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Bringing the Thinking Subject into the World: Reflections on the Work of Hannah Arendt

Sharon Lax
Department of English
McGill University, Montreal
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work with love to my mother, Evelyn Lax, who has never stinted in her expressions of support, love and assistance of every kind. David has been a fellow traveler during the many visions and revisions. My friends who know who they are hopefully know as well how much their humour and companionship have lent a space to rest my weary head. Brian and Stuart are given the highest medals for their optimism and emotional support. The Roseman clan are to be thanked for their familial support. Heather Ann Daly has provided the spiritual glue during the last few centimetres of this process.

My accomplishment in completing the extensive research and writing of this thesis is, finally, dedicated with love to three people in particular: to Louis and Annie, who, from their zygote existence to their five years, have taught me that the imagination is as expansive as we allow it to be, and to my father and my memory of him: his electric optimism and desire to share the million/second rotations of his mind and of course his unflinching encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

Hannah Arendt explored the duality of the privately and publicly constructed realms which serve, through our thoughts and our actions, to position us in the world. She draws a distinction between the *vita activa* and the*vita contemplativa,* challenging prior conceptions of the radical division between the two. In so doing, she demonstrates how self-understanding evolves as much through critical thinking about human interaction as it does through contemplating the relative autonomy of the individual being. As well, she demonstrates how intellectual awareness is best achieved through a critical apprehension of our selves in relation to other selves. Arendt takes *plurality* for granted. She presumes an underlying multiplicity to any discourse concerning the individual and the world. This informs as well her understanding of judgment as a concern with *particulars,* even though the act of judging relies on a general framework of principles.

I examine, in Arendt's work, the concepts of solitude and isolation and how these inform her discourse on reflective thinking. It is my argument that the dinstinction between these two concepts cannot be drawn as neatly as she attempted to do. These two states of being in fact meet in the figure of the pariah as critical thinker, as well as storyteller, and finally as a catalyst for public action.

I submit that there is a subtextual theme of temporality within Arendt's work and then move to demonstrate how this theme expresses the nature and context of thinking and judging, in relation to action.

Finally, I draw upon Arendt's distinctions between thinking and judging, arguing that one cannot be extracted from the other and that the two cannot be defined as autonomous, in the context of critical thinking. Thinking as a component of judging may be partly stated through the figure of the conscious pariah. This person, whose marginal relationship to society obstructs his or her capacity to act, may yet do so through thinking in relation to the world, as critic and as storyteller. In this context, the role of the Kantian spectator may be reconstructed as that of the actor, who implicity grants contingency to both past and future in recreating a place among others.

RÉSUMÉ

Hannah Arendt a exploré le dualisme des domaines privé et public. Elle distingue la *vita activa* de la *vita contemplativa* et remet en question les conceptions antérieures affirmant qu'il existe entre les deux une division radicale. Par là, elle démontre à quel point la connaissance de soi évolue autant à travers la réflexion critique portant sur les interactions humaines qu'à travers la contemplation de l'autonomie toute relative de l'individu. Elle pose que tout discours sur l'individu et le monde est essentiellement multiple. Cela nourrit également sa conception du jugement comme affaire de *particuliers,* bien que l'acte même de juger repose sur un cadre général de principes. En m'inspirant des concepts de paria et d'art du récit mis en place par Arendt, je soutiens qu'on ne peut pas distinguer solitude et isolement de manière aussi tranchée. Finalement, je discute les distinctions établies par Arendt entre penser et juger, soutenant que ces actions ne sont pas autonomes mais inextricablement liées dans la pensée critique.

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INTRODUCTION

> The poets' relation to reality is indeed what Goethe said it was: They cannot bear the same burden of responsibility as ordinary mortals; they need a measure of remoteness, and yet would not be worth their salt if they were not forever tempted to exchange this remoteness for being just like everybody else.
>
> Arendt's discussion of Bertolt Brecht, *Men in Dark Times*[1]

Hannah Arendt explored the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* through various themes in order to shed some light on the human condition. One theme, worldliness, signifies and understanding of the world. World is home (or place) on earth and is fashioned through human interaction. Arendt uses the term *human artifice* to distinguish the structure of the place on earth from all that is biological and to refer to our shared experience. The artifice is similar to the edifice of a home. While *artifice* is based on the *artificial,* it is a manifestation of our sense of place on the earth. Institutions and consumable items may currently represent artifice. Arendt, however, is speaking more of political structures which make use of a space for dialogue rather than the abuse of power through political institutions; and she is speaking of durable goods, inventions and/or tools rather than things for their own sake or made simply in order to be consumed.

Homo faber is a tool maker, is a worker in the sense of a craftsperson. Arendt distinguishes *homo faber* from *animale laborans,* laboring species. She is not so much positing a condition of society, as in Marx's workers/labourers and wealthy owners, nor a society where some are workers, fashioning tools and others are labourers. Arendt is using these Latin definitions to describe a condition, one to which every individual human being may lay claim.

I will explore Arendt's sense of the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* and her notion of worldliness and creating a home on earth in relation to belonging. We require a sense of self to acquire a sense place. I will examine Arendt's study of the intellectual, emotional and physical connections one establishes with others. As well, I will look at her notion of plurality in relation to public space and the diversity we may express through ideas. Worldliness and belonging, I believe, intersect with plurality. One's relation to the world may be examined within a critical discussion of the self alongside the acknowledgment of and

1 Arendt, Hannah. *Men in Dark Times*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968.

critical respect for others.

Arendt's human being is an individual *of* the world, someone who becomes and lives *within* the world. This individual explores the world not by compromising her beliefs in order to belong nor by solidifying an opinion which is at odds with the actuality of her surroundings. She must find a means of departing from imagination's enclosure in order to place herself *beside* others. Such an exploration occurs by engaging in a dialogue with the *many*, in being cognizant of the multiplicity of experience.

Arendt was not an individualist in the Lockian sense, not an idealistic democrat nor someone who would consider the republic, its constitutional body, and its institutions immutable. She regarded the human world through both the poetic lens, following Saint Augustine's concept of worldly love, and through the critical lens of the discerning pragmatist.

In many ways, Arendt's ideas reflect those of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, his humanism, for instance, and in her sense of the role of the citizen as a self-reflective thinker and actor. She veers explicitly from him in respect to the social versus political, as she wishes to critically distinguish the two. Arendt contends that people should exercise critical distance within political matters, rather than empathy and compassion as counsel in judgment and decision-making.[2]

Toward the end of her life, Arendt turned her attention strictly to the connection between the*vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*. The two realms are, in some respects, exclusive yet are drawn together through the thinker's cognition of being surrounded by others and the actor's critical distance from imagination. In order to obtain this critical aptitude, however, the actor at first is a thinker, a critical thinker. Arendt ascribed to the notion of thinking as a practical or pragmatic course toward political involvement.

While she does make a distinction between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*, between the life of the mind and the realm of human experience -- within the world of appearances -- the corporeal, Arendt examines the realm of contemplation in terms of human interaction.

I begin this paper with a discussion of solitude, the setting circumscribed by the solitaire and/or thinker. I then explore solitude, political isolation and

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2 Arendt's strict division between the political and the social has remained a major area of contention amongst her readers. Her sense was that social interests should as little as possible influence political interests, or beliefs. Many of those who find fault with this division hear a condescension and a certain credulity in everything else Arendt deems political. The confusion, I believe, pertains to Arendt's perception of personal interests dominating political discussion. However, I too believe it is near impossible to delineate between the two, as what is political and what is social are always fluctuating.

loneliness all as forms of isolation which have the potential to create an exile of the thinker. My main thesis is that critical thinking and hence critical distance both allow landings we may gain hold of to boost ourselves out of destructive isolation.

Arendt discusses isolation, solitude and loneliness at length at the end of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.[3] In her other works, she approaches these themes in a rather circuitous manner, weaving them into larger themes on the human condition. In *The Human Condition*, she explores the solitude of *homo faber*, the craftsperson, who needs the marketplace to display his goods and be released from a potentially dangerous isolation. In this book, Arendt expands on this theme to discuss modern alienation.[4] Finally, solitude is the setting of Arendt's last lectures and essays compiled in *Life of the Mind*.[5]

In Arendt's discourse on the human condition, solitude and isolation are positioned both as antithetical to one another (in terms of the subject's agency) and as analogous (both being forms of isolation). Isolation is in opposition to belonging. Arendt discusses political isolation within the context of political separation. She does as well point out that willful solitude is always in danger of becoming isolation, that is we are always in danger of isolating ourselves.

At the beginning of my study, I look at the differences between the solitary space of the individual, who, of her own volition, chooses privacy over company, and the solitude which the political pariah or exile may obtain despite the reduction or destruction of her agency. In the second chapter, I discuss the "conscious" pariah. Consciousness is reached through critical self awareness and awareness of what is external to the self. I believe that the narrative structure may serve the need for expression as the physical artifice of *homo faber* serves public debate. The question which continued to appear to me while reading Arendt, therefore, is how does the storyteller relate to the political actor and how

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3 Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1973.

4 Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

5 Arendt, Hannah. *The Life of the Mind: "One / Thinking," "Two / Willing," "Conclusions."* 1 vol. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978. The last part "Conclusions" is actually here an abbreviation of the "Judging" lecture notes, compiled in an edition edited by Ronald Beiner. *The Life of the Mind* is a collection of essays and the lecture, "Judging" (a series of lectures expanded and republished in *Life of the Mind*, in the "Appendix / Judging: Excerpts from Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy" 255-72). In *Life of the Mind*, "Judging" exists as an Appendix. "Thinking" was delivered in a briefer version in 1973 at the University of Aberdeen, as the Gifford Lectures; the opening to "Willing" was presented as well at this series of lectures, in 1974; and both "Thinking" and "Willing," in briefer forms, were presented in 1974-1975 at New York's New School for Social Research. The two essays "Thinking" and "Willing" were to comprise a book, whose final chapter was to be "Judging," which was drawn from a lecture course on Kant's political philosophy held in 1970 at the New School, and was then as well published as *Kant's Political Philosophy*, edited with an introduction by Ronald Beiner. The reflections in "Judging" and, therefore, the final draft of the book *The Life of the Mind* were cut short by Hannah Arendt's death in 1975.

may we -- if at all -- reconcile our experiences and our personal recordings with tools which somehow, in some form, reduce the experience. How do we bring ourselves into the ineluctable world of appearances without compromising our intuitive grasp of the inexplicable?

The pariah's experience, the marginal critical thinker's semblance of the world informs my own exploration of the storyteller's role with regards to Arendt's conception of the world.[6] The conscious pariah as storyteller concentrates on making sense of the otherwise ineffable, on essentially understanding as earthly bodies. My explorations in this work on the storyteller may be framed within another question: "how may the narrator relate those (commonly-perceived) elements which provide our *sensus communis:* that is not so much what elements ascribe our commonality *per se,* but how it is that do we reach this sense of that which we do have in common?"

The storyteller -- who may be the pariah -- who makes an appearance as the historian, biographer, poet, essayist, narrator of fiction, etc., relies on the interaction with not only an audience but with the characters of history, of the past. Through the strength of the narrative, and, in turn, through some public expression, such a teller of a tale may divulge the potential power of the imagination to go 'visiting', exploring the world as others may experience it. In the second chapter of this thesis, I explore the persona of the pariah. I look at how such a person takes shape in Arendt's writing and discuss the pariah as actor and storyteller who uses solitude in the midst of isolation, or exile, to critically review her life. In doing so, the pariah intercepts the prospect of defeat and political isolation and creates some semblance of a home.

As the three paths, one of the storyteller, another of the actor, and another of the thinker all intersect within the act of judging, or critical thinking, and within the structures of time and space determined by both memory (collective and individual) and the act of recounting, I explore the subtextual

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[6] Arendt's storyteller might consider, along with Kant, that,"in judging nature anesthetically . . . [and]. . . sublime, we do so not because nature arouses fear, but because it calls forth our strength (which does not belong to [the] nature [within us])," and, in doing so, allows us to receive confidence "that we should [not] have to bow to [nature] if our highest principles were at stake and we had to choose between upholding or abandoning them." (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* §28 121). Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment.* Trans.Werner S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987.

theme of temporality in Arendt's work. In the third chapter, I look at this theme in relation to her concept of history and then include some of the ideas issuing from my study into an inquiry on her perception of judging.

In the final days of her life, Arendt was working through an understanding of the faculty of judgment, not in terms of a moral precept but in relation to critical thinking and this in relation to the world. Arendt's notion of judging and political thinking may be generalized as the ability to take a stance outside any preconceptions. Her analysis of the mind's activities led empirically to a look at thinking in relation to willing and judging.

