the community has to be—or become—what it is.

My argument in this first part is twofold. In the first chapter, I will explore the notion of *logos* by distinguishing between the activities of *poiesis* and *praxis*, relating these to the distinction between meaning and truth in Arendt's and Heidegger's accounts of political community. From this, I will argue that the differences emerge from their distinct articulations of the relationship between community and space:

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and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999); John Sallis, "Sacrifice of Understanding," in *Echoes: After Heidegger* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990); Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Jacques Taminiaux, *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker: Arendt and Heidegger*, trans. and ed. by Michael Gendre (New York: The State University of New York Press, 1997).

where space is understood as the place of togetherness of plural individual beings. This difference, I assert, is central to both Heidegger's and Arendt's understandings of the relationship between political decision and truth. The relationship between political decision and truth will comprise the preliminary conclusion of the first part of the dissertation, whereby I will show that there is in fact room for the public discussion of factual truths that pertain to a new conception of the principle of epistemic responsibility that I think we can obtain from Arendt's account of the political.

In the first chapter, I will offer a critical response to Heidegger's instrumental/productive way of thinking of political community, which lies in his articulation of the originary truth of the work of art, will in turn allow me to demonstrate in the second chapter—by way of Arendt's account on politics and truth— that what is at stake in political decision is the manifestation of our freedom, and not of truth. This Arendtian freedom is related to the creation of "meaning" in human affairs, where this meaning cannot be reduced to "truth" as such.[14] Instead, I will evince that the meaning of political action can only be established by the faculty of "political judgment" which aims neither at judging the utility of a pre-conceived truth[15] and/or the actualization of this "truth" in a political space, nor at *acquiring* a certain kind of knowledge based on a truth about the political space itself. In doing so, I will, in part, respond to Dana Villa's contention about Arendt's aestheticization of political action, which he argues reveals an anarchic politics analogous to ancient Greek politics:

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[14] An analysis of the transformation of Heidegger's question of the meaning of being to the question of the truth of being does not fall within the scope of this paper; however, this transition as it reveals itself in his later works has been informative in structuring my account of Heidegger's articulation of the relationship between meaning, truth, and the place (*topos*) of being.

[15] For example, there is a pre-conceived (essential) truth of a certain identity of who can occupy the space in the formation of a nation-state.

"[This] is a politics of constantly evolving opinions, shifting ideas of the common good, unpredictable consequences, and (last but not least) apparent moral irresponsibility."[16] While focusing on the centrality of Arendt's and Heidegger's accounts of meaning and truth in relation to their political thinking, this part will explore the possibility of understanding Arendtian political action as not lacking an *arche*, but instead as an activity that rests on worldly "principles." Arendt's understanding of political action gives us a domain of human plurality through which we understand the condition of possibility of political judgment, where this plurality creates and sustains meaningfulness in our world. The driving force of the first argument comes from Arendt's following statement:

> Culture and politics, then, belong together because it is not knowledge or truth which is at stake, but rather judgment and decision, the judicious exchange of opinion about the sphere of public life and the common world, and the decision what manner of action is to be taken in it, as well as to how it is to look henceforth, what kind of things are to appear in it.[17]

This in turn will lead me, in the second chapter, to reformulate the Arendtian principled political action in opposition to Heidegger's understanding of the (poietical) work of setting up of a world, through which a community emerges, which rests on an anarchic truth. Taking my cue from Villa's statement, I aim to show that the anarchic origin of "truth" found in Heidegger's account renders his political thinking irresponsible, Arendt's account, on the other hand—understood in and through the plurality of

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[16] Dana R. Villa, "Critique of Identity to Plurality in Politics," in *Arendt & Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*, ed. Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012): 99. Similarly, in his essay "The Judgment of Arendt," George Kateb states: "Aestheticized politics is pure politics, politics for the sake of politics— politics purified, to a considerable extent, from moral anxiety as well as moral goals, just as other aesthetic phenomena are held ideally to be" (in *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics: Themes from Kant and Arendt*, ed. Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001): 122).
[17] Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture," in *BPF*, 219-20.

political actors and their judgments—aims to preserve worldly principles, and the manifestation of these worldly principles is the condition of the possibility of the emergence of a political space of human togetherness as the "place (*topos*) of responsibility." This argument will lead me to the second part of the dissertation, in which I will ultimately demonstrate that the political space is the place of visibility for plurality, whereby the plurality of human beings—too often submerged—becomes visible and accounts for creating meaning in human affairs.

Chapter 1. Heidegger, Truth, and the Foreclosure of Responsibility

Poiesis and Praxis

In order to proceed, it is first necessary to demonstrate the distinction between the activities of *poiesis* (production) and *praxis* (practice). These notions are present in both Arendt's and Heidegger's analyses regarding political community and political space. *Poiesis*, the activity of producing (making, fabricating) has a preconceived end (*telos*) in view, so that the activity of production is instrumentally directed towards realizing that end. For instance, the worker conceives of a table, and uses up wooden material to make it. The principle of instrumentality pertains to the means-ends category of the human activity of production, which is understood as "work."

For Arendt, *praxis*, or practice, on the other hand, relates to a human action that rests on a *principle*, but the outcome of this action cannot be predetermined, as it is in the case of production. Unlike *poiesis*, *praxis* is neither equivalent to the action's motives and goals nor to the standard of utility that we have in the activity of production. This does not mean, however, that Arendtian political action is devoid of

motives or goals; rather, it means that political action cannot be judged by its motives or the achievement of its goals alone. Insofar as political action has a principle, it differs from the activity of production in that the political actor manifests this principle in acting in the presence of others.

To give an example, "greatness" can be understood as a principle where the performance of political action reveals this "greatness" even when "greatness" is not the motive or goal of the action. Greatness appears in the performance of the action itself. As Margaret Canovan points out, "public spirit, freedom, objectivity, justice, courage, the ambition for glory" can be counted amongst the principles of political action.[18] A principle differs from a goal in that it cannot be exhausted by any action, but it can be repeatedly manifested in different actions. The standard of judgment of political action, then, does not lie in the utility of its outcome, but rather in the principle by which it is guided. This point will be further elaborated when I discuss the auto-telic character of political action in Arendt's account.

To this effect, I will argue that any judgment of political action is related to the "meaning" that action creates in the political space, in contradistinction to the belief that "truth" creates political space as in Heidegger's articulation of political space. Arendt's articulation of *praxis* as "political action" can only take place in a "space of appearance,"[19] i.e., a public sphere where one can manifest one's freedom by acting on a principle without a view to the action's end, or without weighting on the utility of its outcome since this end always remains unpredictable because action falls within a web

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[18] Margaret Canovan, "Politics as Culture: Hannah Arendt and the Public Realm," in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994): 196; and *BPF*, 152.
[19] *HC*, 198-9.

of human relationships.

In a different vein, Heidegger's sense of practice relates to Dasein's understanding of its possibilities. Although it belongs to Dasein's basic constitution in both its inauthentic and authentic ways of being, understanding is made possible in Dasein's owning up to its ownmost possibility, which comes out of itself in a state of being-resolute, or in an authentic mode of being. This authentic way of being is contrasted with the inauthentic way of being where Dasein forgets the freedom manifested in its primordial temporalizing, and views its actions by way of its surroundings, coming out of instrumental concerns rather than its own self.

In an inauthentic way of being, the human being is related to its surrounding world through equipmental, instrumental relations, which require a determinate contexture.[20] This determinate contexture gives us the meaning of our actions—only insofar as one knows that the red light indicates a stop in traffic can one act properly in accordance with what the red light signifies. This signification, however, is open to change, insofar as one's intentions imply how one can use tools. A helmet worn for protection from accidents may, in a certain context, be used as a tool to collect water from a river, if one ends up at a riverside with one's helmet and no other tool for collecting water. This way of modifying one's behavior does belong to Dasein's understanding of itself as its possibilities (that is, contextually); however, the authentic mode of being lets Dasein act for the sake of its own existence, understood by way of its finitude, where its essence is not given to it beforehand. In so doing *Dasein* reveals its own freedom, which is not internally connected to another (external/instrumental)

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[20] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, (Hereafter *BT*), trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: Blackwell Publishing, 1962): H. 193, 68-88.

end in view. Dasein's action becomes the end of itself, and the meaning of its action then is understood authentically.

This distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis* gives us the basis to understand how Arendt opposes the concept of political action to the concept of production. While political action is contained in itself—that is, when it is considered as a performance with no tangible outcome—production has an extrinsic goal, i.e., a "product," so that the activity of production can be judged according to its utility, i.e., its ability to bring about the end in view. The outcome, too, has a utility by which we can judge the success of the activity that produced its end in a tangible product. Hence, the first opposition between Heidegger and Arendt can be summarized as follows: While in Heidegger's account the public appearance of the human being—where the meaningfulness of one's actions depends on a certain pre-established contexture of meaning—covers up one's ownmost freedom, for Arendt, this public appearance of the human being is the very condition of possibility of the manifestation of freedom— where freedom is informed by the plurality of human actors.

In light of this preliminary distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, the problem I diagnose with Heidegger's understanding of political community, therefore, stems from the difficulty posed by an ontological category of "a people" (the *Volk*) when it is understood as a political category realized in a place—where people occupy political space in a certain way. To elucidate this point, I will first investigate the question of "whoness" in Heidegger including how we can *only* take up this question in and through an anticipatory resolution that manifests itself in decision[21]. This analysis will

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[21] It should be stated at the outset that, I will not discuss the element of "decisionism" in Heidegger's account. For such a discussion, see Richard Wolin, *The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of*

comprise the basis of Heidegger's ontological category of "a people," demonstrating that the problem I see arises from the tension between the possibility of Dasein's manifestation of its "whoness" and Dasein's spatiality.

Resoluteness and the Spatiality of Dasein

Existence refers to the mode of being of the human being. As Heidegger states, "being with things belongs to the existence of Dasein, to its kind and mode of being."[22] This always already being-with-things-in-the-world is understood as the characteristics of existence which allow Dasein to encounter things, and this encounter shows that the Dasein's being-by-things is disclosive. This disclosure points to a letting-be of the entities, it is an openness which allows Dasein's encounter without first having a conceptual understanding of the world as such.

Heidegger's account of Dasein is a specific attempt to show that a dichotomous understanding of the subject-object distinction is mistaken insofar as this distinction falls short of explaining Dasein's transcendence, which is related to its temporality. Still, his fundamental ontology reveals another distinction, the distinction between being and the beings, which Dasein enacts in understanding itself as a being, as *existing* in the world. Dasein is the being for whom its being is an issue, as Heidegger states: "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is

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Martin Heidegger (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990). However, my reading does not align with Wolin's reading of Heideggerian decision as not "decisionistic" in that he contends that "the glorification of the faculty of the will, the celebration of the powers of human volition implicit in the very concept of decisionism, would seem directly to contravene the inherited understanding of the antisubjectivist thrust of Heidegger's doctrines" (*Politics of Being*, 37). As we will see in the next section, notwithstanding what Wolin calls the "antisubjectivist thrust" of Heidegger's thinking, Heidegger's articulation of an anticipatory resoluteness puts forth *Dasein* as the site of truth, which in turn makes *Dasein* responsible for its decision in an internal/private manner.

[22] Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysics of Principle of Reason* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1978): 127.

ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it."[23]

It is in this sense that the question "what is Dasein?" cannot settle the *issue* of existence for Dasein so that the question becomes: who is Dasein? Or who can Dasein be? François Raffoul takes up this question in his essay "Rethinking Selfhood: From Enowning":

> [Now], for a being whose "essence" lies solely in its existence, the question cannot be "what," as if such a being would exhibit properties; instead it can only be accessed by the question "who?" Heidegger emphasizes that the "who" points towards an entity who, in its Being has a relation to that Being, that is, who is each time mine (je meines), which explains why one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: "I am," "you are." The question "who?" aims at a particular entity, whose mode of Being is existence, and which is characterized by selfhood.[24]

Insofar as Dasein is an entity who can be understood in terms of its selfhood, we will see how Dasein's relation to the world reveals Dasein's "whoness" in two distinct ways: as inauthentic and as authentic.

As Dasein, the human being exists *in the world* in a manner that is always already among things so that Dasein can orient itself among entities in a way that the entities cannot orient and relate themselves to each other. For instance, I exist and touch the keyboard of the laptop, and I take the laptop *as* touching the table, whereas the laptop is not touching the table for the laptop does not have this very *understanding* that allows Dasein to take things *as* being this or that. The laptop is. It is extant. It is an entity, which is what it is, and it does not have an understanding of the *world as significance*; Dasein's understanding on the other hand, allows for taking the world as significance.

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[23] *BT*, H. 12.
[24] François Raffoul, "Rethinking Selfhood: From Enowning," *Research in Phenomenology*, (Volume 37, No. 1, 2007): 84.

The world has significance, and in the first instance, Dasein inauthentically exists amidst beings and with others, all of which are significant for Dasein as it takes care of things. Here I sit at the table, on the chair, with my laptop, typing up the description of this everyday experience. This is one of the ways in which I encounter my surroundings in a daily manner. I use my computer in order to convey my thoughts onto the paper, and I relate to the computer in its usefulness. The computer as such is significant for me insofar as I know how to use it, and insofar as it is of use to me. This is the basic structure of a functional relationship. I use the computer *in order to* deliver information. In Heidegger's words: "the factical Dasein can understand itself primarily via intrawordly beings which it encounters," "it can let its existence be determined primarily not by itself but by things and circumstances and others. It is the understanding that we call *inauthentic understanding*."[25] This inauthentic understanding is still related to Dasein's understanding of itself as its possibilities, and this understanding is not merely due to knowing how to use things. Neither is this knowledge related to any theoretical knowledge that Dasein possesses: Dasein knows how to do things in the world and with the things it is surrounded by because it exists as self-projection in the most basic sense of having projects, futurally understood, to be accomplished.

Nevertheless, Dasein can also come back to itself authentically from its ownmost possibility, arising from its finitude, and this finitude reveals the infinitude of Dasein's possibilities as they are projected as "mine" in every self-projection. Understood in this way, the accomplishment of the task of delivering information in all

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[25] Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, (Hereafter *BPP*), trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982): 277.

its instrumentality still relates to oneself insofar as one relates to *oneself as that for the sake of which* one exists. The for the sake of which is a possibility of existence, where such possibility is ultimately is "existence itself." The goal-directedness of one's activity which has a certain beginning and which will have a certain end bears the structure of the activity of "production" as I explicated above. The product of this activity will come about at the end of one's work. But how then does the "for the sake of which," reveal itself? The "for the sake of which" of the human being belongs to the existential structure of Dasein, whether understood inauthentically or authentically, but the question here is how does one make sense of one's own existence from within this instrumentality by way of transcending it? How does one make sense of one's practice in non-instrumental terms? When is the world disclosed to Dasein as its world—or when does Dasein understand its world as its possibilities? This disclosure happens through "anxiety."

Anxiety is a basic "state-of-mind" that discloses Dasein to itself, as it is its possibilities. Anxiety, thus, is what reveals Dasein as a possibility to itself. Anxiety points to a becoming free for decision: it is liberating insofar as it recovers Dasein's relationship to its ownmost possibility (the possibility of death) and makes room for 'resoluteness' in the face of the nothing into which one is thrown. Dasein is liberated so long as she understands her finitude. Understood in this way, anxiety is distinguished from fear, where one has an object of which to be afraid. Anxiety does not have an object in view; it basically makes one understand that one can be who one chooses to be, at the same time, disclosing Dasein's thrownness and falling.[26] As Heidegger notes,

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[26] I will not further analyze Dasein's thrownness, but it should be noted that it is the basic structure of the Dasein as it exists in the world, without a pre-given/predetermined essence; for Dasein's essence

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"that in the face of which one has anxiety is not an entity within-the-world," it is "nothing ready-to-hand."[27] The world is not disclosed to one as an object itself; on the contrary, anxiety discloses the world to Dasein as Dasein's world.[28] Hence, anxiety is that which lets us distinguish between inauthenticity and authenticity. For authenticity is only an existentiell modification of the "they"; i.e., it is only a modification of our everydayness.[29] In anxiety, one is able to grasp this everydayness, which lets one in turn to grasp one's transcendence.

As we discussed above, for Heidegger, Dasein's transcendence is basically its being-in-the-world, it is the understanding of being, which is manifested in Dasein's intentional comportments. This way of understanding transcendence overcomes the divide between the subject and the object of intention, and turns the human being, as Dasein, into an entity, who only exists in relating to its world.[30] Transcendence is Dasein's being-in-the-world, and it can be understood authentically through Dasein's resolution. Dasein's resolution is made possible by its structure of resoluteness: "resoluteness, by its ontological essence, is always the resoluteness of some factical Dasein at a particular time. . . Resoluteness 'exists' only as a **resolution** [*Entschluss*] which *understandingly* projects itself."[31] Articulated in this way, Dasein's resoluteness becomes a non-locatable space in which resolution takes place. That is, resolution happens inside oneself. When Dasein becomes the site of resolution, Dasein's acting

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is in its existence. The notion of "falling" however, will be informative in the rest of the discussion as for Heidegger falling is opposed is to the "gathering" by being, as that which occurs when one is authentically related to oneself through a modified grasp of its falling, that is, everydayness.

[27] *BT*, H. 186.
[28] *BT*, H. 187.
[29] See *BT*, end of Section 26.
[30] That is, the articulation of Dasein's transcendence is Heidegger's attempt to overcome an inside/outside distinction that bears its roots in a traditional ontology which puts forth subjects and objects as exclusive and outside of one another.
[31] *BT*, H. 298, **my emphasis**.

upon its resolution reveals resolution's spatial counterpart: "As resolute, Dasein is already *taking action*."[32] By way of owning up to its ownmost potentiality-of-being, Dasein already is in action, and this action cannot be understood publicly for it relies on a discourse of reticence.

This internality of resolution brings to focus a tension in Heidegger's account since resolution is the resolution of a factical Dasein who exists in a particular time, and in the world: Namely, Dasein's spatiality, too, depends on Dasein's resoluteness. This co-dependence manifests a tension between Dasein's transcendence as being-in-the-world, that is, as necessarily spatial, and the spatial manifestation of this internal resolution. I will argue that this resolution, which is made possible by Dasein's authentic understanding of itself, becomes instrumental with regard to acting toward an external end that Dasein cannot but grasp instrumentally.

As a being in the world, Dasein's transcendence is its disclosedness where Dasein discloses its world and itself as possibilities. This disclosedness can be understood as Dasein's existential spatiality through its dealings with entities in the world, and this disclosedness is modified existentially in authenticity, which rests on Dasein's resoluteness. In turn, what is disclosed in and through this resoluteness is the Situation to which Dasein relates itself from out of that for the sake of which it exists, that is its own self. As a result, this Situation cannot be owned up publicly for it is grasped in the reticence we mentioned above:

> [But] spatiality of the kind which belongs to Dasein, and on the basis of which existence always determines its 'location', is in the state of Being-in-the-world, for which disclosedness is primarily constitutive. Just as the spatiality of the 'there' is grounded in disclosedness, the Situation has its foundations in resoluteness. The Situation is the 'there' which is disclosed

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[32] *BT*, H. 300.

in resoluteness—the 'there' as which the existent entity is there.[33]

The spatiality of Dasein is related to Dasein's understanding of the world through its understanding of being which we call transcendence. The import of this transcendence in relation to Dasein's spatiality is connected to resoluteness in the above passage where Heidegger contends that only as a being-in-the-world that it is, can Dasein find itself in a Situation—or understand the Situation it is in, according to an authentic understanding of its world. Hence, Dasein's resolution does have a spatial aspect, however connected to an internal decision, which implies a tension in the formulation of Dasein: the being who exists in the world and with others, and whose being-in-the-world is its basic structure. Next, I will explore this tension in articulating the coming-together of an authentic political community in Heidegger's account.

The Volk

The distinction between the inauthentic and authentic self suggests that the self in the "they" is the inauthentic self, while at the same time, Heidegger's analysis in *Being and Time* points to the possibility of an authentic self in an "authentic community."[34] This authentic community in Heidegger's sense is "the *Volk*." The "*Volk*" is different from the "they." So how do we understand this "self" of Dasein as operative in the "*Volk*"? The relationship between the self and the *Volk* can help us understand Heidegger's underlying project in his *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*: that is, the questioning of the essence of the [human] being through the questioning of the essence of language. For this purpose, I turn to Heidegger, where he curiously

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[33] *BT*, H. 299.
[34] Heidegger does not use this phrase "authentic community" himself, however, I will utilize this term in showing the significance of the analogy of "the *Volk*" understood as an authentic Dasein itself. This possibility is pointed to in his discussion in section 74 of *BT,* H. 384-385.

asserts that, "[this] number-like, numerical plus is in a certain sense a necessary, but no

sufficient, condition for the change from You to the [plural] You," and states further:

> The nearness of humans beings to one another does not coincide with the degree of intimacy. Conversely, we can say: '[plural] You, my fellow Germans,' and the '[plural] You' transforms itself **immediately** into a: 'You, my *Volk*.' It has a peculiar relationship with the change of the singular into the plural.[35]

How, then, are we to understand this immediacy in the transformation from the singular

to the plural? As Heidegger himself notes, the peculiarity of this relationship should be

further clarified. How does the self transform itself into the *Volk*? The self, who is not

an "I": rather, the "I" is in the manner of a self who can decide. This is the basic

structure of this selfhood as the condition of possibility of being an "I": in the manner

of a "who" that can decide to be this I, or you, or We. These different possibilities, I

contend, come from the "individual strength of one's solitude"[36] as Heidegger puts it.

This strength, then, turns into a decision when "we as *Dasein* submit ourselves in a

peculiar manner into the membership of the *Volk*, we stand in the being of the *Volk*, we

are this *Volk* itself."[37] The significance of this decision is related to authenticity, and

here we hear Heidegger saying; "we are *properly* we only in the decision, namely, each

one singly."[38] This being-in-decision is the "who-ness" of the *singular* human being.

And this decision-like structure shows how the human being as a "who" is different

from a "what." Thinking with Heidegger, then, the question of "what is the human

being?" [39] becomes irrelevant for our investigation. Similarly, in his work *An*

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[35] Martin Heidegger, *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, trans. by Wanda Torres Gregory and Yvonne Unna (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2009): 38, **my emphasis**.
[36] Ibid. 49.
[37] Ibid. 50.
[38] Ibid. 51.
[39] Ibid. 30.

Introduction to Metaphysics, Heidegger asserts that

> Only as a questioning, historical being does man come to himself; only as such is he a self. Man's selfhood means this: he must transform the being that discloses itself to him into history and bring himself to stand in it. Selfhood does not mean that he is primarily an 'ego' and an individual. This he is no more than he is a we, a community.[40]

He thus remarks: "Because man as a historical being is himself, the question about his own being must be reformulated. Rather than 'what is man?' we should say 'who is man?'"[41]

The conclusion, then, is that this who-ness of the human being is revealed in decision. This decision links Dasein's temporality to its historicity understood as the co-historicizing of the *Volk*. Hence, once we attempt to describe the "I" or the "We," we come back to the decision; and this decision is possible through the selfhood of Dasein, or Dasein's "being-there," which not only lets it be disclosed in irresolute or inauthentic modes, but also as there-in-decision. As Heidegger says, "we saw that now also the we, which we believed we could describe, determines itself only in decision."[42] And this decision is informed by a "belongingness," which he uses in both senses of "belonging to an audience"[43] and "belongingness to a *Volk*"[44] as that which is opposed to being a mere citizen.

The distinction between belonging to an audience and to a *Volk* will be significant in the rest of my analysis, which will reveal that the *Volk* erases the possibility of an audience—of an Arendtian "space of appearance"—that is based on the *plurality* of the human beings. For the Heideggerian belongingness resembles a

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[40] *IM*, 143-4.
[41] *IM*, 143-4.
[42] Heidegger, *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, 51.
[43] Ibid. 38.
[44] Ibid. 53.

becoming-one of the "people" in belonging to the body of a *Volk*. However, this "body" of the *Volk* does not point to the corporeality of a *Volk* that would resemble that of a human being, i.e., its bodily structure as an organism.

The *Volk*, because it is decision-like cannot be articulated as an organism, because its structure is similar to the structure of a "self." As we explained above, Dasein has a basic structure of resoluteness as a self, and this sort of resoluteness is the condition of possibility of Dasein's deciding to be an "I," a "you," or a "we." Analogous to this, the *Volk* decides to be a *Volk* in owning up to its destiny by way of the singular decisions of singular Daseins.

Although it stems from an internal resolution, this decision becomes an essential feature—a means—linked to the extrinsic goal of the formation of a community. While the internal decision is singular and seems like a form of *praxis* (whose content resides in the realizing of a historicizing mission as we will see later), the decision itself becomes a means to an end, despite Heidegger's own conviction to the contrary. Indeed, for Heidegger, this kind of resolution puts Dasein in the "Situation,"[45] where this situation can be spatially understood as the locus of our true historical possibility that is handed down to us:

> [But if] fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-Others, its historicizing is a co-historicizing and is determinative for it as *destiny* [*Geshick*]. This is how we designate the historicizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. *Only in communicating* [*Mitteilung*] *and in struggling* [*Kampf*] *does the power of destiny become free.*[46]

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[45] *BT*, H. 391.
[46] *BT*, H. 385, emphasis on the last sentence *mine*.

The silent reticence of Daseins is actualized in the taking over of the destinal message, where this message is communicated in one voice through struggle. At this point, we can see why Heidegger's conception of an authentic community operates within a productive/instrumental understanding of community: the community has to be produced—by taking over a nationalist essence (a "message")—and this production rests upon an originary truth as I will show in the next section.

So far, our analysis is in the line with Heidegger's contention that the self and the *Volk* are not differentiated in terms of numbers; i.e., the *Volk* is not just a sum total of selves. But the *Volk* comes about only when each self decides to be a member of that *Volk*. Yet, we should be careful, for this decision is not articulated from within a deliberation process *in order to* become a member of the community; but one is always already in (a) community, one is already in the world with others. However, taking up this belonging of the "I" turns the self—who is in the manner of deciding—into a "We." In the end, one might say that, according to Heidegger, one may (and must) decide to walk alone, but with-others; and only so will this walking become a march or as he puts it: "Each one must leap for himself; nobody can be relieved from it, not even through the ever so genuine and indispensable community. Each must venture the leap, *if he wants to be a member of a community.*"[47] This means that the possibility of becoming an "I" as well as a "we" lies in the structure of the Dasein as the self.

Heidegger's contention that "the 'we' is not to be conceived as plural"[48] is a caution against a numerical determination of a political community. However, this move still bears in itself the possibility of erasing the human condition of "plurality"

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[47] Heidegger, *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, 16, *my emphasis*.
[48] Ibid. 48.

which is different from mere numerical multiplicity. Indeed, the "we" that the Dasein assumes to become in embracing the destiny of the *Volk*—rather than its own individual fate—erases the possibility of a "we" understood in its plurality. Through the decision of each Dasein, then, the latter "we," I claim, even though it seems to comprise a plurality by gathering different individuals in the presence of one another, becomes a "we" that is resolved for a "common" destiny.

We see the force of this decision better articulated in Heidegger's "The Self-Assertion of the German University," where he states that "what is decisive in leading is not just walking ahead of others, but *the strength to be able to walk alone, not from obstinacy or a craving for power, but empowered by the deepest purpose and the broadest obligation.*"[49] "The leaders," he adds, should also be led "by the relentlessness of that *spiritual mission* that forces the destiny of the German people into the shape of its history."[50] At this point, we diagnose the problematic relationship between political space and political community where this political community is supposed to shape its history—and its own self in relation to the political space to which it belongs.

In what follows, I will argue that this language of a spiritual mission and the working towards the shaping of a history do point to the erasing the political space as the place where discussions take place in togetherness in the form of a political debate; for the discussion seems to cease to be necessary anymore.[51] In turn, I will show that this human togetherness is reduced to a totality does not comprise a sum of selves as

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[49] Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism*, ed. Günther Neske and Emil Kettering (New York: Paragon House, 1990): 4, *my emphasis*.
[50] Ibid. 1, my emphasis.
[51] While Dana Villa emphasizes the role of the speech of leaders in the formation of a political community, and concedes that Heidegger's account operates on the "productionist paradigm," he fails to acknowledge that such speech is exactly what precludes a plurality of perspectives through which the community can be created. See Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996): 248.

Heidegger himself notes, but that neither reveals the togetherness of plural beings recognized in their unique whoness(es). This reduction to a totality comes from the *Volk*'s submission to the truth that is set to work by the artwork, the truth that is originary in that it originates itself and as such becomes the ground of the world of Dasein. This is the way in which truth takes priority over meaning so that meaning is reduced to truth in Heidegger's account. Next, I will argue that this way of understanding truth as emergent in a certain space reveals the priority of the space to the coming together of a people in their plurality: this emergent truth rather instructs a people's uniformity.

Heidegger: Political Space as the Condition of Possibility of Political Community

In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger interprets the lines of the chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone,* "He wends his way between the laws of the earth and the adjured justice of the gods / Rising above his place, he who for the sake of adventure takes the *nonessent* [*nonexistent*] *for essent* [*existent*] loses his place in the end,"[52] as follows, and I quote extensively:

> [It speaks not of *poros* but of *polis*; not of the paths to all the realms of the essent but of the foundation and scene of man's being-there, the point at which all these paths meet, the *polis*.] *Polis* is usually translated as city or city-state. This does not capture the full meaning. *Polis* means, rather, the place, the there, wherein and as which historical being-there is. **The *polis* is the historical place, the there *in* which, *out* of which, and *for* which history happens.** To this place and scene of history belong the gods, the temples, the priests, the festivals, the games, the poets, the thinkers, the ruler, the council of elders, the assembly of the people, the army and the fleet. All this does not first belong to the *polis*, does not become political by entering into a relation with a statesman and a general and the business of the state. No, it is political, i.e. at the site of history, provided there be (for example) poets *alone*, but then really poets, priests *alone*, but then really priests, rulers *alone*, but then

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[52] *IM*, 147-8.

really rulers. *Be*, but this means: as violent men to use power, to become pre-eminent in historical being as creators, as men of action. Pre-eminent in the historical place, they become at the same time *apolis*, without city and place, lonely, strange, and alien, without issue amid the essent as a whole, at the same time without statute and limit, without structure and order, because they themselves as creators must first create all this.[53]

Although we are at first inclined to read the above passage as indicating the priority of the politicality of the *polis* itself, we will have to turn back to Heidegger's understanding of the unity between *logos* and *topos* in order to understand how this politicality (or better, historicality in Heidegger's sense) emerges. In showing that his understanding of political space is logically prior to the coming-together of a community, or the emergence of "a people," I identify the absence of plurality in the political community to stem from Heidegger's articulation of political space.

In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger speaks of the unity of *logos* and *physis*—*physis* understood as the emerging power—which reveals being itself in the presencing of beings.[54] *Physis* is the condition of possibility of being coming to presence as unconcealment and the *polis* becomes the *topos* (place) of this presencing. The problem, however, with this presencing, is that it is also a concealing insofar as the human being forgets the "essence of truth" insofar as the presencing is related to being. The "essence of truth" is the condition of possibility truth, which we will see to be an "originary truth" that is related to the work of art as that which emerges without a pre-given essence. The essence of truth then goes back to the roots of truth as the adequation between an object and a proposition pertaining to its actuality. In this way, presencing of being too belongs to the condition of possibility of being manifesting

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[53] *IM*, 152-3, **my emphasis**.
[54] Ibid. 63.

itself in the appearance of beings.

However, Dasein's understanding of the being of beings gets covered over when *physis* as "the emerging power" appears in the finished work as the copy of an idea.[55] This articulation of coming into being, presencing, presents itself as a truth, which is no longer originary. The space that is occupied by *physis* is now circumscribed as the place of truth, which belongs to the concealment of unconcealment.[56] Miguel de Beistegui explains this concealing in connection to the human being's "unhomeliness" in his work *Heidegger and the Political: Dystopias* in the following words:

> The law of presence is such that what it presents is only its counter-essence; presence happens only in the covering up of its essence. It is in that sense that the strange can be said to rule in beings as a whole. Strange, indeed, are beings, because they only present the non-essential face of their essence. Strange, indeed, are beings, because their familiarity deceiving, because their very presence is only the covering up of their essence, of their originary site and abode. It is not surprising that the abode itself, or the hearth the chorus speaks of in the last strophe, will come to signify being itself for Heidegger: the concealed site and the original dwelling of all things. Now if amongst such uncanniness, man appears as the most uncanny and least familiar of all beings, it is because he alone is the being who, when relating to beings, does not only relate to their non-essence of their sheer presence, but also to the movement of their presencing. In his encounter with beings, man does not solely encounter such beings, but being as such.[57]

De Beistegui's careful explication brings us back to the significance of the *polis* as the place where this originary presencing happens. Heidegger's articulation of the *polis* as the political site where "history" happens indicates the possibility of the human being's

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[55] Ibid. 184. When I next turn to Heidegger's essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," this point will be significant in our understanding of the work of art as the originary event of truth, where the artwork itself is not a copy. That is, it is not a representation but an original setting up of a world that will make possible the gathering of a people.

[56] In Heidegger's words: "The truth of *physis*, *aletheia* as the unconcealment that is the essence of the emerging power, now becomes *homoiosis* and *mimesis*, assimilation and accommodation, orientation by. . ., it becomes a correctness of vision, of apprehension as representation" (*IM,* 185).

[57] Miguel De Beistegui, *Heidegger and the Political: Dystopias* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998): 132.

recovering its relation to itself in an authentic way by owning up to its Dasein, where this Dasein can only be properly understood in an "authentic community." This authentic community as we have seen is structurally different from the "they" insofar as the latter is organized in terms of instrumental relations, the *topos* of which is not understood in relation to *logos*—in one's gatheredness-by-being—insofar as one understands oneself in the "they" as in "society" rather than in "community."[58]

The upshot of the primordial understanding of *logos* as gathering is that in turn, the relationship between *logos* and *legein* (speech) becomes derivative of the meaning of *logos* as gathering. *Legein* in this originary sense becomes equivalent to unconcealment, as Heidegger states in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*:

> From the essence of *logos* as gathering there follows an essential consequence for the character of the *legein*. Because *legein* as gathering thus defined is related to the original togetherness of being, and because being means to come into unconcealment, this gathering has a fundamental character of opening, making manifest. *Legein* thus enters into a clear and sharp opposition to concealing and hiding.[59]

Insofar as we can understand *legein* as unconcealment, we can see the move in Heidegger's articulation of how this unconcealment becomes a concealing in the sense of positing propositions as the site of the essence of truth. For this unconcealment happens in bringing forth beings into presence, which ultimately confers a meaning upon it such that the being of this being is once more concealed. At this point, we cover over the originary character of *logos*—language—as that which makes first possible propositional truth.

The originary character of *logos* is at the root of Heidegger's critique of

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[58] Here, we need to point to the difference between *logos* and discourse where *logos* as it is related to being becomes the condition of possibility of discourse (or different discourses) by which Dasein makes sense of the world in the totality of its references (Cf. *BT*, H. 32-34).
[59] *IM*, 170.

propositional truth in understanding the essence of truth; for his analysis of language as *logos*—which is itself the condition of possibility of discourse—attempts to show us the way in which we can understand language to be non-dominating. Yet, I contend that this non-dominating language does become dominating, because we—the people—have to appropriate the open space/place of *polis* as our world in common. *Logos*, understood as originary (*urspruenglich*), is different from *logos* as grounding. *Logos* as grounding is understood as *logos* disclosed in language, as speech, where propositional truth becomes the criterion through which to judge our "work." In turn, truth needs us to work to use it and preserve it.

Heidegger states: "Language—what is uttered and said and can be said again—is the custodian of the disclosed essent."[60] The attempt then to show the underlying emerging power of *logos* as non-dominating ultimately underlies the worthiness of questioning—or the question-worthiness of Dasein—which can be understood by way of recovering our primordial relationship with being. As De Beistegui suggests: "The polis itself is thus an uncertain site, the site of questioning" and that "if it is the site of questioning, it is because it is directed toward and also exposes things in their question-worthiness."[61] I want to underscore that, however, Heidegger's attempt to reveal language as the manifestation of this question-worthiness, and by implication as non-dominating does ultimately fail. In order to demonstrate this failure, I now turn to the question of the relation between truth and the *Volk*.

The Truth of the Volk

How is the coming together of a *Volk*, a political community, then related to "truth"? In

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[60] *IM*, 185.
[61] De Beistegui, 135.

order to understand this, we should briefly return to Heidegger's *Being and Time*, where he states, that "what is primarily 'truth'—that is, uncovering—is Dasein." As we saw above, Dasein is disclosive in the sense that always already exists alongside entities and with others. Through its self-projection, it discloses truths—it becomes the site of disclosure—insofar as it relates to its world. This disclosedness is at the root of Dasein's resoluteness (*Ent-schlossenheit*) for Dasein can disclose its world authentically, coming back to itself from its own future, rather than inauthentically from its immediate surroundings. Dasein can understand itself by way of its finitude and in having to take upon this finitude to be decisive in its project. When we distinguish the basic disclosedness of Dasein and show its relation to Dasein's owning up to its in a resolution, the above statement becomes informative about the similarity between Dasein and the *Volk* with regards to their decision-like structure.

The *Volk* discloses the truth of a political space. In his 1933-1934 lectures entitled "On the Essence and Concept of Nature, History, State," Heidegger states that "when we investigate the people's Being-in-space, we see that every people has a space that belongs to it."[62] He explains this relatedness of the people to space as follows:

> Relatedness to space, that is, the mastering of space and becoming marked by space, belong together with the essence and the kind of Being of a people. So it is not right to see the sole ideal for a people in rootedness in the soil, in attachment, in settledness, which find their cultivation and realization in farming and which give the people a special endurance in its propagation, in its growth, in its health. It is no less necessary to rule over the soil and space, to work outwards into the wider expanse, to interact with the outside world. The concrete way in which a people effectively works in space and forms space necessarily includes both: rootedness in the soil and interaction.[63]

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[62] Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept of Nature, History, State," Session 8, February 16, 1934, in *Nature, History, State: 1933-1934*, trans. and ed. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London and NY: Bloomsbury, 2013): 54.
[63] Ibid. 54-55.

It is through this predisposition of relatedness to space, that Heidegger is about to articulate the State as the place where such relatedness becomes manifest. While my analysis thus far has focused primarily on the relationship between an indeterminate political space, and the people that belong to it, Heidegger's lecture sheds light on how this space—through the rootedness in soil and interaction—can only be articulated as the space of the State. In turn, it would not be unintelligible to maintain that the interaction between the people and State can best be understood as lying in the resolve or the decision of a people. For, following Heidegger's words, "the state cannot be an intellectual construct, or a sum of legal principles, or a constitution."[64] Hence, the State has to be spatially understood and constructed by the decision of the people.

The *Volk* can own up to its destiny only by way of the collective resolution of plural Daseins in owning up to this destiny for the *Volk*. In the following, I will make plain the relationship between the re-solve/decision and truth, in tackling the first two definitions of truth Heidegger offers in his "The Origin of the Work of Art," as the "setting itself into work" and as the "act that founds a political state."[65] Heidegger invokes four different ways for the establishment of truth in the following:

> One essential way in which truth establishes itself in the beings it has opened up is truth setting itself into work. Another way in which truth occurs is the act that founds a political state. Still another way in which truth comes to shine forth is the nearness of that which is not simply a being, but the being that is most in being. Still another way in which truth becomes is the thinker's questioning, which, as the thinking of Being, names Being in its question-worthiness.[66]

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[64] Ibid. 55.

[65] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: A Division of Harper Collins Publishers, 1933): 186. Also in his work *Echoes: After Heidegger*, John Sallis takes up a similar examination between the first two definitions, further questioning whether there are in fact several definitions in place (Sallis, "Sacrifice of Understanding," in *Echoes: After Heidegger*, 161-167).

[66] Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, 186-7.

From this, I conclude: Heidegger's understanding of space—as the "clearing" of "being" where "appearing" happens —is related to his understanding of *truth* in its connection to a work—in this regard, especially to the work of art—which he suggests to be the *only* manifestation of truth that sets up a world.

The work of art sets itself into work and sets up a world. This world, in turn, becomes *determinant* in a people's understanding of themselves; hence, the interaction with the artwork does not fulfill its freeing function for the people. Rather, it defines "the people" as for instance the German people who belong to that work of art and its soil. Following this, we will see that Heidegger's understanding of communal space comes from his articulation of the Greek *polis*, the city-state, where he conceives the existence of the *polis* to be the condition of the possibility of the coming-together of the Greek people.