After looking at the relation of solitude to political and social isolation, I attempt, throughout the remainder of this thesis, to elucidate the complexities within Arendt's understanding of thinking, judging and acting and her relational development of the three. She was working toward a comprehensive study of judging in relation to Kant's principles of reason and judgment. This study, later entitled "Judging" is contained within her lecture notes delivered at the New School For Social Research in autumn of 1970.[7]

Towards the end of this work, I discuss briefly Arendt's wish to avoid contextualizing action and thought, and, therefore, judgment, within a basic framework of moral principles. There is some academic debate concerning her expression of good and bad behaviour within the concepts of thoughtfulness and thoughtlessness. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, a book which many have criticized at great lengths (to the point whereby Arendt was considered excommunicated from the Jewish community), Arendt begins her explorations on evil, evaluating action in terms of good or bad intentions.[8,9] She looks for a means by which the individual may obtain critical distance, independence of thought. Then Arendt searches for how such distance may be exercised in action. The type of action Arendt seeks would embody separation from normative beliefs, and such a separation without abstaining from a basic human conscience. In the essay "Thinking" in *Life of the Mind*, she discloses her internal struggle with the lack in our cultural tradition of a concrete approach to critical thinking. While the directives for critical thinking may be ambiguous at best, the directives for judging and for acting may be clear only in terms of

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7 See Hannah Arendt, *Hannah Arendt: Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Ed. Ronald Beiner. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.

8 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Viking Press, 1963. Revised and enlarged edition, 1965.

9 See Elisabeth Young Bruehl's autobiography *For the Love of the World*.

behaviour - implying mannerisms or the following of societal norms and values - - rather than critical action.

I direct my questioning of Arendt's understanding of the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* towards some effective way of determining a course for critical thinking. The sort of reflective thinking which offers worldly understanding is partly determined by the individual's sense of her own past and future or awareness of temporal and spatial boundaries. Using Arendt's notions of public interaction and critical thinking, I am investigating how we may explore the world having used the faculties of the mind to critically achieve awareness of our own position on this planet.

I believe Arendt's notions of publicity and of critical expression are theoretically synonymous. One may attain critical self -awareness through an engagement, as well as through a critical evaluation, of the self alongside others. My study does not set out to resolve all the questions I pose within this thesis. I rather attempt to uncover different layers. The layers are the following: the concepts of thinking, of judging and of acting, in general; in particular, Arendt's notion of thinking and historical contingency, the narrative which creates such contingency, thoughtfulness versus thoughtlessness, thinking as it becomes judging, judging as it shapes acting, and acting as an insertion of the self into the domain of human affairs.

In addition, during my study of publicity as critical expression, I began to develop a sense of Arendt's concept of the individual's relation to the world and the individual in relation to the world. Self-awareness, I see, is characterized by a person's sense of worldliness. Behind the act of inserting oneself into the world is the need to establish a place for one's own self in the solitude of the one amongst others. Action, I believe, is then an extension of critical thinking, although the act itself may occur spontaneously within a moment without memory or seemingly without any form of conditioning. In the *Human Condition*, Arendt turns to Dante to bear out the concept of action which reveals the self's true image:

> *Nam in omni actione principlaiter intenditur ab agent, sive necessitate naturae sive voluntarie agat, propriam similtudinem explicare; unde fit quod omne agens, in quantum huiusmodi, delectatur, quia, cum omne quod est appetat suum esse, ac in agendo agentis esse modammodo amplietur, sequitur de necessitate delectatio . . . . nihil igitur agit nisi tale existens quale patiens fieri debet.*[10]

10 For in every action what is primarily intended by the doer, whether he acts from natural necessity or out of free will, is the disclosure of his own image. Hence it comes about that every doer, in so far as he does, takes delight in doing; since everything that is desires its own being, and since in action the being of the doer is somehow intensified, delight necessarily follows. . . . Thus, nothing acts unless [by acting] it makes patent its latent self. (HC 175, quotation from Dante).

CHAPTER I:
SOLITUDE, ISOLATION AND LONELINESS AND THE NOTION OF BELONGING:

> The philosopher's way of life is solitary, but this solitude is freely chosen, and Plato himself, when he enumerates the natural conditions favorable to the development in "the noblest natures" of the philosophical gift, doesn't mention the hostility of the many. . .
>
> Hannah Arendt, "Thinking" *Life of the Mind*

> ...il faut avouer que cela se faisait bien mieux et plus agréablement dans une île fertile et solitaire, naturellement circonscrite et séparémbre d'habitants était liante et douce sans être intéressante au e du reste du monde, où rien ne m'offrait que des images riantes, où rien ne me rappelait des souvenirs attristants, où la société du petit nopoint de m'occuper incessamment; où je pouvais enfin me livrer tout le jour sans obstacles et sans soins aux occupations de mon goût, ou à la plus molle oisiveté.
>
> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire* [1]

PART I:
CONCEPTS OF SOLITUDE, LONELINESS and ISOLATION: ASSOCIATION WITH THE *vita activa* AND THE *vita contemplativa*

Section 1: Solitude, Isolation, Loneliness and the Public Mirror

Hannah Arendt concentrates not so much on the concept of belonging *per se* but on what being amongst others means and how this affects two activities of the *vita activa*, action which changes the course of human interaction (political action) and work, whose end products are durables. As well, throughout her writing, Arendt interweaves the idea of belonging with a discussion of the concepts of the faculties of the *vita contemplativa*, thinking, willing and judging and their consequences in the *vita activa*. These three faculties are informed by one's associations. One's choice of company, in turn, may to a greater or lesser extent influence one's actions. In this sense, the social and political convene. However, it is political action and critical thinking which concerns Arendt, friendships which involve political activity and critical thinking which involves self-reflection.

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[1] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire*. France: GF Flammarion, 1964.

Building on the traditional divisions within philosophy, Arendt divides physical activity from cerebral: the*vita activa*, comprised of labour, work and action is a necessary condition for the *vita contemplativa*, made up of the faculties of thinking, willing and judging. Critical thinking and its counterpart, judging - as I argue further along, the two can be interchangeable - and willing all precede action, engaging what Aristotle called *pro-airesis*, meaning choice between two possibilities: the preference which distinguishes one choice amongst two ("Willing" *Life of the Mind* 15). A person's social and political life may not necessarily directly determine her choices - or how scrupulous she will be - nor may a person's feeling of belonging, or lack thereof, necessarily present or create choices. A person's friends, acquaintances and associates do not necessarily predetermine her stance on any given issue, as there are obviously numerous factors which influence decisions.

However, in keeping with Arendt's understanding, I would argue that the desire to access the otherwise inexpressible is inextricable from the desire to create a home in the world. In some logical manner (by means of *logos*), through speech and action, one creates a home in a world of contradictions and disrupts the daily cyclical pattern to forge something new. Labouring, service to one's needs, is the activity which occurs in the cyclical. While it is crucial for survival, Arendt is sketching the invaluable critical comprehension of the world as it is ascribed by others. Simply, communication is essential to Arendt's description of the human condition; it serves as one of the links between the *vita activa* and the *vita communicativa*.

While the *vita activa* is a necessary condition for the *vita contemplativa*, thinking, willing and judging may occur separately from the *vita activa*. That is, the subject doesn't have to be implicated in a society through work or action or labour, all activities of the *vita activa*, in order to reach the contemplative state. Isolation - political isolation, extreme solitude or loneliness - may be overcome through the equilibrium provided by critical perspective. Through critical perspective, the person who would otherwise remain isolated may gain access to the realm of human affairs. She may be more likely to seek out the company of others. In order to continue exercising her critical judgment, she may seek out public debate, the *polis*. As well, through willing - or the will to initiate action - one moves in the direction of the *vita activa*. Thinking, willing and judging, therefore, are inseparable during the activity of critical thinking.

If the purpose of communication is to make intelligible those facets of our experiences which would otherwise be ineffable, those who wish to communicate must be asked to expose themselves to experience, to become actors themselves and to seek the company of their fellow human beings. Hannah Arendt writes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism:*

> The problem of solitude is that this two-in-one needs the others in order to become one again: one unchangeable individual whose identity can never be mistaken for that of any other. For the confirmation of my identity I depend entirely upon other people; and it is the great saving grace of companionship for solitary men that it makes them "whole" again, saves them from the dialogue of thought in which one remains always equivocal, restores the identity which makes them speak with the single voice of one unexchangeable person (OT 476).

In the collection of essays "Thinking" and "Willing" and the lecture "Judging" in *Life of the Mind,* Arendt begins her explorations on thinking and on the *vita contemplativa* where, she claims, she left off: from an exposé (mainly within *The Human Condition)* on the *vita activa.* She assembles the stage for a critique of the thinker with a citation which the Ancient Roman Marcus Tullius Cicero ascribed to Marcus Porcius Cato: "Never is a man more active than when he does nothing, never is he less alone than when he is by himself, *[Numquam se plus agere quam nihil cum ageret,* numquam minus solum esse quam cum solus esset]" (e.g. De Republica, I, 17, Arendt, "Thinking" LM 7-8).[2]

There is a distinction in Arendt's work between being in the company of ideas and being physically among others. This distinction illustrates the opposing relation between her concept of solitude and public presence. Although she may be examining the ideas and impressions of others, in solitude, the thinker may be consciously removed from the physical and from the immediate. In short, the individual who 'moves to a quiet corner to think' must shift her consciousness to

[2] Arendt addresses the inner isolation of the self, inwardness, in *"Thinking,"* in the chapter on the "inner life" (LM 97). She is referring to the traditional localization of the "willing ego," regarded as the region within which the history of humankind, in a Hegelian sense, would be reflected. The inner region of the self is expressed by the faculties thinking, willing and judging. During the early centuries of the Christian era, this region was regarded as the seat of the soul. For Arendt, soul and mind are separate. She is tracing, historically, the particular "region" to which the mind departs once it has withdrawn from the world. She prefaces her discussion of the soul with a deliberation on the uninvolved spectator. According to Hegel, the spectator was a singular individual; to Kant, the spectator was the public. The Ancient Greeks and Romans thought of the spectator as the audience of theatre. In Arendt's juxtaposition of the subject of the spectator and the subject of the soul – the singular innermost being and the most important element in the Christian compassion of action and understanding– another juxtaposition emerges: the state of the mind (as spectator) with the corporeal, or physical (spectator). In isolation, a person must be free of the overwhelming sense of aloneness in order to make judgments and draw from experience. The judge's role, therefore, is a combination of both the spectator and the actor. The spectator, as the Olympiads watching tragedy on-stage, is at a somewhat neutral distance. The actor, who is directly experiencing the action and generally the consequences, therefore carries a particular understanding of the situation to the act of judging.

the internal. She must remove herself (if only momentarily) from the realm of human affairs.[3]

It is interesting to note that Arendt's concept of the private realm within the *vita contemplativa* is different than her concept of privacy in the *vita activa*. The first relates to solitude, the second to intimacy and labouring, or service to one's needs. Critical thinking which is political reflection cannot be compared to intimacy, and Arendt's discussions are vitreous in regard to the need for a division between intimacy and public interaction. Intimacy, from the Latin *intim(us)* for close friend, implies interaction between two; and the solitaire is in the company only of ideas. Arendt never actually speaks of intimacy's being housed in the *vita activa*. Her rather brief discussion on intimacy follows her description of the *vita activa*. It would therefore be reductive and false to distinguish such privacy as a state of the *vita activa*. However, for conceptual reasons, it may help to identify the private - *privare*, to deprive - from the state of solitude, which is another sort of distancing, by seeing one as being within the *vita activa* and the other within the *vita contemplativa*.

Arendt describes the public and private realms in most detail within *The Human Condition*. For the purposes of my arguments, here, however, it is suffice to say that she draws a very discernible line between the political and the social. The social for Arendt is the realm of friendships and a place for the interaction of people within a society. The political signifies the activities of the *polis*, or action and choice, based on deliberation and critical judgment, versus behavioral ethics. This demarcation has been a bone of contention amongst her critics; and I will discuss this in more depth in the second chapter.

In studying the connection between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, and in studying the states of being without - solitude, isolation and loneliness - it is important for the reader to note that the private realm is as necessary for any individual and, subsequently, for the political thinker, as is access to the public realm. The combination of the *vita contemplativa* - thinking, willing and judging - with the *vita activa* -labour, work and action - as well as the

[3] See Arendt's discussion of the "un-quiet" in *The Human Condition*. She discusses traditional notions of truth by using traditional definitions of the nature of solitude. Towards the beginning of this book, she writes: "As early as Aristotle the distinction between quiet and unquiet, between an almost breathless abstention from external physical movement and activity of every kind, is more decisive than the distinction between the political and the theoretical way of life, because it can eventually be found within each of the three ways of life. It is like the distinction between war and peace: just as war takes place for the sake of peace, thus every kind of activity, even the processes of mere thought, must culminate in the absolute quiet of contemplation. Every movement, the movements of body and soul as well as of speech and reasoning, must cease before truth. Truth, be it the ancient truth of Being or the Christian truth of the living God, can reveal itself only in complete human stillness" (HC 15).

access to both private and public realms allow for the emergence of thinking, willing, and judging on to the map of ideas and recorded human action. I will argue further along in this chapter that both the concepts of publicity and the nature of storytelling relate to action and the recording of it: the critical reading of historical narratives being a part of the recording.[4]

The search for a departure from solitude and seclusion and an entry into the realm of public affairs empirically suggests the need for discourse. The desire which compels human beings, as public actors and as observers, to partake in the realm of human affairs admits to the desire for exposure. We search for a place or common arena where the solitude of the one may be brought forth into shared or common experience.

While thinking, judging and willing - the last, as the preliminary articulation of the desire to act - may all occur within the state of solitude, the effects or products of thinking, willing and judging occur in the world, outside of the solitude of the one. The world for Arendt is composed of those elements which are commonly experienced. The world is the immediate, the present, and is composed of the public realm. Hence, Arendt's term worldliness defines not only general human interaction, but the human capacity to identify the varying lenses people use to observe the world.

Arendt uses the terms solitude, isolation and loneliness throughout her political and philosophical discourse, terms which describe different kinds of psychological and physical absence from others. It is only on the very last pages of "Ideology and Terror" in *Origins of Totalitarianism,* however, that Arendt discusses at length the terms and explores their relationship to one another. Throughout her work, there are three areas of isolation upon which Arendt focuses: political isolation, loneliness and solitude. These types of isolation are not equivalent, although they may affect one another or even form another.

Political isolation reduces or destroys the individual's capacity to effect change. Such an individual may be cast out of the political spectrum and/or society in general. In extreme circumstances, her political isolation may result in her devaluation in societal terms into a superfluous being. Arendt speaks of this occurring under and during the evolution of totalitarian regimes.

Extreme loneliness may lead to alienation from others and ultimately from one's own self, or from the critical faculties of understanding. Loneliness,

[4] I will as well explore the condition of the storyteller within the following chapter "The Pariah."

on a mass scale, may serve as a tool for dividing people from one another: useful for those hoping to obtain totalitarian or tyrannical power.

Finally, within solitude, if the individual becomes too reliant upon the world of the imagination, the activity of thinking may become ineffective and solitude an injurious state of isolation. In an extreme situation, the individual may forget her surroundings and become mired in the world of her imagination.

Critical thought, the ability to reflect, and the ability to express these reflections change the parameters of these forms of isolation. In political isolation, as a pariah, the individual may gain, besides the fortitude to combat her situation, an awareness which leads to the political will to voice, or express her isolation. Loneliness can refer to the feeling following the understanding that, as Arendt and so many others have expressed, we are born and die alone. It may therefore serve to define a critical understanding of the human condition. Such understanding may fortify a critical perspective and add to one's expression, without overshadowing the will to act. Finally, solitude may very well be a state for productive critical thought, a state one actively seeks to focus.

Solitude is defined in most detail within *Life of the Mind*, a collection of musings on the mind and on thinking. More specifically, this collection examines the *vita contemplativa*. The other forms of isolation which I have discussed are addressed within *Origins*.

Within *The Human Condition*, Arendt covers two general types of isolation. One is the alienation of people from one another and from themselves in modern culture. The reduction of politics to administration, or the feeding of bureaucratic necessity, along with the reduction of work to labour - which we currently associate with Marx's definition of (factory) work: the toil to sustain a livelihood - may all contribute to people's sense of alienation.

The other isolation which Arendt discusses in *The Human Condition*, within her description of *homo faber* - the inventor, the maker of durable tools - is the chosen isolation, or solitude, of the artisan who creates something durable for the human artifice. I will proceed with a discussion of each of these forms of isolation. First, I wish to detail the political isolation and extreme loneliness involved in the evolution of totalitarianism.

It is under the rubric of political isolation in *Origins* that Arendt refers to different stages of loneliness. She writes that it is a function of totalitarian governments to not only reduce and then sever political ties among individuals

but social connections as well. The kind of loneliness which Arendt envisages as a function and product of totalitarian regimes feeds on and from fear. While being politically isolated, a person may yet be fully *conscious* of her deprivation. She may perceive the political reality of her enforced isolation, or exile, and her self worth as two separate conditions. In doing so, she maintains a critical perspective. On the other hand, loneliness which follows political isolation may crowd out much of a person's sense of perspective, or changes her sense of relativity so that she becomes distanced from reality.

The "materially and sensually given world depends upon [our] contact" with others, upon what is known as "common sense" (McCarthy and Arendt Correspondence, August 20, 1954).[5] In this letter to Mary McCarthy, (August 20, 1954), Arendt writes that the inversion of common sense, or *le bon sens*, is an altered notion of what is before us. When we begin to have "misgivings about" the "sensual quality" of common sense and rather attempt to sublimate the sensual with some abstract notion of "common sense," we allow for a misconstruction of le *bon sens*. We then lose as well our "sixth sense," "through which all particular sense data, given by the five senses, are fitted into a common world, a world which we can share with others" (McCarthy and Arendt Correspondence, *Between Friends*, 23).[6]

Without common sense, the sense of what we share in common with others, we become susceptible to profound loneliness. Loneliness serves as a tool for totalitarian governments as it enforces terror and allows space for prejudicial thinking. Within the sphere of loneliness, critical thinking no longer *can* exist; neither can the critical will to act nor the ability to judge. In more general terms, the conditions of the*vita contemplativa* and, by association, the *vita activa* no longer exist. The two areas in which humans exist actually collapse into one another under totalitarianism, an idea I will discuss later.

In summary, Arendt's discussion in *Origins* of loneliness covers the spectrum from the existential realization that we are born and die alone to the extreme severance of consciousness from reality. In *Life of the Mind*, loneliness

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5 Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy. *Between Friends. The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy 1949-1975*. Ed. Carol Brightman. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1995.

6 Kant imparts both common taste and common understanding to *Gemeinsinn*. See "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment: §40 On Taste as a Kind of Sensus Communis" *Critique of Judgment* 159-62. He writes that *sensus communis* would mean: "... the idea of a sense shared ... a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else's way of presenting [something], in order as it were to compare our own judgment with human reason in general and thus escape the illusion that arises from the east of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones, an illusion that would have a prejudicial influence on the judgment (§40 lines 286-94 160).

takes on the character of the individual, as opposed to the political mass. In the essay "Thinking," Arendt writes that "Loneliness comes about when I am alone without being able to keep myself company, when, as [Karl] Jaspers used to say, 'I am in default of myself' *(ich bleibe mir aus)* [my translation: 'I have no access to myself'] or, to put it differently, when I am one and without company" (*"Thinking,"* LM 185). I would define Arendt's inclusion of Jaspers' argument as her attempt to indicate that extreme loneliness may incur the loss of critical thought. In addition, she is arguing that loneliness prevents one from distinguishing one's self and one's thoughts and emotions from the world, or reality: the common space we share with others.

While in the main body of *Origins* Arendt does not portray solitude as strictly the thinker's domain, she is at the end of the text refining her ideas for the essays and lectures which constitute *The Life of the Mind.* This collection is a philosophical journey through the faculties of thinking, willing and judging, and these in relation to action; solitude appears therefore as the voluntary isolation of the thinker. Solitude (sol(us): "only") sets the stage for the essay *"Thinking."* In this essay, Arendt summarizes her concept of reflexive thinking while in company with oneself: "Nothing perhaps indicates more strongly that man exists *essentially* in the plural than that his solitude actualizes his merely being conscious of himself...into a duality during the thinking activity." (*"Thinking,"* LM, 185). When the subject is deeply lonely, she is not conscious of herself as a thinking duality, whereas in a positive state of solitude, she may be conscious of her status as a dual being (within and outside of the mind). Hence solitary thinking can be productive and critical, whereas extreme loneliness leads to alienation and absorption in only one aspect of the self.

In the closing arguments of *Origins,* Arendt appears to be grappling with the question which launches her essay "Thinking," namely the question of how our thoughts and actions may be linked.

In *Origins,* Arendt writes that "[s]olitary men have always been in danger of loneliness, when they can no longer find the redeeming grace of companionship to save them from duality and equivocality and doubt" (OT 476). Her concern over the consequences of a person's immuring herself in solitude addresses the tendency of some thinkers to make certain claims while disregarding or forgetting their departure from the public realm, the realm of human affairs. Such thinkers may be attempting to posit their ideas in the

political arena while maneuvering around any external or self skepticism. In inserting their singular rationale into the plural political realm, such individuals are not exercising politics or political judgment -- critical judgment -- in the Arendtian sense. Instead, they are presenting their ideas to the *polis* as if the ideas were products of *homo faber*, to be displayed in the marketplace.

"Philosophers," Lisa Jane Disch writes in *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy*, "have attempted to substitute vanguard rule for leadership" (HALPT 30), " in the hope," as Arendt wrote, "that the realm of human affairs may escape the haphazardness and moral irresponsibility inherent in a plurality of agents" (HC p. 220).[7]

One question which emerges is "How does Arendt view the solitude of the thinker as an experience of isolation?" This query is extremely important because she is asking what we are doing when we think, that is, what is occurring or how may we integrate our ideas with the ideas of others, with the events, actions and experiences within the world? If extreme isolation restricts one's relation to the world, a possible permanent exile from it, then how, isolated, may one access the tools provided by the public sector? How, isolated, might a person create a lens through which to view her experiences and then to express them to society? This search for perspective becomes a definitive struggle and operates on the inherent human need to construct agency even and especially amongst the ruins, or within a world where one's agency has been obliterated. Arendt's notion of isolation is extremely complex; and it is therefore necessary to look from one extreme, the isolation of the exiled - the pariah, who may or may not find a means of expressing her isolation - to the other extreme, the self-imposed isolation of the thinker who has abstracted herself out of existence.

Extreme loneliness, another manifestation of the self-imposed isolation of the thinker, further clouds consciousness and thereby reduces perspective. Arendt constructs an image of hermetic closure from the world. In the extreme case, this enclosure permits no fragment of critical thought; and the person who inhabits such a world becomes incapable of contributing to the public realm, with the exception of an opinion which has been formed without the aid of critical reference. There is, in other words, no relative point of departure for the thinker whose thoughts lie solely within the imagination. She may detach herself from

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[7] Lisa Jane Disch, *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996.

others and their experiences by relating to the world around her in a perfunctory manner. In a sense, she may behave as *animale laborans,* as a labourer acting out of necessity. Most of her thoughts in such a state may contribute to a system of symbolic references designed to perpetuate her isolation. Such a person has either lost or never gained the crucial critical perspective.

Solitude provides a place for the exercise of thinking apart from the world of external affairs; it is a place where one may engage in a conceptual forum of ideas. Freely chosen, solitude is as essential to the creation of a place in the world as is accessibility to the public realm. The willful move away from physical contact with others to a remote place allows "the confrontation of the self by the self, which is solitude's true vocation" ("Thinking," LM 85) The condition of being freely-chosen is another point of comparison between solitude and political isolation, where the latter may come about through external force.

Thinking is one "faculty" or "province" (MBP 94-5) which exists within solitude; even among others, one must find the space to be alone to contemplate. Arendt professes, "It is because thinking, though it always takes place in words, does not need auditors that Hegel, in agreement with the testimony of almost all philosophers, could say that 'philosophy is something solitary'" ("Thinking" LM 99). Although dependent on the world of appearances for its reference point, thinking "annihilates temporal as well as spatial distances," thereby 'forgetting' its physical contours within the world, its corporeal existence within the world ("Thinking" LM 85).

It is somewhat of a paradox that the thinker who is contemplating the temporal may lack cognizance of the dimensions of her physical surroundings (time and space), her physical relation to the world (the world of appearances). However, I view this paradox as more of a portrayal of the differentiation between immediate physical awareness and historical sense, or sense of being, to throw in the oft-used ontological term (Heidegger's *Dasein*).

Rather than regard thinking as a passive pleasure, then, Arendt portrays such activity as an one boldly pursued, under the roof of critical awareness and a fair bit of skepticism. It is an activity which, in apparent conflict with the imagination's lack of cognizance of immediate temporal and spatial boundaries, is yet involved with the world, operating within the parameters of time and space.

Turning to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (178a29-30), Arendt writes that "

'a generous man needs money to perform generous acts . . . .'" as, she contends, "every . . . activity . . . [outside of thinking] . . . has something to overcome outside itself ("Thinking" LM 162-3). Thinking needs no objects, and in this sense the thinker is liberated from any object, or obstruction, which would come between the subject and the world ("Thinking" LM 162-3). In this sense, the thinker can be in close contact with the world.

Arendt's insightful statement, in regards to representation of the world in the thinker's imagination, appears in one of her earlier essays "Truth and Politics" in *Between Past and Future.* She posits the placement of the imagination of the critical thinker within the company of others:

> . . . even if I shun all company or am completely isolated while forming an opinion, I am not simply together only with myself in the solitude of philosophical thought; I remain in this world of universal interdependence, where I can make myself the representative of everybody else. Of course, I can refuse to do this and form an opinion that takes only my own interests, or the interests of the group to which I belong, into account; nothing, indeed, is more common, even among highly sophisticated people, than the blind obstinacy that becomes manifest in lack of imagination and failure to judge. But the very quality of an opinion, as of a judgment, depends upon the degree of its impartiality ("Truth and Politics" BPF 242).