In understanding the relationship between truth and the *Volk*, I suggest that there are two levels we must consider here. The first is the level of temporality, where the relationship between Dasein's primordial understanding of itself and its originary temporality—i.e., temporalizing—presents the "authentic meaning of action"[67] understood as the manifestation of Dasein's freedom. The authentic meaning of action is the very condition of the possibility of self-projection, which manifests Dasein's freedom. In turn, this freedom becomes the ground on which the whoness of time is revealed: a whoness that is a way of being as existing, which is opposed to a whatness which remains extant. Temporality, in this way, is essentially connected to human existence, and this originary temporality is the condition of the possibility of Dasein's

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[67] *BPP*, 277.

freedom, where this freedom is the possibility of Dasein's owning itself up in its coming towards itself. This freedom comprises the "clearing" that lets Dasein *act* either in an authentic or an inauthentic way, where both modes are connected to this originary temporality of Dasein.[68]

In turn, however, we must ask of Heidegger: How do we understand the practical enactment of this truth originated/manifested at a spatial level? Who are the people manifested here? Given the resoluteness of the Dasein, we know that the whoness of the human being is revealed in decision. The belongingness to a *Volk* that I mentioned earlier demands a spatial articulation. This is the point at which *topos* becomes untopological: for in Heidegger's articulation *where Dasein stands* can only be understood *authentically* in relation to Dasein's originary temporality which belongs Dasein's understanding of itself in its freedom. Dasein's understanding is an authentic appropriation of Dasein's resolution. Insofar as Dasein finds itself in a Situation in a particular space and time, then, Dasein's resolution, squares very well with the logical priority of *space* over the coming-together of a community (the *Volk*) in Heidegger's ontology. This means that the coming-together of the community does not create a political space, but the originary truth that itself creates space—or the "world"—is appropriated by the community to be definitive of the *Volk*. This definitiveness entails a totalizing politics, or the totalization of a political community, which necessitates exclusion in light of the truth that is set to work in a people's destiny.

In his work *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's* Being and Time, Johannes Fritsche discusses how only in this owning up of the destiny of a people can co-historicizing happen, and this is how a community becomes a community

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[68] *BPP*, §20-21, 274-313.

and leaves behind the structure of society.[69] I want to underscore that, in Heidegger's

account, the political space is already there to be occupied: But it can be occupied *only*

by the properly resolved individuals who work towards their common destiny. This

resolution is the basis upon which Heidegger's instrumental/productive understanding

of community reveals itself. This instrumental/productive feature of such work comes

to focus in Heidegger's essay "On the Essence of Truth," where he states:

> The true is something for us to achieve, the decision about our mission.
> Only through the decision of this struggle will we create the possibility
> of a fate. There is fate only where a human being exposes himself, in a
> free decision, to the danger of his Dasein.[70]

I think it is necessary to elucidate the underappreciated tension about spatiality in

relation to the instrumentality of production found in Heidegger's thinking. For this, I

now turn to his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," where he investigates the work

of art as work itself without a view to its usefulness, but rather with regard to its

capacity of being the site of the event (happening) of truth. In this essay, Heidegger

explains usefulness as follows:

> Usefulness is the basic feature from which [this being] regards us, that is,
> flashes at us and thereby is present and thus is this being. Both the
> formative act and the choice of material—a choice given with the act—
> and therewith the dominance of the conjunction of matter and form, are all
> grounded in such usefulness. A being that fall under usefulness is always
> the product of a process of making.[71]

Truth, understood as happening—as an event—cannot produce itself (as an end-product

to be produced), but in and through the artwork, it *puts forth* the conditions of its own

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[69] Johannes Fritsche, *Historical Destiny and National Socialism in Heidegger's* Being and Time (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999): 194-207.

[70] Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," Lecture Course of Winter Semester 1933-34, in *Being and Truth*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010): 201.

[71] Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 154.

possibility, i.e., it sets itself and its conditions of appearance up in the world: "the work opens up a *world* and **keeps it abidingly in force**."[72] "The essence of art," Heidegger asserts to be "the truth of beings setting itself to work."[73] Heidegger underscores that "truth happens only by establishing itself in the strife and the free space opened up by truth itself," "because truth is the opposition of clearing and concealing, there belong to it what is here to be called establishing." Truth, understood as the essence of the artwork, which sets truth to work, can be appropriated in the free space to be taken up by a historical people in their decision.[74] Only such a decision of a historical people lets the people be authentic in their togetherness. This is how, going back to a previous quote, we see that "truth occurs as the act that founds a political state."[75]

The above analysis demonstrates how Heidegger thinks politics to be secondary to art, insofar as the artwork is the condition of possibility in the foundation of a people.[76] Hence, a political community can only be understood in terms of the activity of production, that is, in the putting forth—the unconcealment—of a truth. In line with our previous analysis of the articulation of truth as work, which becomes judged by its correctness, we see that a table, for instance, is understood as the site of the truth of the process of making a table; while similarly, the production of a community is related to a truth that is already given by the political space, where certain people can appear with regard to the truth about their national essence. The artwork relates to work in the sense that it is not conceived of only as a finished work, but the working of truth, the process

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[72] Ibid. 169, **my emphasis**.
[73] Ibid. 162.
[74] Ibid. 186.
[75] Ibid.
[76] In this context, "founding" is understood "as bestowing, as grounding, and as beginning" ("The Origin of the Work of Art," 199).

by which a historical people come together in a political space. In its originarity, the artwork is not understood to be merely useful, or useful at all, rather, the artwork produces the space to be taken up by a historical people in and through an instrumental understanding of producing an authentic community.

"A people" or "a community" do not have the mode of a being of a thing, but rather the mode of being of a work, that is, both working towards the end of its destiny, and of being a work itself that produces an authentic community. Going back to Heidegger's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, we can find his articulation of truth as unconcealment to be related to the link between the polis and work, and I quote extensively:

> Unconcealment occurs only when it is achieved by work: the work of the word in poetry, the work of stone in temple and statue, the work of the word in thought, the work of the *polis* as the historical place in which all this is grounded and preserved. (In accordance with what has been said above, "work" is to be taken here in the *Greek* sense of *ergon*, the creation that discloses truth <in die Unverborgenheit herstellen> of something that is present.) The struggle for the unconcealment of the essent and hence for being itself in the work, this struggle for unconcealment, which even in itself is continuous conflict, is at the same time a combat against concealment, disguise, false appearance.[77]

At this point, it is important to note that our analysis has gone beyond our preliminary attribution of a primordial politicality to the *polis*. It has, however, preserved the *polis* as the ontological site where this politics can first appear. Notwithstanding Heidegger's putting forth of Dasein as enabling this appearance through the question (or the questioning, the questioner) of its existence, it has now become clear that the *polis* is the condition of possibility of this questioning itself.

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[77] *IM*, 191-2. In this same work, Heidegger explains the necessity of showing "how, on the basis of the Greek interpretation of being as *physis*, and only on this basis, both *truth* in the sense of unconcealment and *appearance* as a definite mode of emerging self-manifestation belong necessarily to being" (Ibid. 109).

I contend, then, that for Heidegger a political decision puts forth "a people" to be produced: both produced through a poetical origin, and also produced by the (concrete) "work" of a people resolved for its destiny. In turn, this Heideggerian understanding of political community cannot eliminate violence in the making, because political community rests upon an essential/originary truth. Here, violence does not only imply physical violence, but it entails the silencing of singular identities, and the erasure of their political judgment from the public space. This erasure is informed by the invisibility of certain identities, which is due to the absence of their recognition. I situate this invisibility at the origin of the original setting to work of the essence of truth itself. Truth sets itself to work through the people, who essentially belong to the world that is to be disclosed.

The Foreclosure of Responsibility

After discussing the letting-be of freedom as unconcealment as an "instrinsically exposing, ek-sistent," Heidegger states in his essay, "On the Essence of Truth," that "considered in regard to the essence of truth, the essence of freedom manifests itself as exposure to the disclosedness of beings."[78] This notion of exposure brings to focus a certain sense of responsiveness, where I claim that the essence of freedom lies in this necessary responsibility. Against the background I have laid out, I want to point out that in Heidegger's account, the political space that the *Volk* occupies becomes—contrary to the previous contention about the essence of freedom—the site of irresponsibility.

One origin of this irresponsibility lies in the fact that Heidegger's account of truth in relation to Dasein's being-in-the-world signals not only the being-alongside-

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[78] Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 144-5.

entities, but also its being-with-others. This basic structure of the being-with of the Dasein, however, is foreclosed in the setting up of a world by truth. Truth, in Heidegger's account, occupies the space of openness; i.e., the *polis*, where this truth does not rest upon a principle. It is in this sense, an an-archic truth, for it is originary. It does not have a source.

Truth is (the) event: undetermined, unintended, unconstituted by Dasein. Truth is the setting up of a world by the "artwork"—the only work that does not work towards producing anything other than itself. Heidegger is explicit about this function of the artwork:

> The essence of art does not consist, [either], in picturing reality. Nor is its purpose that we should take pleasure in it, should enjoy it, but rather, the innermost sense of all artistic formation is to reveal the possible, that is, the free, creative projection of what is possible for the Being of humanity. Through art, we first attain the basis and directive for seeing reality, for comprehending each individual reality as what it is, in the light of the possibilities. This is why poetry signifies far more than all science.[79]

The truth that is related to the artwork, thus, commands: truth as voice commands the people. Truth needs people, and people need to use truth. The truth of the artwork becomes the essence of the people in their historicizing, which happens through the taking up of their destiny.

At this point, my reading exhibits that destiny becomes subsumptive, and for this very reason, it excludes that which does not belong to its essential unconcealment. In its relation to *logos*, originary truth lacks an *arche*, a ground/grounding. Nevertheless, insofar as this truth is appropriated spatially by the work of the *Volk*, it

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[79] Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," Lecture Course of Winter Semester 1933-34, in *Being and Truth*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010): 127.

becomes the ground (the blood and soil) of a people. In this sense, I maintain that the destiny that is owned up by a people turns itself into an *arche*: destiny informs Dasein's understanding of the truth of being. Thus, the truth of being becomes the truth of a particular community whose members belong to this identical truth.

Finally, the non-locatable locus of Dasein's temporality transforms the *topos* of the truth into the *polis*: the *polis* that is equiprimordial with the origin of the artwork. That is, Dasein's temporality reveals itself in its spatial aspect, in Dasein's working towards its destiny, which is given to Dasein by way of the setting up of the world of the artwork. I contend, in turn that this truth, is what commands the people in the call of the conscience[80], which Dasein appropriates in its silent resolution. For insofar as the *Volk*'s working towards its destiny is made possible by Dasein's internal resolution, the only way to make sure that each and every Dasein resolves to the same destiny requires that there is an an-archic "truth" to be appropriated—that is, to be heard. As Heidegger adumbrates: "True hearing has nothing to do with ear and mouth, but means: to follow the *logos* and what it is, namely the collectedness of the essent (beings) itself. We can hear truly only if we are followers."[81] True hearing and speaking does not happen amongst individuals, but between, if one wills, the individual, and being: "There can be true speaking and hearing only if they are directed in advance toward being, the logos."[82] The danger inherent in this articulation may not be as straightforward as one would like, however, speech in the sense of political discussion is precluded at the outset as Heidegger invokes the calling of conscience as a "mode of discourse" and argues further that "vocal utterance, [however,] is not essential for discourse, and

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[80] *BT*, §55, H. 270-272.
[81] *IM*, 129.
[82] Ibid. 132.

therefore not for the call either; *this must not be overlooked.*"[83]

While Heidegger intends to recover the "oneness" of the "they" with an authentic community, he ends up with the "oneness" of the *Volk*. Thus, Dasein's silent resolution erases the possibility of political debate between a plurality of individuals, which reveals the place of responsibility from out of a concern for our common world, and rather aims at the realization a shared common goal: founding a people. In the end, the place of truth becomes the place of irresponsibility; for at this site there can be no genuine co-respondence between plural individuals—but only, an irresponsible responding to the voice of destiny. Heidegger's conviction is that resolution is silent and that the "authentic community" in its common resolution carries a "message" through "struggle," where this message is not conveyed through speech but the "voice" of the people. The voice of the people is, however, silent.[84]

Arendt: Political Community as the Condition of Possibility of Political Space

In response to the Heideggerian account of unconcealment of truth which sets forth the world as a political space, through the work of art; Arendt's ontology puts forth the equivalence between being and appearing as such, so that it falls onto the human beings themselves to understand the world as meaningful. Contrary to the internal resolution afforded by Dasein, who understands meaningful existence only in and through taking up an originary truth; in Arendt's understanding of the relationship between political space and political community, meaning is created in response to what *appears*, which

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[83] *BT*, H. 271, *my emphasis*.

[84] Ibid. H. 384-5: "But if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-Others, its historicizing is a co-historicizing and is determinative for it as destiny [*Geschick*]. This is how we designate the historicizing of the community, of a people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communication and in struggling does the power of destiny become free."

always requires a plurality of human togetherness rather than a solitary individual resolution.

Before I move onto the second chapter in order to elucidate the import of the plurality of human togetherness by putting forth a new conception of an Arendtian principle of epistemic responsibility, in this concluding section of the first chapter, I will elucidate the central role that the equivalence between being and appearing plays in Arendt's account in order to demonstrate the significance of the creation of a common political space, which pertains to the creation of meaning in contradistinction to the production—as well as the appropriation—of an originary truth.

Arendt's understanding of the "common world"[85] underlies her contention that politics—insofar as it is related to a plurality of people—cannot be concerned with an originary truth, or merely rational or factual truths that stem from this original event. That is, the common world cannot be *given* to human beings in order for them to take it up without reservations. The common world can only be created and preserved by a plurality of opinions, which truly manifest human togetherness in the world.

The import of how human beings can create or reclaim their common world lies at the core of her contention that without such an act of *recognizing* the world as common to all of them, human beings experience the phenomenon of what she calls "world alienation."[86] While the relationship between the two is more complex, this world alienation happens when the human being sees herself, as sovereign to her own

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[85] Cf. *HC*, 208: "The only character of the world by which to gauge its reality is its being common to us all, and common sense occupies such a high rank in the hierarchy of political qualities because it is the one sense that fits into reality as a whole our five strictly individual senses and the strictly particular data they perceive. It is by virtue of common sense that the other sense perceptions are known to disclose reality and are not merely felt as irritations of our nerves or resistance sensations of our bodies."

[86] See Hannah Arendt, "World Alienation," Section 35 in *HC*, 248-257.

self—dismissing the plurality of existence—and to the world in the mastery of its earthly conditions. For Arendt, this makes up the difference between philosophy—or philosophical thinking—and the thinking of the political:

> It lies in the nature of philosophy to deal with man in the singular, whereas politics could not even be conceived of if men did not exist in the plural. Or to put it another way: the experiences of the philosopher—insofar as he is a philosopher—are with solitude, while for man—insofar as he is political—solitude is an essential but nevertheless marginal experience. It may be—but I shall only hint at this—that Heidegger's concept of "world," which in many respects stands at the center of his philosophy, constitutes a step out of this difficulty. At any rate, because Heidegger defines human existence as being-in-the-world, he insists on giving philosophic significance to structures of everyday life that are completely incomprehensible if man is not primarily understood as being together with others.[87]

The first thing to note about Arendt's statement is her charitable reading of Heidegger in order to show that Heidegger's conception of the world has brought him closer to thinking being—or existing—as primarily as a being-with. However, as we have seen in the conclusion of our previous analysis, Heidegger errs in articulating this togetherness (i.e. being-with) in and through the articulation of a politics that covers over the plurality of human beings. Heidegger's error can be understood as the error of philosophy for Arendt. That is, philosophy thinks existence in the singular, such that politics becomes a matter of adding up singulars and structuring their relationships after the fact. For Arendt, matters are quite the opposite. Politics happens in and through the fundamental relationality of human beings in the first place.

Insofar as Arendt is concerned with the being of the political, she puts forth the publicness of appearance to be the foremost condition of human existence. For Arendt, being is appearing. And human beings exist as human beings insofar as they appear in

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[87] Hannah Arendt, "Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought," in *Essays in Understanding*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994): 443.

public. This appearing in public points to the human condition of worldliness, which is different from attributing the human being, a human nature.[88] In this sense, every human activity that happens in the world has an appearance and hence every activity exists insofar as it appears. In the next section, I will briefly explain the different conditions of the human activities of the *vita activa*, which Arendt articulates in her *The Human Condition* in order to preliminarily point to central role that worldly principles play in her account of political action, through which a political community comes about and in turn, political space, as well.

Activities in the World

For Arendt, like Heidegger, the human world that we occupy is not a just a heap of things but it is a space that we make sense of our existence through the conditions of worldlessness, worldliness, and freedom, which correspond to the categories of our activities of labor, work, and action. But Arendt does not merely appropriate Heidegger's account of the "world." In her articulation, something has totally changed. The world remains to be *created*, by the togetherness of individuals—"without being talked about by men [sic] and without housing them, the world would not be a human artifice but a heap of unrelated things to which each individual was at liberty to add one more object."[89] The world, then, is not a work that reveals an originary truth, which is set up in and through the originary work of art.

No doubt, for Arendt, too, the categories of work (production) and action become interrelated such that work can provide an artificial space for human beings to act: that is, to come together and appear and be seen. This artificial space, however,

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[88] *HC*, 9-10.
[89] *HC*, 204.

needs first to be created and then preserved in order for political action to take place and reveal human freedom. This is why the artificial space in which human beings can appear in their equality and plurality pertains, for its stability, to the production of certain human institutions, which are closely linked with the productive activity of lawmaking.[90] While laws may be needed to protect such artificial space, the space can be understood as properly political only when these laws are made with the goal of preserving the plurality of such space. This plurality can be maintained when the laws are not exclusionary with regard to who can appear in this political space. Nevertheless, the condition of plurality itself, cannot be created by law.

There is indeed an intimate connection between the categories of production and action, where we understand law-making as a productive activity that is connected to the possibility of political action. Yet nevertheless, political action itself cannot be reduced to the rules of instrumental production such as law-making itself. It is this insight that lets us understand that, despite Arendt's appraisal of the Greek *polis* where laws operated like the walls of the city, political action is what itself creates spaces of freedom that are not confined to institutional spaces.[91]

The import of Arendt's account of political action is that it shifts the direction of the relationship between political community and political space, where we saw the priority was given to space over against the gathering of the community in Heidegger's account. In order to show what this shift is conditioned upon, I will briefly lay out the

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[90] However, after they are set in place, these institutions cannot determine the standard of judgment of the political action that will take place in the political space. That is, the instrumentality with which these places (be it institutions, or "constitutions") are produced have to be left behind when acting politically—where political action is action based on a worldly principle.

[91] *HC*, 194-5. Cf. Arendt, "What is Freedom?" 147.

three categories of the *vita activa* as Arendt describes them in *The Human Condition*.[92]

The activity of labor, for Arendt, is "the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process of labor," whereby the condition of labor can be understood as "life itself."[93] She underscores that to labor is necessary to sustain life and that it is a cyclical process in which the human being labors in order to eat and eats in order to labor. There is no definite beginning or end to labor: only death is its ultimate end, which brings about the cessation of labor. The activity of work (or production), as I have laid out at the beginning, is the activity, which corresponds to "*poiesis*," namely, the activity of production that has a definite beginning and an end. The condition of the activity of work is "worldliness" whereby the products of work create our "artificial" human world.[94] The human being builds houses in which to dwell and legislation buildings in which to make laws: and ultimately, the human being makes tools to produce and destroy things. Insofar as the human being is a worker, the activity of production operates within the means-end category, with a view to the principle of utility.

Utility, both inscribed in the act of production and its outcome points to the inherent instrumentality of production. Arendt underscores that this instrumentality entails a necessary element of violence in the activity of production, where the producer (*homo faber*) has to use and transform a certain material into a preconceived end-product, e.g., cut wood in order to make tables. This kind of violence is necessary, Arendt underlines, insofar as the human being wills to bring about a certain end by the

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[92] *HC*, Chapter 2 "Vita Activa," 12-17, and Sections III "Labor," IV "Work," and V "Action," 79-248.
[93] *HC*, 7.
[94] Ibid. 7.

end of the activity of production. Understood thus, the producer has mastery over what she can utilize and produce. This mastery is crucial in understanding the *homo faber* mentality, for the end-product produced by the producer, whilst it gives the human being some "objectivity" of the world—that is, its durable and stable characteristics—it is still subject to potential destruction by the human being. As such, in the realm of production, the human being is relatively sovereign to the ends she sets up for herself, in her capacity to both make and destroy.[95]

Arendt's distinction between the activities of the *vita activa* has been prolifically explored by many commentators and critics alike; either in pointing out the novelty of her phenomenological method, or the puzzles that her account introduces in understanding human existence.[96] As Arendt herself admits, her distinction between the activities of labor and work aims to respond to Marx's, in her reading, mistaken articulation of the activity of labor and his consequential glorification thereof.[97] However, her attempt cannot be merely understood to be aiming at a theoretical criticism of Marx's account, or Marx himself.[98] Rather, understood in conjunction with

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[95] *HC*, 139, 144.

[96] See Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (London: Sage Publications, 1996); Jacques Taminiaux, *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker: Arendt and Heidegger* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997); Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[97] Cf. *HC*, Chapter 3 "Labor," 79-136.

[98] I am not the only one who disagrees with the criticism she places against Marx in *The Human Condition*. For elaborate responses on the relationship between Arendt and Marx, see Tama Weismann, *Hannah Arendt and Karl Marx: On Totalitarianism and the Tradition of Western Political Thought* (UK: Lexington Books, 2014), and Bhikhu Parekh, "Hannah Arendt's Critique of Marx," in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn Hill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979). It is not within the scope of this present work to delve into why her criticism of Marx's account can be (and is) misplaced. Instead, I aim to focus on the merit of her own account of political action, as principled political action, which as my reading will suggest, differentiates her from the camp of political philosophers with whom she disagrees (i.e., Plato, Hegel, and Marx). Nevertheless, I will take up the relationship between Marx's and Arendt's criticisms of human rights in the final chapter in order to elucidate the similarity between the origins of their criticism, namely, the so-called "universal equality" of human beings purported by the Declarations.

the last activity she discusses, that is, the activity of political action, she puts under scrutiny what she deems the mistake of the whole tradition of political philosophy: that is, the "traditional substitution of making for acting."[99]

Against this "traditional substitution of making for acting," which puts forth the sovereignty of the human being to be the indispensable for political action, Arendt argues that the condition that corresponds to the activity of political action, which she understands to be "action in concert," to be plurality.[100] This condition of plurality overrides claims of sovereignty in the realm of the political. The condition of plurality is what makes possible the uniqueness of the human beings become manifest, where "speech and action reveal this unique distinctness"[101] of the human being. Arendt's emphasis on the accompaniment of speech and action gestures towards how a political community is created, which in turn creates political space. Creation of the world points to the manifestation of human plurality in political space. In Arendt's terms: "With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and it is not prompted by utility, like work."[102] Arendt underscores the element of insertion, which is like a "second birth" in order to point to the principle of beginning in political action.

The temporality of political action is such that it is neither cyclical like labor, nor linear like production. The manifestation of human freedom in action lies in its very

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[99] *HC*, Chapter 31: 220-230.
[100] *HC*, 175.
[101] *HC*, 176.
[102] *HC*, 176-7.

beginning. And this beginning cannot be circumscribed to the achievement of certain ends, for given the condition of plurality, action appears and is, boundless: "the boundlessness of action only the other side of its tremendous *capacity for establishing relationships*," and furthermore, "while the various limitations and boundaries we find in every body politic may offer some protection against the inherent boundlessness of action, they are altogether helpless to offset its second outstanding character: its inherent unpredictability."[103]

The boundlessness and unpredictability of action, nevertheless, do not only point to the temporality of action as that which differentiates it from other activities of the *vita activa*. Action is also distinct from other activities of the *vita activa*, for it manifests (indeed creates) a space in which people come together in word and deed. The deed, insofar as it is neither bound by necessity or guided by utility underscores the act of beginning, and the word—whose meaning resides in being spoken to others— discloses the act of creating a world that is distinct from the private sphere of the household, or the isolation of the workplace, and brings to focus plurality not only as an ontological condition of human existence, but as a fact thereof. Arendt writes: "If action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, if it is the actualization of the human condition of natality, then speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and is the actualization of the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique being among equals."[104]

Speech that accompanies action has a twofold significance: 1) It lets action be differentiated from the activity of making (or producing), which can be done "in mute

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[103] *HC*, 191, *my emphasis*.
[104] *HC*, 178.

violence,"[105] and 2) in manifesting the unique identity of the individual, it helps to affirm the plurality of human existence and the meaning that can be created amongst such a plurality. It is in this double-sense that Arendt's articulation of political action has an indispensable element of performativity whose end lies in itself, which allows for an articulation that surpasses mere instrumental or strategic action that has come be associated with politics.

The role played by speech in accompanying political action is of utmost importance, for in the absence of speech, any action that has an element of beginning assumes an instrumental characteristics "in order to" bring an end to fruition. Such instrumentality confuses how political communities can be created, and switches the orientation to a community to be shaped (by a guiding truth) and preserved. In the next section, I will show how Arendt's account of the creation of political space does not rest on any instrumental or essentialist framework, which should guide such creation. It is in this sense that *praxis* is what creates a political community in the concerted action amongst individuals, which in turn puts forth a political space, where individuals appear to each other in their plurality.

Creating Space

The merit in Arendt's articulation of political action lies in the fact that—contrary to the Heideggerian articulation of being-gathered-by-being as that which lets a community appear—only in the gathering and acting of a plurality of human beings can a political community emerge. Human beings become a "we" insofar as they appear and act in a political space. As Arendt states in *The Human Condition*,

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[105] *HC*, 179.

> To be deprived of this space means to be deprived of reality, which, humanly and politically speaking, is the same as appearance. To men the reality of the world is guaranteed by the presence of others, by its appearing to all; 'for what appears to all, this we call Being,' [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1172b36 ff.] and whatever lacks this appearance comes and passes away like a dream, intimately and exclusively our own but without reality.[106]

Simply put: a common human reality depends on its appearance. For this reason, labor does not express a unique human reality for it is an activity that we share with many other species, in basically being bound to survival, hence the condition of necessity in human existence. While on the other hand, the activity of production, that is work, does contribute to this common human reality insofar as the products of work enable us appear to one another. However, this reality insofar as it is related to appearance becomes political only insofar as it is shared in common, and not confined to the limits of one's private sphere.[107] For Arendt: "[A]ction not only has the most intimate relationship to the public part of the world common to us all, but is the one activity which constitutes it."[108]

Her contention enables her to articulate Pericles' funeral oration in the exact opposite manner to Heidegger's articulation. In her words:

> The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this

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[106] Ibid. 199.

[107] This statement is informed by Arendt's own analysis of the family, which she offers in *The Human Condition*. However, it must be pointed out that the household does indeed lets the members of a family *appear* to one another. Arendt's conviction, however, is that in the household, the members of the family are not appearing to one another as public-political actors. For their relation rests upon the privacy of their space—and the principle of survival and necessity thereof—rather than being defined by the relationality of a plurality in the public space, which rests on what she calls worldly principles. While it is not confined to this articulation, the members of the family (while in the household) are foremost defined by their familial and social identities based on the interests that they hold in their individuality, in contradistinction to being disclosed as public agents acting upon worldly concerns in the public space.

[108] *HC*, 198.

purpose, no matter where they happen to be. "Wherever you will go, you will be a *polis*": these famous words became not merely the watchword of Greek colonization, they expressed the conviction that action and speech create a space between the participant which can find its proper location almost any time anywhere. It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly.[109]

Thus, Arendt concedes that, contrary to Heidegger's account, the condition upon which the *polis* itself comes into existence is the togetherness (the coming-together) of the human beings.[110] Hence, insofar as human beings can appear together in their plurality, they can build up a political space from out of the artificial conditions of spatiality along with the equality that pertains to the human beings who are appear in this space. This artificial space gives us the conditions for maintaining meaning and plurality in a political community, which a Heideggerian account cannot provide: an Arendtian political space gives us the condition of human togetherness based on non-violence. This non-violent political space is the place where political judgment happens through the adoption of a certain "disinterestedness"[111] which makes room for speaking about worldly concerns that do not rest upon private interests.[112]

Only in *praxis*, i.e., in principled political action, can the human being manifest her "whoness" as opposed to her "whatness," where the whatness of a human being

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[109] Ibid. 198-9.

[110] Cf. Arendt, "Culture and Politics," *Reflections on Literature and Culture*, ed. Sussanna Young-ah Gottlieb (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007): 188.

[111] Arendt understands "disinterestedness" by way of Kant's account of reflective judgment, and renders it to be the condition of "the liberation from one's own private interests" (Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics," in *Between Past and Future*, 242).

[112] Cf. Peg Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights: The Predicament of Common Responsibility* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006): 26: "The polis as a space of action appears primarily through the performance of the word." Birmingham's work is an excellent source on the discussion of the role of human rights in Arendt's work. That said, however, my reading suggests that Arendt's ontology of natality does not resemble a temporality in the sense of Heidegger's *Augenblick* (moment of vision), as Birmingham contends (Ibid. 28).

more or less denotes the objective qualities of her, which do not and cannot reduce her to a mere thing. Political action as *praxis* enacts a principle in the world, for instance, the principle of justice, and the end of this action is not to exhaust "justice" in the world but to bring about a manifestation of justice to which human actors can meaningfully relate. Hence, political action is not carried out in order to produce an effect outside of itself that can stand independently of human understanding which bestows meaning upon such action: an action is and can be autotelic because it rests on a world-oriented principle.

Contrary to a principle political action, a violent action, Arendt argues in her "On Violence" is "ruled by the means-end category, whose chief characteristic, if applied to human affairs, has always been that the end is in danger of being overwhelmed by the means, which it justifies and which are necessary to reach it."[113] Violence, as an instrumental action cannot be its own *end*, it is always in order to achieve a further end. Arendt further states: "Since the end of human action, as distinct from the end products of fabrication, can never be reliably predicted, the means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals."[114]

At this point, I want to underscore the two main reasons why Arendt can justifiably offer us a thinking of politics without violence[115]: 1) Her refusal of a selfish (merely self-interested) and sovereign human nature which has been foundational for

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[113] Hannah Arendt, "On Violence," in *CR*, 106.
[114] "On Violence," in *CR*, 106.
[115] Although as I explained above, law-making itself is a poietical (productive) activity; however, as Arendt states, "Political institutions, no matter how well or how badly designed, depend for continued existence upon acting men; their conversation is achieved by the same means that brought them into being. Independent existence marks the work of art as a product of making; utter dependence upon further acts to keep it in existence marks the state as a product of action" ("What is Freedom?" 152).

understanding the relationship between the individual and the formation of a political body in 17th and 18th century political philosophy, 2) Her articulation of political action as *praxis* rather than *poiesis*. With regard to the first statement, Arendt's non-presupposition of a human nature is significant in two aspects. First, the human being, insofar as it is bound by natural necessities, still has the capacity to transcend these necessities insofar as she is relatively capable of creating her own conditions of existence. Secondly, there is a problem with attributing the human being a "nature"—especially a solely self-interested one—in political terms; for given such presupposition of a selfish nature of the human being, liberty in politics has been equated with "security" which thus makes political freedom disappear, as though it were, from the world which is capable of being experienced as a tangible reality amongst other human beings.[116] With regard to the second statement, understanding politics as *praxis* rather than *poiesis* makes room for the condition of non-sovereignty found in proper political action.

What I have argued in this chapter, I hope, elucidates Arendt's criticism of the mere instrumentalization of politics, which she identifies to be most manifest with the "rise of the social" that has blurred the line between what is properly private on the one hand, and political on the other in creating, if one wills, a hybrid realm. Arendt's distinction between the social and the political has received understandable attention due to its manifest rigidity. However, the simplicity of such an articulation may lead

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[116] Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in *BPF*, 148. Here, Arendt underscores that "the political thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who more often than not simply identified political freedom with security." Arendt also recognizes the futility of biological defences of violence, wherein the nature of the human being or the nature of a circumstance promotes the necessity of violence. See her discussion about the "sick society" and her criticism of "biopower" in understanding the community in her "On Violence," in *CR*, 156-172.

one astray in trying to articulate what politics would then be involved with, if not with what Arendt deems the social, such as socioeconomic concerns of individuals (or collectives). Repeating Hanna Pitkin's now-famous question: "What keeps these citizens together as a body? And what is it that they talk about together, in that palaver of the agora?"[117] I want to turn my attention next to what I will call a principle of "epistemic responsibility," which urges us to rethink the limit (or the lack thereof) and scope of such political discussion, which is first and foremost stems from a worldly concern—and is created in and through—the condition of plurality.

Chapter 2. Arendt, Meaning, and Epistemic Responsibility

As I stated at the beginning, Arendt's emphasis on the condition of plurality of political community in relation to political judgment comes to the fore in her statement in her essay entitled "The Crisis in Culture," and I want to repeat what she states:

> Culture and politics, then, belong together because it is not knowledge or truth which is at stake, but rather judgment and decision, the judicious exchange of opinion about the sphere of public life and the common world, and the decision what manner of action is to be taken in it, as well as to how it is to look henceforth, what kind of things are to appear in it.[118]

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[117] Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, "Justice: On Relating Private and Public," *Political Theory*, (Volume 9, No. 3, 1981): 336. Cf. George Kateb similarly asks: "When political action defined as public speech about public affairs take place, what is its content? What did citizens of the *polis* and participants in revolutionary councils consider and discuss with one another?" ("Political action: its nature and advantages," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana R. Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 132. See also Hanna F. Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), and Mary G. Dietz, "Hannah Arendt and Feminist Politics," (in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman & Sandra K. Hinchman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994): 231-260) for a discussion on the distinction between the social and the political and its reception in feminist scholarship.

[118] Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture," in *Between Past and Future*, 219-20. I will leave out a discussion of the possible aestheticization of politics, and the politicization of aesthetics that may be extracted from this quote, and instead focus on the relationship between knowledge, truth, judgment, and decision. For a discussion that deals with the aforementioned terms, however, see Patrick Riley's

This statement nicely summarizes why Arendt thinks that politics does not aim at acquiring knowledge or a truth about what is or ought to be, in the sense of grasping a rational (eternal) truth as Plato would have it in his *Republic*. Politics does not aim at "knowledge and truth" but rather concerns itself with "judgment and decision." There are two reasons for this: First, politics happens in the in-between of human plurality; it happens in the exchange of opinions, and not in being guided by an ideal. As such, there is nothing that is intrinsically political. Second, because of this, politics is related to contingent, rather than necessary facts about human affairs, which always have the elements of frailty and unpredictability with regard to the goals that are set upon political action. This is why in a set of terms I will explain below, politics is the space that makes freedom possible; it allows for the spontaneity inherent in human action and speech to appear, while defending against the destructive side of the frailty of human affairs.

As I have argued in the first chapter, politics, when understood in merely instrumental terms, becomes a violent activity. The source of this violence is due to understanding politics in terms of the means-end category where the means may be justified by the ends (rather than goals properly understood). Attributing an end to politics outside of itself is viable in light of a conception of human sovereignty, or mastery of the world. One way to understand this sovereignty is by way of the *homo faber* mentality, which succumbs to predetermined ends in adjusting the means in an instrumental fashion. The act of fabrication is, in this case, grounded on its utility. What is relevant for the current discussion, however, is another type of sovereignty, which is

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"Hannah Arendt on Kant, Truth, and Politics," *Political Studies*, (Volume 35, No. 3, (Sept., 1987)): 381n12.

connected with an ungrounded or arbitrary will. Such sovereignty disregards the plurality of existence in the community. This disregard is twofold. First, it happens when sovereignty understood in terms of a sovereign subject, who gives herself the law in her singularity and autonomy. This is the traditional articulation of the sovereign moral subject, but politics cannot be reduced to moral laws.[119] Secondly, the disregard for plurality also happens when sovereignty is understood as mastery in producing a thing outside of the subject itself. Such sovereignty stems from the will of the sovereign, where the will includes an element of arbitrariness within itself. For example, the end of building a community based on a commonality such as national identity can be violent insofar as it relies on the sovereignty of one certain people, as well as the tools of violence (e.g. physical destruction, cultivation, etc.) in order to realize this sovereignty. As such, politics becomes a politics of sovereignty, which relies on the sovereignty of a State that is made up of people who are understood to be capable of self-sovereignty. This has been a model for understanding political action and political communities, such as that in Carl Schmitt's famous friend/enemy distinction. Schmitt's distinction rests on what is called a "sovereign decision" insofar this decision is absolute and groundless; that is arbitrary.[120]

Taking seriously Arendt's concerns regarding "judgment and decision" in texts such as "The Crisis in Culture," I argue that Arendt's understanding of decision does

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[119] And this is true not only for Arendt, but also for Kant's own articulation as he discusses political principles of equality, independence, and freedom, in his "On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, But it is of No Use in Practice," in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[120] Cf. Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom?" in *BPF*: "Carl Schmitt is the most able defender of the notion of sovereignty. He recognizes clearly that the root of sovereignty is the will: Sovereign is who wills and commands" (162n21).

not promote a "decisionistic" model of sovereign politics as Martin Jay has argued.[121]

Jay contends that Arendt "saw politics not merely as irreducible to socioeconomic forces, but also as unhampered by all normative and instrumental as well, a position often known as 'decisionism,'" in order to further claim that "she seemed to conclude that action should be free of even purely political goals, (e.g., persuading one's opponents) as well as nonpolitical ones."[122] In short, Jay formulates her account as "*politique pour la politique*."[123] This interpretation of Arendt suggests that her account of decision is antithetical to her own account of politics as the space for human plurality.

I maintain, by contrast, that in its relation to judgment and meaning, decision, constitutes a necessary political principle for preserving human plurality. As Arendt is not explicit about this, my aim in this chapter is to introduce a new concept into her political framework for understanding the relationship between responsibility and decision, which I will call the principle of "epistemic responsibility." The principle that guides the properly political decision is neither truth nor knowledge. Nor is it simply the political virtues, such as courage, and honor. Rather, it is a commitment to acknowledging certain factual truths about the world, whose validity does not entail its own meaning, and be inspired to act and judge in a plurality of others where meaning can be created. This commitment, I contend, is principled in that it manifests the principle of epistemic responsibility itself, which in turn becomes the condition of possibility of rendering other principles meaningful.

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[121] Martin Jay, "The Political Existentialism of Hannah Arendt," *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 237-257.

[122] Martin Jay, "The Political Existentialism of Hannah Arendt," 242.

[123] Ibid.

As we have seen in the first chapter, a Heideggerian appeal to truth, albeit originary, in politics, reduces community to a problematically essentialist understanding that forecloses the complexities of responsibility within the world as the place of plural human togetherness. Such essentialism, I have argued in the first chapter, lies in the existential structure of the Dasein, whereby responsibility in the Heideggerian sense becomes a solitary response to one's (communal) destiny that is uncontaminated by the public in its plurality. While this responsibility finds its home in its response to the call of being, it does not escape the charges of a decisionistic model of responsibility, which is based upon its unsurpassable arbitrariness.

By contrast, Arendt's articulation of worldly space as the "in-between" of plural human existence leaves open the possibility of political action founded upon a non-essentialist understanding of responsibility. In this second chapter, I respond to criticisms that this open-ended understanding of political action is problematically anarchic.[124] I do this by developing what I will call a principle of *epistemic responsibility*, which I suggest extricates her account from charges of moral irresponsibility, because such charge would leave her account open to the claim that it would entail violence. The charge of immoralism in Arendt's account pertains to the groundlessness of political action, insofar as it lacks a normative foundation, which in turn renders it possibly and problematically, irresponsible.

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[124] Cf. George Kateb observes that, "Arendt's view on the place of morality in authentic politics remains insufficient" ("Political action: its nature and disadvantages," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 143. See also Dana Villa, "Critique of Identity to Plurality in Politics," in *Arendt & Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*, ed. Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012): 99 (Cf. Chapter1n15 above).

I argue that Kateb's and Villa's criticism fails to take into account the twofold structure of Arendt's notion of political action, where political action both aims at creating and preserving plurality and equality in political space through the exchange of opinions, and where it manifests freedom to be a worldly phenomenon. Notwithstanding his criticism, it is obvious that Villa finds merit in Arendt's account of political space as a space for exchange of opinions. In his words:

> A public space that enables and encourages the debate and deliberation of diverse equals is thus the place where *publicly significant differences* come into being and achieve their fullest articulation. The public realm is a sphere of opinion, not truth, and any public realm that approximated unanimity would cease, in Arendt's view, to be truly *public*. A nearly unanimous or 'mass' form of public opinion—the kind of thing our pollsters currently measure and Tocqueville warned about—is not really *opinion* at all. This is because *opinions* (in contrast to *interests*) are always the property of *individuals*. They are formed through the type of discursive mediation and argument that a robust public sphere enables.[125]

Villa's rearticulation of Arendt's view cannot be contested, however, it does not seem to push Arendt's account far enough in order to show how such public space is created, that is, the question of wherein lies the motivation to enter this public space in the first place. On my view, Andreas Kalyvas offers a plausible response to this question in bringing to the fore the relationship between the faculty of the "will" and freedom in Arendt in order to articulate an Arendtian "decision to participate,"[126] which is supposed to ground political agency. However, Kalyvas' picture is not complete.