One of the more revealing passages in regards to Arendt's consideration of thinking as an activity which is inclusive, rather than exclusive, and in regards to the dialectical nature of critically-aware thinking, occurs toward the end of her essay "Thinking":

> It is [the] *duality* of myself with myself that makes thinking a true activity, in which I am both the one who asks and the one who answers. Thinking can become dialectical and critical because it goes through this questioning and answering process, through the dialogue of *dialegesthai,* which actually is a "traveling through words," a *poreuesthai dia to(long accent over o)n logo(long accent)* (from *Sophist,* 253b, which portrays the basic Socratic question: What do you mean when you say...? except that this *legein,* saying, is soundless and therefore so swift that its dialogical structure is somewhat difficult to detect) ("Thinking," LM, 188-6).

The traditional Socratic thinking exercise, Arendt moves on to say, is a mental dialogue which has as its criterion not truth but agreement, consistency with oneself, *"homologein autos heauto)"*(taken from *Protagoras,* 339c) (*"Thinking,"*

LM, 188-6).[8]

Arendt's navigates her arguments on thinking and on solitude along an entirely different course than does Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance. Rousseau, in the manner of many Romanticists, viewed solitude as a place where one may confront one's self through introspection; in the case of the narration in *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, such introspection occurs alongside the senses' appreciation of the natural beauty, the wonder, of the earth. For Rousseau who deplored the lack of autonomy in a society whose values were ordered in terms of behaviour and manners, solitude was an escape from the artificiality of these social requisites.[9] Leaving the burden of such duties behind and retreating to nature, Rousseau could freely contemplate and meditate. Contemplation becomes dreaming in *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire*:

> En sortant d'une longue et douce rêverie, en me voyant entouré de verdure, de fleurs, d'oiseaux, et laissant errer mes yeux au loin sur les romanesques rivages qui bordaient une vaste étendue d'eau claire et cristalline, j'assimilais à mes fictions tous ces aimables objets et me trouvant enfin ramené par degrés à moi-même et à et à ce qui m'entourait, je ne pouvais marquer le point de séparation des fictions aux réalités; tant tout concourait également à me rendre chère la vie recueillie et solitaire que je menais dans ce beau séjour (Lrps 104).

Through meditation, Rousseau reaches a form of understanding. His meditation is an absorption, a dream-like state in which he lets the pleasing *(aimables)* objects of nature direct his internal discourse. The world perceived through his senses becomes fully circumscribed by his imagination as mood; and his mood, in turn, transforms the world around him. Another phrasing of the concept of meditation, versus critical exploration, is that Rousseau's conceptualization of the world rests on a melding of the forms provided by his senses' perception of nature and his recollections of previous social experiences. He is fitting the contours of his imagination around the things of the world; and his *rêveries* compose a meditative departure rather than a 'visiting' of the world. The theme of isolation in *Les rêveries* exists within an inductive relation in regards to the author's preexisting sense of the actual; his subjective emotional state stands as a synecdochic representation of the isolation of humanity as a whole.

[8] Arendt writes to Mary McCarthy, August 20, 1954: "The chief fallacy is to believe that Truth is a result which comes at the end of a thought-process. Truth, on the contrary, is always the beginning of thought; thinking is always result-less. That is the difference between "philosophy" and science" (letter to McCarthy, August 20, 1954, *Between Friends* 24).

[9] See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Les Confessions*. Tome I & Tome II. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1963.

Using other terminology, we could say that Rousseau develops his existential argument within an autobiographical fashion. The movement behind his reasoning or his reflections is an extension of the self -- the graph of one's life -- onto the landscape before his eyes.[10]

While Rousseau in *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire* expresses the desire to move away from the world of human interaction in order to lament feelings of alienation, his conception of solitude as isolation mirrors Arendt's understanding. She writes of the isolation of a solitude which has grown to such proportions that the solitaire no longer believes herself to be a part of the actual world. Rousseau writes of a solitude "n'ayant plus de frère, de prochain, d'ami, de société" (Lrps 35). While he wishes to leave the confines of society with all its mores dictating behaviour, he sees he cannot limit himself to the sublime landscape of nature. Despite all the personal problems which he confronts within society, he sees that these people are in close proximity, *prochaine,* to his heart, to his expression of being human. Despite the aesthetic pull of the landscape and the attraction of remaining there to meditate, in *les rêveries,* Rousseau, therefore, admits to the absence he's experiencing.

Rousseau exercises the faculty of thinking within the meditative state. He obtains awareness through his ruminations on the sublime. In contrast to this type of thinking, Arendt's portrayal of critical thinking resists the aesthetic and the intimate. Critical thinking, whose extension is the will to act and then political action, is opposed to the type of thinking which brings the domain of the intimate into the public realm. Arendt is attempting to locate the elements of worldly understanding. Solitude, as she perceives, is a state of escape from the physical only insofar as thinking initiates a withdrawal of consciousness from temporal and spatial boundaries. The state of solitude is a temporary departure from corporeal senses and physical compulsions rather than a permanent parting with the world, or with the realm of human affairs. While thinking, one may disregard the spatial and temporal boundaries of appearances while engaging the "mind's faculty of making present what is absent" ("Thinking" LM 76).

Philosophers, however, Arendt indicates, need solitude "so that they can be 'potentially together with everybody' and ask 'the eternal questions of

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10 See Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, § 28, *On Nature As A Might*, where speaking of nature's might and one's aesthetic judgment of nature as sublime, Kant reasons: "Hence nature is here called sublime [*erhaben*] merely because it elevates [*erhebt*] our imagination, [making] it exhibit those cases where the mind can come to feel its own sublimity, which lies in its vocation and elevates it even above nature" (CJ 121).)

mankind'" (HALPT 262, quoting 'Nature of Totalitarianism' (2nd MS) 19a). Thinking, as Arendt, along with Hegel, Kant, and her contemporary Karl Jaspers, perceived, is an activity in which by myself "I am in the company of others." She writes:

> All thinking, strictly speaking, is done in solitude and is a dialogue between me and myself; but this dialogue of the two-in-one does not lose contact with the world of my fellow-men because they are represented in the self with whom I lead the dialogue of thought (OT 476).

The thinker's ascription of an active, critical role to imagination may guard against the "hunt for certainty," which, Arendt argues, such philosophers as Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, in the tradition of Descartes, embarked upon believing "in all earnest[ness] that the results of their speculations possessed the same kind of validity as the results of cognitive process." In so doing, they managed to blur "the line between thought and knowledge" ("Thinking" LM 63-4).

In the tradition of Immanual Kant, whose most interesting discovery, Arendt believed, lay in his "distinction between knowledge, which uses thinking as a means to an end, and thinking itself as it arises out of 'the very nature of our reason' and is done for its own sake" ("Thinking" LM 64), her own understanding of thinking comprises both the element of imagination and the inherent desire to make sense of one's world. It is an exercise which exists of its own accord and not as a process, or quest, whose *a priori* condition is the obtaining of some unattainable 'Truth'. Solitude, as Arendt understood, is not a state one uses to escape the world, to rupture one's relation to it but rather, through critical thinking, or reflection, to forge particular connections with it.

Arendt discusses Aristotle's deliberations on the separation between what he termed the soul, the body and the mind *[noein* or *nous*]:

> . . . there seems to be no case in which the soul can act or be acted on without the body, e.g., anger courage, appetite, and sensation generally. [To be active without involving the body] seems rather a property of the mind . . . But if the mind . . . . too proves to be some imagination *[phantasia]* or impossible without imagination, it *[noein]* too could not be without the body . . . . Nothing is evident about the mind . . . . and the theoretical faculty, but it seems to be a different kind of soul, and only this can be separated [from the body] as what is eternal from what is perishable ("Thinking" LM 33-4; e.g. Aristotle, *De Anima*, 403a5-10 and 413b24ff).

Ancient Greek and Roman thinkers expressed the nature of thinking in its two manifestations: one is the admiration and wonder over birth and life; the other is the incredible horror over being thrown into a world of hostility, a world from which the thinker tries endlessly to escape. In both cases, Arendt contends, thinking departs from the world of appearances. She further elaborates that it is only due to the implication that thinking becomes withdrawal that it may become "an instrument of escape" ("Thinking" LM 162). She writes: ". . . thinking implies an unawareness of the body and of the self and puts in their place the experience of sheer activity, more gratifying, according to Aristotle, than the satisfaction of all the other desires, since for every other pleasure we depend on something or somebody else. Thinking is the only activity that needs nothing but itself for its exercise" ("Thinking" LM 162).

Section 2: The Narrative of the Solitaire

In Rousseau's *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire,* the solitaire is the Romantic who develops a dialogue between his imagination and the observations of his intellect. The dialogue takes place alongside his witnessing of the sublime in the pastoral. Rousseau's thoughts, as I see it, are inspired by Romantic notions of the primacy of imagination over materialism.[11] I would argue that *Les rêveries* is more a response to the five senses' experience of nature than an experience extending from Rousseau's interaction with other people. Rousseau's reflections on solitude are based on the inherent contrast between the quiet stillness of nature and the unrelenting demands of society, while his experience of living on the margins of society shapes his portrait of the solitaire.

Nature as the setting of the writer's solitude sets the mood in a similar manner for contemplation in William Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey.*[12] In the woods, his soul overflowing with the beauty of the landscape, Wordsworth writes of

> . . . waters rolling from their mountain-springs / . . . these steep and lofty cliffs, / Which on a wild secluded scene impress / Thoughts of more deep

11 See Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1983. In particular, see page 18. Eagleton's thesis is basically that the hermeneutics of English or British literary culture, including poetry, around the turn of the 19th century (e.g. Shelley's Defence of Poetry, 1821) underwent a dramatic shift from support for the "utilitarian ideology of early industrial capitalist England" writing to a favouring of imagination as a literary persona. (18). During the Romantic period, the literary text came to be regarded as solely inspired by the imagination, rather than regarded as a document of actual events.

12 *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth.* London: Macmillan Co., 1896.

> seclusion, and connect / The landscape with the quiet of the sky . . . these pastoral farms / Green to the very door, and wreathes of smoke / Sent up in silence from among the trees / With some uncertain notice, as might seem, / Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, / Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire / The hermit sits alone" ("Tintern Abbey: The Two-Part Prelude" 33).

Wordsworth's observer projects his mood on to the natural landscape. In "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," written in 1798, Wordsworth extols: ". . . we are laid asleep / in body, and become a living soul: / while with an eye made quiet by the power / of harmony, and the deep power of joy, / we see into the life of things. ("LCFMTA" 1798, CPWWW 93-5, line from 93).

If we "see into the life of things" in this state of consciousness, we do so from a perspective within the depths of the imagination, so removed from the world of human affairs that the body may be disposed of, while the soul, deeply contented, surveys the world. This is not to say that the meditation made a few miles from Tintern Abbey is void of worldly understanding, that there is a rationale-spirit divide and that the spirit is incapable of recognizing what the rationale observes. However, the meditation described in Wordsworth's lines lulls the consciousness into daydreaming through "the power of harmony" and distances the subject from the realm of human affairs.

In a turn from this perspective, Wordsworth sends out an empathetic lament for those housed in solitude in "Elegiac Stanzas: Suggested By a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm Painted by Sir George Beaumont," written in 1805: "Farewell, farewell in the heart that lives alone, / Housed in a dream, at distance from the kind! / Such happiness, wherever it be known / Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind. ("ES" CPW, WW lines 217-18).

Blindness besets the seeker of solitude who is suspended from the world in a dream-like trance. The heart held in a room within the imagination causes a separation from the "kind," the knowable - in Arendtian terms, the world of appearances - and from human contact. The subject in Wordsworth's description very closely represents the person whom Arendt would describe as existing

within an isolated solitude.[13]

Rousseau's experience of detachment, of separation from human company, or in Arendt's phrasing, from the world of human affairs, permits him the society of the self. He reflects that any human contact is undercut by his aloneness. The stylistic movements throughout his meditations portray an isolation from which he may hardly digress. As readers of *Les rêveries* , we become part of Rousseau's loneliness; any intellectually constructive ruminations he may have on the human condition remain circumscribed by his disabling projection of isolation from humanity onto the landscape before him and onto the pages of the book. In Rousseau's introspective text, nature plays the role of footman to the subject of the narrative voice, and his sensual experience of the world is circumspect to his involved mapping of the contours of his loneliness.

The subjects of introspection, loneliness and aloneness may be present in literature in which the author is portraying the deafening absence of human companionship. In the novel *Auto Da Fé* by 20th-century Austrian writer Elias Canetti, the character Professor Peter Kien is a hopeless loner whose treasured antiquarian book collection represents a world from which he rarely emerges, except to consider marrying his house- and bookkeeper Therese after, in shock, he discovers that she "[knows] how to hold a book better than he [does]" (ADF 38).[14] The married couple does not share a room, however, nor any furniture, as Kien becomes repulsed by Therese's presence. The professor grows more fearful of human contact and encloses his paranoia with "armour, an important defence" against the wily Therese. Clothed in this protective suit, he then dances "his way to the writing table" (ADF 144).