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[125] Villa, "Critique of Identity to Plurality in Politics," in *Arendt & Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*, ed. Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012): 97.

[126] Andreas Kalyvas, "From the Act to the Decision: Hannah Arendt and the Question of Decisionism," *Political Theory*, (Volume 32, No. 3, 2004): 320-346. Cf. Andreas Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

My account aims to alleviate both worries in arriving at a twofold conclusion: 1) Although Arendtian political action is open-ended, it is nevertheless based upon what she calls "worldly principles," which are the basis of this open-endedness as a responsible decision, which in turn 2) requires developing an appeal to what I shall call the principle of "epistemic responsibility."

I argue that this epistemic responsibility becomes a guiding principle in political action, one that connects the realm of truth and knowledge with the seemingly disparate realm of decision and judgment. This principle rests on a thin notion of truth that can provide a more robust account of political action understood as the "accompaniment of speech and deed" in Arendt's political phenomenology. In this sense, the latter allows for a reinterpretation of the relationship between "factual truths" and "meaning-creation" on pluralistic grounds; this in turn, allows for the emergence of a political space of plural human togetherness as the "place (*topos*) of responsibility."

Saving Principles, Saving Meaning

What differentiates political action from violence, as I have outlined at the end of the first chapter, is its principle. In this section, I will explain what a principle is in order to articulate a new conception of an Arendtian principle of epistemic responsibility that can reconcile Arendt's seemingly contradictory convictions about factual truths and their role in political action, which I will discuss in the next section.

First, a principle of action is not the same as its "motives" or "goals."[127] While Arendt thinks that political action is boundless and unpredictable; the unpredictability

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[127] See also James T. Knauer's "Motive and Goal in Hannah Arendt's Concept of Political Action," in *The American Political Science Review*, (Volume 74, No. 3 (Sep., 1980): 721-733) for a nice elucidation of the distinction between an action's goal and its principle, the "in order to" of action, and the "for the sake of which," respectively.

of the outcome of political action does not render it arbitrary or without any standards of evaluation. In fact, it is crucial that we are able to judge political action and understand it as an auto-telic event, which is at the same time what both creates and preserves the plurality of the world. Political action differs from the activity of production in that a political action's meaning is not judged by its utility, that is, in light of the fitness of the end it achieves. Being its own end, that is, its auto-telic status gives us the standard of judgment in light of the principle that political action manifests. It is in this sense that Arendt differentiates between an aim and an end (or the end, *telos*) of an action, where the former can be understood as something outside of action itself, while the latter is contained in its performance.[128] The meaning of action, therefore, cannot be the end of an action, whereby we understand it to be something truth-like at which we arrive in a traditional fashion. The meaning of action, understood thus, is not readily available to the individual, but it has to be created and maintained in the sharing of opinions of a plurality of individuals in a spirit as to recover the world that is common to all of us.

What is a principle of action, then? In her essay "What is Freedom?" Arendt explains that principles become relevant in "transcending" the "motives and aims," that is the "determining factors" of action.[129] Despite the fact that political action is not a productive activity, which can be judged by way of achieving its goal, it nevertheless does have motives and goals as its determining factors. The main criticism of Arendt's understanding of political action has been its purported open-endedness. This open-

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[128] *HC*, 206: "[I]n these instances of action and speech the end (telos) is not pursued but lies in the activity itself…, and the work is not what follows and extinguishes the process but is imbedded in it; the performance is the work, is *energeia*" (Arendt further quotes Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1050a22-35, 206n36-7).
[129] "What is Freedom?" 150.

endedness, however, can only be understood by way of the future, where political action insofar as it happens in the midst of a plurality of individuals, falls into a "web of relationships" which defies the possibility of pre-determining the outcome of action. The crucial point concerns the judgment of such action. We will see in the next section that this judgment is not about the utility (usefulness) of the action in bringing about an end (understood here as goal) but rather about its meaning. And meaning-creation (or sense-making) is and has to remain a public endeavour, which requires debate and discussion, rather than the mere appropriation (or acquisition) of a certain truth regarding a specific event.

In a manner that strengthens the element of publicness/wordliness of a principle, which at the same time does not fall short of complicating the issue, Arendt argues that "principles do not operate from within the self as motives do," "but inspire, *as it were*, from without, although every particular aim can be *judged* in the light of its principle once the act has been started."[130] Arendt's claim is curious: how can such inspiration, "*as it were*, from without," become a standard of judgment of action? To repeat what we said at the beginning, this principle is not an external condition, which guides action and sees to its fruition, but the principle is coeval with the beginning of action and is only actualized in it. This is precisely the grounds upon which Arendt sharply contrasts the American and French Revolutions; she contends that the latter was a failure because it didn't constitute political freedom and equality, which were seemingly its original aims because the principle of equality was motivated by way of sentiment, rather than a worldly concern.[131]

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[130] Ibid. 150-1, *my emphasis*.
[131] Arendt's discussion appears in her *On Revolution*, which I will discuss at length in the third chapter.

Understanding how a principle of action could also be its standard of judgment, is also helpful in articulating why Arendt's account can escape the charges of immoralism, or lack of a normative foundation. This reading of Arendt is not novel by any means, but it requires some attention.[132] It is in her *On Revolution* that she puts forth the beginning of an action and its principle as coeval. The role played by a principle in such a beginning is crucial: For a principle is "what saves the act of beginning from its own arbitrariness" in that the "beginning and principle, *principium* and principle, are not only related to each other, but are coeval."[133] A principle, then, is not a pre-given *arché*, or a foundational principle upon which human beings build their action.[134] A principle is an *arché* insofar as it becomes a worldly condition through which one can evaluate action. Arendt writes:

> *The absolute from which the beginning is to derive its own validity and which must save it, as it were, from its inherent arbitrariness is the principle which, together with it, makes its appearance in the world.* The way the beginner starts whatever he intends to do lays down the law of action for those who have joined him in order to partake in the enterprise and to bring about its accomplishment. As such, the principle inspires the deeds that are to follow and remains apparent as long as the action lasts.[135]

While it might seem curious to imagine how a political principle can "save" a beginning from "its inherent arbitrariness," Arendt's statement suggests that this curiosity can be assuaged by understanding it as an "absolute" from which an act "derive(s) its own validity." As an absolute, a principle does not rest on conditions outside of itself, it is a "for the sake of which," rather than an "in order to" for which

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[132] See Andreas Kalyvas' excellent account in his *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt* (2008).

[133] *OR*, 212.

[134] For an illuminating discussion on Arendt's understanding of *arche*, see Patchen Markell's "Arendt, *Arche*, and Democracy," in *Politics in Dark Times*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 58-82.

[135] *OR*, 213, *my emphasis*.

the action is performed. This reading brings to focus the characteristics of repeatability and inexhaustibility of a principle, where a principle is not *relative* to the law of the space in which it occurs. It guides absolutely insofar as it only emerges in the performance of action. Consequently, a principle is not independent of the togetherness of a plurality of individuals who enact it; for it is manifest only in being actualized, and neither before nor after. A principle, in this sense, belongs to the world—as the common world created by a plurality of people.

The common world human beings create is the condition of what sort of principle can be enacted by political action: in this sense, the principle, so to speak, inspires from without. This is how a principle does not have to be spatially or temporally bounded to a certain group of people or a certain political organization, as long as there is a sort of political organization understood in the sense of the *creation* of an in-between amongst a plurality of people. Principles can be manifested as long as there is the recognition of a "common world." This is why a principle of an action "can also be repeated time and again, it is inexhaustible, and in distinction from its motive, the validity of a principle is universal, it is not bound to any particular person or any group."[136]

Arendt's contention points to a certain universality of the principle, but there is a caveat in how we should understand such universality. On my view, the characteristics of repeatability and inexhaustibility of principles serve to strengthen this articulation of universality. These characteristics are the wherewithal to square Arendt's discussion of Montesquieu's articulation of principles as corresponding to certain forms

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[136] "What is Freedom?" 151.

of government with such purported universality.[137] Montesquieu classifies the three principles of virtue, honor, and fear, in direct correspondence to the three forms of government, namely, a republic, a monarchy, and a tyranny.[138] What Arendt suggests in the context of Montesquieu's classification is that while virtue can be public-political principle in a republic, for instance, it becomes a more or less private affair in a monarchy.[139] A "private affair" in this context *could mean* a moral, or better yet, a psychological motive that may guide an individual's actions. This sort of motive, which still rests on the idea of self-sovereignty of a self-enclosed upon subject, cannot be politically relevant for Arendt, insofar as it disregards the ultimate manifestation of a shared principle in the plurality of public space. I contend, however, that Arendt's reading does not rule out any of these principles to be properly political principles under any given form of government, for again, the principles of action are guiding, instead of restricting action—and as such they belong to the world, and not to the idiosyncratic wants and needs of individuals.

The ramification of the underlined characteristics of principles is that they have meaning only insofar as they can be enacted and judged publicly. That is, they do not pertain to individual or collective interests. They are not merely circumscribed by instrumental concerns pertaining to the historical/spatial context of the political actors

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[137] Hannah Arendt, "Montesquieu's Revision of the Tradition," in *The Promise of Politics*, 65.

[138] Ibid. In a recent publication, Lucy Cane has argued that Arendt indeed does not follow Monstesquieu's classification as strictly belonging to only such sorts of government, and by taking up the claim about the historical regeneration of principles seriously, Cane offers an account in order to demonstrate that Arendt's account does indeed not need a "procedural moral foundation" for political space and action. (Lucy Cane, "Hannah Arendt on the Principles of Political Action," *European Journal of Political Theory*, (Volume 14, No. 1, 2015): 55-75.) See also Corinne Enaudeau's "Hannah Arendt: Politics, Opinion, Truth," trans. Dorothée Bonigal-Katz, *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, *Hannah Arendt's Centenary: Political and Philosophical Perspectives, Part II,* (Volume 74, No. 4, (Winter 2007)): 1029-1044. Enaudeau takes up the possibility of some kind of truth that pertains to an account of know-how in the political realm, which she argues rests on a principle that she articulates as a "common conviction" that political actors hold in concerted action.

[139] "Montesquieu's Revision of the Tradition," 65.

in order to bring about a certain social/economic change, for that would imply the impossibility of "novel" action that brings about a rupture in the temporal sequence of events.

The novel event, in this sense, is not historical merely in virtue of following a trajectory and achieving (or failing to achieve) a certain goal, but it is historical insofar as it can be meaningful by way of its principle, which pertains to the world that is created in the plurality of individuals. Insofar as principles can transcend the "motives and aims" of action, my reading suggests that they do not have to be necessarily in strict correspondence with the form of government in which one lives, unlike what Montesquieu has described. We can understand such contingency in a double-sided fashion: Insofar as the laws of government prescribe the negative liberties (i.e., what one should not do), they do not guide the positive actions—or decisions—of individuals.[140] More importantly, a thin account of knowledge of the "factual truths" (or the lack thereof) of one's world, will be informative in understanding how different principles can inspire from without the given constitution of a certain form of government. My reading aims to throw into sharp relief the seeming gap between factual truths and the principles of political action. Before turning to her analysis of the former in her essay "Truth and Politics," I want to point out Arendt herself has actually entertained how the two terms of factual truth and principles are intimately connected.

This happens precisely in 1957, a year after the Hungarian Revolution, where she adds an "Epilogue" to her *Origins of Totalitarianism*, and I quote her at length:

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[140] Arendt underscores a similar point: "Lawfulness sets limitations to actions, but does not inspire them; the greatness, but also the perplexity of laws in free societies is that they only tell what one should not, but never what one should do" (Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([United States]: Benediction Classics, 2009): 467).

> [The third fact to remember is that] the rebellion in both countries [Poland and Hungary] started with intellectuals and university students, and generally with the younger generation, that is, with those strata of the population whose material well-being and ideological indoctrination had been one of the prime concerns of the regime. Not the underprivileged, but the overprivileged of communist society took the initiative, and their *motive* was neither their own nor their fellow-citizens' material misery, but exclusively Freedom and Truth. [141]

It is undoubtedly curious that Arendt uses the term "motive," for we know that motives remain psychological or moral, that is, at best personal factors that determine a political action in Arendt's account. A motive, by this understanding, does not need (and most of the time do not entail) public manifestation. However, a charitable reading would allow me to contend that what she calls the "motive" of the revolution here becomes indeed the principle of the revolution, for it is not grounded in "interest or theory."[142]

At this juncture, what is important to emphasize is the relationship between freedom and truth. By freedom we understand two things here: 1) the freedom from totalitarian oppression, that is, a liberation from its domination, and 2) the creation of a space of freedom, in which factual truths can survive in speech. The creation of this space of freedom aims to undo a politics of domination, in preparing the conditions for the manifestation of equality in plurality. It is in this sense that the Hungarian Revolution signals a beginning, as an emergence of power in the acting in concert with others to found a space where freedom of opinion can be exercised:

> The truly admirable United Nations' Report on the Problem of Hungary quotes a young girl student as follows: 'Even though we might lack bread and other necessities of life, we wanted freedom. We, the young

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[141] *OT*, 494, *my emphasis*.

[142] The revolution, insofar as it enabled the Revolutionary and Workers' Councils to form, was not motivated by class interests, which are mainly exemplified by the party system. The councils did stand outside "interest or theory": "[But] while the historical origin of the party system lies in the Parliament with its factions, the councils were born exclusively out of the actions and spontaneous demands of the people, and they were not deduced from an ideology nor foreseen, let alone preconceived, by any theory about the best form of government" (*OT*, 499).

people, were particularly hampered because we were brought up amidst lies. We continually had to lie. We could not have a healthy idea, because everything was choked in us. We wanted freedom of thought.'[143]

Arendt discusses further:

The point is that the impact of factual reality, like all other human experiences, needs speech if it is to survive the moment of experience, needs talk and communication with others to remain sure of itself. Total domination succeeds to the extent that it succeeds in interrupting all channels of communication, those from person to person inside the four walls of privacy no less than the public ones which are safeguarded in democracies by freedom of speech and opinion.[144]

While "the people's demands for freedom and truth were, of course, denied,"[145] or in other words, while the institutionalization of freedom (which Arendt contends was established as a fact)[146] could not be established in the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution; this "failure" did not render the revolution meaningless. For in Arendt's account, the meaning of a political action cannot be sought in its causes or its consequences.[147]

Meaning, however, cannot be created when political action is understood in the sense of "making," for instance, a better world, or "history," that is, when politics is reduced to violence. The meaning of a political action is created in the community where it takes place; hence, it is public. This performative understanding of political action gives us what I call the "creation of meaning" in the public realm, as opposed to

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[143] *OT*, 494n11.

[144] *OT*, 495.

[145] *OT*, 501.

[146] *OT*, 496.

[147] I will explicate further what action produces in the sense of "creating" meaning, where this creation does not rest on the model of a means-end category of production. In her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Arendt states regarding a particular event that, "[its] meaning did not depend on either causes or consequences" (Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronal Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989): 56). Cf. *HC*, 205: "[T]he innermost meaning of the acted deed and the spoken word is independent of victory and defeat and must remain untouched by any eventual outcome, by their consequences for better or worse."

the "creation of identity" by instrumental means, where the former rests upon a reflective political judgment that is not related to "truth," but to worldly principles. These worldly principles free political action from being determined by an evaluation of the relationship between the means taken to achieve the end of such political action. The corresponding principle in political action serves to clarify political judgment in Arendt's account. As Arendt states, "the capacity to judge is a specifically political ability," as "the ability to see things not only from one's own point of view but in the perspective of all those who happen to be present."[148]

Arendt's statement is crucial in rethinking the criticisms her theory has received with regard to her so-called rigid demarcation between the social and the political, which seemingly does not allow for instrumental concerns in the political space. I maintain that this is due an unfortunate forgetting of what the political entails for her. The political is realm of plurality, where individuals leave behind their individual (or collective/group-related) concerns in order to recover a sense of a common world that they share. It is in this sense that principles (can) save the common world that individuals create, and I want to suggest that in rethinking the social/political distinction with a lens to these worldly principles, we can also save principles themselves.

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[148]Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture," in *BPF*, 217. My understanding of political judgment in Arendt's account takes its origin from this statement. Judgment, in this sense, is a human capacity that any human being can perform when the conditions of impartiality and disinterestedness, and through my intervention, the principle of epistemic responsibility is met. Differentiating between the judgment of the actor and the spectator does not pose a problem for my account, but I acknowledge the debate surrounding Arendt's distinction on the matter. For Arendt's own elucidation, see her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, and *The Life of the Mind* (Hannah Arendt, "Thinking," in *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1971). See also Richard J. Bernstein's "Judging: The Actor and the Spectator," in *The Realm of Humanitas: Responses to the Writings of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Reuben Garner (New York; Bern; Frankfurt am Main; Paris: Lang, 1989): 235-253.

As I already mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, Arendt's account of political action has been criticized on the ground that she did not deem "social" matters as properly political, and consequently, did not allow them to have a proper place in political discourse. What would political actors talk about in the political space if they could not talk about social (and economic) conditions of life that need attention? I contend that this simplicity of this question can lead one astray. Arendt does not dismiss the social questions insofar as they can pertain to common and plural human existence, however, she criticizes the kind of mentality it creates, whose influence becomes destructive in understanding the principles of how people come together in the political space.

For her, the social is exactly where the private and public converge in such a way that their borders *disappear* from the world. The individual, however, who *appears* in the social space is then neither merely the private individual of the household, nor the public person (bearing a "persona") who appears in a political space, but a hybrid of the two where the private interests of the individual permeate onto the public realm. I believe the misunderstanding of Arendt's contentions in her demarcation of the social and the political is the result of *confusing* two premises that concern public/political action with regard to the space in which it takes place. I will expand on these two premises before I move onto why a principle of epistemic responsibility becomes important for the purposes of creating a political space.

(1) The accompanying political principle of a political action, which becomes manifest in the concerted action of a plurality of people, is not exhausted (or achieved once and for all—understood as a success term): for instance, the principle of justice,

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does not merely denote the just distribution of resources, or the just treatment of equal individuals in a polity, but it embodies such concerns where they have become a worldly concern for a plurality of people. Understood in this way, for instance, social injustices can be adequately addressed if the principle of justice is not confused with a purported *end* of justice.

(2) Following the above contention, then, we can say that "social" matters, which regard, for instance, socio-economic inequalities, can, in fact, be placed in the public discourse where the people come together in order to discuss the circumstances that condition their world. It is not the content of the discussion that matters, if one wills, but the conditions under which people come together. In Arendt's account, the condition that is first and foremost to be met is that the individuals are visible as public actors. The visibility of the human beings makes them firstly of the world, where they can be understood to have a world, be part of the world, and hence their inclusion in the public/political space becomes an imperative.[149] As Bernstein suggests, given the "recognition of plurality," "what can be talked about in public changes in different historical circumstances."[150]

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[149] Arendt's contention that, for instance poverty, or the people who were driven by poverty, could not participate in public/political debate was due to their "powerlessness" (Hannah Arendt and Hans Jürgen Benedict, "Revolution, Violence, and Power: A Correspondence," *Constellations*, (Volume 16, No. 2, June 2009): 304). Powerlessness here should be understood as that which stands in opposition to the potentiality of power, which can only be actualized in a "space of appearance" when a plurality of people come together for a common, that is, worldly concern. Poverty induces powerlessness to the individual insofar as it binds her to the necessities of her life in a twofold manner. While the human being is naturally bound to the necessity of survival, poverty becomes a determining factor in how this individual understands her existence in the world: one that becomes violently solitary in that it destroys the possibility of public meaning creation with others. When Arendt discusses elsewhere, "powerlessness, which always presupposes isolation is a valid excuse for doing nothing," the context should be understood differently. This statement appears in her essay "Collective Responsibility," in which she discusses the phenomena of guilt and responsibility in the pretext of the conditions of action under totalitarianism (Arendt, "Collective Responsibility," in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003): 156).

[150] Richard J. Bernstein, "Rethinking the Social and the Political," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*,

We are now in a position to see that the worldliness of a principle and its performative occurrence is manifest as a *response* to the world. Birmingham's twofold articulation of what she calls the "affective dimension" of principles grasps succinctly this worldliness. Birmingham argues, first, that "principles of action have an affective dimension that are not reducible to psychological emotion but belong to the principle of action itself," which becomes a "normative source,"[151] of action. Secondly, "principles of action provide the affective ground of unity between the individual and the citizen."[152] Birmingham's articulation of the affective aspect of principles can be fruitful in order to unpack the convergence between the individual and the citizen. I want to underscore, however, the latter term of the "citizen" should not be understood merely in the sense of belonging to a polity, but as the performance of citizenship. It is at this point that I want to develop a new concept of the principle of epistemic responsibility, which I maintain has remained unexplored in her account, in order to bring to focus this performative aspect of citizenship.[153]

An Arendtian Principle of "Epistemic Responsibility"

In light of the preceding analysis, we have come to understand that principles are crucial to forming political judgment in a political space of plurality, where this judgment pertains to the "meaning" of a political action. Contrary to the Heideggerian resolution, in Arendt's sense, "meaning" can be created by political judgment in the political space.

(Volume 11, No. 1, 1986): 122.

[151] Peg Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, 13.

[152] Ibid.

[153] This principle of epistemic responsibility as a performance of citizenship will allow me to develop a principle of democratic responsibility in the next chapter.

What are the conditions of forming political judgments in the first place, then? In order to answer this question, we first have to distinguish between a rational truth, for instance, a truth based on a so-called determinate concept of what something (a triangle, a square, 2+2=4) is, or what it should be—and a factual truth, and the import of this distinction for political judgment in Arendtian terms.

Arendt most explicitly tackles the question of the relationship between truth and politics in her essay "Truth and Politics."[154] She writes:

> Factual truth, is always related to other people: it concerns events and circumstances in which many are involved; it is established by witnesses and depends upon testimony; it exists only to the extent that it is spoken about, even if it occurs in the domain of privacy. *It is political by nature.* Facts and opinions, though they must be kept apart, are not antagonistic to each other; they belong to the same realm.[155]

> The trouble is that factual truth, like all other truth, peremptorily claims to be acknowledged and precludes debate, and debate constitutes the very essence of political life. The modes of thought and communication that deal with truth, if seen from the political perspective, are necessarily domineering; they don't take into account other people's opinions, and taking these into account is the hallmark of all strictly political thinking.[156]

Following these statements, we can see that factual truths have two distinct characteristics: 1) they are political by nature, and 2) they preclude debate, and hence are domineering. Insofar as she understands the essence of politics to be debate, these two characteristics seem to be incompatible with one another. In this section, I want to address this question of compatibility and offer an alternative reading that renders the two seemingly contradictory statements coherent by way of a principle of "epistemic responsibility."

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[154] Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics," in *Between Past and Future*: *Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968).
[155] "Truth and Politics," 238.
[156] "Truth and Politics," 241.

The first of these characteristics suggests that the "status" of factual truths is political, while the second one suggests that their "reception" is antithetical to politics. I argue that taking an epistemic stance with regard to the latter can complement the former, which in turn would allow us to articulate a more robust account of political action that rests on a thin notion of "truth" in relation to an "epistemic responsibility" which can guide our action in the world. It is true that factual truths need to be acknowledged, and taken into account in understanding (or making sense of) a certain situation. That is, it may not always be the case that these truths can be contested. Yet, certain factual truths can be informative in forming opinions rather than hindering them.

The scope of Arendt's undertaking in her analysis in "Truth and Politics" is specific to what she distinguishes to be rational and factual truths. Rational truths are marked by their necessity and atemporality (or their being eternal to speak in Platonic terms). This is why she contends that rational truths contribute to philosophical thinking. While Arendt is no philosopher of history, what we can rightly deem her politico-philosophical thinking does pertain to how she understands the concept of history. It is in this sense that it does not become a truism when she asserts that historical truths (or facts about history) are contingent, for her conviction of their contingency point to the intimacy between history and politics.[157]

While Arendt understands rational truths to be truths whose opposite is "error" or "ignorance," she stresses the difference between rational and factual truths, as she

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[157] See Arendt's "The Concept of History," in *BPF*. Her account of history markedly stands in opposition to that of Hegel's, and Marx's understanding of the history, which progresses in a dialectical, necessary fashion. Elsewhere she claims: "[Facts] have no conclusive reason whatever for being what they are; they could always have been otherwise…" ("Truth and Politics," 238).

writes: "the hallmark of factual truth is that its opposite is neither error nor illusion nor opinion, not one of which reflects upon personal truthfulness, but the deliberate falsehood, or lie."[158] This demarcation, while seemingly sufficient for her purposes, underestimates what I think her account itself entails.[159] In laying out her terms clearly, my intervention will serve to locate a quasi-normative principle of action, which I believe will allow us to demarcate the limit of the political realm to appear more clearly. As Arendt does concede explicitly, the political realm is limited, "by those things which men cannot change at will."[160] The stake in the political realm is what gives us, she suggests, our "bearings" in the world, that is, factual truths.[161]

How do factual truths give us our bearings? I think this question can be broached by first teasing out three alternative ways to understand truth in its relation to 1) knowledge (truth as one of the conditions of knowledge, understood in the traditional sense of "justified true belief," or cognitive content), 2) evidence (which admits of degrees with regard to correspondence), and 3) a claim to (or of) truth (where there is also a claim to authority).[162] Arendt is clearly not interested in the first two options, for

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[158] "Truth and Politics," 245.

[159] For critical analyses of Arendt's essay, see Ronald Beiner, "Rereading Truth and Politics," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, (Volume 34, No. 1-2, 2008): 123-136; Patrick Riley, "Hannah Arendt on Kant, Truth, and Politics," *Political Studies*, (Volume 35, No. 3, (Sept., 1987)): 379-392; Andrew Norris, "Cynicism, Skepticism, and the Politics of Truth," in *Truth and Democracy*, ed. Jeremy Elkins and Andrew Norris (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2012). It is worthwhile to note that Linda Zerilli offers an interesting reading of Arendt's text, where she states the stake to be "[how] to develop a public sphere in which citizens could not only tell the difference between warranted public opinion and ideology, but could turn what they know to be true into something politically significant, citizens who could acknowledge what they know and draw the political consequences, so to speak" (Linda Zerilli, "Truth and Politics," in *Truth and Democracy*, ed. Jeremy Elkins and Andrew Norris (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012): 58.

[160] "Truth and Politics," 259.

[161] Ibid. 257.

[162] This account of truth can admit of both an internal and external account of truth, elucidated in the respective accounts of Plato and Hobbes, as they are found in the former's *The Republic* (Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by G. M. A. Grube ([United States]: Hackett Publishing, 1992)), and in the latter's *Leviathan* (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley ([United States]: Hackett Publishing, 1994)).

reasons I will briefly explain below. However, in taking up the question of the role of truth in relation to political space, she also wants to exclude the third option from becoming relevant to political debate and decision.[163] For a claim to truth that is sufficiently authoritative bears the possibility of destroying creating of a political realm altogether.

First, truth understood as a condition of knowledge regards the truth of a statement where a subject can be held to have a justified true belief (hence, knowledge) only so long as there is a state of affairs that corresponds to the subject's belief. I will not delve into the traditional problems this account of knowledge runs into, but I will be content to point out that such truth, while essential for our being-in-the-world, and acting in it, is not readily relevant for the purposes of understanding political action and its guidance among a plurality of others. I assert this based on the ground that in the context of political discussion, the facts that we are talking about are in need of interpretation. At the same time, this interpretation requires us to have a certain attitude of "disinterestedness" in a world of what Arendt calls "interdependence."[164] While the relationship between truth and knowledge concerns the human being in her solitary existence, this does not deny the worldliness of their relationship. Even the correspondence theory of truth rests on the existence of the world in which one's propositions can be understood to be true, hence contextually meaningful. This matter could also be elucidated in political terms. This is to say that knowing a factual truth, insofar as such knowledge can be gathered from one's peers, or from the newspaper, does not, on its own become meaningful unless it is discussed with others in relation to

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[163] This is one reason why an Arendtian decision cannot be read in purely decisionistic terms.
[164] "Truth and Politics," 234, 237.

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the world. I will come back to the point of meaningfulness later.

Secondly, Arendt brings together the notions of truth and evidence in terms of "factual evidence," which she deems, and correctly so, that insofar such evidence is established "through testimony by eyewitnesses—notoriously unreliable—and by records, documents, and monuments, all of which can be suspected as forgeries" and bears within itself the possibility of being denied through "false testimony."[165]

I contend, then, not only that the first two alternatives cannot be as readily excluded from her understanding of political discussion, but that they are intimately linked to one another. I will now take up the third alternative, namely, truth understood in its relation to a claim to (or of) truth. This relationship is more complicated than it at first seems. For this reason, I claim that a distinction that can be maintained between a claim—that is, the "how"[166] of a claim—and what is claimed can help us provide a very thin notion of truth, which will allow to us to have a more robust account of political decision and demonstrate the coherence of Arendt's seemingly incompatible statements to which I alluded at the beginning of this section.

Opinion Formation and Understanding in Plurality

As I already indicated, my discussion here will be limited to investigating what Arendt has dealt with in her "Truth and Politics." However, I do acknowledge that her motivation in understanding opinion formation remains Kantian if we look at what she says in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*:

[Kant] believes that the very faculty of thinking depends on its public

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[165] "Truth and Politics," 239. In this essay she alludes to the removal of Trotsky's name from the historical account of the Russian Revolution as an example.

[166] By this I mean what philosophers of language underscore as the perlocutionary force of a claim that is the meaning of its performance of as a speech act.

use; without 'the test of free and open examination,' no thinking and no opinion-formation are possible. Reason is not made to 'isolate itself but to get into community with others.'[167]

Arendt underscores the import of making public the activity of thinking, which is itself an invisible activity that deals with invisibles in the first place. However, thinking still presents itself as crucial to opinion-formation that happens in a community with others. Thus, opinion-formation itself is a relational act. As Arendt writes:

> Opinions are formed in a process of open discussion and public debate, and where no opportunity for the forming of opinions exist, there may be moods—moods of the masses and moods of individuals, the latter no less fickle and unreliable than the former—but no opinion.[168]

At this juncture, we can see that factual truths can enable the condition of an "epistemic responsibility" in a political debate, which latter involves well-informed parties, who can practice their freedom of opinion. Such an understanding of opinion puts the latter in direct opposition, for Arendt, to "interest," understood as a private or collective reality.[169] The discussion of the element of disinterestedness that accompanies the act of opinion-formation has been one of the central tenets of understanding Arendt's conception of political judgment and has received ample attention by feminist scholars.[170] The center of this discussion has been Arendt's rethinking of the Kantian "enlarged mentality," which she understands as the vehicle of representative thinking, in order to argue that

> The very process of opinion formation is determined by those in whose places somebody thinks and uses his own mind, and the only condition for this exertion of the imagination is disinterestedness, the liberation

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[167] Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989): 40, 40n92.
[168] *OR*, 268-9.
[169] *OR*, 269.
[170] Cf. Linda Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

from one's own private interests.[171]

Arendt's contention brings to focus the fact that opinion is not equivalent to one's idiosyncratic conviction about what interests one or one's group. While opinions are formed in plurality and exchange, which is what creates a common world in response to the world itself; interests cannot be what grounds the creation of a common world, or our responsibility for it. Responsibility here denotes the ability to respond, which, as I will argue, can only be preceded by an epistemic stance of combining "factual truths" and understanding in order to be able to judge and initiate action. On my reading, then, opinion-formation not only retains its public status, but also *gains* an essential spatial aspect. Underlining the spatial aspect of political judgment allows us to throw the element of political discussion into sharp relief in arguing that it is not only the possible points of view that count in creating this enlarged mentality, but that the actual discussion and hearing of others' points of view is crucial to explaining a principled political action that recovers the plurality of human existence.[172]

The factual truths are about what is happening in our "common world" and

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[171] "Truth and Politics," 237.

[172]For a detailed discussion of "enlarged mentality" see also Arendt's *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, 42-4. See also Seyla Benhabib's "Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Arendt's Thought," where she argues that "If we reject Kantian a priorism and his assumption that as moral selves we are all somehow identical, if, in other words, we distinguish a universalist morality of principles from Kant's doctrine of a priori rationality, then I want to suggest we must think of such enlarged thought as condition of actual or simulated dialogue. To 'think from the perspective of everyone else' is to know 'how to listen' to what the other is saying, or when the voices of the other are absent, to imagine to oneself a conversation with the other as my dialogue partner. 'Enlarged thought' is best realized through a dialogic or discursive ethics" (Seyla Benhabib, "Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Arendt's Thought," *Political Theory*, (Volume 16, No. 1, February 1988): 44). In a footnote appended to this passage, Benhabib refers the reader to her "Toward a Communicative Ethics," where she "dealth with the program of communicative ethics" (Benhabib, "Toward a Communicative Ethics," *Critique, Norm and Utopia. A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 279ff). Benhabib's article came to my attention after I wrote this chapter, so I want to acknowledge that such emphasis is present in the literature, as well. However, Benhabib's project is different from mine where she explicitly states her aim to be to "develop a phenomenological analysis of judgment as a moral faculty" (Ibid. 31) in order to demonstrate moral foundations of a tenet of Arendt's thinking of the political.

about the "common world" itself. While Arendt criticizes human rights as not having factual validity (which may translate into enforceable *praxis*), her claim that "Jefferson declared certain 'truths to be self-evident,'"[173] stands for the fact that a condition, such as equality, has to be performed as a *claim*, and agreed upon, instead of being put forth as "the truth." The validity of such a claim, which Arendt calls an opinion, "depends upon free agreement and consent; they are arrived at by discursive, representative thinking; and they are communicated by means of persuasion and discussion."[174] In the following, I will investigate the conditions of such validity.

At the outset, there is a useful distinction to make between the performance of "claiming x" and "x holding to be true." Arendt does not explicitly endorse such a distinction, but in light of her discussion of Jefferson above, we can see that she contends that the latter's validity depends on a sort of agreement—or judgment. A claim to truth, on its own, does not invite political discussion, because of the complexity of the possible connotations of a claim. For instance, when one asserts that, "Life starts at stage X," the statement can be understood at two levels: 1) as a descriptive statement, which in turn, requires the interpretation of 2) a normative content. The meaning of the term "life" is not self-evident, neither what one means by stating the "start" of such life. Life may imply a plethora of normative valuations: that life must be preserved, or that life is sacred, or that the potential of life requires the articulation of rights-bearing subject. To clarify my claim that such a claim precludes the discussion of equal parties, one may think of pro-life and pro-choice parties involved in a debate as to the right of preserving life in the context of the abortion of a

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[173] "Truth and Politics," 242.
[174] "Truth and Politics," 243.

fetus. While the pro-life party could argue that the life of the zygote should be preserved for the fetus is considered a potential rights-bearing subject; the pro-choice party would contend that life understood as a potential does not have moral force in determining the potential-mother's decision regarding a possible abortion. Since the two parties do not have a "common meaning" of the term "life," their disagreement cannot be resolved: for they do not start from similar assumptions. If the statement were instead that "Zygotes feel pain at stage Y," it would have been a "factual truth" rather than a "claim to truth" with a possible (or mostly inevitable) normative ground. It is in this sense that factual truths bring to focus an openness to interpretation, and discussion.

To give an example of the significance of factual truths in the formation of a political space; I turn to the Gezi Park Protests that took place in Turkey in the summer of 2013. On May 28th, 2013, a group of people gathered together to protest the government's decision regarding the demolition of Gezi Park—a public park in the midst of the most famous square in Taksim, Istanbul. These people got together to reclaim their public space in the name of freedom and democracy without basing their movement on any party-affiliation-or-personal-interest. The initial reason for this gathering was to save a park, which was going to be demolished and replaced with a shopping mall. The demolition of the park pertained to the interest of the government, of the economic parties whose gain was in question, and this stood in stark opposition to the principle of preserving a worldly space in which people can come together. On May 31st, the peaceful gathering of this group was received with indiscriminate violence by the police force, which was then governed by the AKP (Justice and

Development Party): The protesters' tents were burnt down and the protesters were pepper sprayed at dawn. This is how violence *attempted to destroy* the power that emerged from the togetherness of a people. May 31st, 2013 marks the beginning of what is now officially called the Gezi Park Protest. In chapter 3, I will return to the Gezi Park Protest and focusing my analysis on its aspect of beginning and the performance of founding freedom, I will argue that these "protests" should be understood as an Arendtian "revolution."

For upon finding out about this brutality, more people came to the park the next day to stand in solidarity with each other. Throughout the first week of the protest, the mainstream media managed to not cover the news of the police violence against the protesters. What happened, in turn, is that individuals took it upon themselves to inform their fellow citizens and raise awareness about what was happening in Taksim. Let me analyze this point in light of epistemic responsibility. First, there were two factual truths at stake in the protest: the first concerns the plan of the demolition of the park, and the second concerns the attempted destruction of a peaceful gathering by the police[175]. The initial gathering was a response to the first fact regarding the destruction of a public space, and was understood in environmental terms of preserving a worldly space. The immense crowd that came to the park in the following days, on the other

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[175] As is common knowledge today (July 4th, 2015), the police did end up causing immense violence and the event ended in August 2013. The aftermath of the protests is 8000 injuries, over 3000 arrests, and 11 deaths (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gezi_Park_protests, accessed on July 4th, 2015). Amnesty International's report refers to the event as a "brutal denial to the right of peaceful assembly in Turkey" pointing out the "denial of the right to protest" (Amnesty International website: http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR44/022/2013/en/, accessed on July 4th, 2015). The full Amnesty report can be found at https://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/eur440222013en.pdf. The government reaction to the protest goes against Article 34 (as amended on October 3, 2001; Act No. 4709) the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, which states that "Everyone has a right to hold unarmed and peaceful meetings and demonstration marches without prior permission" (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey: https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf, accessed on July 4th, 2015).

hand, not only aimed to preserve a public space, but they created a political space by the manner in which they gathered together: that is, in plurality and equality. In the course of a month, the protests spread to many cities in Turkey, and gave birth to a plethora of ways to protest and resist. One of the most crucial aspects of the protests was that without having an official leadership, there emerged many public fora in which people gathered to discuss not only issues of urban planning, but also to rethink democratic practices which on my view resembled the very performance of citizenship that did not remain bound by what we may call a ballot-box democracy. I do not think that it would be a stretch to say on this note that the protest would not have gained the momentum it did, if people did not have access to the two factual truths mentioned above. The access to these truths, furthermore, did not entail non-action, but the very acknowledgment of them inspired a dialogue, which gave birth to a judgment about what was happening. All of this in turn lead people act—which was understood as a responsibility to the world.

In an Arendtian fashion, then, we can say that the principle of epistemic responsibility became a guiding principle in the action of the people, and remained manifest until the end. As I will elucidate in the next section, while we can say that the people performed a "decision to participate" based on a principle of courage, this courage was by no means divorced from a preliminary understanding of the event that was coupled with the factual truths that accompanied it. But this was only possible because people took responsibility for ensuring that basic factual truths about the events were available to the public As such, the police attempt to stop the protests backfired through the sheer solidarity and courage of the people..

At this juncture, I want to underscore that the meaningfulness of knowledge lies in its consonance with understanding: "Understanding is based on knowledge and knowledge cannot proceed without a preliminary, inarticulate understanding,"[176] that is, while one can have a basic knowledge of certain facts, these facts on their own do not entail action. The commitment to respond to the world which takes its bearings from factual truths, I contend, is what makes room for an understanding that exceeds a preliminary understanding, insofar as it is combined by meaning-creating judgment in a plurality of others. What Arendt calls a "standpoint outside the political realm," which belongs to the evaluation of factual truths, which she suggests as "one of the various modes of being alone," makes political commitment, in her terms, impossible.[177] However, conceding that the role of understanding is to make knowledge meaningful,[178] I think we can argue the opposite.

If such meaning resides in public debate, we can concede precisely that epistemic responsibility has to become manifest in a debate that is public because it responds the world in conversation with others. I agree, then, with Corinne Enaudeau's contention that "knowing is not an action but letting others know is one, for it may revolutionize the past."[179] This revolutionizing attitude, in turn, may put us in a better place to see the future as open-ended as well. On this reading, the motivating factor for the public manifestation of a shared meaning will also correspond to the relationship between factual truths and participation:

Facts inform opinions, and opinions, inspired by different interests and

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[176]Arendt, "Understanding and Politics," in *Essays in Understanding*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994): 310.
[177] "Truth and Politics," 255.
[178] "Understanding and Politics," 311.
[179] Corinne Enaudeau, "Hannah Arendt: Politics, Opinion, Truth," 1036.

> passions, can differ widely and still be legitimate as long as they respect factual truth. *Freedom of opinion is a farce unless factual information is guaranteed and the facts themselves are not in dispute. In other words, factual truth informs political thought just as rational truth informs philosophical speculation.*[180]

Arendt's claim entails that factual truths are *necessary* insofar as freedom of opinion is concerned. She understands opinion not in terms of validity, as in the case of truths, where, in her terms, the element of coercion corresponds to the validity of truth claims. "All truths," she asserts, "—not only the various kinds of rational truth but also factual truth—are opposed to opinion in their *mode of asserting validity,*" for "truth carries within itself an element of coercion."[181] Her contention simply accords with her original distinction between a rational truth, and its opposite as error or ignorance; and a factual truth, and its opposite as a deliberate falsehood. I maintain that the relationship between validity and coercion in the first case, however, it still matters how "the element of coercion" is manifested with regards to the second. The validity of factual truths may coerce one to acknowledge them, for this to happen, however, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the factual truths in the first place. I believe this is where we need to elucidate the relationship between factual truths and opinions.

First, I want to approach the status of the validity of rational truths. Here, we can say that the assertion of validity belongs to the faculty of cognition aimed at uncovering objective truths, such as the sum of 2+2=4 which establishes knowledge that has an "element of coercion": The assertion that the sum of 2+2 equals 4 is a truth whose validity cannot be contested. One either knows the conclusion to be the case, or one simply does not know how to count.

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[180] "Truth and Politics," 238, *my emphasis*.
[181] "Truth and Politics," 239.

Politically speaking, what is crucial here is that the validity of rational truths does not require an exchange of opinions. If the essence of political thinking resides in such an exchange, where, in Arendt's terms, "factual truth informs political thought," we have to ask where the validity of a factual truth resides. On my view, the most viable candidate here is political judgment, which confers upon this factual truth, meaning. While factuality has a stubborn characteristic of "thereness,"[182] its validity or meaning comes from how one understands factual truths in relation to others who share one's world. Tracy Strong stresses that "the validity of political judgments depends not so much on the actuality that and of what one knows as on one's capacity to *acknowledge* the opinions of others."[183] Strong rightly wants to emphasize that factual truth by itself is not sufficient to enable one to form a political judgment, but that the capacity to acknowledge (that is, recognize) others' opinions is what enables, so to speak, judgment formation that Arendt deems possible only in a community with others.[184] While I agree with Strong's overall contention, I maintain that this is too quick a leap. The crucial point about the validity of factual truths is that it does not entail "meaning," but it also is the case that the validity of factual truths is not self-evidently coercive.

I want to underscore, then, that while the factuality of factual truths does have an element of coercion understood by the "thereness" of the latter, in order to understand their import in political judgment, we can stress the flipside of such coercion, and maintain that in their coerciveness, factual truths demand a response from

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[182] "Truth and Politics," 253.
[183] Tracy B. Strong, *Politics Without Vision: Thinking without a Banister in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013): 360.
[184] See Arendt's *Kant's Lectures on Political Philosophy*.

the individual. If one knows certain truths about their world, these truths may (or should) become motivating factors in being willing to partake in the public realm. In this sense, not coercion, but an epistemic responsibility could give us a better understanding of courage as a "willingness" to go out into the world—and fulfill its stakes rather than self-interested motives: As Arendt contends that courage (as a most important political virtue) is not "the daring of adventure which gladly risks life for the sake of being as thoroughly and intensely alive as one can be only in the face of danger."[185] This is how factual truths about the world are connected to the faculty of understanding insofar as it aims at "disinterested" judgment in the political realm. Political judgment is "disinterested" in that it does not judge by the standard of utility—or the outcome of action; and also in that it cannot take interest in the enactment of a principle if that principle is to "transcend" the motives and goals of action.

The meaningfulness that comes about through what I call the "creation of meaning," insofar as the human being is a productive being, who can also act and begin, that is, *create* meaning; belongs to the act of political judgment. Such judgment is only possible through the accompaniment of action by speech, for a silent activity (for instance, thinking), cannot reveal the freedom of the human being, which truly belongs to the public realm. The meaningfulness with which political agents are concerned is closely related to a manner of speaking, too, for "words can be relied on only if one is sure that their function is to reveal and not to conceal."[186] The deliberate falsehood and lie can be seen in cases where political lie/propaganda covers over the emergence of a political space where political debate can happen among equals. This is

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[185] "What is Freedom?" 154.
[186] Arendt, "On Violence," in *CR*, 163.

to say that political action as a human performance requires speech not in a sense of utility where speech becomes just a means for communication, but rather the speech in action discloses "what he does, has done, and intends to do."[187]

Hence, the human being reveals her freedom only insofar as she can begin "acting," and act in the presence of others without predicting the outcomes of her action. This unpredictability is the reason why political action is not production per se. First, because the actor is not master of the consequences of her action; and secondly, because it is only meaningful insofar as it is witnessed by others.

A possible objection at this point comes from out of Arendt's text itself. This objection concerns the status of the lie (or as such the liar) in the realm of politics. To repeat, the opposite of factual truth as Arendt articulates it, is the deliberate falsehood, which is equivalent to a lie: a lie that *forecloses* the responsible attitude toward what is in common. But my contention needs qualification. First, the liar is in a quasi-sovereign position in order to manipulate the truths of the world. This seems like a "response" to the world through and through. The act of lying in this sense still points to the freedom of the human being: this is the freedom of her capacity to say/do otherwise, and hence change the world in a certain sense, or present it as it is not. This capacity to change the world is not a potency awaiting to be actualized; it only becomes manifest in the motive of the individual: The motive behind lying is to change the world—or an aspect thereof.[188] And this is precisely why Arendt can contend that to lie is an action and "in other words—our ability to lie—but not necessarily our ability to tell the truth—

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[187] *HC*, 179.
[188] Cf. "Truth and Politics," 246: "[He] [the liar] is an actor by nature; he says what is not so because he wants things to be different from what they are—that is, he wants to change the world."

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belongs among the few obvious, demonstrable data that confirm human freedom."[189]

As I have argued previously, a political action manifests freedom insofar as it can be judged by its principle. Can the act of lying, then, have a proper principle attached to it, which inspires it? If not, how can we maintain that lying is unprincipled? Insofar as political action is coeval with freedom, where this freedom originates from a worldly principle in response to the world, it seems like lying can be principled, as well. This is not so. While political action done in concert with others entails the manifestation of freedom in a spatial manner, the reverse relationship cannot be maintained. The freedom inherent in the ability to lie does not in turn entail political action done in concert with others with a view to a worldly principle—which "*as it were*, inspires from without." The liar acts in accordance with her self-interest, which is not world-oriented, but rather, if one wills, utility-oriented. Even though it aims at changing the world, lying cannot be inspired by a "worldly principle," but only by instrumental motives.[190]

Therefore, the attitude of the liar is irresponsible in a twofold manner for it not only lacks a worldly principles, but it also covers over the "factual truths" and incapacitates the individual (or an audience as such) to exercise her freedom of opinion. The lie introduces a rupture in the individual's thinking and opinion-formation[191]: the bridge between factual truth and judgment is hereby corrupted. The act of lying—whether one is the agent of the act itself or the receiving party—does not comply with

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[189] "Truth and Politics," 246.

[190] Cf. Hannah Arendt, "Lying in Politics: Reflections on the Pentagon Papers," in *CR*.

[191] I agree with James Phillips' articulation of "opinion as a construct" to be what is at stake for   Arendt's defence of opinion against truth. (James Phillips, "Between the Tyranny of Opinion and the Despotism of Rational Truth: Arendt on Facts and Acting in Concert," *New German Critique*, (Volume 40, No. 2 119, (Summer 2013): 102).

the element of impartiality, which is necessary to exercise the freedom of opinion.

If lying were potentially a political action, then this would undermine my claim that political actions require a certain epistemic responsibility. I have shown that, despite the fact that lying manifests the freedom of the individual and hence is called an "action," it cannot be a political action because it lacks worldly principles and cannot admit of the plurality of opinions. Hence, the link I draw with the help of the principle of epistemic responsibility between factual truths, political judgment and political action still holds. Hence, I maintain that lying cannot admit of the plurality of opinion, and in turn, cannot manifest a principle of epistemic responsibility.

An Arendtian "Decision to Participate"

What I have demonstrated thus far is that factual truths cannot be excluded from Arendt's account of political action, and that, a principle epistemic responsibility lets us make sense of the relationship between factual truths and meaning-creation. This principle not only sheds light onto Arendt's seemingly contradictory convictions about factual truths, but it also fills helps us complete the picture that Andreas Kalyvas has presented in his essay entitled "From the Act to the Decision: Hannah Arendt and the Question of Decisionism," where he takes up the question of decision and political action, arguing against convictions such as Martin Jay's.

Kalyvas explores the question of how we can understand Arendt's notion of the will in relation to the human being's "decision to participate" in the political. In taking up the "will" as a faculty, which allows for making "spontaneous and new beginnings," Kalyvas contributes to how we can understand Arendtian political action as a

responsible act, which stems from the *response* of the individuals to their world.[192] In his words, this account aims to enable us to "re-think the decision outside the excesses of decisionism."[193] I agree with Kalyvas on this front. However, in light of my discussion above, I am in a position to state that we can only understand this Arendtian will to decide—or the motive to decide—which is manifest as a "decision to participate" when it is coupled with the access to certain factual truths about the world, whose acknowledgement and discussion in a plurality constitutes the guiding principle of epistemic responsibility in political action.

Kalyvas adumbrates an Arendtian "decision to participate"[194] in the light of a principle of courage which Arendt spells out as "[a] willingness to act and speak at all, to insert one's self into the world and begin a story of one's own."[195] Kalyvas underscores this underlying courage with a "will to live together"[196] in the manner of speech and action in order to bring together will and action.[197] Going back to Arendt's reflections in *The Life of the Mind*, he points to the "dual nature" of the will, first as the faculty of arbitrary choice, and second as the source of action which immediately links the will to the condition of natality.[198] On my view, Kalyvas' reading is correct, and I want to suggest further that such a will on its own cannot be a motivation of action, but it needs to be coupled with some sort of understanding of the world—which becomes the condition of possibility of meaning—that enables one to see the stakes of action that are relevant for one's context and act accordingly. As Kalyvas maintains, "it is part of

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[192] Andreas Kalyvas, "From the Act to the Decision: Hannah Arendt and the Question of Decisionism," 340.
[193] Kalyvas, 322.
[194] Kalyvas, 337.
[195] *HC*, 186.
[196] Kalyvas, 332; *HC*, 246.
[197] Kalyvas, 332.
[198] Kalyvas, 334.

one's freedom to affirm or negate entering into the public realm as an equal and to partake in a common project."[199] Kalyvas' point relies on the import of the will as "a source of action" which is indispensable in spontaneous new beginnings. Kalyvas argues that this coupling of the will and decision to participate can enable us to articulate political responsibility in a clearer fashion.[200] My reading suggests that an Arendtian principle of epistemic responsibility can give us a more robust account of principled political action in laying out that without such responsibility, meaning is lost to human existence. So I turn next to the question of responsibility in Arendt's account next.

Responsibility and Meaning

Arendt contends that the faculty of understanding does not seek putting forth claims to truth that inevitably demand "agreement" among different individuals, but rather the creation of meaning: "The result of understanding is meaning, which we originate in the very process of living insofar as we try to reconcile ourselves to what we do and what we suffer."[201] This reconciliation, however, cannot remain at an individualistic level, but is only meaningful when publicly manifested in action. Meaning is what comes out of either debate or history (in the account of the historian looking back at the events). This is why we can concede Arendt's claim that "meaning, [which can never be the aim of action and yet, inevitably,] will rise out of human deeds after the action itself has come to an end."[202]

Where does our responsibility lie, then? In recovering the "for the sake of

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[199] Kalyvas, 337.
[200] Kalyvas, 339.
[201] "Understanding and Politics," 309.
[202] "The Concept of History," 78.

which" we are in the world. That is, the distinction between the "in order to" and the "for the sake of which" is to be maintained in order to safeguard against what Arendt calls the "growing meaninglessness of the modern world," which stems from the "identification of meaning and end."[203] As Arendt claims:

> [The] moment such distinctions are forgotten and meanings are degraded into ends, it follows that ends themselves are no longer safe because the distinction between means and ends is no longer understood, so that finally all ends turn and are degraded into means.[204]

What this quote suggests is that the erasure of difference between the "for the sake of" and the "in order to" has resulted in equating the meaning of an action with its end, where the action cannot be properly conceived as having an open-ended future which depends upon the understanding of a plurality of political actors.

The end of an action suggests an instrumental view of action, where we fall back into a conception of action as production that is ruled by the categories of means-end, which rests on the principle of utility. However, as Arendt wants to show, the meaning of political action cannot be found in its utility. There are three reasons for this: i) there is not one particular tangible product that can be judged at the end of action, ii) the meaning of an action does not rest on achieving the end of individual or collective interests, and iii) the meaning of an action cannot be extracted from within a "theory" which can otherwise let us deduce truths about the world.

What does Arendt mean when she says, however, that "meaning" is "general" and it is a "for the sake of" which an action is performed? Insofar as she has differentiated between a rational or eternal truth from meaning, she is not after a "generality" that can be inferred by reason alone. The generality of meaning, instead,

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[203] "The Concept of History," 79.
[204] "The Concept of History," 78-9.

can be understood as a shared understanding with others in response to the world. The generality of meaning pertains to the fact that meaning can be taken up by a plurality of people. Meaning, then, cannot be reduced to a truth understood as originary, which turns politics into an instrumental endeavour. Such a productive/instrumental understanding of politics, as we have seen, erases the in-between of a political community, where the in-between is maintained by the plurality of opinions, which cannot be directed by an eternal truth that remains transcendent to this in-between.

My reading suggests that the distinction between truth and meaning is paramount for understanding how we can conceive of an Arendtian political community where this community is not directed by rational (or eternal) truths, but can only maintain its plurality in enacting worldly principles by way of acting and speaking together. In this way, for instance, the principle of justice does not reveal itself as an eternal truth directing the community's needs and actions from above, but it becomes a principle, which can only be enacted in concrete political action thereby allowing meaningful human interaction to occur amongst individuals.[205]

Given the relationship between a worldly space and plurality, we can see that meaning can only be sustained in the presence of others. This condition of publicness is by all means in line with Arendt's understanding of the institutionalization and the constitutionalization of freedom.[206] With regard to the former: while human institutions give us the public spaces in which we can appear to one another and enact worldly

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[205] Justice, in this sense, is not the virtue of a philosopher-king/queen who has the grasp of its truth, which, in turn lets them guide the life of the community as such. (Cf. Plato, *The Republic*).

[206] I will treat the question of institutionalization and constitutionalization of freedom in detail in the next chapter. Briefly, however, what we understand from the constitutionalization of freedom is what conditions the distinction between a "permanent revolution" and a revolution whose aim lies in the constitution of freedom. In this way, the space that revolution provides us becomes the condition of integrating the principles of novelty and stability (Andreas Kalyvas, "From the Act to the Decision: Hannah Arendt and the Question of Decisionism," 329).

principles where these worldly principles underlie our meaning creation activity, publicness is not limited by institutional spaces. And with regard to the latter: even when we concede that the constitutionalization of freedom is what grants the stability of a public space, as is clear in the case of the Hungarian Revolution, even where such constitutional stability is lacking, it still does not strip the event (political action/revolution) of its meaning.[207]

Only insofar as we can have new beginnings in acting politically, our meaning-creation activity can remain intact. For the worldly principles that we enact through our actions can gain different meanings each time due to the condition of plurality of the political community we create. Understood in this way, meaning-creation aims neither at founding universal truths that transcend our worldly reality, nor is this creation indebted to an originary truth which hangs above the political space as an eternal truth regarding a worldly principle; e.g. justice.

Arendt's way of understanding meaning creation does enable us to step back from a sort of political realism in Morgenthau's terms, which sets up rules and laws for the political space before political actors can appear in this space and make sense of them. These laws, insofar as they become the means to generate certain principles, lead political action to lose its human meaning, which stems from the condition of plurality. A political principle, to repeat, cannot be achieved as the end of a law, but it can only be enacted in political action that may or may not bring about a change in law. Therefore, the significance of meaning lies in its relation to freedom, while an instrumental, utility-based understanding of action—aimed at promoting/achieving a certain

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[207]This point is the basis for my argument in the third chapter where I argue for the democratic responsibility of founding a non-violent revolutionary space by which we can understand freedom as a worldly phenomenon, conceding with Arendt's ontology of freedom as such.

truth/principle—would reduce political action to an activity of production devoid of a publicly created and sustained meaning. The relationship between meaning and freedom rests on the space of appearance, i.e., the world as constructed by human actors, where the stake of action is the preservation of this common world.

In Arendtian terms, it is up to politics or political action to preserve this space in enacting certain worldly principles, which themselves may change in accordance with our human condition that comes about from out of earthly conditions. I argued that this sort of responsibility bears a central role in Arendt's thinking, for contrary to this, the absence of meaning and the sole promotion of truth in action entails the possibility of violence. For violence does not rest upon a world-oriented principle: the goal of violence is not creating meaning, but rather preserving a certain kind of "truth," where such truth becomes "despotic"[208] and violent insofar as it erases the condition of plurality—i.e., the plurality of opinions—in human togetherness. At this point, we see that Arendt's question of community does not point to the community qua an organic totality, for instance, a nation, which entails and is entailed by a mythic identity. Rather, the question pertains to singularities that reveal their togetherness in a mode of being which makes possible the sharing of meaning(s).

The auto-telic characteristic of political action does not entail an arbitrariness, or an-archic performance. While we can concede that the aim of political action cannot be meaning as such, meaning becomes created in the performance of political action as

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[208] Arendt writes: "Seen from the viewpoint of politics, truth has a despotic character. It is therefore hated by tyrants, who rightly fear the competition of a coercive force they cannot monopolize, and it enjoys a rather precarious status in the eyes of governments that rest on consent and abhor coercion. Facts are beyond agreement and consent, and all talk about them—all exchanges of opinion based on correct information—will contribute nothing to their establishment. Unwelcome opinion can be argued with, rejected, or compromised upon, but unwelcome facts possess an infuriating stubbornness that nothing can move except plain lies" ("Truth and Politics," 241).

containing its principle in itself. This meaning is not focused on an agreement, for instance, upon what justice is, and how rules should be formed in conformity to a "truth" of justice; but rather, in acting by the principle of justice, meaning can be created without producing (or succumbing to) an eternal truth about justice.

I believe I have at this point justified why I problematized Heidegger's originary truth in the first chapter, where truth overcomes the plurality of opinion amongst individuals, which in turn effaces a shared responsibility for individuals' concerted actions insofar as political action is determined on the grounds of each and every individual's solitary resolution.

Intermediary Conclusion

Here, we reach two conclusions which can strengthen Arendt's claims about truth in politics: 1) The kind of "truth," understood as belonging to the identity of the individual and/or the community, which I have shown to be a Heideggerian truth manifested in the formation of political community, cannot have a role in an Arendtian politics, and 2) The preservation of factual truths themselves still need to be in place in order to make possible the basic conditions for freedom of opinion.

A principle of epistemic responsibility, as I have shown, is the condition of possibility of making the connection between the knowledge of these truths and the judgments and decisions of actors in a political space. In light of such epistemic responsibility, we can better make sense of Arendt's claim when she writes: "The political attitude toward facts must, indeed, tread the very narrow path between the danger of taking them as the results of some necessary development which men could not prevent and about which they can therefore do nothing and the danger of denying

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them, of trying to manipulate them out of the world."[209]

Safeguarded by the plurality of political agents, political judgment enables the "creation of meaning" in the political space, insofar as this judgment reveals the disclosive quality of political action, where the judgment does not rest on pre-determined truths. The disclosive quality of political action, in turn, points to the unique identity of the political agent, i.e., her "whoness." At this point, we can recover the "meaning" of one's "whoness" which can be manifested in the presence of others, a meaning that is not equivalent to a "truth" that points to one's "whatness", i.e., one's social identity, based on a shared affinity with others such as gender, race, nationality, etc. Insofar as the human being has the capacity to begin something anew, i.e., introduce a rupture into the world, she cannot be understood as a mere thing (a mere "what") or as a self-enclosed subject the meaning of whose existence is predetermined. The very ability to judge political action with a "disinterestedness" that takes into account an interest in the world—the common world as such—shows us how the instrumental mentality of a self-sovereign subject can be transcended. It is in this way that the attitude of disinterestedness eliminates the reduction of political judgment to concerns of private (subjective or collective) interests. As we saw with Heidegger, these interests point to the instrumentalization of truth whereby a people seeks to further an originary truth in the realization of the interests of a certain national identity or in the decision about the common good for a group of people who share affinities with each other. This sort of truth, which has the power of determining the content of political judgment, would erase the possibility of a plurality of opinions, along with the

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[209] "Truth and Politics," 254.

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possibility of disagreement.[210]

In sum, Heidegger and Arendt end up at very different "places" while both emphasize the decision-like structure of the human being, and for that matter, the "political community." While Heidegger relates this decision to the decision of the human being to be gathered by being and be resolved for its destiny, I have shown that this decision proves to put forth an inherently irresponsible political community. In reply to Dana Villa's contention about the tension in Arendt's political community, however, I have shown that Arendt's articulation of political decision, which can be understood as a decision of a "we" to *keep the space of appearance open*, depends on meaningful and responsible human togetherness. This space of appearance as such, is the world, understood as the "in-between" of our existence, which makes an "us" possible in the first place. As I have argued, this space depends upon our capacity to create meaning through our political judgments rather than to found and be founded by a rational truth. In conclusion, this Arendtian articulation of the relationship between political community and political space—where the relationship is manifested through the correspondence of our political judgments—gives us the world as the "place (*topos*) of responsibility."

In the next section of the dissertation, I want to turn to the question of the spacing of freedom in its relation to revolution and finally, to Arendt's conception of a "right to have rights." By this undertaking, I aim to show the relationship between the

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[210] As Agnes Heller remarks in her essay "An Imaginary Preface to the 1984 Edition of Hannah Arendt's 'The Origins of Totalitarianism'": "If issues are carried by a crowd *with one single voice*, differences in opinion cannot be articulated and particular groups cannot stand for the complex network of their interests" (Agnes Heller, "An Imaginary Preface to the 1984 Edition of Hannah Arendt's 'The Origins of Totalitarianism," in *The Public Realm: Essays on Discursive Types in Political Philosophy*, ed. Reiner Schürmann (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989): 266).

creation of a non-violent political space and recognition.

PART II: MARX, NANCY, ARENDT: CREATING A WORLD

Chapter 3. Arendt and Nancy: Creation of the World as Revolutionary Space

"We have to decide to—and decide how to—be in common, to allow our existence to exist. This is not only at each moment a political decision; it is a decision about politics, about if and how we allow our otherness to exist, to inscribe itself as community and history."[211]

The Question of Politics

My aim in this chapter is to take up the question of opening a space of freedom in order to put forth a political imperative of revolutionary spacing by turning to Jean-Luc Nancy's and Hannah Arendt's politico-philosophical thinking. My argument here is twofold. First, if, in Nancean terms, sense-making is the condition for the appearance of freedom, then sense-making is a condition for being-together in the world, or, in Nancy's terms, for creating a world. Taking my cue from such sense-making capacity, I will argue that reading Nancy and Arendt together can help us understand how such capacity tallies with what Marie-Eve Morin calls a "political imperative" of creating a world which is immediately linked to a "justice" that happens through the "measuring of the incommensurable."[212] I build up on this notion of a "political imperative" in order to argue that this imperative pertains to the opening up of a revolutionary space which allows for the manifestation of freedom in a spatial manner. Having argued in the second chapter for a principle of epistemic responsibility that becomes an *arche* in

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[211]Jean-Luc Nancy, "Finite History," in *The Birth to Presence*, (Hereafter *BP*), trans. by Brian Holmes and others (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993): 166.

[212]Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy* (UK: Polity, 2012): 110, 120. Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Experience of Freedom*, (Hereafter *EF*), trans. by Bridget McDonald (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993): 75.

understanding the formation of a political community, the task at hand is to uncover how this community can be understood as a *demos*, whose possibility lies in the possibility of a revolutionary spacing.

At the heart of Nancy's and Arendt's thinking lies the question of how freedom exists in the world. Articulating freedom as a worldly phenomenon, both Arendt and Nancy distance themselves from the tradition of thinking of freedom as the freedom of the will, and hence rethink or undo the notion of *sovereignty* that is linked to this notion of freedom. For them, the manifestation of freedom does not lay claim to the sovereignty of the Subject, but happens in the plurality and equality of individuals. Arendt articulates such freedom as proper to "all political life," insofar as political action "corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world."[213] Understood politically, Arendt is not concerned with dichotomies and oppositions, but with the problem of the "in-between" of our existence. She formulates the "between" as that which separates us, and keeps us together at the same time. For this reason, Arendt's political thinking can be understood as an attempt to recover what she calls the "reason of being" of the political, or what she otherwise calls freedom. As I have argued in the first two chapters, she contends that when understood in instrumental terms, that is, as a kind of production (*poiesis*) guided by the truth as such, the political space turns into a realm of violence where human freedom cannot occur.

The question that Nancy is dealing with pertains to freedom understood as a fact. The relationship between freedom and existence, for Nancy, lies in an articulation of human existence as a being-in-common, where the ultimate stake is that of an

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[213] *HC*, 7.

experience of freedom that stands against violence perpetrated against existence and hence against its being-in-common. Freedom is a beginning, and for Nancy, beginning is "the task of politics as the liberation of freedom, as the (re)-opening of the space of its inaugural sharing."[214] While I suggest that this "inaugural sharing" can be understood as an ontological event, it nonetheless possibilizes the "liberation of freedom" in enabling freedom to appear in space. I hope to offer an intervention in Nancy's thinking at this second level. But first it is crucial to understand why there is a "task of politics" in the "reopening" of a space.

Nancy's thinking is responsive to a certain crisis in the thinking freedom.[215] For even when we think freedom to be a fact, this fact gets covered over in the crisis of both democracy and totalitarianism, albeit at different levels. In the former, freedom is covered over by way of a principle of general equivalence that posits equality in equalizing difference, whereas, in the latter, difference is altogether erased in the totalization of plurality in its folding into the One. While in this regard they seem like exact opposites, Nancy's intervention brings to focus the instrumentality pertaining to both democracy and totalitarianism in their production of politics—or their destruction thereof.[216] In democracy, the end of politics is to put forth the liberal Subject whose

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[214] *EF*, 79.

[215] See Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Experience of Freedom*, trans. by Bridget McDonald (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993) and *The Truth of Democracy*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (NY: Fordham University Press, 2010).

[216] It is important to note at the outset that Nancy's thinking of democracy has undergone the following transformation. In the '80s, Nancy responded to the crisis in parliamentary democracy, he elucidates this crisis as a "politics given over to vested interests" (Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Retreating the Political*, (Hereafter *RP*), ed. Simon Sparks (London: Routledge, 1997): 127), that basically went hand in hand with capitalism—which he describes as the "general equivalence" of "ecotechnics," or globalization as an "unworld" (see Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World* or *Globalization*, (Hereafter *CW*), trans. by François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003). Later in *The Truth of Democracy* (Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, (Hereafter *TD*), trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (NY: Fordham University Press, 2010), he is taking up anew the question of the '68 revolutionaries, in order to put

freedom resides in her capacity to be equal to another in the pursuit of her personal interests, which obstructs being-in-common. In totalitarianism, politics becomes the production of a community that is premised upon a commonality, where freedom is practiced only insofar as one can comply with such commonality and its presuppositions of a total unity. If one cannot comply, then one is excluded.

For Nancy, as it is for Arendt, politics is not *poiesis*, but *praxis*.[217] While for Arendt, *praxis* is the condition of the political, hence the freedom that we share in a political togetherness which stands against any other way of being-in-common, especially in the mode of instrumentality of what she deems the social; for Nancy politics does not exhaust our being-in-common which is based on the fact of freedom.[218] Politics is coeval with the appearance of freedom in space, which for him is what ensures that the plurality of existence is never closed off. He writes:

> [But] 'seeing to it' should not be an operation, nor should the 'public' be a work, its 'justice' and 'courage' a production. A politics—if it still is one—of initial freedom would be a politics putting freedom at the surface of beginning, or allowing to arise, in the sense of allowing to be realized—since it is realized in arising and in its breaking open—*what cannot be finished*. Like sharing, freedom cannot be finished.[219]

Nancy's statement gestures towards two characteristics of freedom: 1) Freedom is a beginning, and cannot be finished. This means that freedom is not a process, in Arendt's terms, "with a definite beginning and an end," like the activity of *poiesis*

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forth a more constructive way of rethinking democracy, which does not understand itself as a form or regime of government, but an act of the people becoming a *demos*. My intervention in this chapter resembles more closely Nancy's more recent articulation of democracy, as that which "promotes and promises the liberty of the whole human being within the equality of all human beings," and "in this sense, modern democracy does engage, absolutely and ontologically, the human being and not just the 'citizen'" (Nancy, "Finite and Infinite Democracy," in *Democracy in What State?* Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Daniel Bensaïd, Wendy Brown, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière, Kristin Ross, Slavoj Žižek (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011): 59).

[217] *EF*, 78. We will come back to this point later.
[218] Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy*, 119-20.
[219] *EF*, 80.

(production/fabrication) is, 2) Freedom cannot be created, or possessed as a product or a property. The latter characteristic offers a rearticulation of freedom, which is not the property of a Subject (subjectivity) that is understood as an entity/identity/substance, closed in upon itself, standing autonomously.[220] Understanding freedom in this traditional way—or as a personal/private project—would entail a sort of violence that can emerge when and where sense *ends*, and hence where sense-making becomes impossible in the world. Nonetheless, as I will argue, the fact of freedom can always be recovered in the creation of the world—as a non-violent spacing. What Nancy adumbrates in *The Creation of the World* or *Globalization* underscores what I read as an Arendtian distancing from violence through his articulation of a non-teleological creation of the world:

> *To create the world* means: immediately, without delay, reopening each possible struggle for a world, that is, for what must form the contrary of a global injustice against the background of general equivalence. But this means to conduct this struggle precisely in the name of the fact that this *world* is coming out of nothing, that there is nothing before it and that it is without models, without principle and without given end, and that it is precisely *what* forms the justice and the meaning of a world.[221]

In focusing on this Nancean understanding of the creation of a world, which "comes from nothing," and which happens through the contingency of a "we" that itself must be created, I aim to show that the very act of creation itself is revolutionary—or political—in positing the act itself as a primordial non-violent beginning.

Coming from nothing, here, stands for an account of a non-immanent (while at the same time a non-transcendental[222]) creation insofar as creation does not have its

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220 Autonomy understood as the principle of a moral Subject, who is self-legislating.
221 *CW*, 54-5.
222 Both immanence and the transcendental will allude to a totalizing "sense" of creation insofar as the one will find its principle outside of itself (a transcendent God), and the other will find it in itself as

principle inherent in it, but rather insists in its performance, which, as I have demonstrated earlier, still belongs to a "decision," even a decision of a "we": "Decision consists precisely in that *we* have to decide on it, in and for our world, and thus, first of all, to decide on the 'we,' on who 'we' are, on how *we* can say 'we' and can call ourselves *we*."[223] This decision, then, gives us, what I deem the *contingency* of a "we," which is one of the important elements of what we may call Nancy's ontologico-political thinking. This contingency is always connected to the question of sense, to which I will turn briefly, in order to clearly demonstrate how a revolutionary spacing in fact rests on the spacing of sense.

Sense, Spacing, and World-Creation

For Nancy, existence happens in an in-between, that is between human beings, trees, rocks, tables, and so on. As such, it happens in the world. So does sense. Sense cannot be merely understood as signification, or reference, or simply as a truth, since all these notions denote a relationship between the terms, which enable the relationship to close in on itself, and hence, close itself off from the world. The aim of this section is to underscore how the question of making-sense of sense pertains to the question of *how to keep sense open*. For this, I will first elucidate how sense differs from mere signification, or an end (*telos*) to be achieved, especially articulated through a Nancean ontology of the being-in-common of existence. Sense, for Nancy, is intimately linked with spacing and responsibility. Understanding sense in a spatial (and relational)

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the realization of a potential principle (Marxian understanding of humanity as that in which "man" produces "man"). To avoid a possible misunderstanding, while one may use terms such as "condition of possibility" in talking about Nancy's understanding of the relationship between being-in-common and openness, for instance, his thinking of such relations—or of a primordial relationality—can at best be understood as a biconditional, rather than one term being conditioned upon the other.

[223] Jean-Luc Nancy, "Politics I," in *The Sense of the World*, (hereafter *SW*), (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998): 93.

manner will help us do justice to Nancy's undoing of the traditional way of understanding "relation," wherein he underscores that relation is neither given or produced in-between Subjects, nor as a Subject in its relation to itself.

The relation of sense does not relate Subjects that can subsist independently of each other, and neither does the relation itself become a Subject. The relation of sense rests on its foremost plurality, whereas relation itself understood as the Subject operates as the primary mode in which relation between Subjects is made possible. To give an example, where the relation is founded upon (and itself founds) a social contract, which becomes binding, rather than freeing singular existents in their relation; the relation of sense becomes obfuscated. When sense is obfuscated, the unrelational relationality of the social contract presents itself as the truth of political space, where this space operates not on the spacing of plurality, but a spacing out of oneness. Such spacing arrests, though not always and not altogether, the sense-making capacity of individuals who are foremost responsible for creating that space.

Sense relates existence in its singular plurality, in that plurality can be conceived of as primordially relational, and spatially created. Sense, in this sense, is different from truth. I quote Nancy in full:

> Truth punctuates, sense enchains. Punctuation is a presentation, full or empty, full of emptiness, a point or a hole, an awl, and perhaps always the hole that is pierced by the sharp point of an accomplished present. It is always without spatial or temporal dimensions. Enchaining, on the contrary, opens up the dimensional, spaces out punctuations. There is thus an originary spatiality of sense that is a spatiality or spaciousness before any distinction between space and time: and this archi-spatiality is the matricial or transcendental form of a *world*. In turn, truth is in principle instantaneous (if one wanted to pursue the parallel, one could that it is the a priori form of a universe, in the literal sense of the gathering-into-one). An ecstasy of truth, an opening of sense.[224]

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[224] Jean-Luc Nancy, "Sense and Truth," in *SW*, 14-5.

How does sense open? How does enchaining "space[s] out punctuations"? How do we have creative enchainings that operate on the openness of sense rather than falling back into a truth (an eternal or rational one), which determines any given thing? The distinction between sense and truth is thrown into sharp relief once we understand that sense can only be displayed in and through our responsibility, when there is no given meaning (or in this case, sense) to existence.

If "sense is the concept of the concept," where the former concept can be analyzed as "signification, understanding, meaning," then sense "can't simply be the concept (or the sense) *of* something that would stay put, set within an exterior reality, without any intrinsic relation to its concept."[225] Sense as "the concept of concept" is that which allows one to have the latter concept—or allows one to conceptualize—what is encountered in the world in its essence, or "whatness." Only in sensing first, that is, in entering into relation, can one move over to signification. Sense becomes, then, the thatness of, for instance, what is experienced in this tree, which in turn enables one to signify (albeit from different perspectives each time) "the tree."

This concept of concept cannot be fixed as the concept of something, pertaining to an exterior reality for it is only understood *as* sense in relation to a being that tries to make sense by enacting relations. It is understood in an opening through which existence exposes itself, and tries to make sense in and through plurality, which in turn lets us create the world. In taking responsibility for making sense, i.e., our own sense, we make sense our own. This means that "sense" does not own the one (person, individual) who makes sense: there is no equivalence or givenness between sense and

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[225] Jean-Luc Nancy, "A Finite Thinking," in *A Finite Thinking*, (Hereafter *FT*), ed. Simon Sparks (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003): 5.

the Subject.

In his *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy states that "we are meaning in the sense that we are the element in which significations can be produced and circulate," where meaning (or sense) stands for "the sharing of Being."[226] Such circulation of meaning demands *spacing* (separation, distance, but nonetheless an opening), and only through such spacing can we make sense of (co)-existence in its singular plurality. The singular in this sense can only exist (or be understood to be distinct) in a plurality, and at the same time, plurality can only exist in the singular. In other words, plurality has a singular appearance in that its experience does not pertain to numbers—but instead pertains to a singular standing-together in plurality. Since sense it not given, the decision to keep sense open here points to this responsibility (or a response), which is a being-responsible for sense. Such responsibility is exhibited in the decision of keeping sense open, which is the decision not to turn it into a fixed "sense" (given to existence) or to the "Sense" (as equivalent to the meaning of existence itself: man, humanity, God, etc.).

It is in this vein that Nancy articulates this responsibility as the originary ethicality of the human being, [or the *Dasein*]. As Nancy says, "only a subject that is entirely responsible for sense, and for its own existence as making sense, without prior subjection to any fixed sense, can be a fully-fledged ethical subject."[227] The role played by sense and its ungivenness is crucial to understand Nancy's statement. While he

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[226] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, (Hereafter *BSP*), trans. by Robert D. Richardson and Anne O'Byrne (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000): 2. Depending on the translator, "*sens*" has been translated as either "meaning" or "sense," so we can understand them interchangeably for Nancy.

[227] Jean-Luc Nancy, "Heidegger's 'Originary Ethics,'" in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002): 73.

explicitly evokes the singular subject in its responsibility to make sense, his understanding of sense as that which exceeds signification, points to the plurality of this singular subject. The subject only exists in being-in-common, and its *ethos* is already implied in its being. The very meaning of our being-in-common, of our existence; is that "we" are absolutely responsible for sense, for sense is the "response to a responsibility," and only we are "in a position to answer for it."[228]

As Anne O'Byrne elegantly points out: "Without our being there to expose being as shared, that is, without our being there to say 'we,' the fact *that* fish and fibers *were* could not emerge as the problem of facticity, which is to say, as the demand for sense. By saying 'we,' we open up the distinction between the fact that we beings are and what that means; we open up the world as the infinite movement of fact and sense toward one another and we expose the singularity of finite beings as plural singularity."[229] What O'Byrne underscores as the "infinite movement of fact and sense" emerges as the absolute responsibility for sense, insofar as facticity remains the locus of openness, the exposure of our being to the world, whenever we attempt to ascertain what our being means. This meaning unfolds only in relation, that is, in understanding relation in its very spatiality. And such a relation demands a spacing that cannot be closed in upon itself in order for the self to understand itself as a self. The self is not itself, but only to-itself as it is to the world. Parallel with this, such opening to sense is only possible in a being-in-common, in exposure, in *community* without a pre-given sense of the sense. This is how Nancy thinks we are responsible for sense, where the latter is not (a thing, a product, a given), but happen—in enchaining.

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[228] Jean-Luc Nancy, "Responding to Existence," in *FT*, 294.
[229] Anne O'Byrne, *Natality and Finitude* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010): 137.

The upshot of a responsibility for sense that always happens in-common is that this responsibility cannot be based on the sovereignty of a Subject, rather it always necessitates the very relationality of existence as the ultimate affirmation of plurality. Thus, being-in-common is coeval to such responsibility:

> Being-*in*-common means that being is nothing that we would have as a common property, even though we *are*, or even though being is not common to us except in the mode of *being shared*. Not that a common and general substance would be distributed to us, but rather, being is *only* shared *between* existents and in existents. … Consequently, on the one hand, there is no being between existents—the space of existences is their spacing and is not a tissue or a support belonging to everyone and no one and which would therefore belong to itself—and on the other hand, the being of each existence, that which it shares of being and by which it *is*, is nothing other—which is not 'a thing'—than this very sharing.[230]

We can glean two things from this statement: 1) being does not belong to us insofar as we exist, but we exist in being-in-common, and 2) space does not belong to us either, nor does it belong to itself; space exists only in the active spacing of existence. These points are in line with the critical conclusion I have drawn in the first chapter regarding Heidegger's articulation of the relationship between being, space, and Dasein.

As I have argued in the first chapter, Heideggerian decision in the political realm happens in a space that belongs to itself (opened up in and through the work of art), and it manifests itself as the appropriation of a truth, which forecloses making sense in public. This paves the way for an erasure of plurality, and manifests itself as an irresponsible decision understood as the absence of a response to the world—which contributes to the making of an unworld. This absence of a response to the world can be articulated through Heidegger's aim in *Being and Time* as Nancy understands it, where

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[230] *EF*, 69.

this aim is to show that "philosophizing is the decision to philosophize,"[231] that is, to make sense. I have demonstrated, however, that such decision to make sense in Heidegger's account ultimately becomes unworldly, and moreover, *unworlding* in a twofold manner: First, Heidegger excludes the realm of opinion from a resolute attitude towards the world. This, in turn, leads him to opt for a productive/instrumental kind of politics that rests on the appropriation of a certain truth in relation to being.