In the solitude of Kien's "service for truth," in his departure from the world, where he draws "closer to the truth by shutting" himself "off from mankind" (ADF 13), aloneness is eternal, clouding every aperture to the world. As critical thinking is eventually stilled within such an enclosure, Kien's quest for truth is illusory. He would have to do what from the beginning of the novel he refuses to do: provide some palpable offering to the external world. We may

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13 See Philip Koch, *Solitude: A Philosophical Encounter*. Illinois: Open Court:, 1994. I've taken the quotations cited here from pages 3-4. This author prefaces his query with the quotation cited; his investigation focuses on what it is that we actually seek in solitude. Koch provides extensive bibliographic information, as well some material from Eastern texts. One of Koch's contentions is that it is not only the philosopher or writer who achieves a space beyond the physical presence of others, but the worker and labourer too. The solitude, then, of Henry David Thoreau, of many anointed saints, such as St. Anthony, (see pages 1, 4, 64, 71), and of many Eastern monks is a solitude which encompasses the whole being. Thoreau only perhaps veered from a similar religious reflection and monastical will, as he chose to labour, to till the soil as to create, literally, a homestead for the exercise of thinking.

14 Elias Canetti, *Auto da Fé*. Trans. C. V. Wedgwood. London: Pan Books, 1978.

envisage the tacit desperation underlying the narrative of *Auto Da Fé* as a deep-seated desire to escape from the world created by the imagination, in order to reemerge in the same stirring manner as one has emerged at birth.

Arendt insists on the solitaire's use of critical thinking as a tool to relate to the world. Her portrayal of the solitaire, therefore, is opposed to Canetti's portrayal of Kien, whose ego becomes constrained and eventually is suffocated by its own magnification. Arendt poses critical thinking as a reflective active activity in which one moves toward the world through ideas, with the supposition of entering or returning. The movement of the imagination through an introspective semblance of mood rather appears as a projection of one's ambivalence, not as a critical encounter. The pariah, who has been isolated from society, thus losing a foothold in the world of human affairs, yet may create a sustainable edifice of understanding. The critical precipice between being omitted and being able to see becomes a narrative through which pariah may actively insert herself as subject into the world.

Section 3: Belonging and Storytelling or The 'Two-in-One' in Thinking

If we were to reflect on Hannah Arendt's construction of solitude as a narrative, this narrative would be mostly inscribed by the solitaire's critical apprehension of the political ramifications of living on the margins, or the boundaries of society.[15] Arendt's investigation of worldliness begins with theories of plurality and diversity. Plurality represents the diversity of opinions in the public realm or the multiplicity of narratives which are emblematic of the plurality of human experiences. The world of human affairs is the world composed of such experiences. The human artifice is composed of political actions and the durables of *homo faber.*

Arendt's study of solitude may as well be differentiated from Rousseau's, as she focuses on a concept of diversity. According to her, public debate should occur alongside the understanding that there are numerous ways of telling a story, numerous ways of experiencing the world.

One of the key characteristics of Arendt's vision of the public realm, one which she purportedly never explicitly stated, is "publicity" (HALPT 34). The notion of publicity, the quality of being-heard or seen, is parallel to the notion of plurality. Publicity is the "'interspace'" the " 'in-between'"ness, or "'inter-est',

15 See, for instance Arendt's book on Rahel Levin Varnhagen, her character and historical sketches within *Origins of Totalitarianism*, her literary discussions of Kafka collected in *The Jew as Pariah.*

being or becoming (part of the world). Such activities, married to a critical sense, lead to worldliness. Worldliness is a critical understanding of one's surroundings. In general, the act of interspersing one's own experiences with those of others is part of the critical analysis of narrative.

While critical acuity is required for judging, so too do certain political acts carry the fortitude of self-awareness. The political actor in Arendt's writing does not defer to the opinions of others but does take into the account the diversity of human understanding. While the act itself may occur spontaneously, immediately, outside the actor's sensing of physical boundaries, political action therefore hinges on critical judgment. In this sense, actions are differentiated from behaviour: *behavior* from the word*be* and from the Latin *habere*, indicating possession, which together define more of a condition than something which is created and occurs. Action for Arendt is political if changes the world in some way. In acting, the actor inserts herself into the world in a rectilinear fashion upon the map of the cyclical everyday. In this manner, the act *becomes* something other than common. While this description engages the superlative, the action does not have to be a 'great deed'. In fact, generally, political action is not grandiose. While I later examine the notion -- incorrect, I believe -- that Arendt's vision of action is agonistic, that her concept of the actor verges on hero worship, Arendt simply pointed out that action is based on choice She writes that "choice becomes the starting-point of the actions themselves," and that "[t]he faculty of choice is necessary whenever men act for a purpose" ("Willing" LM 60).

I would argue that theoretically there is a contradiction in action as Arendt describes it. While she writes of choice, she as well describes it as a type of birth. Political action is a type of birth in which one inserts oneself into the world. In this sense, the necessity for its existence may be as intangible as the need for birth. Action -- possibly apart from the actor's full comprehension -- presses the actor to enter the world, to search for a sense of belonging. The actor's comprehension of the necessity for action may be more innate than tangible. Choice then, or the will to act, is framed within the oppositional borders of necessity and, by extension, purpose. The purpose of political action may reflect the purpose of biological birth; however, one key difference, I would argue, is that the former emerges from the desire to be amongst others, in short, to effect change in the public realm.

An alternative phrasing of action's reliance upon others is that actions lie

partly on the line between being in the company of others and being in solitude. Actions lie at the juncture between being among others and being alone. Our convictions often predicate the kind of connections we develop and the kind of company we keep. In the concluding published lecture of what was a course, "Basic Moral Propositions," Arendt discloses the sometimes inapparent connections between the kind of people one surrounds oneself with and one's thinking and judgment:

> In the last analysis . . . our decisions about right and wrong will depend upon our choice of company, with whom we wish to spend our lives. And this company [in turn] is chosen by thinking in examples, in examples of persons dead or alive, and in examples of incidents, past or present. . . . Out of the unwillingness or inability to choose one's examples and one's company, and out of the unwillingness or inability to relate to others through judgment, arise the real skandala, the real stumbling-blocks which human powers cannot remove because they were not caused by human and humanly understandable motives. ("Interpretive Essay" Ronald Beiner in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* 113, from "Some Questions of Moral Philosophy," Fourth Session; Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress, Container 40, 024651).

Section 4: Friendship in the Public Realm

To Arendt's eyes, intimacy was strictly personal, to be relegated to the private realm and cultivated in privacy. She maintained, however, that public friendship, human interchange, serves as a crucial foundation to the constitution of societies. The quality of public friendship is respect rather than intimacy. In the chapter "The Pursuit of Happiness in On Revolution," Arendt writes that the greatness of the United States' Declaration of Independence lies not in "its natural-law philosophy. . . but . . . in the 'respect to the Opinion of mankind'" (OR 129, from Thomas Jefferson's letter to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825).

By way of comparison, Arendt makes the distinction between public liaisons and Rousseau's heralded public friendship: *fraternité*. This term for brotherly compassion, empathy and intimacy, indicating public spirit, became the slogan for the fathers of the French Revolution (attributed to conversation with Professor James Moore, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec Canada 1996).

Arendt's notion of public collective action, a collective whose mandate reflects Tocqueville's term *consensus universalis*, has nothing to do with constitutional accord or with the agreed-upon adherence to particular laws or

which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together'"(HALPT 34-5). (See as well MDT 31, HC 182). The oft-used term publicity, in relation to advertisement, is similar to the publicity I've described here only in that both represent a desire to communicate. Arendt was obviously not looking at the vendor's communication but the political thinker's. Lisa Jane Disch in *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy* uses the term publicity to describe the contours of public space, the *in-between*.

Arendt shied away from the notion that only philosophers and historians should manage philosophy and history, should construct the past. She rather believed that not only stories which record political acts but the understanding, or interpretation of such stories should be in the hands of all. The objective of her own study of the past was "not to reconstruct moral and political universalism but to recover a fragment of that tradition that was unappreciated in its time and use it to strike up a new conversation" (HALPT 207).

In *Life of the Mind*, Arendt explores the questions "What are we 'doing' when we do nothing but think?" and "Where are we when we, normally always surrounded by our fellow-men, are together with no one but ourselves?" (Introduction to "Thinking," *Life of the Mind* 8). This exploration is not at all an epistemological study of meditation. Arendt does discuss in length the construction of knowledge through the five senses' perception of the world. However, the direction of her study of thinking is how it may impress one's decision-making. She explores thinking as a means for adequately expressing our relation to the world. As solitude is a space in which one's intellectual contact with the world continues, judgment is a necessary faculty which connects the *vita contemplativa* to the *vita activa*. Judgment presides in the activity of integrating one's ideas concerning the world with what is remembered. Similarly for Arendt, thinking is not a quest which tacitly accepts departure (from the world). Although imagination allows for the departure from temporal and spatial boundaries of the body, the thinker is yet bound to the world by her corporeal existence. She may reason herself out of existence, but this will not change that reality. In addition, the thinker enables the critical element of her imagination through the exchange with others.

The desire to belong becomes an appendage of the reader's critical sense. The reader and author acquire strength of judgment through critical analysis. Judgment and action , in Arendt's analysis, are the two main components of

codes of behaviour ("Civil Disobedience," *Crisis of the Republic* 88).[16] According to Arendt's vision, consent pertains to the will to construct communities, to a public dialogue which allows for different voices. In addition, she saw self-interests or group interests imposing a rigid structure to the freedom and spontaneity of action and of speech. This opinion is obviously extremely contentious, since one could argue that, first, self-interests, or group interests are presently pejorative labels applied to the beliefs of congregants who wish, together, to address the need to change certain regulations which impinge upon a person's ability to act politically. Broadly, the label *self-interest* has been applied to groups of people who are attempting to halt discriminatory practices. Secondly, the term *self-interest* wrongly relegates any human rights issue to the pool of biases. One may well argue that many laws protecting certain rights come into being through the initiatives of so-called 'human-interest' groups.

Arendt's position on self-interests can be viewed in context, however. Her belief was essentially that human rights should be guaranteed in a constitution and that all issues pertaining to political equality should be addressed in relation to the constitution's judicial jurisdiction. In Arendt's understanding, the desire to ingrain certain individual's rights into the constitution would be unnecessary if basic human rights were being respected. One could well argue that such an understanding is optimistic, idyllic and impractical, at the most, disrespectful.

Arendt's concern over private intimate connections entering the public realm hinges on the idea that empathy does not provide the critical distance which she sees as fundamental to judgment. She obviously does not rule out compassion in public discourse and in judgment. Arendt worried that empathy's use as a podium for public debate would immure public expression within fundamental ethical values. Empirically, such values endanger the spontaneity and freedom necessary for action. Arendt writes of Rousseau's *humanitas* in the introductory essay to *Men in Dark Times*: "In the eighteenth century the greatest and historically the most effective advocate of this kind of humanity was Rousseau, for whom the human nature common to all men was manifested not in reason but in compassion, in an innate repugnance, as he put it, to see a fellow human being suffering ("On Humanity in Dark Times," *Men in Dark Times* 12).

In particular, Arendt reveals her doubts regarding the application of the commiseration implicit in *fraternité* to a political agenda. In her lecture on

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[16] Hannah Arendt, *Crisis of the Republic*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972.

Gothold Ephraim Lessing, (1729-81), published in *Men in Dark Times*, she writes,

> Lessing was troubled by the egalitarian character of compassion - the fact that, as he stressed, we feel 'something akin to compassion' for the evildoer also....Humanity in the form of fraternité invariably appears historically among persecuted peoples and enslaved groups [and is the] great privilege of pariah peoples [and] dearly paid for....[It is] often accompanied by so radical a loss of the world, so fearful an atrophy of all the organs with which we respond to it - starting with the common sense with which we orient ourselves in a world common to ourselves and others and going on to the sense of beauty, or taste, with which we love the world- that in extreme cases, in which pariahdom has persisted for centuries, we can speak of real worldlessness (MDT 12-13).[17]

For Arendt, then, the more or less ideal construction of relationships in the public realm would be emotionally distanced, that is, "sober and cool rather than sentimental." Such relations, she believed, would, in making "political demands and [preserve] reference to the world," embody *philanthropia*, 'love of man,' or what the Greeks called "humanness" in the "discourse of friendship," a "readiness to share the world. . . ." (MDT 25).

Section 5: The Basis of Public Friendships: Action and Communication

Through action, through speech and, arguably, through work, human beings participate in the world. They achieve belonging through speech and deeds. "Action and speech," Arendt writes in *The Human Condition*, "need the surrounding presence of nature for its material and . . . a world in which to place the finished product" (HC 188). In the same way, thinking becomes a critical exploration of the world, as thinking in a critical fashion, we become a part of a larger arena of ideas.[18] Arendt however does not equate thinking literally with acting.

The nature of political action is extremely complex: what is the role of critical thinking and how may we distinguish such thinking of another variety;

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17 In *The Human Condition*, formally entitled *Vita Activa*, not only is a definition of solitude nonexistent, but so is an explanation of its existence in the private realm. The private is termed household, or *oikos*, in Ancient Greek society and is the realm of *dominus*, or mastership. The private realm of human activity – labouring for instance – is composed of the activities of necessity, fundamentally biological, and of those activities which comprise household management. The private realm as well is distinguished from the public through property ownership, a private bond between person and land, which, as in Ancient Greece and Rome, guarantees 'membership' in the public realm. Arendt never defines solitude as a state within the private realm.

18 This should not be confused with the notion that thinking, or the object of one's thoughts are part of the world of appearances and can therefore replace that person or object of one's thoughts. Arendt points out in her discussion of subjectivity and objectivity in the world of appearances that our existence within this world is constantly oscillating from subject to object, formed not just by our existence in the world but by the existence of others. Arendt's notion of plurality is reflected in this argument.

how may we distinguish certain acts from others as political? Does philosophy which engages both critical thinking and judging bring us closer to the political act, insofar as we may construct and work through in detail a particular morality? In a 1954 response to Mary McCarthy's sardonic question in the nature of a Dostoevskian riddle, "Why should I not kill my grandmother if I want to?", Arendt writes,

> Such and similar questions were answered in the past by religion on one side and common sense on the other. The religious answer is: because you will go to hell and eternal damnation; the common sense answer is: because you don't want to be murdered yourself. Both answers don't work any longer, and this is not only because of these specific replies -- nobody believes in hell any longer, nobody is sure if he does not want to be killed or if death, even violent death is really so bad -- *but because their sources, faith on one hand and common sense judgments don't make sense any more.* The philosophic answer would be the answer of Socrates: *Since I have got to live with myself, am in fact the only person from whom I never shall be able to part, whose company I shall have to bear forever, I don't want to become a murderer; I don't want to spend my life in the company of a murderer* . . . . The Socratic answer never worked really because this life by oneself, on which it is based, is the life of the thinker par excellence: *in the activity of thought, I am together with myself -- and neither with other people nor with the world as such* . . .. (Arendt to McCarthy, August 20, 1954, in *Between Friends*, 22, italics added).

Again, Arendt expresses the need for interacting with others. As I've pointed out, isolation along with a lack of the critical precipice of understanding may obstruct one's sense of belonging. Again, this is a sense which is needed in the everyday, in the common, as well as in preparation for political action.

The reply above proceeds with a lengthy discussion on the futility of thinking in order to reach an *a priori* truth. Truth is the exercise itself: the desire to think-through.[19] Arendt's letter to McCarthy eloquently relates her distinction of the effects of thinking from those of acting. The thinking 'act' could potentially draw the subject away from the world, from the relative comprehension of her deeds. Thinking can be mere rationalization. It can rationally construct a believable innocence from a fictitious one. It is only when the subject has access to the public realm, or is able to conceptualize herself amongst others, that the thinking ego takes on self-criticism.

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19 Arendt writes to Mary McCarthy, August 20, 1954: "The chief fallacy is to believe that Truth is a result which comes at the end of a thought-process. Truth, on the contrary, is always the beginning of thought; thinking is always result-less. That is the difference between "philosophy" and science" (letter to McCarthy, August 20, 1954, *Between Friends* 24).

Arendt's inquiry into thinking in "Thinking" in *Life of the Mind* follows the questioning, "What is one doing when one thinks?" If one's vision of the world is fashioned primarily through clichés, from an inability "to think from the standpoint of anybody but [oneself]" (defined by Brightman in his description of Eichmann, in *Between Friends*, Ed. Brightman "Intro" xxvii), one may embark upon a course of thoughtlessness. In the absence of public relationships or what Lisa Jane Disch refers to as situated impartiality, an individual's capacity to judge may be eclipsed by the imagination's attempt to fill the void created by loneliness. The term *situated impartiality* implies a an absence of *a priori* judgment or prejudice, a placing of one's self within the situation.[20]

Worldlessness, a deliberate refusal to understand or actual ignorance of the consequences of one's own and others' actions, demarcates the lonely subject's boundaries of reason. Without critical understanding or avoidance of the world, the subject may operate in deception. She will be unable to detect the speciousness or deceptively attractive nature of certain thoughts. In the case of thought and action, this person cannot critically analyse motivation: neither the motivations of the thinkers and doers nor her own motivation in blindly accepting.

Arendt believes that in the interests of respect and asserting plurality in public space, speech is a necessary component, in order to grant exposure to ideas. Without reference to public debate, without concessions to plurality and diversity while thinking, one's arguments become circumspect to attempts to redeem Truth as one sees it. Here is illustrated the search for an evasive and possibly elliptical Platonic Truth, a holy grail of the philosophical quest. While Arendt in *Life of the Mind* is writing of patterns in philosophical inquiry, the same argument may be made in terms of the political. Such words as *tolerance*, for instance, suggesting a suffering which one *bears* or *endures*, says more of the

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20 In order for the reader to better understand Arendt's notion of critical distance, I refer in the next few pages to Lisa Jane Disch's recent study of Arendt (*Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy*) in which she uses the term "situated impartiality." Disch's thesis on Arendt's "impartiality" conceivably backs her into a corner, defending Arendt as simultaneously emerging from while discarding an Archimedean bias. Disch expresses this as the Archimedean norm being allowed in through the back door, since one cannot and often does not actually "visit" every perspective which comes one's way. She then counters with the term "situated impartiality," which signifies the importance of *being situated* in Arendt's view, being at home in the world, while maintaining a critical distance. The term, "situated impartiality," I would argue, goes beyond Arendt's writings, taking into account her personal life, her experiences as a pariah for instance. As well, this term takes into consideration what Disch aptly describes as the necessary "discomfort" in leaving the familiar with or without the anticipation of having a home to return to. Arendt did describe such thinking as "thinking without a banister" (see Disch 142-43, 147). With her use of "situated impartiality," Disch not only counters critical rejoinders to and consequent dismissals of various elements of Arendt's work; but, most importantly, she arrives at her own thesis of publicity and articulation, using elements of Arendt's understanding of the possibility of political action.

actual intentions of those who use this word in a political framework. The word is often used in place of actual political inquiry. The suggestion is that one is merely tolerated, spared from death or exile from the intolerance which lies below the surface. Under the rubric of disguised prejudice, Truth is merely what one wishes to believe. The historical narrator, as well as political judge, who ignores the necessity for debate writes in the end a mythology of victor and vice.

Thinking which takes place without the benefit of many opinions is "found and actualized in solitude [eclipsing]....the realm of the many, the world of human affairs" ("Truth and Politics," *Between Past and Future* 237).[21] In "Thinking," in *Life of the Mind*, Arendt contrasts speech and thinking, revealing her partiality for the type of thinking which follows the rigorous course to intelligible speech. Arendt writes,

> Our mental activities . . . are conceived in speech even before being communicated, but speech is meant to be heard and words are meant to be understood by others who also have the ability to speak, just as a creature endowed with the sense of vision is meant to see and to be seen. . . . It is because thinking, though it always takes place in words, does not need auditors that Hegel, in agreement with the testimony of almost all philosophers, could say that "philosophy is something solitary." And it is not because man is a thinking being but because he exists only in the plural that his reason, too, wants communication and is likely to go astray if deprived of it; for reason, as Kant observed, is indeed "not fit to isolate itself, but to communicate. . . . ("Thinking," LM 99-100).

To reiterate, although Arendt calls for debate, she never denies the importance of solitude. She refers to contemplation as "soundless speech -- *tacite secum rationare*, to 'reason silently with oneself'" and describes this in terms of 'giving account to' ("Thinking," LM 99-100). I would describe this act as etching experiences on to historical memory. Thinking can be an "anticipated dialogue with others," as Arendt envisages in Lessing's thought ("On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing" in *Men in Dark Times* 10). The desire for dialogue presumes a desire to be understood, to be intelligible. In addition, shared interest - a *consensus universalis* - in creating space for dissension presumes the existence

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21 Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*. Rev. Ed. New York: Viking Press, 1968.

of a common ground, a belief in plurality.[22]

PART II:
STORYTELLING
TALES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

Trauet nicht der leisen Klage,
Wenn der Blick des Heimatlosen
Scheu Euch noch umwirbt.
Fühlt, wie stolz die reinste Sage
Alles noch verbirgt.

- Arendt "An die Freunde" Winter 1925/26[23]

"When someone goes on a trip, he has something to tell about," goes the German saying, and people imagine the storyteller as someone who has come from afar. But they enjoy no less listening to the man who has stayed at home, making an honest living, and who knows the local tales and traditions. If one wants to picture these two groups through their archaic representatives, one is embodied in the resident tiller of the soil, and the other in the trading seaman. Indeed, each sphere of life has, as it were, produced its own tribe of storytellers. -

Walter Benjamin "The Storyteller" *Illuminations,* II.[24]

Section 1: Storytelling as Action

Lisa Jane Disch in *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy* depicts Arendt as a storyteller, a narrator of experience, and as an individual with a heightened poetic and historical sense. She argues that the public space Arendt envisions, the *polis,* is formed by articulation, a space most luminous during the articulation of differences rather than similarities (HALPT 35). The desire to engage in public

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22 Addressing the issue of the will and freedom in societies and the concerns of governments, Arendt writes in "What is Freedom" in *Between Past and Future* 155: "Every attempt to derive the concept of freedom from experiences in the political realm sounds strange and startling because all our theories in these matters are dominated by the notion that freedom is an attribute of will and thought much rather than of action. And this priority is not merely derived from the notion that every act must psychologically be preceded by a cognitive act of the intellect and a command of the will to carry out its decision, but also, and perhaps even primarily, because it is held that 'perfect liberty is incompatible with the existence of society,' that it can be tolerated in its perfection only outside the realm of human affairs. This current argument does not hold – what perhaps is true- that it is in the nature of thought to need more freedom than does any other activity of men, but rather that thinking in itself is not dangerous, so that only action needs to be restrained: 'No one pretends that actions should be as free as opinions'" [from John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*].

23 *Do not fear the quiet complaint/ When you are courted by the look of the homeless awe/Feel how proudly the purest tale/ Still hides everything.*

24 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections.* Trans. Harry Zohn. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schoken Books, 1968.

debate in order to provide form to the abstract is similar to the desire which lifts narrative from experience. In a lecture she gave in a course for creative writing students, Flannery O'Connor spoke of giving the abstract through storytelling:

> The beginning of human knowledge is through the senses, and the fiction writer begins where human perception begins. He appeals through the senses, and you cannot appeal to the senses with abstractions.. . . the world of the fiction writer is full of matter, and this is what the beginning fiction writers are very loathe to create. They are concerned primarily with unfleshed ideas and emotions . . . apt to be reformers . . . to want to write because they are possessed not by a story but by the bare bones of some abstract notion. They are conscious of problems not of people, of questions and issues, not of the texture of existence, of case histories and of everything that has a sociological smack, instead of with all those concrete details of life that make actual the mystery of our position on earth ("The Nature and Aim of Fiction," *Mystery and Manners* 67-8).[25]

Arendt had a faith in the life of the story, in its ability to clarify particular experiences which would otherwise remain ineffable. O'Connor asserts that the story is equated with meaning for the writer "because of the very idea that it is an experience, not an abstraction" (MM 73). She continues: "Some people have the notion that you read the story and then climb out of it into the meaning, but for the fiction writer, himself, the whole story is the meaning, because it is an experience, not an abstraction" (MM 73).