In their critical analysis, Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe take up the Heideggerian decision to philosophize as the possibility of a response to the world, in order to put into question the aim of philosophical activity as that which pertains to the deciding on what politics should be once and for all. They show that it is in this way that philosophy becomes a means to establish and achieve a political end; and it does so in a metaphysical way, that is, in becoming unpolitical itself by foreclosing the plural dimension of such activity. By contrast, their critical appropriation of an ability to philosophize aims to demonstrate a certain "co-belonging of philosophy and politics"[232] as a response to the world, in opposition to Heidegger's account.

What is important for us to note here is that while Nancy concedes to Heidegger's terminology of being, by contrast, he understands being as coeval with existence, where being is an opening to sense. For him, "to be" and "to make sense" are

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[231] "Heidegger's 'Originary Ethics'," 84.

[232] Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe state the programme of the Centre de Recherches Philosophiques sur Politique (Centre for Philosophical Research on the Political) in terms of this co-belongingness (Cf. "The Centre: Opening Address," in *RP*, 109). On the contrary, in the "Introduction" to *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger states that, "the point is not to gain some knowledge about philosophy but to be able to philosophize" (*BPP*, 2). The presupposition of this statement is the existence of a being that *can* philosophize. In Heidegger's terms: "Philosophy has a meaning only as human activity. *Its truth is essentially that of human Dasein.* The truth of philosophizing is in part rooted in the fate of Dasein. This Dasein, however, occurs in freedom. Possibility, change and predicament are obscure. Dasein stands before possibilities it does not foresee" (Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995): 19).

active verbs, which do not operate within the framework of a given being (i.e. being as givenness) or a given sense.[233] It is in this sense that existence entails the *praxis* of sense-making, and vice versa; the verbs to be and to make sense only *appear* passive when one considers them in a "given" fashion. Such appearance has repercussions at a practical level: by taking one's being as something given, one may be led to a certain kind of inaction, that is, to the refusal of indecision[234] that forms the condition of possibility of any ethical decision worthy of the name. For instance, where we think that there is a human essence produced and given to the human beings by God, that is, where the human being *is what it is*, responsibility can only exist in relation to the means of such "becoming-human" and not for the end that is to be created in action. This kind of existence is enclosed upon itself insofar as it stops, or in fact never starts, questioning the end—in this case, what it means to be or to become (that is, make oneself) human. When one thinks sense is "out there," one stops making sense. This is why Nancy underscores that "this 'making' is not a 'producing.'"[235]

The role played by the relation of sense in Nancean ontology, I want to suggest, corresponds to what he calls a being-in-common. Being-in-common, in turn, happens in and through the *act* of making-sense. For this reason, any identity comes to be recognized in the relation between singularities.[236] The role played by the ungivenness

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[233] "Heidegger's 'Originary Ethics'," 67: This is an explication of Nancy's statement that "to be is to make sense." What I mean by the givenness of sense is "signification." In the rest of the chapter, I will use "signification" in order to imply sense as a pre-determined end, or simply as a given.

[234] We have to note here that the relation between decision and indecision is a complex one in Nancy. Given the purposes of this chapter, I will emphasize the aspect of indecision as a way of existing, which simply means that existence is not decided for in advance. Indecision as such is the condition of decision. This is so because decision always happens within a finitude, which opens up to the infinite, in the task of not finishing sense—or not producing signification. I will return to this point later.

[235] "Heidegger's 'Originary Ethics'," 67.

[236] *BSP*, 7. Hence, this identity is "identification" or a process.

of relationality, as that which has to be performed again and again, is crucial in understanding any identity to be relational, as well. This performative element in construing relation, in turn, renders the form taken by our concrete being in common at any moment as always contingent. What I deem the "contingency" of our being-in-common, in turn, surpasses an understanding of any self-identical or self-certain "subjectivity"[237] that is understood to be self-productive in producing itself and the world as such.

Such dissolution of subjectivity—or the primordial relation of self to itself—puts into relief the relationality of existence, where being-in-common "means that being is nothing that we would have as a common property, even though we *are*, or even though being is not common to us except in the mode of being shared."[238] That is, being-in-common does not mean, "that a common and general substance would be distributed to us, but rather, being is only shared between existents and in existents."[239] Such sharing does not melt singularities into each other—or makes them one, if one wills—but rather, operating on the level of the spacing of the *limits* of each singularity, this sharing shows the possibility, or necessity, of *contact*.[240]

This contact makes plain the creation of the world as the opening of *finite*

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[237] Cf. Ibid. 29. Nancy concludes that there is "no philosophy 'of the subject' in the sense of the final closure in itself of a for-itself."

[238] *EF*, 69.

[239] *EF*, 69.

[240] As he points out in his "The Being-with of Being-there," "for a *Being-with-the-there* to happen, there must be a contact, therefore a contagion and encroachment, even if minimal, even if only as an infinitesimal drift of the tangent between the concerned openings," (Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Being-with of Being-there," *Continental Philosophy Review*, (Volume 41, No. 1, 2008): 10) and he gives the following example, saying, "*I* can only open myself there by opening at the same time onto other *theres*, as we say of a door that it opens onto a *garden*." (Ibid.) This opening is the gesture that implies the finitude of existence, where the stake of opening is making sense, but not a sense of self-production, where there is a given "I", which has to come back to itself from the infinite demand of becoming identical with itself (Cf. Marie-Eve Morin, "Thinking Things: Heidegger, Sartre, Nancy," *Sartre Studies International*, (Volume 15, No. 2, 2010): 44).

freedom. Such finitude can only be understood as the responsibility of sense—in responsiveness—to the world. For one way of understanding infinity/infinitude implies a certain irresponsibility, due to the fact that it always points to a kind of completion, an arrival, an end, a pre-given sense that is to be achieved, whether it be in terms of a God principle, human nature, man, history, or truth. The irresponsibility of this kind of attitude towards accomplishment lies in the indefinite deferral of such principles. It is from this deferral that this kind of infinity has to be understood through the incessant attempt at a closure of sense, where the aim of realizing an infinite principle becomes a futile and violent endeavour because it does not understand existence as belonging to exposure.[241] This is a paradigmatic violence of unworlding, which seeks to totalize the infinitely exposed existence, and renounce its experience of freedom.[242]

While existence in finitude is "infinitely exposed"[243] in being open to an infinite possibility of meaning, in attributing infinity to be something outside existence itself, we cover over the finitude of existence that is always in exposure.[244] In taking up an infinite demand from a transcendent principle, existence does not make sense its

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[241] In Nancy's words: "the meaning of the world does not occur as a reference to something external to the world" (*CW*, 43).

[242] Cf. *EF*, 17: "[But] freedom is renounced everywhere that existence, as existence (which does not always mean *life*, pure and simple, but which implies it), is subjected and ruined by a form of essence, an Idea, a structure, the erection of an (ir)rationality: in Marx's Manchester, in our 'Third' and 'Fourth' worlds, in all the camps, all the apartheids, and all the fanaticisms. But also and very simply, if we dare say it, it is renounced where the essence, concentrated in itself, of a process, of an institution (technical, social, cultural, political) prevents existence from existing, that is to say from acceding to its proper essence."

[243] In Nancy's words, finitude is "infinitely exposed" (Nancy, "Finite History," in *BP*: 155).

[244] Understood as something non-originary (belonging to the finitude of existence itself), finiteness falls into a bad infinite, and here we turn to Marie-Eve Morin's analysis: "Finiteness (for example, Cartesian finiteness) is only thinkable against the backdrop of an infinite, against which the finite thing will then be essentially regarded as deficient and as engaged in an infinite process of finition of completion. The end or finition of finiteness can only lie in the finite being overcoming its limitation through the appropriation of what lies beyond it. The telos of the finite being will thus be only a bad infinite, an infinite that is never actually present but can only be achieved at the end of an infinite process" (Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy*, 31).

own, but instead takes up such a transcendent end that needs to be realized. Yet, this realization, insofar as it would require a closure around a principle, can never be fully achieved, for sense always exceeds signification. For instance, what a people is, always remains an open question, continuously negotiated. By contrast, a productive understanding of sense conceals the responsibility of the singular existences (i.e., us, in this case) who themselves have to make sense of all these senses each and every time they/we think, in thinking who we are. What an external understanding of infinity *lacks* is the "making our own" of sense, taking responsibility for "creating" sense, or creating the world.

There is, however, another way of understanding infinity as that to which finitude is exposed in existing. Contrary to the infinite attempt of the production of sense, there is an infinite demand, which belongs to the constant *renewal* of exposure. This infinity is understood as creation—or in other words, *praxis*—which involves a kind of production of a "self," which is not given to itself, and which never completes itself, but exists only insofar as it can be recognized in being exposed to the plurality of existence. Such recognition belongs to the opening of a "self," its natality, or birth. The self, as it is "to-itself," creates a singularity who questions, acts, makes, destroys. But then again, this self is to-the-world in the opening of sense, hence it exists in relation and creates the world in and through plurality.

Against this background of thinking in finitude which exceeds philosophical demonstration, how are we to understand Nancy's claim that, "in finitude, there is no question of an 'end,' whether as a goal or as an accomplishment, and that it's merely a question of the suspension of sense, in-finite, each time replayed, reopened, exposed

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with a novelty so radical that it *immediately fails*"[245]? What fails? The suspension of sense. This suspension can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, it is the attempt of arresting of sense so that sense, understood as exterior to existence, is fixed or fixated. Such arrest happens when finitude misses itself as a target, that is, when it thinks that sense is "out there," while pretending that we are in-here. In other words, suspension fails in its accomplishment: if there could be an accomplishment of sense, there would be no sense.

On the other hand, suspension fails when sense remains in suspense, where "the new, as the very event of sense, eludes itself,"[246] which in turn allows for the renewal to always happen anew. The new, as the event of sense, is crucial for Nancy's understanding of finitude. Sense understood as being-toward (and not being-(in)-itself) demonstrates that one cannot finish sense, have it as an end, but only in the suspension of sense can we make sense.[247] As soon as we forget that we are making sense, we try to "make" sense, produce it.

Understood on its public, hence spatial, register, this Nancean sense-making capacity signals a world whose creation belongs to the plurality of existence. In arriving at an articulation of the plurality of existence as a fact itself, we can now pose the question as to the concrete manifestation of such plurality, which becomes the locus of relation itself, in its relation to world-creation that affirms this fact of the plurality of existence. In turning next to the *praxis* of world-creation, I will argue that this *praxis* should be understood foremost as a political one, which becomes the condition of possibility of making sense of the contingency of a "we."

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[245] "A Finite Thinking," 10, *my emphasis.*
[246] "A Finite Thinking," 10.
[247] Ibid.

Is World-Creation Political?

In the previous section, we saw how in Nancy's account sense differed from mere signification and reference. We also saw that the import of such rethinking of sense allowed us to understand relationality of sense anew, in such a way to arrive at the plurality of existence as a fact. Through this plurality of existence, we can now make intelligible a thinking of non-sovereign existence, which underscores what I deem the contingency of a "we."

The contingency of the "we" is an essential feature of Nancy's understanding of community, which can be traced throughout his works beginning with *The Inoperative Community* and culminating in his *Creation of the World* or *Globalization*[248]. At this point, we must admit that such a contingency of the "we" or a being-in-common would surely refer us to Nancy's understanding (or undoing) of the notion of community as that which is based on a common-being.[249] However, instead of focusing primarily on Nancy's notion of community, which has been prolifically explored, I want to investigate further his understanding of sense and the *responsibility* of sense-making in their spatial aspect as belonging to the act of creation of the world in order to show that only through this sense-making can we understand world-creation to be an imperative for us. As we have seen, in Nancy's ontology, sense is what happens in public (with others); yet, it does not necessarily denote the creation of a political space.[250] Nancy

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[248]Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), and *The Creation of the World or Globalization*, trans. by François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003).

[249]Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), and *Identity: Fragments, Frankness*, trans. by François Raffoul (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

[250] Cf. This point on the publicness of sense is most clear in *Retreating the Political*, where Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy speak of a "vigilant" attitude towards the question of the "co-belonging of philosophy and politics" (*RP*, 109).

underscores that sense is not necessarily political in order to safeguard the sense of existence from being reduced to the total domination of politics, which manifests itself in the statement "everything is political."[251]

In the following subsections, I will offer a way to rethink the possibility—or in fact, the necessity—of the non-violent creation of a political space, which can ultimately do justice to the task of creating a world in which we can affirm the *incommensurable equality* of a "we." Hence, I will attempt to respond to the question as to whether world-creation is political or not. If this world-creation denotes an affirmation of incommensurability, then we will be able to see that such affirmation lies in what I will, in the upcoming section, call a principle of democratic responsibility. This principle will allow us to translate a Nancean sense-making into an Arendtian emphasis on mutual promises that mark the revolutionary moments.

The Political and its World-Creating Capacity

For Nancy, allotting the political too much space in the world, to the point where the world is identified with the political, where "everything is political," brings to focus the problem of "total domination" of politics (*la politique*) whether it is found in totalitarian or a democratic stance towards the world. Such total domination equalizes all without maintaining/preserving plurality/difference in existence. Arendt shares a similar worry. As she makes plain in *The Human Condition*, the phenomenon of the "rise of the social"[252] marks, for her, the disappearance of the political from the world (as common space): such a disappearance happens where the social as "a generalization

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[251] *RP*, 123.
[252] See *HC*, Section 6, "The Rise of the Social," 38-49.

of the fabrication experience"[253] prevails in the political realm, where the private or collective interest of life (as a common denominator/equalizer) covers over the plurality of the world(s).[254] In understanding the world as uniform, the social reduces every relation to its utility and function, whose value resides in their instrumentality. For Arendt, in turn, "the rise of the social" brings with it the foreclosure of meaning-creation, for the space that is occupied by instrumentality cannot posit an end that is for the sake of itself: here performance becomes sheer process—whose end lies outside of itself—and every end can turn into a further means.

The closure of the political motivates for both Nancy and Arendt the necessity of differentiating between "politics" and "the political," in order to rethink the latter in terms of relation and plurality, hence, freedom in the world.[255] To this condition of plurality corresponds what Arendt calls "power," which is "what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence."[256] In a similar vein, for Nancy, power (the power that is needed to struggle for the world against the unworld of globalization[257]) belongs neither to each individual nor to the collective as a whole, but rather appears only in or as a collectivity, and hence exists only in the plural.[258] Power understood as a potential actualized in plurality jibes with the non-sovereignty that both Nancy and Arendt attribute to human action. I will

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[253] *HC*, 157.

[254] Through "the rise of the social," human existence adopts as its principle the principle of instrumentality, where the distinction between means and ends become lost, and the standard of judgment of action becomes the utility of the action. Arendt is critical of this movement of all ends becoming mere means to further ends.

[255] Kalyvas identifies the distinction between these terms for Arendt in the opposition of extraordinary and ordinary politics (See Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt*), while for Nancy it remains a question of understanding politics insofar as it can be distinguished from its essence. See: "The 'Retreat' of the Political," in *RP*.

[256] *HC*, 200-1.

[257] *CW*, 55.

[258] *BSP*, 30.

come back to this point later when I discuss what I will call a revolutionary spacing.

In the disappearance of plurality, Nancy identifies politics as an "ecotechnics" that rests on "general equivalence," which points to a similar erasure of the political through its "non-apparent obviousness."[259] Ecotechnology is understood in terms of "auto-maintaining" and "auto-affecting" in that the sense we can make of existence is closed in on itself, equating every thing by the mark of equivalence.[260] For Nancy, general equivalence marks a "culture of general calculation,"[261] understood in and through the "capital" in its capacity to equalize value in exchange (or exchangeability). This is how Nancy brings together the *unprincipled* "principle" of totalitarianism and democracy together. That said, Nancy is not advocating that totalitarianism and democracy are the same; and their main difference lies in how they think equality. Democracy thinks "equality" in terms of equal exchangeability (i.e., equivalence); where exchangeability still denotes a difference that however can be boiled down to equivalence. Totalitarianism thinks equality without difference or without plurality in its concrete existence. Both ways of understanding equality, I contend, endangers the spacing of freedom. This is so because both articulations de-emphasize the performative component of the experience of freedom.

Nancy expresses the ontological character of freedom or its *stake* as openness. This openness is namely the exposure, which relates us back to the possibilities of the singularities in their sense-making capacity. What is at stake here is not what is or what can be foreseen, but what can be/is decided, yet not through a deliberative process. Such openness does not operate in response to an infinite demand to produce man,

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259 Marie-Eve Morin, *Jean-Luc Nancy*, 99. Cf. *CW*, 126: "The political becomes unapparent."
260 *CW*, 94.
261 *TD*, 16.

community, communism, and so on. As we have seen in the previous section, this openness is the sense of finitude. Nancy claims: "the *sense* of 'freedom' is nothing other than the very finitude of sense."[262] This freedom is not an accomplishment of sense. This 'freedom' is not about achieving *something* (an end): it is neither about the means nor the ends to be decided. It is about the decision itself: namely, the decision that happens in exposure. Through this decision, static space turns into a place where the spacing of freedom is enacted. Freedom *exists* in exposure, in a sharing, i.e., in the world.

If existence happens in this decision of turning space into a place, where sharing exists as a fact, then there must be a way to understand this spatiality of sharing in political terms: there must be a possibility of politics in the very retreat of the political. I want to argue that such sharing, against the backdrop of a spatial understanding of sense-making, entails a politics despite Nancy's reluctance to affirm it. For where sharing is lost in the world, speaking of freedom becomes difficult, if not altogether impossible. This is so because, following from our analysis, freedom, even though it is a *fact* of existence—insofar as it is related to the affirmation of the incalculable—does not make an appearance (or it disappears) in the retreat of the political.

Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe discuss the "retreat" of the political in their "The Centre: Opening Address" as well as in their essay entitled "The 'Retreat' of the Political."[263] The retreat revolves around the question of "total domination," found both in, albeit at different registers, totalitarianism and democracy. They set up their investigation as a "questioning of the *essence of the political,*" which they announce

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[262] "A Finite Thinking," 14.

[263] Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Retreating the Political*, ed. Simon Sparks (London: Routledge, 1997).

will not include an "empirical approach" to the political.[264] My intervention here will be to advocate that their philosophical approach still entails a *praxical* axis to think the political: this is so because the political has the possibility to emerge (be created) through *praxis*, which on my view, belongs to the recovery of the relation of sense I previously discussed in world-creation. In order to understand what must be recovered in the recovery of the relation of sense, let us first look at closely the complication of relation in the retreat of the political.

The retreat of the political comes to the fore at two levels, both of which have to do with the question of "relation." The first one is found in the statement I mentioned earlier, namely, that "everything is political": This statement points exactly to the disappearance of relation in assigning a status to each and every thing to become "political" in and of itself—which bears within itself the impossibility of discerning the relationality between things: people, institutions, existences, cities, treatises, and so on. When each thing is rendered "political," the originary spacing that allows for the political to appear disappears. In light of the previous analysis, it is clear that the relationality that belongs to existence in exposure is what enables us to make sense of our existence together. Once this relationality is covered over, what we are left with is the second level of the retreat, which is exhibited as the "total domination" of politics, where the capacity of sense-making of the singularities is arrested by some dominant apparatus. In this sense, the "total domination" of politics demarcates the subsumption

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[264] "The Centre: Opening Address," in *RP*, 108. Cf. Simon Critchley's "Re-tracing the Political" sums up beautifully the insight of the phrase "the essence of the political" as the difference that can be traced between "*le politique*" (the political), and "*la politique*" (politics), which latter formulation is deliberatively dismissed from Lacoue-Labarthe's and Nancy's programme for the Centre in their renouncement of an empirical approach to the question (Simon Critchley, "Re-tracing the Political: Politics and Community in the Work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy," in *The Political Subject of Violence*, ed. David Campbell and Michael Dillon (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993): 73-93).

of every other relation under what is inscribed by politics, or an order that has done away with politics in the sense of the space of human togetherness.

To put in concrete terms, the total domination of politics effaces politics as a site of plural public existence, in and through so-called public policies that no longer belong to the decision of the public, but which rather regulate the public, which is supposed to be plural, by imposing one (all-embracing) relation. Nancy gives the example of "health," which in this case becomes a value (externally imposed on existence) whose plural sense is reduced to the thinking of biopolitics.[265] When politics becomes an all-embracing given (or an unquestionable fact), the *stake* of the political—that is, the spacing of freedom—is lost. I maintain, however, that we are not at an impasse: and the question is not merely how to get rid of the retreat, but instead to trace the political back to its world-creating capacity, which is different from the productive understanding that is entailed by the total domination of politics.

As such the answer does not lie in the overcoming of the total domination of politics, or as Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe put it, the stake is never the "ruling out or sublimating" the "class or political struggles," for such attitude already rests on the "presupposition of relation of subjects," which seeks the "ordering of the political as telos."[266] Their point is similar to Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism, in identifying the articulation of politics as mere management or organization, that is, what Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe aptly call, the "re-organization of the social body."[267] It is in this vein

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[265] Here we will take such "biopolitics" to merely denote the organization of "life" by politics. Cf. *CW*, 94.

[266] Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "The 'Retreat' of the Political," in *RP*, 117.

[267] Ibid, 127. Cf. HC, 28: "[W]e see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping."

that Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy refer to Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism as "total

domination" and here I turn to Arendt's text to illuminate the point further:

> Total domination, which strives to organize the infinite plurality and
> differentiation of human being as if all humanity were just one
> individual, is possible only if each and every person can be reduced to a
> never-changing identity of reactions, so that each of these bundles of
> reactions can be exchanged at random for any other. The problem is to
> fabricate something that does not exist, namely, a kind of human species
> resembling animal species whose only 'freedom' would consist in
> 'preserving the species.'[268]

While Arendt does not state it explicitly, what we see from this passage is the *fictional*

character she assigns to both identity (as the self-identity of a Subject), and to the

political community, which is artificially fabricated in and through a fiction of human

nature. Arendt's criticism signals what she will lay out as a criticism of human rights,

where these rights become both a site of saving the human being's nature, while at the

same time, leaving the human being open to destruction once she is reduced to her

"fabricated" nature.

As we have seen in the first part, in teasing out Arendt's articulation of

principled political action, which manifests human freedom in the world, we know that

the stake of freedom is not the mere preservation of life. The distinction between life

and its necessities, and political existence and freedom (in other words, action) serves

to delineate the conditions from which freedom and plurality can emerge. For Arendt,

total domination does not allow for the appearance of freedom and plurality. Instead,

the disappearance of worldly principles that promote political action altogether leaves

us—parallel with Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe's analysis—with a society that presents

itself as one big family, which needs to be managed and organized. Under the "logic" of

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[268] *OT*, 418.

total domination, such organization is achieved through "ideological indoctrination" and "absolute terror in camps."[269] In still other words, total domination hinders one's capacity of sense-making, and hence, becomes a very condition of unfreedom itself.

In light of the preceding discussion, the relationship between sense-making and freedom has become clearer. It follows from my analysis that Nancy and Arendt both advocate against foreclosure of a possibility of sense-making, and my reading justifiably suggests that one needs a *worldly space* to make sense. This builds upon what I argued in the second chapter. There I developed the link between thinking and judging and showed that the former activity needs a plurality of perspectives from which to take its bearings and understand the world. As I showed, the link between opinion-formation and judging depends on a principle, which arises from the interplay of our capacity to entertain a plurality of perspectives in acknowledging the facts that pertain to the world. The worldly capacity of sense-making is intimately linked to this capacity of entertaining a plurality of perspectives, where the latter's foreclosure can in fact be understood, as well, only in spatial terms. Arendt calls these sites of foreclosure the "holes of oblivion."[270]

The phrase first appears in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in reference to the situation of the people who are taken away by the police in order to then "disappear" forever, and also to the condition of the exclusion and extermination of the lives of

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[269] Ibid. The logic of totalitarianism rests on a nihilistic principle where totalitarian method is crystallized as "everything is permitted." However, she contends that the totalitarian method ultimately transcends "this principle" because the content of the latter cannot be "limited by either utilitarian motives or self-interest" (*OT*, 440). She claims that "normal people" cannot readily accept this principle, due to a "common sense." Nevertheless, the totalitarian experience surpasses "our powers of understanding" (*OT*, 441), where the ultimate imposition of "everything is permitted" arrests one's capacity of judgment.

[270] *OT*, 434, 459. This is the phrase that Arendt uses in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in reference to the conditions under which people lived in concentration and internment camps in the Nazi regime.

individuals in the concentration and internment camps. While Arendt contends, with regard to the former case, that the memory of the identity of the "disappeared" person cannot be taken away from the surviving world, she does affirm the existence of these "holes of oblivion." However, twelve years later, the phrase reappears in her *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, in which she changes her conviction, and I quote in full:

> It is true that totalitarian domination tried to establish these holes of oblivion into which all deeds, good and evil, would disappear, but just as the Nazis' feverish attempts, from June, 1942, on, to erase all traces of the massacres - through cremation, through burning in open pits, through the use of explosives and flame-throwers and bone-crushing machinery - were doomed to failure, so all efforts to let their opponents "disappear in silent anonymity" were in vain. *The holes of oblivion do not exist.* Nothing human is that perfect, and there are simply too many people in the world to make oblivion possible. One man will always be left alive to tell the story. Hence, nothing can ever be "practically useless," at least, not in the long run.[271]

It may be then apt to say that such holes may never actually fully exist, insofar as there may always be a survivor in order to recount the story of what has happened, and hence, open up a venue for a certain kind of sense-making. Oblivion, in this instance seems impossible to achieve; however, the sheer absence of oblivion does not by itself allow for the possibility of the creation of a world in which existence is exposed to freedom, namely, where this exposure corresponds to the condition of plurality that belongs to the relation of sense. Mere life does not suffice to do justice to the plurality of exposure. Turning to Nancy:

> [This doesn't mean] that it would be enough to 'exist' (to be there, in the most banal sense of the term) in order to think, or that thinking (in the banal sense of forming representations) is sufficient for existing. It means, rather, that the fact of existence cannot be its own truth, which is

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[271] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1963): 232, *my emphasis*.

to be the fact of a *sense*—and that the concept and the signification of sense cannot be its own truth, which is to be the sense of this *fact*. It means that existence must be thought, and thought existence, in order that it is—in order, simply to be.[272]

The freedom of existence, insofar as it can become a fact, needs the plurality afforded to it by sense. I have argued thus far that neither the total domination of politics nor its retreat is sufficient to understand the possibility of the political itself. Coupled with the above passage, my reading so far suggests that the stake of the political, however, insofar as it belongs to the capacity of sense-making, cannot be altogether destroyed: For it is related to the potential of power that belongs to the plurality of individuals who can stand together. Such power, both Nancy and Arendt contend, is not equivalent to a (violent) force that seeks domination. As such, it becomes the affirmation of incommensurability itself.

Freedom without Sovereignty: Measuring of Incommensurability

In this section, I will explain how the experience of freedom is in fact equivalent to the measuring of incommensurability, which allows for an affirmation of the plurality of existence without falling into the framework of general equivalence. Laying out the terms of existence in terms of non-sovereignty will open up a new venue for understanding democracy that gives us the possibility of articulating equality anew, that is, equality without general equivalence.

One conclusion to draw from our previous analysis of sense-making as the condition of the affirmation of plurality is that both Nancy's and Arendt's accounts of how to understand freedom spatially brings into focus the primacy of (public) freedom

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[272] "A Finite Thinking," 28.

over the liberal rights discourse. Both thinkers deploy an account of the experience of freedom, which comes prior to the formation of a rights-bearing Subject.[273] This is because they share two similar ontologico-political assumptions, which I believe need to be clearly spelled out:

(1) Freedom is a fact of experience. Both thinkers criticize and distance themselves from the tradition of thinking of freedom as the freedom of the will.[274] This distancing is due to their rethinking, or better, undoing, of the notion of sovereignty involved in thinking freedom. Thus, the relationship between responsibility and existence does not lay claim to the sovereignty of the Subject.

(2) Plurality is a fact of existence. In this sense, any sort of immanentism or transcendentalism that tries to overwrite this plurality does violence to the world.

In turn, their respective ontology of natality and finitude does not necessitate grounding in a legal (or in our case liberal) framework—that is, the foundation of such ontology does not pertain to an external constitution—but rather, as we have seen, it demands a rethinking of relation. Despite this lack of grounding, I maintain further, their ontology still gives rise to a political articulation of existence, which I have underscored as the becoming-communal of sense and the belonging to a sharing that is not based upon a prior sharing of commonality. This is one reason why Nancy's ontology does not

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[273] This is not the only similarity between the two thinkers. I agree with the contention of scholars who have referred to "Nancy's silent Arendtianism." Cf. Oliver Marchart, "Being With Against: Jean-Luc Nancy on Justice, Politics and Democratic Horizon," in *Jean-Luc Nancy: Justice, Legality, and World*, ed. Benjamin Hutchens (London, New York: Continuum, 2012): 184n25.

[274] Nancy's most explicit elucidation of this is found in his *Experience of Freedom*, while Arendt takes issue with the conception of freedom as the freedom of the will in her *The Human Condition*, "What is Freedom?" in *Between Past and Future*, and also in *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1971).

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presuppose the formation of liberal rights in order to conceive of a community, a coming-together in sameness.[275] To be precise, "[this] has nothing to do with facile appeals to self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction of a liberal or even libertarian, individualism."[276]

By contrast, the very singular plurality of the mode of being-in-common is the way in which I want to present existence as an "existence to responsibility," which becomes an "absolute responsibility." As can be maintained, this absolute responsibility is not responsible *for something*; but it is an existing as (to) responsibility. This responsibility rests on the "abyss" of freedom. In Nancy's words, "the 'abyss' (of freedom) *is* that there is something, and it is nothing else," where "freedom is not the vertiginous ground of the abyss, opened and revealed to comprehension. Freedom arises *from nothing*, with thinking and like thinking, which is existence delivered to the 'there is' of a world."[277] If freedom arises *from nothing*, and if it is not measured against something, then we have a measureless freedom in which our absolute responsibility is without measure as well. Nancy is careful to note, however that "[of course], a measureless responsibility is quite prepared to dissolve all actual responsibility by deferring it from one subject to the next ad infinitum and by drowning obligation in an absolute and ungraspable equation of freedom and necessity."[278] Nancy's account does not lend itself to such an equation, for the responsibility that is absolute exists in the exposure of "subjects" to one another, where their contact makes up the nexus of such responsibility without spacing them out singly—as though each could respond to the

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[275] *EF*, 72: "The 'us' is anterior to the 'I,' not as a first subject, but as the sharing or partition that permits one to inscribe 'I.'"
[276] *EF*, 34.
[277] *EF*, 54-5.
[278] "Responding to Existence," in *FT*, 290.

void around her.

For Nancy, if "freedom measures itself against nothing," then it "'measures' itself against existence's transcending in nothing and 'for nothing.'" Hence he concludes: "freedom: to measure oneself against *the nothing*."[279] The curiosity of Nancy's statement is most explicit in his commitment to articulating freedom as a measure against "the nothing," rather than "nothing." It is because the latter does and can only point to an absence of something: that is, a "what(ness)" that is lacking. Whilst "the nothing" is still something: it is that against which we measure ourselves in the *relationality* of our being. If freedom is this measuring, then we can assume an absolute responsibility for this measuring, bearing in mind our previous analysis of why this responsibility is absolute. It is equally important to remind ourselves of how we have come to understand freedom and responsibility for Nancy: Neither freedom nor responsibility is grounded on a lack, which strives towards completing itself. They are not defined in relation to something that would need to be produced as an end outside of itself; rather they are "relation" properly understood. It is in this sense that "the nothing" can make sense as the fundamental relationality against which we can measure ourselves in order to bring to the fore the incommensurability of existence. In my reading, "the nothing" becomes the world itself: a world that is created in and through this measuring without a measure. The measure, then, neither stems from a self-producing self, nor aims at producing such an immanent self, which is complete through enclosing itself in coming back to itself, thereby shattering the contact that is afforded to it by existence.

The political gesture of Nancy's statement lies exactly in this seeming impasse.

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[279] *EF*, 71, *my emphasis*.

What Nancy urges through this "measuring of the incommensurable" is a measure against the measure of general equivalence, which is fleshed out as equality in capitalism. I have argued already that such equality does not do justice to the plurality of human existence. The rethinking of equality requires understanding it by way of the relationship between singularity and plurality in spatial terms. "Singularities," Nancy claims, "have no *common being*, but they *com-pear* [com-paraissent] each time *in* common in the face of the withdrawal of their common being, spaced apart by the infinity of this withdrawal – in this sense, without any relation, and therefore thrown into relation."[280] If singularities are "thrown into relation" and as such "com-pear" (or appear in relation) to each other, measuring becomes measuring against the world.

Nancy underscores what this measuring ultimately implies; that is, an excess of existence: "Measuring oneself against the nothing is *measuring oneself* absolutely, or measuring oneself against the very 'measure' of 'measuring oneself': placing the 'self' in the position of taking the measure of its existence. This is perhaps, and even certainly, an excess."[281] The excess of existence can help us clarify what Nancy means by the "measuring of the incommensurable against nothing": if this measuring is what creates a world, then this measuring of the incommensurable can be read as the affirmation of plurality, which denotes "justice" itself. This is a justice that cannot be achieved or maintained in and through a predetermined action for it happens in the measuring of incommensurability (or non-equivalence) itself, in its affirmation. This is a justice that corresponds to the creation of the world. This world-creation jibes with what I will deem in the next section a revolutionary space insofar as it already implies

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[280] *EF*, 68.

[281] *EF*, 71: "As this logos of sharing, freedom is immediately linked to equality, or, better, still, it is immediately *equal to equality*."

revolutionary existence. An articulation of a revolutionary space will work to verify that a spatial appearance of freedom is not ruled out by the ontological fact of freedom. To the contrary, such spatiality can in fact be inferred from it, especially if we are to make sense of the "measuring of the incommensurable" as an actual fact of existence itself.

At this juncture, we can see that the principle of such creation can be approached from the perspective of non-equivalence, which does not entail inequality. To the contrary, insofar as this affirmation becomes what *founds* plurality, it denotes a fact of equality in the disclosure of singularities. This fact is not grounded in the equality afforded by "rights." For Nancy, instead, "to demand the just, the lively, and beautiful infinity of man, of a man or human being beyond *his rights*,"[282] is what is entailed by the freedom that we do not possess either in the form of a 'right' or in the mode of a property. Nancy's understanding of freedom invokes an articulation of rights as artificial—hence, created—where the equality that these rights evoke becomes artificial as well. The artificiality of equality, resides in its spatial performance.[283]

The key to understanding such equality without recourse to a possession of rights lies in Nancy's criticism of a sovereign politics, or a politics of sovereignty. Only in the separation of the two terms can we understand the stake of politics, where politics "no longer designates the assumption of a subject or in a subject (whether individual or

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[282] *TD*, 30, *my emphasis*.
[283] The term of artificiality denotes the non-naturalness or non-givenness of rights, or the equality that is afforded by them to human existence. The rights of the human being in this sense, if one wills, are not natural. I reserve a detailed discussion of human rights in this context for the next chapter, where I will underscore the Arendtian "right to have rights" to be operative in an account of recognition. For sake of clarity, at this point, however, we can turn to Arendt's twofold understanding of law (which is intimately linked to rights): 1) law as "nomos," which points to its "spatial significance," in the Greek *politeia* (*OR*, 186), and 2) law as "lex" (*OR*, 188), which denotes an "intimate connection" or "relation" that is created by the relations of individuals themselves. In the next chapter, I will develop this point of artificiality by articulating an Arendtian recognitive politics, which rests on the artificial equality created by the recognition of an individual's "right to have rights."

collective, whether conceived as a natural organic unity, or as a spiritual entity, as an Idea, or as a Destiny), but designates the order of the subjectless regulation of the relation between subjects."[284] In turn, Nancy postulates:

> The political order would define its regulation by an equality and by a justice that would not postulate an assumption of a subject. In that sense politics would be subjectless: not that it does not require agents, but it would not claim to form by itself a place of identity or a return to the self. It would, on the contrary, define a space without return to the identical.[285]

Identifying in his account the difficulty of this thesis, Nancy's reluctance to propose a politics lies in the fact of the very difficult task of distinguishing between sovereignty and politics, where the former upholds absolute power, while the latter can only promote power by its creation within a plurality. Having investigated a Nancean articulation of a responsibility of making sense, my reading suggests that only a non-sovereign politics can lend itself to the political affirmation of sense (as well as what comes after such affirmation), which creates a space in which other registers of existence can appear without recourse to violence:

> The condition of nonequivalent affirmation is political inasmuch as politics must prepare the space for it. But the affirmation itself is not political. It can be almost anything you like—existential, artistic, literary, dreamy, amorous, scientific, thoughtful, leisurely, playful, friendly, gastronomic, urban and so on: politics subsumes none of these registers*; it only gives them their space and possibility*.[286]

Politics, here becomes the archi-politics of opening up a space which Nancy understands as the spaciosity that belongs to political action itself. Consonant with this, if we understand political existence without assuming a priority of Subjects, we can in fact arrive at a non-sovereign politics, which creates the world as a revolutionary space.

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[284] *CW*, 105.
[285] *CW*, 106.
[286] *TD*, 26.

A non-sovereign (non-violent) world-creation is the *fact* of world-creation, which belongs to an act or a being acted upon of the world, where the limits of exposure (of existence) are made explicit in the experience of freedom. This is precisely where Nancy needs an Arendtian intervention. In turning to Arendt's understanding of the relationship between power and space, we will see next how foundation is not equal to sovereignty.

The Spatial Fact of Freedom as Relationality

I find merit, then, in juxtaposing a Nancean experience of freedom with Arendt's equation of freedom and action. To do so will allow me to adumbrate how a non-sovereign politics is possible—in fact, mandatory—in order to understand the revolutionary vein inspiring both Nancy's and Arendt's accounts.

If sovereignty implies a twofold subjectivity—in being subject to oneself and being subjected to another—Arendt's insight in denying sovereignty to the realm of human affairs proper to politics is not merely a metaphysical turning away from the position of an absolute, but the very acknowledgment of the fact of political existence itself, that is to say, the fact of plurality. In Arendt's words:

> If it were true that sovereignty and freedom are the same, then indeed no man could be free, because sovereignty, the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership, is contradictory to the very condition of plurality.[287]

In coupling such plurality with a view of freedom as what I want to call an "existence to responsibility," which is at the same understood as a beginning, we can see how Nancy's account overcomes a primacy of "rights" approach to the experience of freedom—where the rights are *granted* to (already free) citizens in their rights-bearing

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[287] *HC*, 234.

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capacity so that they can be properly free.

Instead, for Nancy freedom becomes "the right of what is 'by rights' without right: … as *fact*, as initial and revolutionary."[288] This statement is intelligible only insofar as we grant that freedom only becomes a fact in performance. In turn, the question pertains to how and where this freedom as existing to responsibility is exercised. It is at this point that the conclusion of the preceding analysis of sense reveals its import: Freedom and sense converge. This convergence is most explicit where Nancy puts it succinctly in the following terms: "In *distress and necessity* we 'understand' that this 'we,' here, now, is still and once more responsible for a singular sense."[289] I take this to be a political statement and I argue that we can qualify it as such because it links "sense-making" and its responsibility to the creation of a "we," which does not rest on a rule (or arche) of the community. Nancy's account would agree with this qualification, and I quote him at length:

> Freedom does not appear [here] as an internal rule of community, nor as an external condition imposed on the community, but it appears as precisely the internal exteriority of the community: existence as the sharing of being.
> Provided the assets or rearticulations of these notions outweigh their liabilities, we will call this space the public or political space, as does Hannah Arendt, though ours may not be exactly in accordance with her perspective. That the political space is the originary space of freedom does not therefore mean that the political is destined primarily to guarantee "freedom" or "freedoms' (in this regard it is not space that must be spoken of, but only the apparatus) but that the political is the "spaciosity" (itself spatiotemporal) of freedom. It gives place and time to what we have called "measuring oneself with sharing." It gives space and time to the taking measure of this "measuring oneself" in its various forms, an archi-politics from which it is possible to consider politics as well as to distinguish political orders from other orders of existence.[290]

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[288] *EF*, 107-8.
[289] "A Finite Thinking," 15, *my emphasis*.
[290] *EF*, 75.