The fictional narrative may reveal the author's own inarticulated reflections while paradoxically concealing them, as in a masquerade ball the persona of the mask is only partially a fiction, drawn from certain elements of the personality behind. In *The Human Condition,* Arendt distinguishes fiction from the historical, as the former "reveals a maker just as every work of art clearly indicates that it was made by somebody." The latter, the "real story" as she refers to it, "has no visible or invisible maker because it is not made [and] [t]he only 'somebody' it reveals is its hero." In addition, "it is the only medium in which the originally intangible manifestation of a uniquely distinct 'who' can become tangible *ex post facto* through action and speech" (HC 192)

This is an interesting assertion, as the historian, the biographer, and the person who records the act, all, I believe, work with the tension of writing fiction and recording what truly reflects the event or life. As well, the one who records the *"who,"* the writer or teller of the *"real story"* may, as the writer or narrator of

25 Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*. Ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald. New York: The Noonday Press; Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

fiction, be found behind a mask. In putting all the emphasis on action and on the hero of the political act, Arendt, in this remark, does not appear to take into account that the historian is as much a part of the story as the actor. The demarcation between history and fiction, between fact and myth is a subject of many discussions. However, for matters of clarity in studying Arendt's understanding of the storyteller, it is perhaps best to focus on the identity of the storyteller as the one who records action, thereby making it available for other generations. Arendt writes that action "reveals itself fully only to the storyteller, that is, to the backward glance of the historian, *who indeed always knows better what it was all about than the participants*" (HC 192, italics added).[26]

Disch writes of the internal tension between the storyteller and the audience, or readership. She believes that this tension emerges through the storyteller's understanding that she must reveal her vulnerabilities to the audience (HALPT 3). The storyteller's contact with her audience, be it an imagined contact during the writing or recounting, marks her point of departure from the abstract. In many ways, Disch's description of the conception of the story mirrors Arendt's description of critical thinking. As the storyteller is concerned with the style of communication she will use to represent her ideas, the critical thinker is concerned with the products of thinking. The critical thinker examines what forms these products may take when she engages the other faculties of the *vita contemplativa*, willing and judging. Some foresight is necessary in critical thinking as eventually the products of thinking enter public discourse through speech and action.

The desire to write or tell a story is the desire to explore, as the critical thinker explores knowledge. As the quest to pinpoint an all-pervasive Truth sends the thinker into circles of reasoning, the quest to identify the desire behind telling a story and to adequately describe the impact of the story on the audience may be an elusive one. The question is whether or not the story is able to illuminate what is fleeting, as Arendt believes action and speech do. While thinking influences speech and action, it in turn is effected by speech and action. In this respect, thinking, Arendt suggests, is an attempt to recapture the luminous intelligibility of speech and action. She writes that argument of the "rhetorical convention" is a "linear 'train of thought';" but thinking is circular, a

[26] Many scholars have argued that Arendt's primary focus was on the necessity of procuring distance between participant or actor and judge. I disagree with this thesis, however, and rather agree with Disch that Arendt was not presenting a categorical definition of action in order to delineate strength or bravado, but, rather, that she was concentrating on collective action.

"'mapping survey of the region which some incident had completely illuminated for a fleeting moment'" (HALPT 3, from Arendt, "Action and the Pursuit of Happiness" lecture).

Arendt argues that there are no absolutes, only ambiguity in the telling of the tale: "To begin with telling the anecdote of a real incident is against all the rules of the game; but these rules are not absolute, they are rules of caution rather than laws of thought and hence can be broken." (Disch, 3, from Arendt, "Action and the Pursuit of Happiness," lecture delivered at the American Political Science Association, 1960, Library of Congress, MSS Box 61.)

Disch writes that "Caution is advisable because storytelling discloses the arbitrariness of the appearance of consistency, opens one's thought-musings to rival orderings, and invites contrary interpretations of the incidents that inspired them" (HALPT 3).

Imagination may engage the mind's critical capacity or capacity for self-reflection, as well as provide the tools for the faculty of judging. Iris Marion Young writes in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* that "[i]magination is the faculty of transforming the experience of what is into a projection of what could be, the faculty that frees thought to form ideals and norms" (JPD 6).[27]

Critical thinking allows for the act of "visiting" the world. There is the unstipulated understanding, however, that there will be a return with contradictions to solitude, to a familiar place In judging, then, one makes use of "situated impartiality, visiting a plurality of diverging public standpoints" (HALPT 162).[28]

"Situated impartial judgment" could become "a public and collective process" (HALPT 162). Visiting serves as a metaphor to describe the storyteller's, the reader's and the listener's study of the reasoning and impulses behind the actions of others.

I would argue further that in the act of recounting, the storyteller expresses what Kant in *The Critique of Judgment* calls the "imagination's law of association." He is describing the apprehension of an art object; however I believe this description applies to the autonomous critical agent and to the 'lawful', or to the internally structured laws which we employ when we draw any associations (based on one's prior experiences). In a somewhat contradictory

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27 Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

28 In order for the reader to better understand Arendt's notion of critical distance, I refer in the next few pages to Lisa Jane Disch's recent study of Arendt (*Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy*) in which she uses the term "situated impartiality."

manner, the storyteller, I would argue, along with the audience, engage the "imagination's law of association" while allowing for the "freedom from the law of association."[29] In this process of expression, where self-imposed limitations exist alongside the semblance of a limitless expanse, the storyteller resembles the critical thinker. Both play with the illusions of and possibilities expressed by timelessness and infinite space. Both inherently calculate the actual dimensions of their own existence. In addition, the author who artfully constructs a space in which the reader (or listener) may employ her own imagination to draw associations, skillfully convinces rather than persuades.

As a critical thinker, the storyteller has trained her imagination to pass back and forth between the world of the mind and the world of experience.[30] "Storytelling," Disch contends, is the method which Arendt uses, or "proposes" in order "to account for the possibility of principled opposition to totalitarianism." As well, Disch writes, storytelling, in the "Western political tradition" is an "abstract impartial model of critical thinking" (HALPT 12).

While the storyteller's imagination moves among the diverse 'worlds' of ideas and of appearances and 'visits', or momentarily assumes the perspectives of others, the storyteller remains critically aware of the world between, all that is commonly shared and all that is commonly understood. The storyteller as critical

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29 See Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, §49, p. 182 (of the edition used in this paper), see also §21, page 88, §28 page 121, and all of §59. Kant uses the contradictory phrase, the "free lawfulness of the imagination" in describing the apprehension of "a given object," here meaning *art object*, in which "the imagination is tied to a determinate form of this object and to that extent does not have free play (as it does [e.g.] in poetry) . . . " but yet has autonomy. He conceives of this autonomy as "*understanding's lawfulness* in general" (*Critique of Judgment*, Part I, "General Comment on the First Division of the Analytic," page 91). Kant writes that the judgment of an object as beautiful or ugly is based on the subject's moral definition of it. Aesthetic judgment relies on moral definition: whether or not in the beholder's eyes, the object is good or bad.

30 Walter Benjamin's contention in "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov" (in *Illuminations*) is that the traditional teller of tales had died. The art of storytelling, as Benjamin puts it, "is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out," ("Storytelling," *Illuminations* 87). The storyteller, he continues, who "takes what he tells from experience-- his own or that reported by others [and in turn] makes it he experience of those . . . listening to his tale," is, for instance, different from the novelist, who must turn to the solitary life, isolating himself more completely in order to write. Benjamin says of the novelist: "The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounseled, and cannot counsel others. To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life. In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living" (Ill 87).

Although these descriptions bring a certain amount of clarity of vision to the role of the storyteller and the personal strength required to pursue what Benjamin distinguishes as storytelling and novel writing, I disagree with his arguments here. It is perhaps not the decrease in the "communicability of experience" (Ill 86), but the pressure to create an authentic style which leads Benjamin to believe that the tradition of storytelling is dead or dying. (See his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*.) One could argue that these days, due to the sheer number of published material, there is far more pressure on the artist to produce something original, to, in fact, evoke the experience of the Other through certain literary devices which shock. The European experience, for instance, of two world wars, of genocide, of violence in general, of the constant publicity of stories of atrocities may create the desire for originality: of content, of style. As well, while there has been a "quite [gradual removing of the] narrative from the realm of living speech" (Ill 87), I do not believe the difference between this era, or Benjamin's, and an era when storytelling gave people a certain strength of faith to make sense of inconsistencies, may be represented as a difference having to do in particular with a loss of storytelling.

thinker (and possible judge) therefore "visits," using both distance and sensitivity but being neither entirely impartial nor completely empathetic.

Section 2: Storytelling as an Aperture for the Reader

Although actions may initially be spontaneous, they are given context and meaning in the composition of historical 'events', or are historically contextualized through the story. As I have discussed above, if an act is to bear any significance in the course of events, it is necessary to accord meaning to the act. Action "manages to reveal . . . distinctness" (HC 176).

It confers distinction to the individual. The individual, whose life is bound by both time and space, by the finitude of life and dimensions of her physical existence, may yet distinguish herself by the act. The act, in turn, through the witness and *raconteur,* exceeds temporal and spatial boundaries. Interestingly, the meaning created of action returns us to the world of finitude, where our perceptions are influenced by our awareness of the limits of time and space. Through word and deed, I would add, through storytelling, as through deed "we insert ourselves into the human world" (HC 176).

Margaret Canovan in *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* claims that action, in its "radical unpredictability . . . is only one of the many ways in which . . . the most characteristically human of activities is also the most frustrating" (HARP 132).[31] She believes that this is mainly so because "[a]cting and speaking are not things that one individual can do by himself . . . ," or herself, the result being that action in this sense has many more "disadvantages compared with fabrication . . . ." (HARP 132).

Margaret Canovan continues comparing action to fabrication, or the products of the political actor as opposed to those of *homo faber.* She states that the results of action may be far less predictable than those of fabrication (HARPT 132). While I agree with this statement and while I believe that Canovan reads Arendt with much precision, I do think that this Canovan misses a critical element in her comparison of action with work. As Arendt writes, word and deed reveal a person's unique qualities, so that through the action or through the resulting narrative of action one may not only have a second birth but may reinvent it. Despite the undeniable effect other people have on an individual's acts and speech, therefore, action and speech reveal individuality. Similarly, the

31 Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

products of fabrication represent unique points of the worker's/creator's/inventor's imagination. However, how may one assert wholeheartedly that fabrication is a purely self-generated activity? Each product of work adds to as well as draws upon elements of the human artifice, and by extension, ideas and opinions of people other than the worker/creator/inventor.

While storytelling is certainly not political action, the telling of the story, I would argue, could be configured as an act of insertion (into the world). Storytelling may reveal the authentic and is as well a public 'act'. Telling a tale is an act similar to speech: it requires the participation of an audience. The story, differentiated from the deed but similar to speech, helps create form from or reveal form in the chaotic. It may construct contingency out of randomness. The narrative form is essential in communication, even though the form appears arbitrary and runs the risk of reifying the experience and/or the action.

The storyteller may confer sense to or make intelligible the event which appears arbitrary or random. She provides a prologue to the act. The storyteller, historian, scribe needs solitude, as does *homo faber*. Similarly, the storyteller, historian scribe requests an audience as does *homo faber*. The story, I believe, is not a product in stasis (as *homo faber*'s products would not be). For one, the audience or reader participates. This does not necessarily mean being privy to the creative process of the storyteller. As I have previously mentioned, the storyteller does not fully reveal her process of invention, nor her identity as author/creator/inventor. However, those who actively read or listen potentially shape the story, as the critical thinker plays with the existing forms of ideas.

. Obviously, the *raconteur* who acts as an historian need not base everything on factual verisimilitude. The story related to experience need not rely on factual detail. (Some so-called "facts" may be matters of opinion.) The edifice of the story is constructed rather from the relating of imagination to experience. This proposal is interesting as it brings to the foreground the question of choosing, sometimes, between good storytelling and adhering to actualities. Arendt herself, who "loved to tell stories," as Young-Bruehl in Mind and the Body Politic writes, had a "charming disregard for mere facts . . . and unfailing regard for the life of the story" (MBP 1). Young-Bruehl writes of Arendt:

> She was heiress to an aphoristic technique: the *capita mortua* of the broken tradition were assembled with this technique, reincarnated, full-bodied

> and vital. "Insofar as the past has been transmitted as tradition, it possesses authority; insofar as authority presents itself historically, it becomes tradition." But when the past is not transmitted as tradition, it can be freely appropriated; and when such free appropriation presents itself historically, it becomes the occasion for dialogue. Hannah Arendt used the image of Penelope's weaving to describe thinking; what is thought is rethought, ceaselessly, spurred by internal and external dialogue. And she knew very well the difference between this process and writing. For writing she had tools of assemblage-- large silver scissors and quantities of Scotch tape (MBP 1).

The use of silver scissors and tape becomes symbolic for the motion of the storyteller's imagination. The storyteller's unexpressed intention may well be to link various experiences through a particular theme or themes. This creative process requires the use of "large scissors" and "Scotch tape," now "cut" and "paste" under "edit" of the computer, to pull the various experiences together in close proximity to one another. The completed narrative serves as an aperture for those who are interested in listening.[32]

In another sense, I have argued that there may be no quintessential completion, as the reader/audience may provide continuum outside the body of work. Again, political action is not storytelling. However, the notion that while there is form there may be no final nor completed narrative runs parallel to the Arendtian characterization of action. Action, existing within the limits of space and time (unalterable as we can't move through time in any other way than as we do, forward, second-by-second) has a definite form. However, not only does action arise out of freedom and spontaneity, even in the confines of time and space *and*, some would argue, even in the confines of preceding historical circumstances; but the effects of the act may continue to affect things of the world. In a similar fashion, storytelling may be versions of history: interpretations which, in turn, may be remade and retold.[33]

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt describes the hero of the story as someone who needs no heroic qualities:

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32 The concept of movement, or fluctuation in storytelling in a perhaps more true to oral storytelling. The oral story usually changes over time, so that the allegorical quality of the story shifts in keeping with the cultural markers or thinking of the time.