As I have argued in the first chapter, such guaranteeing of freedom that corresponds to the priority of space is not what Arendt's account of political freedom advocates. To the contrary, there is no given free space, for Arendt, because spaces become places of freedom through human action. Action, the "sharing of deed and words" is "the one activity which constitutes" the public world that is common to us.[291] This is, in her terms, the "intangible in-between" of human existence: "Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever."[292] Arendt states further: "The space of appearance comes into being wherever men [sic] are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore *predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government*, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized."[293]

Arendt's conviction here is crucial. The coming together of human beings in the manner of speech and action which "predates and precedes all formal constitution" does not by any means exclude the formation of formal government, and yet, it underscores the performative moment that precedes the formalization of such spaces of freedom after the fact. On my view, the emphasis on such predating and preceding of formal structures expands the conception of what we may call an Arendtian politics of citizenship and underlines the capacity of the human being to become a political actor even when there is no polity (in the sense of an organized political structure) in place. I believe that this reading is helpful in alleviating a certain complication that may arise from trying to articulate the ontological condition of natality as performative through and through. The ability to create a space of appearance belongs to the condition of

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[291] *HC*, 198.
[292] *HC*, 199.
[293] *HC*, 199, *my emphasis*.

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natality of the human being: that the human being is a beginner by which a new thing can arrive in the world.[294] In and through her natality, the human being starts something new, which does not on its own guarantee the action's outcome. And inasmuch as natality belongs to concerted action of plural human beings, it cannot happen everywhere, and not all at once.

As a beginning, concerted action can affirm the plurality of existence in speech—and do so politically—but this action needs work for its meaning to be preserved. Insofar as human plurality is only manifested in such a "space of appearance," which corresponds to the "web of relationships," Arendt contends that, "nobody is the author or producer of his own life story."[295] For Arendt, as we have seen previously, appearing constitutes reality, and there is no reality or working principle behind what appears. This amounts to affirming that there is no "truth" behind the plurality of appearances. By attributing a truth to the oneness of community, for instance, we commit the mistake of understanding "mankind" as a principle working behind history. Given the plurality of political action, mankind is, in Arendt's words, "an abstraction which never can become an active agent."[296] Parallel with this, the human being herself also cannot be in charge of the outcome or the story of her own action, or herself:

> Whoever consciously aims at being 'essential,' at leaving behind a story and an identity which will win 'immortal fame,' must not only risk his life but expressly choose, as Achilles did, a short life and premature death. Only a man who does not survive his one supreme act remains the

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[294] Oliver Marchart refers to "natality" as a "quasi-transcendental concept" in Arendt's thinking (Oliver Marchart, "Time for a New Beginning: Arendt, Benjamin, and the Messianic Conception of Political Temporality," in *Redescriptions: Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History*, Volume 10 (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006): 135, 142).
[295] *HC*, 184.
[296] Ibid.

indisputable master of his identity and possible greatness, because he withdraws into death from the possible consequences and continuation of what he began.[297]

Prima facie, Arendt's claim can be read as an articulation of "immortality" that is not factually afforded to human beings by their mortal existence.[298] She articulates it in response to what she calls the "Greek solution" to the "frailty of human affairs" where this frailty is central in understanding the unpredictability of the outcome of political action. Action, as Arendt understands, has three characteristics: unpredictability, boundlessness, and anonymity of its actors (insofar as it happens in a plurality of individuals).[299] The last characteristic of anonymity, I contend, underscores the non-sovereignty of the human being in the public realm (different from the mastery experience by a producer working upon material to produce a predetermined outcome).[300]

The unpredictability and boundlessness of action gives Arendt the argumentative tools to criticize the sovereignty-based understanding of human action, which she calls the "traditional substitution of making for acting."[301] As I laid out the origin of her criticism of this substitution in the second chapter, namely, that the instrumental and sovereignty-based understanding of action emphasizes a truth that lies behind the political community. Such truth gives the community shape, molds it into what it is according to the knowledge, as I outlined, which Plato regards the knowledge of the good in his *Republic*. Hence, in emphasizing the Platonic distinction between the

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[297] *HC*, 193-4.
[298] Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy emphasize this point of her argument, while however not paying enough attention to the immortality created in the story that is enacted after the action, which is what enables the fleeting moment action to be preserved and contribute to the world we share in common.
[299] *HC*, 220.
[300] For Arendt's discussion of the incompatibility between freedom and sovereignty: *HC*, 234-5.
[301] *HC*, 220.

two modes of action, adumbrated as "*archein*" (beginning) and "*prattein*" (achieving),

Arendt succeeds in making plain the internal contradiction of conceiving of acting as

making, which inevitably turns action into a violent activity, which as we have seen,

has the danger of foreclosing the plurality of existence.[302]

Going back to the articulation of freedom as a fact, then, the difficulty that

Nancy's analysis faces may be overcome by this Arendtian insight of realizing freedom

in space that is first and foremost political and that subsists only through its very

creation. I maintain that while the scholarship generally agrees on the fact that Nancy

does not first and foremost want to propose a "politics,"[303] there is still reason enough

to expose a revolutionary spacing (as "archi-politics") from his finite line of thinking

about freedom. At this point, it is easier to see that Nancy's project understood in terms

of the fact of existence as plurality seems very much in line with how Arendt articulates

freedom: as an occurrence in space, in public, and only meaningful with others.

Arendtian plurality, however, is a fact of existence that belongs to political

action in the accompaniment of speech and deed, where the latter two reveal the

"unique distinctness" of individuals.[304] Such plurality needs a space to be manifest, an

"in-between." Arendt articulates two in-betweens that belong to the world: firstly, the

"physical, worldly in-between," which lays "objective" matters to be discussed, and

secondly, the discursive, more "subjective" and "intangible in-between," which takes

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[302] *HC*, 189.

[303] Cf. Simon Critchley, "Retracing the Political," and Oliver Marchart, "Being With Against: Jean-Luc Nancy on Justice, Politics and Democratic Horizon." See also Christopher Watkin, "Being Just? Ontology and Incommensurability in Nancy's Notion of Justice," in *Jean-Luc Nancy: Justice, Legality, and World*, ed. Benjamin Hutchens (London, New York: Continuum, 2012): 27. See also Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy*, in which Nancy himself stresses that this metaphysics does not entail a politics.

[304] *HC*, 176.

place directly between human beings.[305] Indeed, for Arendt, plurality denotes relationality.[306] Similarly, relation, we can say, exists at two levels for Nancy. On the one hand, being-in-common is relation, that is, "existence is co-existence."[307] While at the same time, our relationality is manifested in our being-in-common, and in each instance we decide to make sense of our existence.[308] For Nancy, "nothing finishes with the decision, but everything begins."[309]

As Catherine Kellogg explains in her "Freedom After the Law," "for both Arendt and Nancy, it is only in relation to others that freedom occurs, which is to say, freedom depends on a certain context, situation or set of enabling conditions."[310] Freedom's dependence on a "context, situation, or set of enabling conditions" is itself conditioned upon human existence in exposure—its relationality. It is this relationality that calls for a decision of existence, which happens in space:

> [This] spatiality, or spaciosity, is the space of freedom, inasmuch as freedom is, at every moment, the freedom of a free space. Which means that it constitutes the spatializing or spacing essence of freedom. … [This] spatiality is not so much *a given free space*—different in this from Hannah Arendt's public space, which takes the form of an institution or of a preliminary foundation, unless it should be understood as the very

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[305] Ibid. 182-3.

[306] For Arendt, even self-relation denotes a plurality, and this is one of the more curious similarities between Nancy and Arendt, especially considering how Nancy understands existence as "singular plural" existence. The similarity of Nancy's account to Arendt's has not gone unnoticed. See footnote 63 above.

[307] *CW*, 73. He further distinguishes co-existence from two ways of understanding togetherness: namely, integration, which dissolves existences into one another, and juxtaposition, which abides by an irreducible exteriority (Ibid. 110).

[308] *TD*, 18: "[Sense] as an outside that is open right in the middle of the world, right in the middle of us and between us as our common sharing (out). This sense is not the conclusion of our existences; it does not subsume them under a signification but simply opens them to themselves, which is also to say, to one another." Sense is open. It is out in the open. It is between existents, right in existence. Sense is not truth. The opening of sense is our opening onto each other. This sense as opening is our *responsibility to and for responsibility*; i.e., absolute responsibility, which only exists in our being-in-common.

[309] *EF*, 145.

[310] Catherine Kellogg, "Freedom after the Law," in *After Sovereignty*, ed. by Charles Barbour and George Pavlich (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2010): 75.

foundation of this shared areality—as it is the gift of a spatio-temporality (if we may speak thus), which is engendered (gift of the first schema— schema of the gift itself = offering?) and which is followed by the very liberation of space—and as the exact reverse of its devastation.[311]

The ambiguity of Nancy's interpretation of Arendt's articulation of free space can give us some pause here. After all, if Arendt is indeed talking about "a given free space," it may not be easy to see the similarity we initially set out to demonstrate between their accounts. I have already argued in the first part of the dissertation, that the freedom of the space is not prior to the action enacted in that space, which itself creates the space of freedom. I contend, moreover, that Nancy's claim has the potential of undoing itself when we recognize that the free space understood as a "foundation of this shared areality" depends on the relational element by which a public space is formed for Arendt.[312] Nancy's mistake here lies in his overlooking the difference between what he calls a "form of an institution" and the principles that are enacted in founding such institutions by a plurality of individuals in shared existence. The freedom of the free space in Arendt's account can only be manifested in *praxis*: that is, a principled political action. To give an example, while the university can be understood to be a free space, the freedom of the institution is not "of the institution" but of the decision of its members to keep this space free. This Arendtian decision itself is enacted in relation— in being-together in a space: a "space of appearance."[313] This space of appearance is coeval with the performance of founding freedom, and I will turn next to this aspect of

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[311] Nancy, *EF*, 145, *my emphasis*.

[312] I suggest that Philip Armstrong's account (2009) has a similar underlying insight. In his analysis of the 1999 demonstrations against the World Trade Organization "WTO" that took place in Seattle, he stresses the Arendtian dimension of the event in the emergence of a 'space of appearance' that does not precede the act of spacing itself (Philip Armstrong, *Reticulations: Jean-Luc Nancy and the Networks of the Political* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2009): 233).

[313] This point relates back to the conclusion of the second chapter where I demonstrated a new conception of an Arendtian principle of epistemic responsibility, which accompanies the decision to participate in the public realm.

founding freedom in order to show that this in fact is what gives rise to a principle of democratic responsibility.

Founding Freedom: Revolution and Democratic Responsibility

The upshot of Nancy's reflections on the possibility of sense-making and world-creation rests on the affirmation of plurality, and hence equality (not fraternity) in a public space. In this section, I aim to show that coupled with Arendt's insight into the formation of a space of appearance the power that is actualized through such togetherness entails a political imperative. This political imperative can be understood as based on a principle of democratic responsibility, which elucidates the co-respondence of existence that Nancy expresses in the following way:

> In [such] co-respondence—which defines our co-responsibility—there must be something that does not close the exchange but, on the contrary, institutes and relaunches it. There must be voices, timbres, and singular modes. These voices are in themselves, in their co-respondence, the creation of sense. **Democratic responsibility is responsibility for such a creation**. But immediately and from the outset, this means that democracy itself is not something given, an available sense. It is responsible precisely for what is not given: the *demos*, the people, the ones with the others.[314]

The creation of sense, as I have argued, happens in a being-in-common that makes sense of the fact of existence. The absolute responsibility in enacting this capacity for sense-making, already gestures towards a politics in the spacing of such sense. This gesture becomes clearer where Nancy explicitly states that, "there must be voices." The voices already imply plurality, and in order for this plurality of voices to exist, I maintain, there must be speech. The co-respondence (co-responsibility) covers the exact terrain of creating politics—in creating (or becoming) a *demos*—precisely in the

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[314] "Responding to Existence," 299, **my emphasis.**

absence of an 'ideal' or a 'value' on which that *demos* can ground itself. The existence of such *demos* makes possible the 'self' that is in question, or hidden in the question of freedom, or of sense. But where does this voice appear? Or more importantly, which voice counts? Simply put, the voice that is not violated counts. The capacity to have a voice corresponds to the possibility of becoming a public person, of appearing in space. In Arendt's terms, *per-sonare* already denotes the resonating of the voice, hence a space to be heard.[315] Insofar as this voice belongs to the individual in her publicness, it is a voice that pertains to the creation of the world.[316]

While the world is created in the spacing of freedom, the space turns into a place, as I have mentioned earlier, in a decision of existence. I suggest that reading Nancy's statement through an Arendtian lens will bring to focus the move from the capacity of sense-making to that of mutual promises, which is the moment of the transition from a space to place of human togetherness. Understanding democratic responsibility under the light of mutual promises enables us to think democracy outside of the terms of a ballot-box democracy—tied to a democratic institution for its existence—and puts the focus on the very performance of becoming a *demos*. Taking seriously Nancy's identification of "the hope for a revolution" and "a re-creation of the world,"[317] we can rearticulate the aim of revolution as world-creation (or its re-creation) as democratic performance. If indeed, there is "nothing that pre-exists creation," then, this re-creation happens at a spatial level, insofar; as "it is the act of appearing."[318]

In order to focus on the act appearing of such world-creation, I want to turn my

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[315] *OR*, 107, 293n43.
[316] For the time being, however, I will leave the import of having a voice undeveloped only in order to take it up in terms of "listenability" in the next and concluding chapter.
[317] *BSP*, 41.
[318] *BSP*, 16.

attention to Arendt's elucidation of beginning and foundation of freedom in her *On Revolution*. In so doing, I will argue that the performative aspect of beginning and founding can help us develop the scope and limit of the responsibility of the creation of the world in common that is found in beginning something new. In still different terms, I propose that we think this creation—or (re)creation—as a *democratic* responsibility. I contend that this performative aspect of revolution in Arendt's account ultimately agrees with Nancy's articulation of democracy as a "spirit of democracy," which does not reside in its "form, institution, or regime."[319] This spirit, or sense of democracy opens up a new venue for the political to emerge through the recognition of what Nancy calls the "possibility of being altogether, all and each one among all"[320] without recourse to a legal framework. For Nancy, politics (*la politique*) itself is not responsible for the content of such appearance[321], but the public responsibility that resides in the decision of creating a world brings to home the retracing of the political in its world-creating capacity.

Revolution as Beginning and Beginning as Revolution

While Nancy does not concede Arendt's influential analysis of revolution in her *On Revolution,* it is precisely in this text that Arendt explicitly tackles the curious question of space as a guarantor of freedom and arrives at the negative conclusion of the incapacity of space itself becoming such a guarantor per se. Freedom has to become a spatial fact in order to be understood as a fact, and as such it only resides in the

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[319] *TD*, 15.
[320] *TD*, 14.
[321] *TD*, 17. While I believe that it is not easy to dismiss to politics as such in preserving such a creation, here my aim is to focus on how we can rethink the act of creation itself without thinking about creation in terms of production.

performance itself.

However, before turning to her account in *On Revolution*, I want to take up her "Epilogue" of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* again, which I have explored in its relation to the import of factual truths in the previous chapter. For the purpose of this section, I want to underscore Arendt's contention about the Hungarian Revolution that, "what had started as a student demonstration had become an armed uprising in less than twenty-four hours."[322] This is to say that the space of appearance had grown: more people responded to what was happening in their world. She notes further that

> from this moment onward, no programs, points or manifestos played any role; what carried the revolution was the sheer momentum of acting-together of the whole people whose demands were so obvious that they hardly needed elaborate formulation: Russian troops should leave the territory and free elections should determine a new government. The question was no longer how much freedom to permit to action, speech and thought, but how to institutionalize a freedom which was already an accomplished *fact*.[323]

The upshot of Arendt's reading is then that the two levels of revolution, that of liberation and the establishment of freedom coincided in one and the same act as soon as freedom had appeared in the spatial experience of a plurality of people thanks to the guiding principle of epistemic responsibility I established in the previous chapter. The moment of rupture in the revolution—which is not an absolute rupture, but a moment, in an Arendtian fashion, between past and future—happens at an ontological level of interrupting the historical trajectory of an occupied people. The rupture is ontological in that it transforms an occupied people into a *demos*, and such a change is reflected at a political level: The world is created (or re-created) for the sake of the world itself.

What I want to hold on to in Arendt's articulation of the Hungarian Revolution,

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[322] *OT*, 496.
[323] *OT*, 496, my emphasis.

however, is the distinction between the institutionalization and the constitutionalization of freedom. As she contends, the latter was suppressed at the end of the revolution, where immense violence was undertaken against the oppositional people by the police forces. Nevertheless, the institutionalizing of freedom, as a performance, pointed to that initiatory moment where freedom as a fact did make sense to the people who were denied their bearings in the world because of propaganda and indoctrination. This initiatory instituting of freedom was sufficient to understand the revolution as a successful one. The instituting of freedom as a performance puts into relief the overly legalistic reading that may be found in Arendt's statement in *On Revolution*, where she argues that the "central idea of revolution" is "the foundation of freedom, that is, the foundation of a body politic which guarantees the space where freedom can appear."[324] In emphasizing the condition of power, which corresponds to the creation of a 'body politic,' we can see that this body politic is what lets relation appear amongst individuals, rather than regulating the relationship between pre-conceived Subjects.

The import of this performative aspect of the foundation of freedom, which can be found in her main line of argument—that is, to differentiate the principles of revolution (such as public equality, public freedom, public happiness) from a pre-determined end of alleviating suffering, or solving "the social question"[325] by overcoming misery—still follows the trajectory of her distinction between power and violence that she articulates in *The Human Condition*. Whereas power is a potential that

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[324] *OR*, 125.
[325] Richard Bernstein explains "the social question" as "the attempts to confront and solve the question of the existence of poverty. More precisely—since poverty in one form or another has always existed—the social question is the growing public recognition of the ignominy of mass poverty and the need to eliminate it" (Richard J. Bernstein, "Rethinking the Social and the Political," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, (Volume 11, Number 1, 1986): 115).

is actualized by a plurality of individuals, and is legitimate insofar as it complies with such plurality (and equality) of individuals; violence for her, remains instrumental, hence in need of justification, and at best pre-political despite her own admission that violence and power usually appear together.[326] It is this distinction between power and violence, which lets her so starkly distinguish between the American Revolution and French Revolution, as we will see in the following.

Arendt's thoughts on revolution are far from simple and straightforward and many scholars have attempted to do justice to her thinking on several different registers including especially the relationship between the revolution and law, and the constitution and political freedom.[327] On my view, one of the reasons of the well-deserved attention her work received is due to its conclusion, where Arendt discusses the "lost treasure" of the revolution. The lost treasure of the revolution is the revolutionary spirit, that is, the capacity to begin. The treasure, however, is not lost, for it can always be recovered—in the reappearance of the principles she discusses—principles that accompany the capacity for beginning something anew in and through political action.[328]

In order to articulate the aforementioned principle of democratic responsibility, which I contend belongs to the act of world-creation, I choose to focus mainly on Arendt's articulation of revolution as both a beginning and a foundation. My emphasis

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[326] "On Violence," in *CR*, 151.

[327] See Michael A. Wilkinson, "Between Freedom and Law: Hannah Arendt on the Promise of Modern Revolution and the Burden of 'The Tradition'," and Emilios Christodoulidis and Andrew Schaap, "Arendt's Constitutional Question," in *Hannah Arendt and the Law*, ed. Marco Goldoni and Christopher McCorkindale (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2012); and also Jeremy Waldron, "Arendt's Constitutional Politics," and Albrecht Wellmer, "Arendt on Revolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana R. Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[328] Cf. Following Arendt (*OT*, 478) Bernstein underscores a similar point in stating that the "revolutionary spirit and its lost treasure" is in fact, natality (Bernstein, 127).

will allow me to think with and against Arendt a possible political imperative that follows from her more ontological articulation of the "revolutionary spirit," as the spirit of the new.[329]

If we keep to Arendt's argument that what is "crucial, [then], to any understanding of revolutions in the modern age is that the idea of freedom and the experience of a new beginning should coincide,"[330] we need to unpack how freedom and beginning can indeed coincide in the revolutionary act. There are two ways to approach this relationship between freedom and beginning: 1) revolution is a "beginning,"[331] and 2) it is the foundation of "freedom."[332] In turn, such foundation can be understood at two levels as well. On the one hand, it is the appearance of freedom itself, while on the other it is the foundation of a constitution: both understood as constituting a space of plurality, and as constituting a text. For Arendt, both senses of the constitution are related to one another by way of what she calls "mutual promises"[333] that are enacted in the constituted space of plurality:

> The grammar of action: that action is the only human faculty that demands a plurality of men, and the syntax of power: that power is the only human attribute which applies solely to the worldly in-between space by which men are mutually related, combine in the act of foundation by virtue of the making and keeping promises.[334]

This passage illustrates both the ontological (i.e. the capacity to act) and the

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[329] While focusing on the declarations of human rights, Ayten Gündoğdu concedes that a declaration is already a revolutionary invention of democratic politics, which, in words, can "institute a new order, change existing conceptions of power, and recognize social relations" (Ayten Gündoğdu, "A Revolution in Rights: Reflections on the Democratic Invention of the Rights of Man," *Law, Culture, and the Humanities*, (Volume 10, No. 3, October 2014): 368).

[330] *OR*, 29.

[331] In Arendt's words: "Only where this pathos of novelty is present and where novelty is connected with the idea of freedom are we entitled to speak of revolution" (*OR*, 34).

[332] *OR*, 125, 142, 154.

[333] For Arendt, I contend that the Mayflower Compact marks the initial moment for understanding the power of mutual promises, and the other mark of power is the written Constitution itself.

[334] *OR*, 175.

performative (i.e. power enacted in action) conditions of human togetherness that makes foundation possible. In Arendt's words, the latter emphasis on the faculty of making and keeping promises also denote "an element of the world-building capacity of man."[335]

It is by way of this "element of the world-building capacity" that she contends that the American Revolution "did not break out but was made by men in common deliberation and on the strength of mutual pledges," and "the principle that came to light [...] was the interconnected principle of mutual promise and common deliberation."[336] My reading suggests that this is precisely where we can see the import of becoming a *demos* in responding to the world for the sake of the creation of the world itself. The "mutual promises" mark not only the temporality, but also the spatiality in which the revolution was grounded. The founders, during the Mayflower Compact, appeared to one another, which rendered coeval the foundation and the performance of instituting freedom, before constitutionalizing it. I maintain that the emphasis on the mutual promises and common deliberation of a plurality of individuals can be underscored as Arendt's solution to what we may call a "constitutional paradox," which inheres in the unconstitutionality of the constituent power itself. This brings us to the relationship between power and legitimacy. Power is necessary for what I have called the act of "world-creation," and power's transformation into authority. This point is tricky, and it invites the question of the legitimization of power. Legitimization here happens without an appeal to a divine absolute or to nature, even though the need for the absolute does not vanish altogether. For Arendt, the absolute resides in the principle

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[335] *OR*, 145.
[336] *OR*, 213-4.

of action, as I have already noted in the second chapter, "from which the beginning is to derive its own validity and which must save it."[337] In this sense, I want to underscore that the absolute here becomes bound to the promise that is made and kept between people—the promise understood as the decision to keep a space of freedom open. Yet, power is only potential and similarly the spacing of freedom requires concerted action on the part of a plurality of individuals. A performative reading of this sort of the import of mutual promises sheds light on her criticism of the French revolutionaries, where she deems that the

> French Assembly who had declared themselves a permanent body and then, instead of taking their resolutions and deliberations back to the people, cut themselves adrift from their constitutent powers, did not become founders or founding fathers, but they certainly were the ancestors of generations of experts and politicians to whom constitution-making was to become a favourite pastime because they had neither power nor a share in the shaping of events. It was in this process that the act of constitution-making lost its significance, and that the very notion of constitution came to be associated with a lack of reality and realism, with an over-emphasis on legalism and formalities.[338]

I believe at this point, we are able to argue that while Arendt focuses on the constitution of freedom by the act of the constitution, which founds political freedom as the "aim of revolution,"[339] she still regards the ontological root of the founding freedom—that is the act of beginning—to be a necessary component in understanding revolutionary

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[337] *OR*, 212. While he does not offer a full-fledged argument for his suggestion, Wilkinson notes in a similar fashion, that: "[A]lthough the founders of the American republic could not escape the traditional imperative conception of law, they had stumbled on the answer to the vicious circle of law's foundations. The act of engaging with one another through promises and mutual ties, reminiscent of the Roman *lex*, and which constituted the 'new beginning' of the republic, carries its own *principle* with it" (Wilkinson, 2012: 57). Wilkinson further states: "The vicious circle of the legality of the new law and the legitimacy of the new power is tamed not by positing an *absolute*, but by developing a *principle* from the act of beginning itself" (Ibid. 59). By contrast, I maintain that the principle inherent in the beginning of the act (i.e. the revolution) becomes an absolute by which the revolution can be judged.

[338] *OR*, 126.

[339] *OR*, 35.

action.

If we understand Arendt's conviction that it is power, which is enacted in plurality that legitimizes law; then we can see that the attempt to have law constitute power instead displaces the initiatory power of the people who come together to found freedom. For this reason:

> The men of the French Revolution, not knowing how to distinguish violence and power, and convinced that all power must come from the people, opened the political realm to this pre-political natural force of the multitude and they were swept away by it... The men of the American Revolution, on the contrary, understood by power the very opposite of a pre-political natural violence. To them, power came into being when and where people would get together and bind themselves through promises, covenants, and mutual pledges; only such power, which rested on *reciprocity and mutuality*, was real power and legitimate...[340]

Arendt's point is intricate. Her reading of the French Revolution is critical of the element of a so-called "general will" which unites the will of the many.[341] Such a "general will" that founds power not only implies (or rather, necessitates) a sovereign people, but also the arbitrariness of such foundation. By contrast, foundation understood as emerging through the power that rests on "reciprocity and mutuality" is not grounded in sovereignty (absolute and arbitrary) but in the reciprocity of human action, which puts forth *equality* as a fact of such foundation. In this sense, revolution and "its actual end,"[342] lies in the foundation of political freedom, which resides in the capacity of the "I-can," rather than in the "I-will."[343] For Arendt, the possibility of the former is conditioned by the human being's ability (understood here as capacity) to act, which, underlining the relational character of the ability to act, entails action in concert

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[340] *OR*, 181, *my emphasis*.
[341] *OR*, 78-9.
[342] *OR*, 149.
[343] *OR*, 150.

with others. The "I-can," then, is manifested in the plurality of individuals who act to change the world, by taking the world up anew through worldly principles in contradistinction to private/collective interests, whereas the "I-will" foregrounds sovereign decision.

At this point, one needs to remember what is at stake in all this reformulation of freedom and a corresponding political imperative, which I have cashed out in terms of an opening of space. What is at stake is that the getting together of a plurality of individuals in a space, where the question of beginning comes to the fore, becomes a revolutionary act itself.

An indication of this fact is the co-appearance of freedom and equality in both Arendt's and Nancy's accounts. If such manifestation puts forth freedom as an affirmation of the incommensurability (i.e. the plurality and equality) of existence, we can see then more clearly the force of a non-violent attitude towards the world that is of utmost importance in realizing such affirmation. This non-violence, once again, is not solely the absence of physical violence, but also the absence of any act that would foreclose the plurality of senses in the world, thus transforming the world into an unworld. It is for this reason that I underscored the fundamental spatiality of relation (i.e. relationality) in setting up a political imperative of world-creation as a principle of democratic responsibility.

In Arendt's words, "freedom in a positive sense is possible only among equals, and equality itself is by no means a universally valid principle but, again, applicable only with limitations and even within spatial limits."[344] Revolution, so understood, opens up a space for novel action to occur. And this is the space of plurality, or in

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[344] *OR*, 275.

Nancy's terms, we can understand it as the space for the affirmation of incommensurability. What differentiates the American from the French Revolution was its concern for founding the political—as a site of plurality—rather than letting the social overwhelm its worldly "inter-est"[345] through private or collective interests.

It is in this sense that revolution, for Arendt, aims at the "foundation of freedom." Her judgment of the particular event of the French Revolution is that the revolution's outcome defeated its purpose of manifesting human freedom in the constitutional act. The resulting violence and terror in the aftermath of the French Revolution is due to mistaking the aim of the revolution for the alleviation of social misery.[346] Arendt's judgment becomes more tenable if we accept her distinction between the activities of *praxis* and *poiesis* (production), but it is not altogether necessary. I believe it is possible to find a sliver of freedom—following from the previous discussion, indeed, freedom as a fact—in the initial coming-together of individuals of the French Revolution to claim what they regard as liberation. Such liberation can be understood as a viable first step in creating a public realm where it did not exist before.

Does Arendt's account comply with such an understanding of the spacing of freedom? In order to answer this, we need to invoke the implications of liberation and freedom, as understood through their different corresponding registers of violence and power. Arendt differentiates between freedom and liberation, contending that the latter can be the aim of rebellion, while it is never a guarantee for freedom. As such,

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[345] In Arendt's words, the "inter-est" is "which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together" (*HC*, 182). Cf. *OR*, 86.

[346] I want to point out that Arendt does not give us sufficient tools to assess the causal role the revolution's aim played in its ultimate outcome. I leave this task to the philosopher of history.

liberation can be understood as the liberation from oppression, as that which can reclaim a space, in which one can appear to others, but this only in order to regain an essence that one has lost. One is liberated insofar as one is liberated from the monarch, the dictator, the totalitarian regime, and so on. So one can rebel, and rebellion too happens with others, for instance, to gain certain "rights" in order to be able to count. There are two things to note here. First, rebellion, inasmuch as it happens with others, nevertheless happens "against" others. And secondly, the rights to be gained by the end of rebellion itself do not guarantee freedom understood spatially.

In still other words, rebellion so oft misses out on the possibility of creating a world in which human beings can appear in their plurality. Moreover, Arendt remarks that, "there is nothing more futile than rebellion and liberation unless they are followed by the constitution of the newly won freedom."[347] It is for this reason that the American Revolution becomes an example (retaining an exemplary validity) for the modern revolutions. In the above statement, by constitution, Arendt means literally the written text, while she is also careful to note that the Founding Fathers were aware that "the fact that the actual content of the Constitution was by no means the safeguard of civil liberties but the establishment of an entirely new system of power."[348] While this point relates to a certain commitment to constitutionalism in Arendt's argument, I will underscore the primacy of political freedom against civil and political rights that are formulated in a constitution.

Political freedom is the very appearance of plurality, which manifests itself most acutely in the capacity of revolution, as the *foundation of freedom* that is initially

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[347] *OR*, 142.
[348] *OR*, 147.

manifested in acting in concert with others. At this juncture, I maintain that the possibility of revolution, or the spacing (founding) of freedom, allows us to work out a third way in order to understand such foundation in the revolutionary act. This possibility of revolution will put into relief two conclusions that Arendt arrives at with regard to the French and American Revolutions. For the former, the problem belonged to the locating of power in the will of the people. For the latter, I propose that we take seriously Arendt's following statement, despite her appraisal of the foundation of the republic by the end of revolution:

> There was no space reserved, nor room left for the exercise of precisely those qualities which had been instrumental in building it. And this was no mere oversight, as thought those who knew so well how to provide for power of the commonwealth and the liberties of its citizens, for judgement and opinion, for interests and rights, had simply forgotten what actually they cherished above everything else, the potentialities of action and the proud privilege of being beginners of something altogether anew.[349]

While Arendt's contention has been generally and rightly understood as a criticism of representative democracy in opposition to direct or participatory democracy, the focus of her criticism is not so much on the legal framework in which these forms of democracy operate, but rather on which conditions these democracies stand and what they entail. These conditions are more ontological and performative in content than what can be reduced to basic moral, social, or legal categories.[350] This, on my view, is why she favors the council system, and the town hall meetings where the capacity of

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[349] *OR*, 232.

[350] I agree with Albrecht Wellmer's point where he describes Arendt's articulation of "public freedom," which he deems operative in her understanding of the "autonomy of the political": "[…] Arendt considered this autonomy to be based, in the first instance, upon the irreducibility of primary categories she draws on to elucidate the idea of public freedom: namely, joint action, plurality, power, etc. these aspects of public freedom cannot be reduced to moral, social, or legal categories" (Albrecht Wellmer, "Arendt on Revolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana R. Villa (UK: University of Cambridge Press, 2000): 232).

beginning something new is exercised in acting with others.

What I want to offer then is an alternative way to rethink revolution and the foundation of freedom. Inasmuch as the constitution is significant in such foundation, what really lies at the heart of political freedom is that moment of principled political action before it succumbs to either 1) the moralization of the political endeavour (e.g. the compassion for the French people)[351] or 2) the loss of the revolutionary spirit in democracy's focus on the welfare of people (and the shifted emphasis on the private pursuit of happiness of individuals in the US)[352]. On this note, Arendt's appraisal of the council system can be understood as the underlining of the ontological and performative content of how democracy, as a performance of equality, can work. Understood in and through the participation of individuals, we can see that equality becomes a fact of the world. It is in this way we can respond to what Deranty and Renault call the need of equality to become an imperative.[353]

Equality, as intimately linked with human plurality and its appearance, sheds light onto Arendt's reservation about representative democracy in the United States. Representative democracy had as "its chief goals," "popular welfare and private happiness," but it could as well be "called oligarchic in the sense that public happiness

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[351]*OR*, 86: "Compassion abolishes the distance, the worldly space between men [sic] where political matters, the whole realm of human affairs, are located, it remains, politically speaking, irrelevant and without consequence. […] As a rule, it is not compassion which sets out to change worldly conditions in order to ease human suffering, but if it does, it will shun the drawn-out wearisome processes of persuasion, negotiation, and compromise, which are the processes of law and politics, and lend its voice to the suffering itself, which must claim for swift and direct action, that is, for action with the means of violence."

[352] *OR*, 126-9.

[353] Jean-Philippe Deranty and Emmanuel Renault, "Democratic Agon: Striving for Distinction or Struggle against Domination and Injustice?" in *Law and Agonistic Politics*, ed. Andrew Schaap (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 51.

and public freedom" were the privilege of the few.[354] It is important to note that Arendt's is a contextual interpretation, which still holds true in one sense, that in representative democracy, the plurality of individuals (and hence, their opinions) as political agents cannot be maintained as a fact.

Nevertheless, my reading suggests that her account of revolution as a "beginning" and a "foundation" of freedom, does in fact give us a new venue of reading her thought in conjunction with a principle of democratic responsibility, which can enable us to recover the act of world-creation as a possibility that does not require institutional spaces for the performance of freedom.

As we have seen, plurality, insofar as it is a spatial phenomenon, is central to both Nancy's and Arendt's understanding of freedom and their account of political action. At this point, we also understand that political action is only possible within a revolutionary space. Yet my reading suggests that such revolutionary space, though it is the place where freedom is enacted, does not necessarily entail a "successful revolution." Rather it consists in a "revolutionary" attitude towards our existence together. This attitude involves a sort of decision to create the world, and a responsibility, taking our cue from Nancy's words, "to assert common equality, common incommensurability: a communism of nonequivalence."[355] In order to see how this responsibility to create a world, which becomes the affirmation of incommensurability, extends Arendt's own conception of revolution. I will conclude by linking the different points developed in this chapter to the Gezi Park Protests that took place in Turkey.

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[354] *OR*, 269.
[355] Jean-Luc Nancy, *After Fukushima: The Equivalence of Catastrophes*, trans. by Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015): 41.

Conclusion: Revolution, Democratic Responsibility and Gezi

Understood as a democratic responsibility, I maintain that the revolutionary attitude discussed in the previous section was exemplified in the Gezi Park Protests that started on May 28th, 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. As I explained in the second chapter, the protests started in the name of saving a public park (Gezi Park) and its trees from a possible demolition so that a shopping mall could be built. At Gezi Park, people reclaimed their public space, and turned it, in fact, into a political one based on the political (or, worldly) principles they enacted in this space: for instance, justice, public equality, and as I explored in the second chapter, epistemic responsibility.

The unique political identities of the agents of the Gezi Park Protests appeared where they talked about social injustices not in order to redeem their private concerns (the discussions on civic rights, notwithstanding), but to enact a principle of justice whose meaning was created by the affirmation of their plurality—or, in Nancean terms, incommensurability—in the speeches of a plurality of voices, where none was suppressed. Both in their togetherness at Taksim Square, and in the public fora created in different districts of Istanbul (and in many other cities) after the park was evacuated, these individuals performed what it means to become a *demos* in actualizing the power that transforms any space into a concrete public place.

Keeping with the above discussion of Arendt's account on revolution, I contend that what started in Gezi Park was in fact an Arendtian revolution, which confronted us—in this case, the citizens of Turkey—with "the problem of beginning."[356] In getting together to reclaim their public space in the name of freedom and democracy without

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[356] *OR*, 21.

basing their movement on any party-affiliation-or-personal-interest, the growing number of protesters brought to focus the question of beginning and foundation. While their efforts were suppressed by brutal police violence, what they brought about was a spatial manifestation of freedom—and its performative foundation. In Nilüfer Göle's words, "the Gezi movement marked a new threshold for democracy."[357]

As I argued in the second chapter, the principle of epistemic responsibility connected the seemingly disparate realms of factual truths and meaning-creation and became the guiding principle of responsible political action, while stressing the importance of responsible and independent journalism and the transparency of government policies. The principle of democratic responsibility for its part highlights the positive achievement of the revolutionary uprisings that have taken place in the recent years (Occupy Wall Street, Gezi Park Protests, Arab Spring, to name a few) that have had global impact in our current political conjecture.

A revolution, it follows, cannot be understood as merely a reaction to preceding events. Such a reaction would correspond to an action that comes about unthinkingly— or unjudgingly, as a mere reaction. While many civil movements can be seen in this light as a reaction to a governmental regime, what lets us understand the Gezi Park Protests as an Arendtian revolution are the principles involved in it. The two principles that I identified in the previous chapter and this one, namely, the principle of epistemic responsibility, and the principle of democratic responsibility, however exhibits a wider, but by no means thinner, understanding of revolution as an action done for the sake of an initiatory spacing of freedom.

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[357] Nilüfer Göle, "*Gezi*: Anatomy of a Public Space Movement," *Insight Turkey*, (Volume   15, No. 3, 2013): 8.

Understood in this sense, a revolution is an action done in concert by a plurality of human beings, where this action comes about by way of a political reflection resting on a political judgment regarding the world around people. For this reason, revolutions are unique events in time, not pin-pointed directly as the effect of a certain cause or chain of events, but rather understood as a response to the world—in claiming a *democratic* responsibility—in opening up a revolutionary space where freedom can exist.[358] I suggest that in this sense revolution becomes a response to a certain loss of the world wherein political actors aim to recover (or recreate) the world. The role played by the possibility of revolution, or the spacing (founding) of freedom, then, is a key insight for us in trying to understand freedom as a worldly phenomenon. And I maintain that the possibility of revolution is in fact what gives us the contours of what I have called a principle of democratic responsibility.

Now we see once more that responsibility is a crucial point in Arendt's thinking, insofar as we can understand an Arendtian creation of the world, which is accompanied by the creation of meaning as a happening in response *to* the world that we have in common. Meaning-creation enables human beings to "transcend" the sheer utility and functionality of given significations of life, which only promote mere life. An Arendtian conception of world-creation, or the reclaiming of the "common world,"[359] is tied to her understanding of political action as the "accompaniment of speech and deed," or as a new beginning, which introduces itself as a rupture between the past and the future,

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[358] The term 'democratic' here is chosen in its capacity to point to the becoming of a *demos*, rather than offering a definition understood as a regime in the narrower sense. Democracy, in this sense, does not become a mere means or an end to achieve at the end of political action.

[359] Neither for Nancy nor Arendt does the "common" world denote a pre-given commonality—apart from the literal   material existence of the earth as such—which still can only be understood to be in-common through what Nancy understands to be "sharing," and what Arendt understands to be "meaning-creation."

giving rise to a manifestation of freedom in the world.

In the end, my argument in this chapter has been twofold. First, I have articulated the relationship between freedom and existence in its connection to the possibility of sense-making and world-creation, in Nancy's account. My reading suggested that the sense-making capacity of human being can be manifested through a spacing of freedom that is understood as world-creation. This world-creation as has been explicated as the affirmation of the incommensurability of existence, an affirmation, which I have maintained is essentially political since it takes place in a political space. Next, I tied this worldly sense-making to the formation of a revolutionary space, informed by Arendt's understanding of revolution as both a "beginning," and a "founding of freedom" in order to show that such an affirmation of incommensurability—or plurality—is what enables us to rethink the possibility of equality in spatial terms. We are now at a point where we can understand how political phenomena can inform political thinking, and how any philosophizing of the political needs to become manifest in the world that is our creation. Arendt goes to the heart of this matter:

> For political thought can only follow the articulations of the political phenomena themselves, it remains bound to what appears in the domain of human affairs; and these appearances, in contradistinction to physical matters, need speech and articulation, that is, something which transcends mere physical visibility as well as sheer audibility, in order to be manifest at all.[360]

In order to overcome what Arendt calls the "sheer audibility" and "mere physical visibility," I will next turn to an account of recognition, which rests on visibility and listenability in their spatial and performative aspects in order to articulate an Arendtian

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[360] *OR*, 19.

"artificial equality." This discussion will provide an account (in terms of giving an account) of why Arendt's notion of "artificial equality" is crucial in understanding the spacing of freedom in laying out the conditions of the appearance of freedom as ultimately resting on the visibility (concrete appearing which I will understand as the performance of recognition) of individuals.

My account so far has demonstrated the import of world-creation as a revolutionary spacing that becomes the affirmation of the incommensurable plurality of existence, which is a non-violent world-creation in each instance. I want to now turn to what I called my two-tiered account of recognition, an Arendtian recognitive politics, which will allow for me to elucidate further the conditions under which one can be meaningfully "seen and heard by others" in the political space.

Chapter 4. An Arendtian Recognitive Politics: "The Right to Have Rights" as a Performance of Visibility

In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel describes the essence of recognition with the following words: "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged [*als ein Anerkanntes*]."[361] Being acknowledged or recognized by another self-conscious agent, on this view, establishes the truth of one's *own* self-consciousness, in such a way that the two are bound together. The certainty of my own consciousness is in this way conditioned by the existence of an other—an other whose life I cannot consume—for the human condition is such that we must be present to others and in the presence of

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[361] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): Section 178, 111.

others in order to be recognized in our individuality.[362] Hegel's account of recognition does not remain at a merely subjective level of the understanding of self-consciousness of itself: for Hegel, mutual recognition becomes the condition of possibility of self-consciousness in attaining its truth, and the latter therefore consists in the constitution of a universal subjectivity that sees itself as an undivided, universal consciousness whose will is determined by no *other* than itself. It is in this way that the asymmetry involved in the "struggle for recognition" is overcome, that is, in the historical occurrence of the sublation of the particularity of the individual, where the individual overcomes her own particularity and unites with her universality. To put the point in other terms, the individual's unity is reflected in the social and legal structures of the State, which serves as the medium of reconciliation between the individual's particular desires and her universality as a free-willing subject. The universality of the individual emerges historically, where political organization makes possible the existence of the juridico-philosophical subject, an abstract universal person with *rights*. This person is *recognized* by laws, and by the other citizens, so that the ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*] of the community can bring about the existence of a *moral community* where one can

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[362] Hegel states: "Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come out of itself. This has a twofold significance: first it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an other being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees only its own self. It must supersede this otherness of itself" (Ibid. Sections 179-80: 111).

According to Hegel, self-consciousness *exists* in reflecting upon itself, and this reflection enables it to become its own object, for self-consciousness is the consciousness of the self, which constitutes the truth of consciousness. While mere reflection upon itself does not suffice for self-consciousness to realize its truth, it still constitutes the condition of the possibility of the *relationship* between the self-consciousness and 'the world.' This relationship occurs as self-consciousness posits otherness in negating itself. Thus, otherness is established as a self-othering of the self-consciousness.

The desire of self-consciousness to be acknowledged and acknowledging does, in fact, entail a space of inter-subjectivity. This desire can be manifested through the reciprocation of acknowledgement, where this re-cognition does not take place *immediately*, but rather, through the mediation of the self-consciousness. This mediation is displayed as the double action of a mutual recognition in order for the self-consciousness to achieve the unity with itself through the unification of its identity and non-identity. In Hegel's account, this leads the phenomenological observers to the anticipation of strife, i.e., the *battle* for recognition that will only end in the *failure* of the self-consciousness in attaining its truth.

experience freedom in *inter-subjectivity*.[363] This account of recognition has been widely influential in social and political theory, and problematized as a normative or social phenomenon by contemporary theorists such as Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth.[364] A principal concern is that, by relying on Hegel's emphasis on the reconciliation between the individual's particularity and her universality as embodied in social and cultural practices, theorists of identity politics fail to see the *limits* of achieving such inter-subjective recognition: Identity politics is based on the understanding of the sovereignty of the modern subject, yet the equality of the modern subject precisely does not make an appearance in public.

This is not to deny that there is obviously great significance to this historical understanding of the universality of human subject's possession of *equal abstract rights* for any modern democratic theory. But the tradition of thought that begins with Hegel brings along with it the disappearance of democratic/civil actors from the public space by reducing recognition to a psychological and social process[365], which latter appeals to the mere enhancement of abstract rights in order to cure misrecognition, and thereby inequality.

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[363] G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

[364] The examples of Charles Taylor's development of his theory of recognition in relation to the conception of identity can be found in his works such as *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), and *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). As for Axel Honneth, *The Pathologies of Individual Freedom: Hegel's Social Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (UK: Polity Press, 2007), *Redistribution or Recognition?: A Political–Philosophical Exchange*, co-authored with Nancy Fraser (New York: Verso, 2003), *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflict* (UK: Polity Press, 1995) are some of the works in which he develops his account of recognition. A discussion of Taylor's and Honneth's theories, however, will be absent from the present discussion because my aim here is to focus on the relationship between spatiality and visibility in putting forth a two-tiered theory of recognition.

[365] Cf. Saul Tobias' analysis of the reassessment of the Hegelian politics of recognition in identity politics. (Saul Tobias, "Hegel and the Politics of Recognition," *The Owl of Minerva,* (Volume 38, No. 1-2, 2006-07): 101-126).

My main argument in this chapter is that Arendt's attentiveness to the *performative* and *spatial* aspects of recognition in relation to her conception of a "right to have rights" is an interesting corrective to the Hegelian tradition of thinking about rights. Specifically, Arendt's call for the 'right to have rights' encourages the appearance of such actors in their "artificial equality." The difference between abstract right and artificial equality is that while the former may be deemed necessary for political emancipation—in Marxian terms—it does not overcome the inherent inequality of the material conditions of human beings as the assumption on which "abstract right" operates. The latter, on the contrary, helps articulate the possibility of the appearance of individuals, whose legal equality remains insufficient in deeming them visible in public. This chapter aims at rethinking the conditions of subjects' visibility and thus their emplacement—their occupation of space—in order to overcome the tension that stems from thinking the political subject in terms of abstract universal equality.[366]

The Question of Spatiality

My emphasis on the spatial aspect of recognition will prove to be crucial with regard to the commonplace understanding of democracy as a form of government in which all— that is, all who are eligible—have an equal say, and participate as equals in political decisions. In current democratic experience, this equal participation manifests itself most commonly in the voting booth. That is, one's equality can only be shown when one decides to enter the voting booth, understood as a most private space where one is

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[366] The juridico-political conception of an abstract universal equality has found its body in the 1793 and 1795 *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, and the 1948 adoption of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

expected to make the most public decisions.[367] The examination of the spatial aspect of such political experience can ease the tension between an Arendtian "right to have rights," and the human beings' having rights, where this tension originates from the demand for "universal equality."

While attributing a *recognitive* aspect to Arendt's understanding of human existence may seem intuitive enough, the curious absence of an Arendtian theory of recognition may require some attention.[368] This curiosity is perhaps alleviated to a

[367] In his brilliant essay, "Fugitive Democracy," Sheldon Wolin claims that, "democracy is not about where the political is located but about how it is experienced" (Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," in *Democracy & Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996): 38). Wolin's statement raises a necessary objection against the rigid demarcation between political and private realms, where the aim of democracy is crudely understood as the (possibility of) protection of the private individual from (unqualified) domination by the State. While I agree with Wolin's insight, I wish to put special emphasis on how democracy is *experienced spatially* in our current political existence. See also Chantal Mouffe's discussion on the question of representative democracy, where she aptly claims that "elections in and of themselves do not guarantee democracy if they are only mechanisms for legitimating governments, which once elected, are not response to the needs of the citizens" (Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London, New York: Verso, 1993): 100).

[368] My claim specifically regards an account that focuses on the performative and spatial aspects of such an Arendtian understanding of recognition. This is not to deny that the scholarship generally agrees that the "mutual recognition" of individuals in a public space is both a presupposition and a given outcome of Arendt's articulation of a political-public space. One example of this can be seen in Dana Villa's words: "The public realm, understood as a discursive space characterized by symmetry, nonhierarchy and reciprocity, both presupposes, and makes possible, plurality and so provides the opportunity for a politics based on mutual recognition and respect for difference" (Dana R. Villa, "Postmodernism and Public Sphere," *American Political Science Review*, (Volume 86, No. 3, September 1992): 714). While Villa's statement sounds appealing, and very much in congruence with what Arendt does offer her audience, we need to understand what sort of recognition her account can provide us in light of her *spatial* understanding of human existence. See also Emilios Christodoulidis and Andrew Schaap's "Arendt's Constitutional Politics," where they state: "Far from being a necessary precondition for politics, equality is more often than not the object of political dispute, in situations where equality (even visibility) must be claimed by actors from an opponent who denies it to them. By engaging in a struggle for recognition, parties to a conflict demonstrate their equality; and in doing so, disclose new subject positions and another possible world" (Emilios Christodoulidis and Andrew Schaap, "Arendt's Constitutional Question," in *Hannah Arendt and the Law*, ed. Marco Goldoni and Christopher McCorkindale (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2012): 113). Again, my account aims to articulate recognition not as a struggle, but as a spatial performance that needs to be enacted in recognizing the other's 'right to have rights.' My account will also throw into relief contentions such as Canovan's that Arendt's "politics is concerned with the world as such and not with those who live in it" (Margaret Canovan, "Politics as Culture: Hannah Arendt and the Public Realm," in *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays*, ed. Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994): 187). In her *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights,* Serena Parekh offers a brilliant analysis of the foundations of human rights, where she mentions the import of social recognition, without, however,

certain extent in the critical analysis of what is called a "politics of recognition" that Patchen Markell undertakes in his work *Bound by Recognition*.[369] Informed by an Arendtian motivation, Markell's project aims to approach the question of recognition by tracing its origins to a temporal understanding of human existence. He does this to demonstrate human existence as being inevitably *non-sovereign*, both epistemically and politically speaking. Thus, he problematizes the conception of identity at the basis of the politics of recognition, where what is to be recognized is an identity understood as a "coherent self-description that can serve as the *ground* of agency, guiding or determining what we are to do."[370] This view of identity denotes a claim to *sovereignty*, of a subject or of the State, whereby recognition inevitably undoes what it seeks to accomplish, i.e., an acknowledgment of finitude. As Markell explains, "acknowledgement is directed at the basic conditions of one's own existence and activity, limits which arise out of our constitutive vulnerability to the unpredictable reactions and responses of others,"[371] and it is in this sense that for Markell's purposes, Arendt's ontology of natality and plurality become prominent in *criticizing*, rather than *positing* anything akin to a politics of recognition.

This Arendtian understanding of non-sovereign human existence definitely serves well for such criticism of a politics of recognition; however, in bringing the implicit dimension of her thought that seems to rely on a "recognitive politics" to light, I will show that recognition will be misunderstood as long as it does not respond to the concrete recognition of natality in shared space. I will locate this claim in a hidden

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developing an account of such recognition. (Cf. Serena Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity: A Phenomenology of Human Rights* (New York, London: Routledge, 2008): 129-130.)

[369] Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[370] Markell, *Bound by Recognition*, 36, *my emphasis.*

[371] Ibid.

premise of Arendt's novel definition of political action as "concerted action" where one

can be *visible in her unique identity* that is, in "being seen and heard by others." For

Arendt, such appearance bears the twofold mark of what understands as the "public":

> The term "public" signifies two closely interrelated but not altogether
> identical phenomena: It means, first, that everything that appears in public
> can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity.
> For us, appearance—something that is *being seen and heard* by others as
> well as by ourselves—constitutes reality. Compared with the reality which
> comes from being seen and heard, even the greatest forces of intimate
> life—the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the
> senses—lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until
> they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a
> shape to fit them for public appearance.[372]

And:

> [Second], the term "public" signifies the world itself, in so far as it is
> common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in
> it. This world, however, is not identical with the earth or with nature, as
> the limited space for the movement of men and the general condition of
> organic life. […] The public realm, as the common world, gathers us
> together and yet prevents our falling over each other so to speak.[373]

Coupled with Arendt's claims regarding the correspondence of appearance and reality,

which is constituted by "being seen and heard by others" in a world that is common to

us all, her understanding of the disclosure of the "who" can be understood in a two-

tiered manner, which allows for an Arendtian recognitive politics as follows: 1) "being

seen and heard" in a public space, understood as being recognized in and through one's

social identity[374], becomes the condition of possibility for 2) "being seen and heard" in

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[372] *HC*, 50, *my emphasis*.
[373] *HC*, 52.
[374] Here, the notion of social identity stands for any sort of self-identification in terms of gender, national, ethnic, religious identities, or what Arendt understands as the human being's "whatness," as that which is given to human existence that may or may not be changed. For Arendt, this form of identity should in no way be *utilized* in understanding the human being's manifestation of freedom which happens through the self-disclosure of one's "unique political identity," i.e., her "whoness" in the presence of a plurality of others. Understood in this regard, the performative and spatial recognition of one's social identity aims to go beyond an identity-based politics in providing the ground for the second level of

a political space as a political agent, where the recognition of one's "unique political identity," or "whoness," opens up the room for a non-identity-based recognitive politics. This account of recognitive politics, I contend, can put into relief the role played by condition of plurality in the equivalence between appearance and reality, where "being seen and heard by other derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. […] Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear."[375]

In taking up Arendt's formulation of "being seen and heard by others" to inform my theory of recognition, I aim to shed a new light on her conception of the "right to have rights" which bears value for both institutional and extra-institutional political practices. While Arendt's conception of the "right to have rights" was received as a breakthrough, and was taken up by countless commentators, it still retains a certain enigma. For instance, Seyla Benhabib argues that the right to have rights is a "moral imperative," which grounds the existence and enforcement of legal rights; Peg Birmingham on the other hand, calls it a "political right" itself pertaining to the ontology of natality in Arendt's account.[376] In very recent literature, Sofia Näsström shifts the question of its justification from a moral or ontological basis to that of a normative one (normative understood as principled in the Arendtian sense) and argues that this right is a "democratic," and not a "political" right insofar as its normative

recognition of one's "whoness" in political space.
[375] *HC*, 57.
[376] Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and Peg Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights: The Predicament of Common Responsibility* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

ground can be understood by appealing to what she calls a "principle of responsibility" found in a democratic form of government.[377]

On my view, the articulation of the spatial aspect of the *experience* of *recognizing* a right to have rights can show us what is truly radical about Arendt's formulation, namely, that this right is a "right to belong to *some kind of organized* community"[378] and that it comes alive only when it is *performed*. Accordingly, this recognition of the right to have rights is an imperative for a meaningful human life, because it pertains to the condition of visibility of the human being(s), where this condition of visibility can be understood as the *responsibility* of recognizing the possibility of "artificial equality" in public space.[379] This visibility is the condition of concrete recognition, which is a 'good' kind of recognition where the individual is not merely understood as a private and rights-bearing individual. I want to show the import of the recognition of the human being in another sense than her being an entity with a fixed identity through which its rights can be articulated in their relation to its duties to the other rights-bearing subjects. I further claim that this right to have rights is universal, but neither 'natural' nor 'metaphysical.' It is crucial to understand the right to have rights as the (groundless) ground on which other human rights can rest. Only once this is done can the question of the ground of human rights have a non-aporetic answer,

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[377]Sofia Näsström, "The Right to have Rights: Democratic, not Political," *Political Theory*, (Volume 32, No.5, 2014): 543-568.

[378] *OT*, 296-7.

[379] This understanding of responsibility underlies the "ability to respond," and in a recent talk I gave on this topic, I explained it as the ability to respond to the *world* around us, that is, to the common world that we *share* together, and that we *constitute* together either around a roundtable or in other public (or even private) spaces. Understood in this spatial and shared sense, this ability to respond however can be seen to come in degrees. An "equal ability" to respond does not exist for two reasons: 1) Some people *cannot* respond, they basically lack the ability, which may or may not be due to a lack of recognition, and 2) Some *do not* respond, and this may or may not be due to the volition of their will, or due to a basic lack of thinking.

and the demand for the "universal equality" of the human beings be tenable.

In order to go on and understand what is meant by the tension of the demand for "universal equality," I will start my investigation with an analysis of Karl Marx's 1843 essay entitled "On the Jewish Question," where he aims to show that the "Rights of the Citizen" in the State rest on the "Rights of Man" in civil society, wherein there is an inherent inequality experienced by the individuals as such.[380] I will then turn to Arendt's double-sided critique of "human rights" in her 1951 work entitled *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* For this, I will also go back to the texts of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* of 1793, and the United Nation's 1948 adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. This will allow me to show that this so-called "universal equality," stems from a nation-state's adoption of universal human rights. While put forth as a factuality in the Declarations, this "universal equality" remains a metaphysical notion at best, and I opt instead for an account of "artificial equality" in relation to my original question about the spatial aspect of the experience of a right to have rights.

My approach here is twofold. First, I will show that this artificial equality requires that one discards the notion of a universal natural self-making human being, and turn to an understanding of a human being who can only experience this right to have rights insofar as she is visible. This equality, then, is a condition, which is created and maintained in a political space where individuals are recognized as full members through equal participation in which they (can) manifest their concrete political

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[380]Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," available at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/, 1-27. In this chapter, I will keep the original quotations from Karl Marx's, and Hannah Arendt's texts. While they use the gender term "man" in order to denote "Mensch" (human being), I am aware of the possibility of sexist language, and I do not wish to endorse it.

identities. My second objective will be to show the import of such recognition in analyzing the severity of its absence by turning to the 2011 Uludere Airstrike (also known as the Roboski Massacre) that took place in Turkey.

Marx's "On the Jewish Question": Political Emancipation versus Human Emancipation

Karl Marx's 1843 article entitled "On the Jewish Question," is a reply to Bruno Bauer's article "The Jewish Question," in which Bauer presents his so-called solution to the Jewish question—i.e., the Jews' demanding political rights. Bauer's solution is that Jews should "give up" their Judaism because the requirements of the secular State demand secular citizens. Marx aims to show that Bauer's solution is inadequate because Bauer is mistaken in the identification of the problem—the question itself. He explains that Bauer's mistake lies in the fact that Bauer seems to think that the State is secular. In Marx's view, the State bears certain 'political-theological' inheritances, which is to say that the form of life that it produces—universal citizenship—is thoroughly Christian (Paulinian, even): In the same ways that Paul does away with the requirement that all Christians be Jews, and extends the possible membership in the Christian church to pagans and so on, making Christianity the first creed *of universalism*, the modern State, with its rights of citizen, is also a thoroughly Christian institution, and furthermore, one that is premised on another set of rights, the rights of 'man.' Whereas the citizen is ideal, universalizable, and free in his "celestial" existence, "man" is left vulnerable to exploitation through the enshrinement of the rights of private property ownership.[381]

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[381] Ibid. 4-5: "[We find] that his [Bauer's] error lies in the fact that he subjects to criticism only the 'Christian state,' not the 'state as such,' that he does not investigate the relation of political emancipation to human emancipation and, therefore, put forward conditions which can be explained only by uncritical confusion of political emancipation with general human emancipation."

Marx's thoroughgoing analysis aims to show the difference between the process of political emancipation and true human emancipation. This distinction between political and human emancipation is the basis of Marx's criticism of the juridico-political rights granted by the nation-state, where he shows that these rights are insufficient in promoting the genuine freedom of the human being in her sociality. His is a critique of the proposed 'universal equality' of individual human beings as stated in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* of 1793. With its 35 articles extending to social and economic rights, the 1793 Declaration can be seen as an improvement upon the first one written in 1789, which only consisted of 17 articles that mostly focused on the more individualistic aspects of "equal" human existence.[382]

While Marx does not mention it in his essay, it is worth mentioning the first article of the 1793 Declaration, which demonstrates the shift in understanding the relationship between government and society, where the former exists to ensure the welfare of the members of the latter in their capacity as individual human beings: "The aim of society is the general welfare. Government is instituted to guarantee man the

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Marx's article is divided into two parts, and for my purposes in this section, I will not focus on an analysis of Bauer's politico-theological grounding of human emancipation, to which Marx replies in the first section. I will work with the concluding part of the first section where Marx takes issue with the articles of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*. However, I would like to point to the beginning of the first section where Marx famously notes the following:

> The most rigid form of the opposition between the Jew and the Christian is the *religious* opposition. How is an opposition resolved? By making it impossible. How is *religious* opposition made possible? By *abolishing religion*. As soon as Jew and Christian recognize that their respective religions are no more than *different stages in the development of the human mind*, different snake skins cast off by *history*, and that man is the snake who sloughed them, the relation of Jew and Christian is no longer religious but is only a critical, *scientific*, and human relation. *Science*, then, constitutes their unity. But, contradictions in science are resolved by science itself. (Ibid. 2-3)

This passage hints at the fact that Marx is not mainly focused on the religious contradiction between the Jews and Christians, but on actually how this contradiction becomes possible—in the human mind—and how we can resolve this at a scientific, worldly level. A Marxian resolution of this contradiction hinges on the material conditions of human existence, and the possibility of their transformation.

[382] Marx mainly works with the Declaration of 1793, I contend, in order to better elucidate the inherent inequality on which the rights of man and of the citizen rest.

enjoyment of his natural and inalienable rights."[383] Marx instead focuses on Article 2 of the 1793 Declaration, which states that "these rights, etc., (the natural and imprescriptible rights) are: equality, liberty, security, property."[384] While Article 3 of the same Declaration reads: "All men are equal by nature and before the law," Marx decides to quote Article 3 of the Constitution of 1795, which further states: "Equality consists in the law being the same for all, whether it protects or punishes."[385] The two formulations of Article 3 suggest that equality is taken up both as a natural and as a juridico-political phenomena. This article operates at the level of a two-sided factuality: first, the natural human being—the non-citizen—is equal to every other in this natural capacity; and second, the citizen—understood as the rights-bearer—is equal to every other before the law, however, this time only in and through the capacity of the State (in its authority) to recognize the rights-bearer as worthy of these rights as such.

Marx justifiably concludes that this universal equality, which resides in the formulation of an individual in society, pertains only to the individual who is articulated as a rational, egotistic, calculative being whose main (free) activity in the society is the seeking of her ends through reasonable means, and without hindrance. "The so-called rights of man," Marx understands, "are nothing but the rights of a member of civil society—i.e., the rights of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community."[386] In this sense, these rights belong to the individual who understands herself to have a sort of expressive agency, which is merely an expression of want and

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[383] "*Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* from the Constitution of Year 1 (1793)" accessed at http://www.columbia.edu/~iw6/docs/dec1793.html, in *The Constitutions and Other Select Documents Illustrative of the History of France 1789-1901*, ed. Frank Maloy Anderson (Minneapolis: H. W. Wilson, 1904): 17074. Reprinted in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution*, eds. Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt (American Social History Productions, 2001).
[384] Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 16.
[385] Ibid. 17.
[386] Ibid. 15.

desire. Human beings want and desire different things, but their so-called equality lies in this basic instrumentality of need/desire satisfaction.[387]

Marx's elucidation of the individual understood as an instrumental agent aims to reveal the inherent inequality of human beings proposed in the bourgeois mode of production, given that the expression of one's ends does, at the outset, exclude the realization of one's communal[388] identity. Freedom understood as the rational self-determination of ends covers over the manifestation of the capacity of production that, for Marx, grounds the *true* universal equality of the human beings.[389] Hence, Marx examines the "so-called rights of man" as

> [t]he rights of man in their authentic form, in the form which they have those who discovered them, the North Americans and the French. These rights of man are, in part, political rights, rights which can only be exercised in community with others. Their content is participation in the community, and specifically in the political community, in the life of the state. They come within the category of political freedom, the category of civic rights, which, as we have seen, in no way presuppose the incontrovertible and positive abolition of religion—nor, therefore, of Judaism.[390]

However, he contends that the political rights of the citizen actually rest on the rights of the social, economic, and individual human being, which are confined to the "private interests and private caprice" of the human being as she is "separated from the community."[391] Underlying this claim is the view of a split person, which is constituted by the (nation)-state: the individual human being as the rights-bearing subject on the one hand, and the particular citizen whose universality (sociality) resides in the

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[387] This conclusion should be nothing novel for the students of Hobbes.
[388] The human being's (social and universal) species-being: *Gattungswesen*.
[389] If we square this true equality with his understanding of the human being/essence as species-being (*Gattungswesen*), we can go beyond his understanding of 'revolutionary *praxis*' as a mere teleological, progressive movement understood in materialist determinist terms.
[390] "On the Jewish Question," 14.
[391] Ibid. 17.

abstraction of her national membership to a community, which grants her *political* rights. The individual itself is a member of civil society, while the citizen itself is a part that makes up the whole of the State.

Marx understands the rights of the citizen, the so-called political rights, to be internally tied to the rights that are exercised by the human being through the rights of man. Herein lies the internal conflict of the individual: for i) as a rights-bearing human being, the individual's rights extend to the arbitrary free choices in her private (social) life, which, in turn, determine her socio-economic relations with other individuals, while ii) as the (public) citizen, her ends are to be understood to be in harmony with the universal laws purported by the State. This is the point at which the assumption of 'universal equality' presents an internal tension in its articulation.

Instrumentality is the principle upon which the socio-economic relationships between individual human beings in civil society rest: the individual has a right to pursue her instrumental ends insofar as they do not infringe upon another's rights (space of freedom, i.e., free transaction). The political rights of the citizen, on the other hand, rest on the conception of a subject whose autonomy then is not only directed at private ends, but also at social/political ones as such. Marx's contention regarding the conflict between the rights of man and that of the citizen gives us a hint at Marx's anthropological understanding of the human being as a social species-being, who is living an illusory conflict with regard to her essence. The State structure introduces an enigma into the human being's life by separating the person into the particular 'man' and the universal abstract 'citizen.' The enigma is that "the real man is recognised only in the shape of the *egoistic* individual, [while] the *true* man is recognised only in the

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shape of the *abstract citoyen*."[392] The rights, then, of the egotistic individual, which are understood as the "inalienable rights of man" do not have a practical application in the political sphere—in terms of the rights of the citizen—unless the individual is first and foremost in hold of the means to achieve her ends.

Methodologically, Marx's analysis rests on demonstrating the point of antagonism between the State and the civil society. Due to the antagonism between the human beings' humanity—i.e., their essence as conscious productive capacity—and their existence in civil society, Marx concludes that a truly emancipated humanity would do away with "the State" whose structure is the source of this antagonism:

> The perfect political state is, by its nature, man's species-life, as opposed to his material life. All the preconditions of this egoistic life continue to exist in civil society outside the sphere of the state, but as qualities of civil society. Where the political state has attained its true development, man—not only in though, in consciousness, but in reality, in life—leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly lie: life in the political community, in which he considers himself a communal being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers.[393]

For Marx, then, the twofold life of the human being can only be overcome when the human being is not only politically, but, rather humanly emancipated. Nonetheless, political rights are necessary insofar as this human emancipation can be accomplished in the form of overcoming the State apparatus. While it is true that Marx has a concept of political action understood as 'revolutionary praxis,'[394] his project does not have to be solely reduced to a revolutionary imperative to do away with the State understood as

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[392] "On the Jewish Question," 20.
[393] Ibid. 8.
[394] This 'revolutionary *praxis*' can only belong to the human being in aiming to achieve the unity of her universality and individuality. It is *praxis* insofar as it presents itself to be possible as the activity of work, which is articulated as a conscious capacity to appropriate one's world, and change its structures.

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the locus of the political/politics in society. Marx's claim aims at the destruction of the current structure of the State (as such—understood as a necessary structure above the civil society and the family), that is, the structure of political domination, which suppresses the human being's essentially social being—or her essence. For Marx,

> [As] *human* nature is the *true common life* [*Gemeinwesen*] of man, men through the activation of their *nature create* and produce a human *common life*, a social essence which is no abstractly universal power opposed to the single individual, but is the essence or nature of every single individual, his own activity, his own life, his own spirit, his own wealth.[395]

Prima facie, then, the overcoming of the State may seem like an erasure of 'politics' itself; however, for Marx, this does not suggest that the human being loses the 'worldly' character of her existence if no longer the member of a State.[396] The seeming impasse in Marx's account stems from his identification of the State with the political as the site of domination. Nevertheless, Marx's account may give us a framework in which to understand political space in non-domination terms and make room for freedom that is not only understood as rational self-determination but as manifested through our concerted action with others. While I do not wish to assert that this project was in the scope of Marx's account, a charitable reading can still allow us to think this possibility. Yet, a further problem remains.

To repeat, Marx's main assertion in "On the Jewish Question" is that the freedom of the (egotistic) individual in her particularity could not be reconciled with her universality. It would be apt to say then that Marx's account hints at a kind of

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[395] Karl Marx, "Money and Alienated Man," in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, trans. by and ed. Loyd David Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967): 271-2.

[396] This premise has been the gist of Arendt's argument in critiquing the so-called human rights, where these rights were no longer granted by the State, the human being had lost her world. Marx's contention that "the state is the intermediary between man and man's freedom" ("On the Jewish Question," 7), suggests that the State is a *false* mediator in understanding the freedom of the human being as such.

reconciliation—in a much Hegelian manner—that comes in the form of true human emancipation. I believe we can take Marx's formulation to be gesturing towards a positive account of how to understand such reconciliation in its relation to the appearance of the human being in her true essence in the world. Marx's formulation, on this note, does enable us to articulate an understanding of recognition that his theory entails.

My reading suggests that for Marx, the recognition of oneself as a species-being (one's true universal social being) can only be understood by the *self-recognition* of the citizen in the human being. In still other terms, such recognition can only be understood through true human emancipation which surpasses the political emancipation of the human being that puts her in opposition to her (natural) self in society. Marx's insight is a valuable one; yet, it does not sufficiently explain how this process of recognition can overcome the problem he identifies in the so-called liberal rights, which inspires his criticism. In a sense, if we remember his "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," which was penned around the same time as "On the Jewish Question," we see that Marx's immanent criticism of democratic society on Hegel's assumptions does follow a similar trajectory in understanding the human being as a being in a community of others, one, however, in which plurality is absent.[397] This point requires some clarification. If as I have argued thus far, the affirmation of human plurality consists in a principled political action, which creates a world in common, then we need to see if such a principle is present in Marx's account. Insofar as Marx understands freedom in the community as the capacity of each individual's self-actualization, plurality does not

[397] Karl Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," available at:
https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/index.htm

present itself in and through worldly principles, which transcend the solitary concerns of human beings in their life activities. A principle of self-actualization, to the contrary, becomes an equalizing force of the sameness of individuals insofar as they share in what Marx calls the species-being [*Gattungswesen*] of the human being.

Nevertheless, Marx's critique of the political rights of the human being provides valuable insight into showing that such rights rest on the fact that they are grounded in the so-called natural rights of the human being, which can be summed up to be the individual's right to private property—the private individual has the right to private property. Unfortunately, Marx's own account forecloses the possibility of a 'public individual' who can be understood to exercise her rights—or even have them—only in public.

In *Hannah Arendt: Politics, History and Citizenship*, Phillip Hansen argues a similar point: "species-being stands opposed to plurality, the recognition that we are truly and humanly the same only in our differences. Plurality needs a world, not a sphere of socialized production, if it is to be actualized."[398] For Marx, I contend, one only needs to have self-recognition (recognizing the citizen in the natural human being) in order to be recognized in public. This self-recognition is the condition of a truly self-making subject, who is sovereign to her actions, and to her ends. I want to underscore that, for Marx, this is where the human beings' true 'universal equality' lies, that is, in their universal capacity to produce and express themselves. Marx understands the productive capacity of the human being to be the *ground* for one's expressive agency. The human being expresses and objectifies her existence in her product. If the human

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[398] Phillip Hansen, *Hannah Arendt: Politics, History and Citizenship* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993): 32.

being works, however, under alienated conditions where she can identify neither with the reason nor the outcomes of her production of a certain object, then she cannot be deemed a properly self-making subject who is practising her rational self-determination.[399]

The overcoming, so to speak, of this alienation would reveal the human being's capacity of self-actualization, and this, in Marx's terms, is equivalent to human freedom.[400] If the human being can manifest her projects parallel with this self-actualization, we end up with a community of individuals who, for instance, produce for their wants and needs, be it individually or collectively, without being coerced by external forces that transform their life activity into a mere means of life. The equivalence of self-actualization and production gives us a complete Marxian account of the self-making subject, whose recognition, in turn, depends on this instrumental goal-oriented activity. In this sense, Marx's analysis continues to adhere to a natural capacity of the human beings in order to understand their 'universal equality' and this is where his account errs. For while he gives an account of the possibility of differences in individualistic expressions of human freedom—where this possibility rests on a drastic transformation of material conditions that were identified to be the ground of the inherent inequality of the human beings in the first place—the individuals remain interchangeable insofar as they remain merely producers, and do not become actors in the world.

Therefore, the unity of one's particular and universal identities reveals the

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[399] Karl Marx, "The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978): 66-126.

[400] An analysis of what Marx borrows from Aristotle's ontology of the Subject does not fall within the scope of this chapter.

human being as the producer who has realized her social essence. This unity can in the end enable one to produce one's own identity. This self-producing (i.e., self-making) subject, however, remains at an individualistic level in a sterile world where she is impoverished of (or free from) a community of others: for this subject does not (need to) appear as a worldly being—or be visible to others. What is at stake here is the freedom of a self-making subject, whose recognition by others does not seem to play a role in this freedom.[401]

Against this background, I identify the foreclosure of the possibility of what will be called henceforth a 'recognitive politics,' in Marx's account—by which I mean a two-tiered theory of recognition, which can account for the recognition of the social and political identities of human beings through the condition of 'artificial equality' understood in a spatial aspect. The Marxian foreclosure of such a 'recognitive politics' rests on Marx's conception of the human being as a being, whose freedom still lies in her sovereignty. Arendt sees this self-production as the ultimate grounding of freedom in necessity, which becomes self-contradictory; simply put, the human being needs to produce (both the world and her own self) to become free. Even when the human being can be said to be producing freely, or in a non-alienated fashion, she has to work in order to provide the means of her (individual) life. Furthermore, while the human being can control her 'whatness' by her productive capacity, in Marx's account, there is no imperative—or even a remote possibility—to create a 'political community' where the human being can appear as a 'who' to her peers.

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[401]I agree with Nancy Fraser's valuable contention that a vulgar Marxism displaces a politics of recognition in favor of a politics of redistribution, and such displacement is by no means the project undertaken here. Cf. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition," *New Left Review,* (No. 3, May-June, 2000): 111.

I will turn next to Arendt's criticism of "human rights" as it appears in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* published three years after the United Nations' adoption of *Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948. Taking my cue from the articulation of human freedom as non-sovereign, which I have developed in the previous chapter, I will underscore the spatial aspect of the experience of freedom in order to develop an account of recognitive politics. This account of recognitive politics aims to bring to focus the conditions of visibility and listenability, which are performed in a *space of recognition* of the human being in recognizing her "right to have rights."

Arendt's Criticism of "Human Rights"

As we have seen in the preceding discussions, for Arendt, the existence, or reality, of "politics" or "the political" does not inhere in the particular human being; rather, she argues, that "politics" or "the political," exists only insofar as it exists *between* human beings.[402] If it was Marx who decidedly announced and urged that "philosophy become [this]-worldly,"[403] then it is Arendt, who actually responded to this urgency. Arendt's response lies in how she takes up the question of recognition by showing the problem with the notion of "universal equality" of the human beings in the abstract.

In her essay "Karl Marx and The Tradition of Political Thought," Arendt concedes that the claim to "universal equality" cannot be what grounds political freedom, because as I have argued in the previous section: i) this conception of universal equality, transformed by Marx, is rooted in the human being's productive

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[402] Hannah Arendt, "Introduction *into* Politics," in *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005): 95.

[403] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978): 144: Thesis 2: "The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. Man must prove the truth — i.e. the reality and power, the **this-sidedness** of his thinking in practice" (**my emphasis).**

capacity as a universal aspect of the human condition, and ii) this universal equality of the human beings' labour force remains insufficient in motivating the public appearance of the human being as a political agent in her concerted action with others, where such appearance affirms their plurality.[404] In the following, I will show how Arendt's criticism of "human rights" leads her to understand the question of "equality" anew, in showing how the "universal equality" purported by the Declarations does not entail the concrete recognition of the human being's "right to have rights".

I first turn to a well-known passage that appears in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, where Arendt states:

> We became aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and this means to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions), as well as the right to belong to *some kind of organized community*, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation.[405]

This is the statement where Arendt's conception of a "right to have rights" makes its appearance for the first time. Arendt does not merely assert that this right to have rights exists—but that "we became aware" of its existence. Coming from Arendt, this is not just a colloquial use of "we," but this "we" points to a 'voice,' through which the voicing of the concern(s) of "the children of enlightenment" there becomes a "we."[406] It

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[404] Hannah Arendt, "Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought," *Social Research*, (Volume 69 No. 2: Summer 2002): 284-6.

[405] *OT,* 296-7, *my emphasis*.

[406] I owe this point to a conversation with Andrew Benjamin, regarding an earlier version of this chapter. For a theorist who has called into question every traditional understanding of "we"s and how they are formed, Arendt's use of the term bears the elements of almost a call for becoming a "we" in undertaking a project of articulating this 'right to have rights' together. And this 'voicing' or 'finding one's voice' is no other than what Kant argued to be crucial for one's public use of reason in his essay "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" Kant begins this essay with the statement that "Aufklärung ist der Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbstverschuldeten *Unmündigkeit.*" While the term "Unmündigkeit" has been generally translated as "immaturity," or "tutelage," "Mündig" comes from the term "Mund" (mouth), and it would not be inappropriate to say that the kind of immaturity of which Kant is alluding to stems from the lack of a mouth—that is, one's own voice. (Cf. Immanuel

is central to her analysis of totalitarianism that with its rise, the "we" of modernity observed that, "no such thing as inalienable human rights existed."[407]

In the following, I will investigate the relationship between this right to have rights, and the having of human, civic, and political rights *as such*. By this I mean that while Arendt argues that the right to have rights can only be "guaranteed by humanity itself," this humanity should not be read as a metaphysical principle of humanity, but rather, as I will show, humanity should be understood as the *concrete appearance* of human togetherness (in plurality and equality). On my view, this principle of humanity pertains to a decision of appearing together. Said in a different idiom, the 'right to have rights' is a *performative* statement, in that it does what it says, and unconditionally— not because it is absolute, but because it can be understood in an extra-institutional sense. [408]

To begin, we need to first uncover why an Arendtian understanding of political recognition can only be understood as standing against a primacy of rights approach, while not dismissing the import of "rights" as such. In the section entitled "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man," found in Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt offers us her argument as follows, and I quote her at length:

> Denationalization became a powerful weapon of totalitarian politics, and the constitutional inability of European nation-states to guarantee human rights to those who had lost nationally guaranteed rights, made it possible for the persecuting governments to impose their standard of

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Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, (Dezember-Heft, 1784): 481-494, *my emphasis*).

[407] *OT*, 269.

[408] For an understanding of performativity of politics, see Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997). See also Bonnie Honig who has maintained that Arendt has a "performative politics" in undertaking an analysis of Arendt's argument regarding the performative foundation of the republic in the American Revolution (Bonnie Honig, "Declarations of Independence: Arendt and Derrida on the Problem of Founding a Republic," *The American Political Science Review*, (Volume 85, No. 1, Mar., 1991): 97-113).

values even upon their opponents. … The official SS newspaper, the *Schwarze Korps*, stated explicitly in 1938 that if the world was not yet convinced that the Jews were the scum of the earth, it soon would be when unidentifiable beggars, without nationality, without money, and without passports crossed their frontiers. And it is true that [this kind of] *factual propaganda* worked better than Goebbels' rhetoric, not only because it established the Jews as scum of the earth, but also because the incredible plight of an ever-growing group of innocent people was like a practical demonstration of the totalitarian movements' cynical claims that **no such thing as inalienable human rights existed** and that the affirmations of the democracies to the contrary were mere prejudice, hypocrisy, and cowardice in the face of the cruel majesty of the a new world. The very phrase 'human rights' became for all concerned—victims, prosecutors, and onlookers alike—the evidence of hopeless idealism or fumbling feeble-minded hypocrisy.[409]

The force of Arendt's argument is twofold: 1) the weapon of denationalization coupled with mainstream propaganda promoted as a fact that the Jews were "the scum of the earth," and thereby 2) reinforced as a *fact* the non-existence of the so-called human rights. The implicit premise regarding the second statement is such that while human rights aimed at being agreed upon as facts of human existence, their becoming suspect pointed to the other extreme, where their unenforceability was seen as "evidence of hopeless idealism," practiced by the people who believed in them. It may be true that there is a component of idealism that accompanies the human rights discourse, literally speaking, stemming from an idea of "humanity" which is supposed to accelerate the realization of such humanity, which should become its own ground. Such idealism on its own, however cannot be the culprit of the unenforceability of such rights which are deemed inalienable to human existence. At this juncture, I wish to underscore the insufficiency of human rights in underlining the import of their so-called necessity and universality, and instead point to, motivated by Arendt's insight, the absence of a

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[409] *OT*, 269, ***my emphasis***.

recognition of the "right to have rights" that may help us link the two terms of rights articulated in this context.

Arendt's argument itself gets its driving force from the factual existence of not only the extermination and internment camps, but also the growing phenomenon of statelessness that people (not only Jews, but homosexuals, Roma people, and so on) faced, which became the marks of the rising totalitarianism in mid-twentieth century. To the first effect, she understands the process "on the road to total domination" to be threefold: 1) "to kill the juridical person in man," that is, to strip people off of their political rights by which they are understood to be equal to one another, and 2) "the preparation of living corpses" as "the murder of the moral person in man," that is, to make impossible human solidarity by erasing human dignity, and 3) to do away with "the differentiation of the individual, his [sic] unique identity," that is to make impossible the possibility of meaningful appearance in the presence of others.[410] This process culminates in the deprivation of a space, which makes "opinions significant and actions effective."[411] Therefore, this threefold process coincides with the threefold process of the human being's denial of a *place* in the world: 1) "the loss of home" along with the "impossibility of finding a new one," 2) "loss of government protection," so that 3) these people became "superfluous."[412] Altogether, people were denied a place in the common world and put into camps where they were neither seen nor heard.

The curious point is that the loss of these individuals' political rights went hand in hand with a loss of their "humanity" which was supposed to belong to the individual in her natural state. According to the Declarations, the human beings' humanity is what

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[410] *OT*, 447-53.
[411] *OT*, 296.
[412] *OT*, 293-6.

motivates the existence of "human rights" in the first place, that is the "rights of man," which in turn translate into the "rights of the citizen."[413] Arendt's argument clearly states what she calls the "paradox" of human rights: that the "abstract" human being whom these rights are supposed to protect did not exist.[414] The rights of man ground the rights of the citizen, and where the latter fail, the rights of man are supposed to be enforceable by way of humanity.[415] What happened in World War II, however, was the obvious failure of such logic. Arendt concludes, thus, that these people were denied their "universal human rights" by first being denied their "human" status.[416] The erasure of their individual human status, in turn, became a condition of possibility of erasing the condition of "plurality" of the common world.[417]

While Arendt offers a criticism of universal human rights with the specific phenomenon of totalitarianism in the twentieth century in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, she later diagnoses the self-contradiction of this universality of human rights as granted by a nation-state to stem from the 1789 "French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen" in her *On Revolution*. According to her analysis, this Declaration was meant to constitute the foundation of all political power, while

> *The new body politic was supposed to rest upon man's natural rights, upon his rights in so far as he is nothing but a natural being, upon his right to 'food, dress, and the reproduction of the species,' that is upon his right to the necessities of life.* And these rights were not understood as prepolitical rights that no government and no political power had the right to touch or violate, but as the very content as well as the ultimate end of government and power.[418]

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[413] *OT*, 293.
[414] *OT*, 291.
[415] Cf. *OT*, 300.
[416] *OT*, 296. Cf. Dana R. Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999): 186.
[417] At this point, Arendt claims that, "revolution happens [then], in a space where civil rights are not recognizing human beings qua individuals" (*OT*, 293).
[418] *OR*, 109, *my emphasis*.

Understood as such, the "Rights of Man," "were meant to spell out primary positive rights, inherent in man's nature, as distinguished from political status, and as such they tried indeed to reduce politics to nature."[419] While it was not nature or history that granted the human being's eternal inalienable rights, it was the nature of the human being, which became the "source of Law."[420] What Arendt's criticism demonstrates is that while the Declaration seemingly got its force from the nature of the human being—which was understood as concretely established—it nevertheless ended up overriding the element of power that was found in the initial togetherness of a plurality of people.

In turn, the political rights that the French Constitution put forth, i.e., "equality before law, liberty, protection of property, and national sovereignty," are the rights of citizens, the loss of which does not (or should not) entail absolute rightlessness. For according to Arendt, human rights "can be granted even under conditions of fundamental rightlessness" understood in the political sense.[421] Herein lies the perplexity inherent in the conception of human rights. Where the rights of the citizens fail to concretize the natural (and eternal) or inalienable rights of man, the otherwise unenforceable human rights should be put into place by revolution.[422] I have already underscored the revolutionary spacing as the spacing of freedom. However, insofar as this spacing of freedom is equivalent to the actualization of power in plurality; it should be noted that the ability to revolt, lies in one's being recognized to be able to do so in

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[419] *OR*, 108-9. Arendt contrasts this to the U.S. Bill of Rights, since the Bill "was meant to institute permanent restraining controls upon all political power, and hence presupposed the existence of a body politic and the functioning of political power" (Ibid.).

[420] *OT*, 290.

[421] *OT*, 295.

[422] Ibid.

the first place.[423]

My claim is simply this: the human beings have to be able to appear in a space where they can be recognized to have a "right to have rights,"[424] not only where they do not anymore *possess* their so-called *inalienable human rights*, but also under circumstances where their mere visibility becomes justification for exclusionary practices, i.e., violence. Next, I will explore the condition of such recognition.

The One Human Right

In Arendt's words, "the fundamental deprivation of human rights is manifested first and above all in the deprivation of a place in the world which makes opinions significant and actions effective."[425] This place is the space in which we can appear to one another, and *become* equal. As we have seen in the previous chapter, "equality" is not a natural phenomenon of human existence, but it stands in need of affirmation. For this reason, it can only be understood in artificial terms, which apply to a certain space in which politics happens.[426] Furthermore, I want to underscore that equality is artificially created in the *performance* of recognition of the plurality of existence in being in the presence of others.

Arendt's suspicion of a so-called "universal equality" of human beings is a

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[423] If one is understood to be merely eliminable as soon as one decides to revolt, then the revolt would merely entail mass destruction through possible violence, instead of the actualization of power.

[424] Roger Berkowitz's poignant analysis on this section of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* where Arendt discusses the right to have rights gives us valuable insight. In his article "Hannah Arendt on Human Rights," Berkowitz claims that this right is simply "the right to speak and act in public" (Roger Berkowitz, "Hannah Arendt and human rights," in *Handbook of Human Rights*, ed. Thomas Cushman (New York: Routledge, 2012): 64). While I agree with Berkowitz's claim, my aim is to further show how this right is linked to a recognition through the performance of visibility.

[425] *OT*, 296.

[426] As Arendt argues, in her chapter entitled "The Revolutionary Tradition and its Lost Treasure," the councilmen were equal, because "their title rested on nothing but the confidence of their equals, and this equality was not natural but political, it was nothing they had been born with; it was the equality of those who had committed themselves to, and now were engaged in, a joint enterprise" (*OR*, 278).

direct response to the first article found in the United Nations' 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of *brotherhood.*" [427] The term "brotherhood" not only implies the moralization of the content of such equality, but also it purports an understanding of human existence in terms of a belonging to one big family of humankind. Against this formulation of equality, Arendt states the following:

> Equality, in contrast to all that is involved in *mere existence*, is not given us, but is the result of human organization insofar as it is guided by the principle of justice. *We are not born equal; we become equal as members of a group on the strength of our decision to guarantee ourselves mutually equal rights.*
> Our political life rests on the assumption that we can produce equality through organization, because man can act in and change and build a common world, together with his equals and only with his equals. [428]

Two conclusions follow from the above passage: 1) that equality is not natural, but is instead experienced spatially, and 2) that it rests on a mutual decision—understood as a response to our common existence in the world. Motivated by these conditions, Arendt is apt in claiming that those that do not have a place in community "lack that tremendous equalizing of differences which comes from being citizens of some commonwealth and yet, since they are no longer allowed to partake in the human artifice, they begin to belong to the human race in much the same way as animals belong to a specific animal species."[429]

It is true that Arendt's statement allows us to see the force of citizenship in her articulation of the condition of equality. Nevertheless, the emphasis on the "mutual

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[427] *Universal Declaration of Human Rights:* http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/, *my emphasis*.
[428] *OT*, 301, *my emphasis*.
[429] Ibid. 302.

decision" of becoming equal points to another possibility: While the law can give human beings certain rights that can be practised in the presence of others—that is, in public—the participation in this public is first and foremost granted by an *act* of human beings themselves. This is the act of recognition, which I will lay out in terms of an Arendtian recognitive politics that brings to focus the condition of "artificial equality."

An Arendtian Recognitive Politics

Equality is not an ideal, handed down to human beings; neither is it a natural condition of human existence. Rather, equality is a condition, which the human beings (can) create in their togetherness. While "citizenship or membership to a commonwealth" can allow individuals to *possess* some rights and attain formal equality, such abstraction involves the paradox I mentioned earlier. In Arendt's words:

> The paradox involved in the loss of human rights is that such loss coincides with the instant when a person becomes a human being in general—without a profession, without a citizenship, without an opinion, without a deed by which to identify and specify himself—*and* different in general, **representing** nothing but his own absolutely unique individuality which, deprived of expression within and action upon the common world, loses all significance.[430]

The paradox lies in the fact that human rights have only been understood to be equivalent to political (in this case, juridical) rights. Here, however, my claim is that Arendt only identifies a paradox, and that she does not endorse it as an all-embracing impasse in our thinking about rights: Instead her articulation of a "right to have rights" shifts the human discourse in order to point "one human right" which is embodied in the performative aspect of an Arendtian recognitive politics.

In her *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights: The Predicament of Common*

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[430] Ibid, *my emphasis*.

Responsibility, Peg Birmingham understands this "right to have rights" to be "more than merely a juridical right," while she argues that, for Arendt, it "is a fundamental political right; it is the right to belong significantly to a political space."[431] Birmingham's demarcation between juridical and political rights becomes telling in the context of trying to appropriate how the political differs, for Arendt, from merely institutionalized juridico-political practices. This distinction demonstrates the novelty of Arendt's project in comparison to Marx's critique of juridico-political rights, where these rights are grounded on the rights of the human being in her individuality.

While I acknowledge the appeal of Birmingham's distinction, calling "the right to have rights" a political right does not give us the recognitive—hence, the extra-institutional and spatial—aspect of how this right can be performed. Understood as a political right, the right to have rights already entails the formation of a political space. If one is in a political space, then one can manifest one's right to have rights, and then have further rights, and so on. However, not every public space is a political space by definition. A public space has the possibility of becoming a political space on the condition of the questions raised in that space by the plurality of human beings who are gathered there. Such transformation of a public space into a political one corresponds to Arendt's articulation of political action as principled, that is, resting on worldly principles. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the worldliness of these principles points to a reading that does overcome the so-called rigid demarcation between the social and the political for Arendt. In pursuing the recognition of visibility of what I will call the "social identity" of the human being, my account will help square the

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[431] Peg Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, 59. I will turn to Birmingham's poignant articulation of the "principle of givenness" in the next section.

"right to have rights" as the "one human right" with the universality of this right.

In distinguishing the condition of visibility from mere visibility, my account will serve as a useful intervention into understanding the ontological grounding of human dignity, where this dignity enables us to recognize someone as a particular individual bearing a social identity. I am aware that Arendt's account does not render a straightforward justification for such articulation, but in thinking with Arendt, we can show that the coherence of her account depends on a performance of the recognition of one's visibility in public (even when not properly political) spaces possible.

In order to make sense of this performance of recognition, then, we need to understand the force of Arendt's argument in a different vein. While Arendt's criticism of the so-called human rights rests on their being granted and applicable only while one is a member of a nation-state, her account does not rule out the possibility of understanding one's right to have rights in an extra-institutional sense. However, how is this right to have rights to be understood with regard to the individual who is recognized to have it? This question becomes especially pertinent when the universality of this right is not natural, and when it does not rest on a metaphysical understanding of human nature that can give us its ground. Our cue will come from understanding human dignity as connected to the condition of visibility.

By underscoring the performative aspect of recognition based on the condition of visibility, I contend that it will be possible for us to *not* understand the "right to have rights" as a "political right" in Birmingham's, nor as a "moral imperative" in Benhabib's senses. The right to have rights is more than a moral imperative, for it does not rest on *one's* recognition of *oneself*, as *owing* another person this right, a

recognition which ultimately lies in one's own morality, and not in the person that one is supposed to recognize.[432] Benhabib claims that the first way in which the term "right" is used in the "right to have rights" corresponds to the "moral imperative" according to which it invokes "a *moral claim to membership* and *a certain form of treatment compatible with the claim to membership*."[433] The connection she then draws to the second part of the phrase elucidates how the State's granting these rights rests on "this prior claim of membership."[434] While necessary to provoke a possibility of the universal *enforcement* of human rights, I contend that Benhabib's project remains all-too-dependent upon institutional practices bound by a (preferably liberal) legalistic framework. I explore next how we can understand this "right to have rights" through a recognitive performance pertaining to extra-institutional spaces, especially when the institutional practices of such recognition fail.

Space of Recognition

In his article "The 'Aporias of Human Rights' and the 'One Human Right': Regarding the Coherence of Hannah Arendt's Argument," Christoph Menke starts off his discussion by stating that Arendt's critique of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" is

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[432] I am grateful to Don Carmichael for suggesting this clarification regarding where morality may reside in a rights-discourse. While I am not particularly concerned here with the notion of "collective responsibility," this suggestion is also supported by how Arendt understood legal and moral matters in relation to collective responsibility: "Legal and moral standards have one very important thing in common—they always relate to the person and what the person has done; if the person happens to be involved in a common undertaking as in the case of organized crime, what is to be judged is still this very person, the degree of his participation, his specific role, and so on, and not the group" (Hannah Arendt, "Collective Responsibility," in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003): 148).

[433] Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*, 56.

[434] Ibid. 57.

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that the Declaration "is of an order of 'ought' to which no 'can' can respond."[435] That is, the Declaration puts forth how human existence ought to be constituted, while it fails to manifest its norm in practice.

In Menke's words, the Declaration of 1789 is the "emergence of mankind as a political entity."[436] In accordance with this universal existence of "mankind," the Declaration finds its guarantee in the sovereignty of the nation-state, which recognizes its members as equals. Thus, Menke suggests that the principle of the self-determination of the nation-state posits that "the *dignity* of man consists in having rights as a member of a political community"[437] and this is why the loss of dignity comes with a loss of polity; that is, human dignity as an a-historical, a priori principle of human existence cannot be the ground of human rights understood as inalienable universal rights. From this, it can be entailed that the dignity—understood in and through the Declaration—of the human being consists in having "rights" as a member of a political community.

I maintain that the above conclusion with regard to dignity needs to be modified in order to understand the import of *ontological* grounding of rights in an Arendtian sense: the dignity of the human being consists in having *the right to have rights* as a *possible* member of a political community. My claim can also be understood to be similar to Etienne Balibar's suggestion that the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," in

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[435]Christoph Menke, "The 'Aporias of Human Rights' and the 'One Human Right': Regarding the Coherence of Hannah Arendt's Argument," *Social Research: An International Quarterly,* (Volume 74, No. 3, Fall 2007): 742. In his article "The Self-Reflection of Law and the Politics of Rights," Menke further states, with regard to the self-reflection of law in the formation of "subjective rights," that "the paradox of the law is fact and demand, being and prescription, Is and Ought" (Christoph Menke, "The Self-Reflection of Law and the Politics of Rights," *Constellations*, (Volume 18, No. 2, 2011): 132).

[436] Menke, "The 'Aporias of Human Rights' and the 'One Human Right': Regarding the Coherence of Hannah Arendt's Argument," 750.

[437] Ibid. 752, *my emphasis.*

equating the man and the citizen, was a Declaration of a "universal right to politics."[438]

This "universal right to politics" would in turn mean a capacity that can be practised by the human being insofar as she chooses to partake in politics or become a member of a political space. Parallel with this, we can see that the dignity of the human being that can be recovered through one's "right to have rights" is intimately linked to the condition of visibility, the individual's being recognized as being-visible as a possible participant in a political community. Such rearticulation reinforces my argument that one's "right to have rights" does not depend on one's possessing of civil or political (or basically human) rights.

As argued thus far, visibility denotes what reality consists of in Arendt's account. For Arendt, reality is what appears in a space, insofar as it is what *can* appear to others. As she states in *The Human Condition,* "to be deprived of this space means to be deprived of reality, which, humanly and politically speaking is the same as appearance."[439] The capacity to grant a proper human existence to the human being, then, lies in recognition of the visibility of the human being, which is the recognition of one's "right to have rights." Such recognition of one's visibility is what motivates the ultimate appearance of the human being as who they can be in a political community. But as I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, this recognition is two-tiered, and the first step has to accommodate the recognition of a plethora of social identities (themselves always relationally understood as I argued in the third chapter) in order for

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[438] Etienne Balibar, "'Rights of Man' and 'Rights of the Citizen': The Modern Dialectic of Equality and Freedom," in *Masses, Classes, Ideas: Studies on Politics and Philosopher Before and After Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 49. For a discussion of Arendt's "right to have rights" as what Balibar deems a "politics of politics," see Etienne Balibar, "(De)Constructing the Human as Human Institution: A Reflection on the Coherence of Arendt's Practical Philosophy," *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, *Hannah Arendt's Centenary: Political and Philosophical Perspectives*, *Part I*, (Volume 74, No. 3, Fall 2007): 727-738.
[439] *HC*, 199.

us to make sense of the recognition of one's unique identity, that is, one's "whoness." I want to demonstrate how this two-tiered account of recognition can be understood by turning to the Uludere Airstrike (also know as the Roboski Massacre) that took place in Turkey in 2011.

On December 28, 2011, the Turkish Air Force 'accidentally' killed 34 Kurdish people at the border of Turkey and Iraq.[440] The 34 people were citizens of the Republic of Turkey, who were smuggling tobacco and diesel oil into the country. Here, what is officially a border between two countries becomes a social and political boundary between two peoples in one land. While these citizens politically belong to the Republic of Turkey, the economic means of their survival is connected to the smuggling business.[441] The incident and its relation to human rights (the violation and thereof together) has been prolifically explored by international and national human rights associations. It is undeniable that the bombing was an act of the violation of the right to life of these human beings. I want to underscore, however, that despite the civil and political rights these villagers hold under the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, what happened in Roboski cannot be understood as merely a violation of their "right to life." The matter is more complicated than that. I want to diagnose here a lack of the recognition of these individuals' "right to have rights," hereby extending Arendt's analysis of this right to be ranging beyond the status of statelessness and of the refugee.

The attack of the Turkish Air Force can be traced back to the incompatibility

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[440] A detailed account of what happened in Uludere (Roboski) then and in its aftermath can be found at http://bianet.org/english/human-rights/143200-timeline-what-happened-in-roboski. See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roboski_airstrike

[441] A detailed journalistic piece on what happened in Roboski and an insight into the lives of the Kurdish people who are living around the area has been penned by Fréderike Geerdink in her *Roboskî'de Çocuklar Öldü: Türkiye'deki Kürt Sorununun Temellerine Bir Gazetecilik Yolculuğu,* original *De Jongens Zijn Dood: Een journalistieke reis naar de kern van de Koerdische kwestie in Turkije* (Dutch), trans. by Nurşen Kaya (Iletişim Yayinlari, 2014).

between the granting of political rights by the State (which the Kurds possess) and the concrete recognition of individuals in their social identities as a performative phenomenon. The equal rights that are granted to the citizens by the State remain insufficient in granting the Kurds' equal visibility in public space. Such visibility, which invites the listenability of others, is the condition that makes individuals possible equal participants in the political realm. In turn, I contend that the kind of violence perpetrated against the Kurdish villagers can be understood to stem from the instrumental framework of politics inscribed within the project of a homogeneous nation-state based on the universal abstraction of the citizen in such a self-identified nation-state.

In this instance, we see that strategic action undertaken by the State aims to create or preserve a certain identity-claim based on shared interests. Here, the interests of the State did not coincide with the interests of the Kurdish people. Moreover, the absence of an official apology[442] by the government to the families of the deceased reinforces another side of this lack of recognition: Invisibility understood as hyper-visibility. For this sort of accidental elimination is only due to the hyper-visibility of the Kurd as 'terrorist,'[443] which covers over the Kurds' visibility with regard to their ethnic identity of Kurdishness and deems them invisible as possible political agents in the

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[442] The then Deputy Chairman of the AKP (Justice and Development Party), Huseyin Celik stated that, "The payment of compensation would in fact constitute a material apology. A verbal apology could be extended after all details of the incident have been uncovered" ("Uludere apology may follow compensation," available at http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/uludere-apology-may-follow-compensation.aspx?PageID=238&NID=10770&NewsCatID=338, accessed on July 9, 2015). An official report on the incident penned by the appointed Parliamentary Commission has been released in March 2013, but to this day, the official apology has not come. Cf. Fréderike Geerdink, *Roboskî'de Çocuklar Öldü: Türkiye'deki Kürt Sorununun Temellerine Bir Gazetecilik Yolculuğu,* original *De Jongens Zijn Dood: Een journalistieke reis naar de kern van de Koerdische kwestie in Turkije* (Dutch), trans. Nurşen Kaya (İletişim Yayinlari, 2014).

[443] Here, the term "terrorist" stands for a militant of the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (Kurdish acronym: PKK).

public sphere.

If the Kurd is not recognized in her social identity, that is, if her whatness—that is, her Kurdishness—is not recognized, her appearance as a "who" in the political space is foreclosed. If she in turn does not possess the possibility to appear (or choose to appear) in the political space, then following my analysis, I maintain that this amounts to the very dismissal of her very right to have rights. Thus, the spatiality and performativity of the right to appear is put into relief by the recognition of one's visibility. The recognition of the Kurds' "right to have rights" in and through the recognition of the visibility of their social identities would have not only hindered the act of violence against them, but it would also allow them to appear in a space where their civic and political rights can in fact be meaningfully understood. Without such recognition, their having of human rights is not meaningful. Moreover, without such recognition, the possibility of their showing "who" they are in deciding to appear in a political space is also overridden.

The merit of the recognition of one's social identity is that such recognition allows for the possibility of visibility in public space. Once such recognition is enacted, the public space in which one appears as a woman, or a Kurd, or a student, can transform into a political space which brings into focus the "listenability" as the possibility of hearing (and being willing to listen to) those who may be denied the possibility of being an equal participant in creating a political community. I contend that the disclosure of one's whoness, one's unique identity, can then be meaningfully understood in one's appearance in such a political space, which does not operate on a pre-given truth about identities, while it also wards off the hypostatization of social

identities.

In Arendtian terms, this disclosure entails a being-with-others, a "human togetherness," which does not promote a "being for or against others" but being-with-them.[444] In contrast to forming power in human togetherness in a plurality, a "being for or against others" is based on an opposition of interests pertaining to different collective identities. This opposition operates within instrumental terms based on violence: for instance, the elements of utility, coercion and strategic action aimed at domination.

As I have adumbrated above, the condition of visibility can manifest itself in different extremes: as hyper-visibility, which turns into a kind of invisibility, or as *mere* visibility that remains abstractly grounded on an abstract equality of human beings before the law.[445] For instance, the Kurd who is hyper-visible as terrorist loses altogether the possibility of manifesting her political agency, which can only present itself in an equality and plurality of human togetherness. Similarly, a homeless person who is hyper-visible as 'homeless,' becomes *merely* visible, so that her dignity becomes concealed. One's appearance in the political space, then, is not a natural phenomenon, but can only be manifested by a principle of humanity, which I understand as the human dignity that is granted in the recognition of one's visibility.

The foundation of this human dignity is neither natural, nor historical. This is the point of transformation in the discourse of rights. Regarding this shift in the discourse of humanity in the nineteenth century, Arendt states that: "[This new situation], in which 'humanity' has in effect assumed the role formerly ascribed to

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[444] *HC*, 180.

[445] The equality before law is a formal condition that does not satisfy a full-fledged account of how this equality extends to the sphere of subjective rights. An investigation of the relationship between law and subjective rights does not fall within the scope of this dissertation.

nature or history, would mean in this context that the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself."[446] Arendt contends that humanity as a regulative idea could not and did not in fact do this work.[447]

As I stated at the beginning, this performative understanding of recognition can make room for an articulation of "the right to have rights" that is not grounded in natural, moral, or political terms. This is why I want to suggest that we need to understand "humanity" on a different register than that of a natural-law or positivistic discourse. What if we understand humanity to refer to a *human condition*—in contradistinction to a human nature—in which we appear to others in our singularity— or givenness?

Humanity understood as a human condition demonstrates the *material* aspect of human plurality as a fact of human existence, which embraces "givenness" as valuable. Such singular (and plural) "givenness" in turn becomes a step in order to articulate the un-givenness of the individual, who appears in the political realm as a "who." Contrary to the "artificial equality" constructed by human beings in their plurality, the givenness of the human being—the differences that individuals have—does not have the inherent force to equalize these differences.

The principle of "givenness" has been brilliantly explored in Birmingham's account, where she suggests that this principle points to another sense of a "right to have rights," which in her terms is, "the right of givenness, unqualified mere existence,

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[446] *OT*, 298.
[447] Ibid.

to appear and to belong to a political space."[448] Here, "unqualified mere existence"

denotes "a singularity without identity,"[449] which belongs to the human being's

condition of natality. Articulating a "right to have rights" through the principle of

givenness responds to the problem which Birmingham underscores as follows: "Every

individual as unqualified existent, without *representable* identity, as isolated existence

is in danger in a political state characterized by its inability to recognize the murder of

those who are nothing but human beings. These individuals live without recognizable

identity; they in the desert, in isolation."[450] Birmingham's formulation of the principle

of givenness aims to put forth the inherent worldliness of the given as such—that what

is given is still of the world—having been born into it.[451] This point is poignant. But if

what Birmingham calls a "*representable* identity" is a political one, then there may be

something that actually *relates* unqualified mere existence to such an identity. On my

view, this relation can be born through a social identity, albeit an unfinished one. One's

social identity appears—or becomes visible in a public space—in one's relation to

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[448] Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights*, 87. Her analysis brings to light the inherent flaw in Agamben's analysis of Arendt's conception of a "right to have rights" in relation to the refugee. (Cf. 91). She further concludes that "the right to have rights is not a sacred right bestowed from beyond; it is a human right that emerges from the event of natality itself" (Ibid. 92).

[449] Ibid. 87: "It is this singularity without identity that Arendt is thinking when she thinks the 'given,' that which Western politics has never embraced and welcomed into its midst." Cf. Ibid. 91.

[450] Ibid. 89, *my emphasis*.

[451] The end of Birmingham's discussion on the principle of givenness marks what she suggests can let us understand this principle in its relation to a "right to have rights." In her words: "Gratitude for what is given (for the singularity of being, for the otherness of living things, for the webs of appearance, for the unfolding of time, for the earth itself) is accompanied by the joy of inhabiting together with a plurality of others a world where the unpredictability of the new remains an ever-present possibility. Both gratitude and joy animate the right to have rights" (Ibid. 103). Birmingham's suggestion responds to the absence she identifies in Arendt's thought. As she states: "A public sphere that guarantees these 'natural rights'—the right to one's uniqueness and singularity, the right to embrace one's embodied existence—sexuality, passions, dress, culture—ought to have claimed her attention. Not just general human rights but truly individual rights—the rights of embodied individuals whose sexuality, passions, and culture are recognized in the public sphere—were surely what her own thinking called for" (Ibid. 98). I think my account not only shows that Arendt's thinking does give us such a public sphere, but also that existence understood as relational and plural does overcome the seeming contradiction in Arendt's articulation of "unqualified mere existence" by showing that the latter is in fact qualified in many different senses.

others. Thus, the non-sovereign element of social identities remains intact, and in fact, such relationality is what brings to the fore the urgency of one's recognition of a "right to have rights."

In different terms, the way in which I have differentiated between social and political identities still gives us room to understand one's social identity (or identities) without qualifying them as sovereign and enclosed upon themselves. Such a non-sovereign understanding of social identities avoids the danger of hypostatizing identities, and falling back into an identity-based politics resting on, again, commonalities of individuals that are abstracted from their concrete existence. Only insofar as one can be understood as having an identity (a social one) can that person be recognized to have the right to have rights.

It is true that these social identities are never finished. Making room, however, for their possible interplay is crucial for politics to happen in between equals. The recognition of the visibility of an agent, who can then partake in political discourse, then, should be understood as a common concern of all. A common concern is one that gives us room to reclaim our world-creating capacity as human beings. This world-creating capacity and the space for public discourse have both formal and informal elements, understood through both institutionalized political practices and extra-institutional ones.[452] Insofar as the invisibility of minority/underrepresented/oppressed

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[452] In his essay "Arendt on Revolution," Albrect Wellmer does an excellent job depicting the distinction between "direct" and "representative" democracy in his elucidation of the institutional character of political action, which however, remains linked to the un-institutional character of individuals' performance under different circumstances (e.g. system of councils, or in my understanding, other public fora). I quote extensively:

I [therefore] take the idea of a council system to be a metaphor for a network of autonomous or partially autonomous institutions, organizations and associations, in each of which something takes place like the self-government of free and equal participants—free and equal in various dimension, with various tasks and various forms for recruiting

groups is concerned, recognizing these people's visibility, firstly with regard to their social identities, lets us *radicalize* in the end the public sphere, which in turn *radicalizes* who can/does/will participate in it. Visibility, then, brings together what Arendt calls an "urge to appear,"[453] and one's right to do so.

A non-identitarian understanding of political identity is manifested in the *un-givennes* of political identity. Political identity appears in a *space,* where we can differentiate it from familial or social identities into which we are born, or which we develop with regard to the commonalities that is shared with others. I have the social identity of being Turkish insofar as I share this trait with a community of others, while I also have the social identity of being a woman philosopher, and many others can be identified as such. The equivocation of social and political identities happens, however, at the edge of these characterizations. The social identity of being Turkish is on the one level related to having the national identity of Turkish citizenry, while I could have

members; a network whose units might be both horizontally and vertically connected, related to or dependent upon one another.

Complex structural bodies of this kind can represent both the institutions of a federal political system (from the local to the national level) and the associations, organizations and institutions of a democratic 'civil society' in contrast to 'formal' political institutions. I think that with her concept of a council system Arendt must have meant both: the political institutions of a federal political system and a network of autonomous or partially autonomous associations and organizations along the lines of civil society. Arendt's basic point then is, that the taste for freedom and the experience of freedom can only derive from the diverse forms of active participation in common concerns; the idea of political freedom therefore has to be spelled out in terms of a network of institutions and associations, formal and informal, and moreover in a way such that freedom must begin and become lived experience where the 'common issues' are as it were still physically tangible to those involved and, as their own immediate concerns, can be negotiated in an autonomous manner. It seems obvious that political freedom, seen this way, means something other and something more than a constitutionally based guarantee of basic citizen's rights. These are, as Arendt observes, a *precondition* of freedom, but not (political) freedom itself (Albrecht Wellmer, "Arendt on Revolution," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana R Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 224).

[453] As Arendt states: "In contrast to the inorganic thereness of lifeless matter, living beings are not mere appearances. To be alive means to be possessed by an urge toward self-display which answers the fact of one's own appearingness. Living things *make their appearance* like actors on a stage set for them" (Hannah Arendt, "Thinking," in *The Life of the Mind* (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1971): 21).

been the citizen of the Republic of Turkey without being Turkish, but rather Kurdish, Armenian, or the member of any other minority. On another level, I could have been a Turk without being a citizen of the Republic of Turkey. The recognition of such a social identity in terms of one's "right to have rights" is not necessitated by belonging to a political community, but on the condition of having the possibility to create such a community. One's "right to have rights" in this sense allows for an extra-legal articulation of this right, and therefore, the condition of citizenry—which is the means of belonging to a democratic discourse in current terms—does not restrict the recognition of one's "right to have rights." That is, one's political identity, one's whoness can only appear insofar as one is recognized to have a right to have rights. What I understand as the universality of the "right to have rights" in turn does not reside in its capacity to be constitutionalized, but in its capacity to be universally performed anew in each instance.

At this point, we see that one's social and political identities are connected despite their difference. One's social identity brings to focus the relational aspect of human existence, which does not remain enclosed in a private space in which one does not appear to others. One's political identity, insofar as it relates to appearing in a political space with a plurality of others which becomes the *praxis* of world-creation, then does not rest on common characteristics that individuals share; but rather, it is understood by the reclaiming *a place in common*. This place in common can, if it is to be the affirmation of the incommensurable plurality of existence, give us an Arendtian recognitive politics.

Such recognition demands not only a responsiveness to the world, but it also

puts into relief the principle of *courage* that lets one become a part of a *praxis* of world-creation. The principle of courage that accompanies one's appearance in a political space has a twofold significance: 1) It manifests the dignity of the human being as being worthy of having a "right to have rights," and 2) It also underscores the vulnerability of the human being. As I have already laid out in the second chapter, this courage is not equivalent to recklessness, but to a sort of willingness to enter into the political. As we have seen in the case of the Uludere Airstrike, the absence of the recognition of the Kurds' "right to have rights" points to an extreme case of this vulnerability, which is not immediately connected to the political space. This is why such recognition becomes crucial in stressing the first level of "being seen and heard by others" that pertains to one's social identity. I believe, then, such vulnerable position in which one appears to others is important in understanding the recognition of one's right to have rights as an imperative, which is at once a performative.

At this point, we have gone beyond what Arendt has given us in her formulation of the "right to have rights" understood as the right to "membership in a community," for we have shown the possibility of *how* this membership can be *performed*. In order to do this, it has first been argued that Marx's criticism of the liberal political rights, as laid out in his "On the Jewish Question," shows the inherent inequality on which these universal rights are founded. In turn, it has been ultimately argued that Arendt points to a similar structure of inequality to which the Declarations cannot respond, and in order to remedy this, I have shown that what is needed for an Arendtian recognitive politics is in fact a condition of "artificial equality."

I claim, then, with a sense of urgency, that we understand recognition with and

beyond what Arendt has offered us; that is, recognition as an imperative that pertains to the "right to have rights," which is granted by the recognition of visibility in a public/political space. Visibility means to exist: not merely to live, but exist in and through the possibility of making sense, and creating meaning in the world with others. For this to be possible, then, I argued that the possibility of interplay between human beings, both at a social and political level must be in place. As we see in case of the Uludere Airstrike, and countless others, recognition cannot remain an abstract phenomenon, nor can misrecognition simply be understood as a lack of human rights. Only when we can understand the right to have rights in terms of the performance of visibility, can we actually *empower* certain invisible parties, so that they can recover their world-creating capacity, wherein they can manifest their freedom in the plurality of others.

Conclusion

When Hannah Arendt published her first book under the title *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1951, the rightlessness of the stateless and the refugee was no longer an unfathomable or novel phenomenon, although the danger of this condition of rightlessness had proven to be destructive at a level that could not have been imagined before. Arendt brought to light this condition of rightlessness in her analysis of totalitarianism, which she understood to be "a new form of government" unprecedented by any measures. Her criticism of the condition of rightlessness struck right to the heart of the matter in her eloquent criticism of the so-called universal human rights, which since their birth in the 1789 French Constitution had been subject to a plethora of

revisions and adoptions, without, however, changing what lied at their core: equality.

While *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was not the first work Arendt had penned, we can say that it was the first work in which she tackled explicitly the political questions of her time, and tried to do so, as some would agree, in a philosophical manner. To my mind, Arendt's thinking of the conditions of human existence always revolved around the questions that were first raised in this work: equality, community, truth, revolution, rights, plurality, action, and space. These terms that frequently appear in her *oeuvre* have been taken up by contemporary Arendt scholarship and have been prolifically analyzed and criticized on many different registers which have placed Arendt in many different camps in the philosophical tradition, and fruitfully so.

The present work was an attempt to bring to focus what has been implicitly assumed in the scholarship, due not to a lack of emphasis either in Arendt's works or in the scholarship, but rather due to its obviousness: This is the relationship between the performative and spatial aspects of the terms that I have listed above. In this work, I explored the philosophical coherence of what Arendt's politico-philosophical thinking has accomplished in spatial and performative terms in order to put forth what I called an "Arendtian recognitive politics," which is a two-tiered theory of recognition that seeks to do justice to the recognition of the human beings' social and political identities alike.

In order to do so, I put Arendt in conversation with thinkers with whom she has had implicit or explicit connections. These figures are Martin Heidegger, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Karl Marx. In bringing Arendt into conversation with these figures, I aimed, on the one hand, to respond to the philosophical puzzles Arendt's work presents, while

on the other, to open up a new venue for thinking the act of recognition as it pertains to a spatial performance of the act itself, in order to show its intimate connection with human freedom understood in terms of non-sovereignty. My account of recognition goes against the grain of the tradition that has understood recognition to be an act that puts into the relief a self-identical and self-knowing subject whose identity needs to be reconciled with itself.

In demonstrating the condition of plurality as a fact of existence, though one that still stands in need of creation and affirmation, I argued that only in the coming together of a political community without an essential commonality can we emphasize this condition of plurality, which manifests the intricate connection between social and political identities of human beings.

The project of recognitive politics understands the philosophical coherence of politics articulated in spatial terms by underscoring the interrelation of the principles of epistemic responsibility and democratic responsibility, and the recognition of what Arendt has famously called a "right to have rights." In doing so, it aims to make plain the performative and spatial components of meaningful political existence.

Recognitive politics emphasizes the conditions of performativity and spatiality in understanding the political. Recognitive politics is itself a performance, which puts into relief the seemingly puzzling relation between the activity of recognition and the subject of recognition. By emphasizing the plurality of human existence, and the intricate connections between social and political identities, recognitive politics aims to shed new light on the interconnectedness of these terms without falling back into an identity-based-politics.

The performative and spatial components of political existence points to the experience of politics performed by a plurality of individuals whose togetherness put forth a political community. Thus, it is key to understand who we are talking about when we talk about a political community.

The current project sought to underline the non-sovereign aspect of the political community, which is created and is likely to be preserved by non-sovereign individuals. The element of non-sovereignty was in the background in Chapter 1, as I have explored the relationship between political space and political community to demonstrate that Arendt's account of political community is what gives us the "*topos* (place) of responsibility." Unlike political community understood in and through the work of art and its originary truth coming out of Heidegger's account, which guides such a community in determining a space for the community to occupy, Arendt's account emphasizes the activity of meaning-creation on pluralistic grounds, an activity which becomes the basis of a fundamental responsiveness to the world.

More explicitly, the element on non-sovereignty comes to the fore in Chapter 2, through what I have called a principle of epistemic responsibility. This principle does not prioritize a knowing subject who has individual access to a truth that is supposed to be operative in articulating the conditions of a community. In Arendt's account, the contingency of factual truths becomes informative in understanding political community, which is created by a plurality of individuals with a common, that is, worldly concern. The principle of epistemic responsibility, as I have underscored, promotes a thin notion of truth—laid out in terms of factual truth—that has to be taken up responsibly in order to give us a more robust account of political action. Epistemic

responsibility guides meaning-creation in and through a discursive process of opinion-formation and political judgment.

Another register on which I have explored a non-sovereign articulation of human freedom was the *praxis* of becoming a *demos*. I have underscored this *praxis* in and through a principle of democratic responsibility in connection to Nancy's articulation of the capacity of sense-making which I juxtaposed with Arendt's emphasis on the foundation of freedom in her account of revolution. Such democratic responsibility exhibited the very spatiality of the activity of world-creation, and put forth the performative element of human freedom inscribed within the condition of plurality itself.

Finally, the term recognitive politics advocates a two-tiered theory of recognition, which operates within the terms of what I called "artificial equality" and "visibility." In showing the interrelation of the two tiers of recognizing social identities, and recognizing political identities, it also upholds the spatial aspect of the act of recognition, which has hitherto been understood in more temporal terms. The performance of recognition, I contend, can be approached from a spatial perspective, which undoes the ramifications of an identity-based-politics that—if one wills—forgets about the creation of a world. World-creation is itself an activity that is performed by individuals who uphold worldly principles that are not motivated by private or collective concerns, but rather which tally with creating a world based on the conditions of plurality and equality.

The core of the present project is the term responsibility that I have tried to explicate through an attitude of responsiveness to the world, which we share with

others. I have not advocated a responsibility that can be reduced to merely moral or socio-economic terms. It is more so a responsibility that is ontologically rooted in our human existence in the world that finds its home in the plural and public discussion of what is at stake in such existence: the creation of the world itself. Moreover, I do not promote a responsibility that is divorced from the triangle of rights-duties-and-obligations, but I urge a rethinking of responsibility that makes meaningful the latter terms themselves.

With regards to what the terms epistemic and democratic responsibility tried to elucidate, we can see that an Arendtian recognitive politics tallies with a "revolutionary spacing," as the spacing of freedom that becomes revolutionary insofar as it pertains not only to "the problem of beginning," but also to the merit of beginning something new together as such. I hope that the present project, too, succeeds in its initiatory endeavor and opens up a new venue in current politico-philosophical discourse and that it urges the performance of recognition to be developed in more meaningful ways that adhere to formal and informal democratic practices.

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