33 Canovan writes: Because human affairs go on among individuals who are vividly distinct, they can after the even be turned into stories that have *dramatis personae* and appear to have form and meaning. Only after the event, however: no one can predict the end of the story while it is still going on, and the 'hero' of the story certainly cannot dictate its forms. These observations about stories are directed toward familiar ways of thinking about politics, particularly against the modern conception of history as a particular story, taken from a particular event, consisting of a plot that may be discovered, as it is presumed to be preexistent, foretold (HALPT 32).

the word "hero". . . . in Homer, was no more than a name given each free man who participated in the Trojan enterprise and about whom a story could be told. *The connotation of courage, which we now feel to be an indispensable quality of the hero, is in fact already present in a willingness to act and speak at all, to insert one's self into the world and begin a story of one's own.* And this courage is not necessarily or even primarily related to a willingness to suffer the consequences; courage and even boldness are already present in leaving one's private hiding place and showing who one is, *in disclosing and exposing one's self.* The extent of this original courage, without which action and speech and therefore, according to the Greeks, freedom, would not be possible at all, is not less great and may even be greater if the "hero" happens to be a coward. (HC 186-7, italics added).

CHAPTER II
SOLITUDE, ISOLATION, LONELINESS: THE CONTEXT OF ISOLATION

He watched the stars and noted birds in flight;
The rivers flooded or the Empire fell:
He made predictions and was sometimes right;
His lucky guesses were rewarded well.

And fell in love with Truth before he knew her,
And rode into imaginary lands,
With solitude and fasting hoped to woo her.
And mocked at those who served her with their hands.

But her he never wanted to despise,
but listened always for her voice; and when
She beckoned to him, he obeyed in meekness,

And followed her and looked into her eyes;
Saw there reflected every human weakness,
And saw himself as one of many men.
W. H. Auden, "In Time of War, VI," *Selected Poems*[1]

PART I:
ISOLATION AND THE EVOLUTION OF ITS VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS

Section 1: Living Outside the World: Loneliness and Isolation

Through imagination we may harbor the illusion of visiting the world -- imagination may, for one, enact internal debates. However, imagination alone cannot replace experience. When our connection with the public realm diminishes or is diminished, when we are forcefully cut off from public discourse or of our own volition depart from what surrounds us, we are on the slippery slope toward a loneliness which enters all thought as a virus enters the bloodstream. "Solitude," Arendt writes, "can become loneliness," and "this happens when all by myself I am deserted by my own self" ("Ideology and Terror" OT 476).

Alexis de Tocqueville, whom Arendt quotes most extensively in *On Revolution* and in the essays compiled in *Crisis in the Republic*, wrote in *Democracy in America* of the tendency to confuse the self as realized in solitude

[1] W.H. Auden, *Selected Poems*. Ed. Edward Mendelson. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

with the public persona.[2] This confusion may follow a conflation of one's self-interests, one's personal goals, with goals of public interest. As personal convictions subsume political (i.e., plural) considerations, public action takes on an ideological stance, rather than being an insertion into the political arena. When de Tocqueville speaks of a solitude whose consequence is public crisis, he relates his impressions of democracy in America on a somewhat portentous note: ". . . not only does democracy make men forget their ancestors, but also clouds their view of their descendants and isolates them from their contemporaries. Each man is forever thrown back on himself alone, and there is danger that he may be shut up in the solitude of his own heart" (DA 508 vol II, book ii).

The possible outcome of a complete dissociation from the world is the "solitude of [the] heart." Such loneliness welcomes madness when, shut out from human contact, the subject is finally deserted by her own self.

Within the condition of loneliness, it has been argued, the imagination breeds on the 'objects' formed by the absence of experience, eventually negating the reliability of experience and eliminating all possibilities for genuine thought (HALPT 92). This isolation severely hampers one's capacity for judgment. Loneliness, Arendt writes, is "the common ground for terror [and] the essence of totalitarian governments" and is "closely connected with uprootedness and with superfluousness" (OT 475).[3]

Without recourse to the actual, the 'world' of the lonely serves as a substitute. At worse, the imagination breeds an effective illusion of stability when there is none. In general, the lonely may sense that she has lost what commonly binds her to other human beings (OT 475).

As opposed to political isolation, extreme loneliness results in severance from all human matters.[4] Arendt locates the root of mass loneliness, whose source is political, in the destruction of individuals' private as well as public lives:

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2 Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Trans. George Lawrence. Ed. J. P. Mayer. New York:: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1969.

3 I would argue that the term "uprootedness" defines a turning point when the role consigned to the individual by society becomes more significant than the person. The danger here, therefore, is the arbitrary nature of one's role in society. At any time, those in power could reconfigure one's role in accordance with their own aims. In a discussion of uprootedness, therefore, we would do well to include a discussion of the fundamental instability belying one's comfortable existence in any society.

4 This is important, as Arendt's main point in discussing isolation is to examine the significance of political disenfranchisement. *Homo faber*, according to Arendt, needs a public realm which is analogous to (without being exactly that of) the public realm of the actor. This public realm would be the human artifice, or, for the craftsperson, the marketplace. *Homo faber* attempts to "find his proper relationship to other people" through exchange, as these "products themselves are always produced in isolation" (HC 160-161).

> While isolation concerns only the political realm of life, loneliness concerns human life as a whole. Totalitarian government, like all tyrannies, certainly could not exist without destroying the public realm of life, that is, without destroying, by isolating men, their political capacities. But totalitarian domination as a form of government is new in that it is not content with this isolation and destroys private life as well. It bases itself on loneliness, on the experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of man (OT 475).

Margaret Canovan expands on Arendt's description. Extreme loneliness, Canovan argues, is more than a separation from other people on an intimate level; it is a complete separation from the world, from a shared common space. The loss of something fundamentally common may result in a dispossession of the faculty of reason, ultimately having a pernicious effect on judgment. The lonely person who lacks reference to the world can no longer mitigate between her mood of loneliness and actuality.

There is no critical precipice in the imagination of the lonely, a place from which the subject could observe somewhat impartially and somewhat sympathetically her existence in the precarious balance of acceptance and abandonment. For the lonely, the emotion of loneliness, of a profound emptiness (be it anything from severe depression to serene acceptance), eclipses any other sort of awareness. Even the perception of "the loss of one's own self" does not provide a critical eye. Lonely, "man loses trust in himself as the partner of his thoughts and [his] elementary confidence in the world which is necessary to make experiences at all."[5] In short, this experience of loneliness eviscerates "[s]elf and world" and the "capacity for thought and experience." (OT 477).

A conscious acknowledgment of isolation may occur, however, if the space for critical thought is granted. The pariah's, or exile's, critical perception of her isolation is contrary to the solitary thoughts of the lonely. The conscious pariah's critical awareness is preceded by an understanding that the only method of gaining control is to reclaim her agency with whatever means are available.[6]

In the same sense, loneliness is not necessarily the space of despair. As

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[5] See one of the first descriptions of loneliness in Koch's book *Solitude*, 31-4.

[6] I take the term "conscious pariah" from Margaret Canovan in *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* and provide further explanation in the following chapter of this thesis, "The Pariah."

critical thought may redeem the despairing individual, Arendt writes of two extreme senses of being in the spectrum of loneliness. She argues that, paradoxically, loneliness is "contrary to the basic requirements of the human condition and [yet] one of the fundamental experiences of every human life" ("Ideology and Terror" OT 475).

This contradiction may be partially explained through an examination of two different expressions of loneliness. One breeds lack of trust in one's own thoughts, in everything one experiences, and, in general, in regards to the world. The other type of loneliness may elicit an existential awareness which is similar to critical awareness. Clark E. Moustakas writes in *Loneliness* that the eclipsing of all emotions by the realization that one is utterly alone in the world (being born and dying in such a state) results in an epiphany, an invigorating new appreciation. In hyperbolic language, Moustakas elaborates: "It can be a new experience. It may be an experience of exquisite pain, deep fear and terror, an utterly terrible experience, yet it brings into awareness new dimensions of self, new beauty, new power for human compassion, and a reverence for the precious nature of each breathing moment (Lon 7).[7]

As Arendt discusses in *Origins*, the metaphysical expression of loneliness is the conceptualization of the fear of death. She makes clear in her comparison of loneliness and isolation that this form of loneliness is not isolation. According to Arendt's formal definitions, isolation occurs within the political realm and loneliness within the social (OT 474). In this sense, I would reiterate that Arendt is referring to political isolation. While political isolation, then, refers to an absence of public place, loneliness describes a void experienced by the psyche. As lonely individuals, we may yet concur with others. Arendt writes that in fact loneliness can present "itself most sharply in company with others" and that the "lonely man [may] find himself surrounded by others with whom he cannot establish contact" (OT 476).

Loneliness overwhelms all relationships. Implicit to the term "contact" is Arendt's insistence that loneliness cannot be simply defined in terms of the presence or absence of companionship. The visceral pain of absence may not vanish in the company of others. Here, both extremes of loneliness interact: the pervasive aloneness which Moustakas describes, which may well lead to a reconciliation of the two halves of the self after trauma, and the loneliness from

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[7] Clark E Moustakas, *Loneliness*. U.S.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961.

which the individual cannot retreat. A distrusting person who is lonely might have difficulty fostering any lasting stable relationships. Despite what may appear to an outsider as companionship, the interaction of a deeply lonely person with others is framed by her lack of a sense of belonging. Such aloneness casts a shadow over any reprieve, over any possibility of reversing the sense of loss of the world. Such loss may indeed follow the grim acceptance of the haunting understanding that "one day we shall have to leave this common world which will go on as before and for whose continuity we are superfluous" (OT 476).

Arendt mentions another kind of superfluousness in her discussion of the different phases, or conditions of isolation. Towards the end of "Ideology and Terror" in *Origins*, she discusses the devaluation of certain members of a population which occurs *en route* to genocide. She writes, "Uprootedness can be the preliminary condition for superfluousness, just as isolation can, but must not, be the preliminary condition for loneliness" (OT 475).

Under totalitarian rule, it may no longer be important whether an individual is physically or existentially lonely, but rather whether this person is yet capable of allowing expression through the cloud created by the feeling of absence. Loneliness, I would argue, in this instance, exists within that gap between experience and the articulated. The ability to articulate becomes synonymous with our sense of belonging to a common world. One's general understanding of this connection is reflected in the spoken, or expressed; the critical understanding behind the spoken is reflected in a sense of worldliness.

Section 2: The Burden of Our Times or the Origins of Isolation During Totalitarianism

While solitude expresses a transition, a purposeful seclusion from one's physical world in order to think critically, isolation, although it may eventually allow for solitude, elicits the image of a more fixed absence, a permanent

exclusion from society.[8] Isolation is generally used to designate a cutting off, a setting or placing apart from -- in Latin, *isolate* is *insulatus,* meaning *insulate.* The political isolation which Arendt details is a casting out from the company of others. However, as Arendt perceives, there are certain connections between the isolated individual and the world which remain intact. "In isolation," she writes, the individual is not entirely cut off from the rest of the world; the isolated "remains in contact with the world as the human artifice" (OT 475).

This existence grows unbearable, however, when the capacity to add something of one's own is diminished or completely annihilated, and one's connection to things, or to the human artifice, is severed. The destruction of the capacity to add to this artifice and the obstruction of the ability to act fall under the same rubric of mass loneliness, which is a tool of tyrannical or totalitarian rule. Loneliness of this nature may be further compounded by society's treatment of the subject as *animale laborans,* "whose necessary 'metabolism with nature' is of concern to no one" (OT 475).

Section 3: Being Alone for Homo Faber and the Alienation of Our Times

In Arendt's characterization of isolation in *The Human Condition,* aloneness resembles less the extreme, seemingly interminable, separation of an individual from society. This isolation is a chosen place away from political life and from society as a whole for the pursuit of one's crafts.In *The Human Condition,* Arendt concerns herself with the work of *homo faber,* with the invaluable quality of the market to the craftsperson. *Homo faber* utilizes the market to counter isolation, as the citizen or actor makes use of the public political space. It is here in her work where Arendt most profoundly separates isolation from the context of a permanent political dislocation. She then reconfigures it as the space for the solitary pursuit of one's work.

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[8] Although the personal experience of isolation may seemingly occur over night, in view of historical circumstances, it does not. However, teleological studies of history do assemble historic 'reasons' or motivations for certain actions and events. Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* was originally entitled "The Burden of our Times," providing credibility to Disch's claim that the word origins succeeded only in obscuring Arendt's intention as historian/storyteller to make sense of the apparent random events of the past (HALPT, see subchapter "Storytelling as New 'Objectivity'" 121-140). Arendt acknowledges that there is an intrinsic human need to think and to act, in order to confer contingency to the otherwise random. This need ultimately supersedes the tacit acknowledgment of the risks involved in ascribing a model of contingency to perhaps otherwise unrelated and incidental events. Disch writes that perhaps Arendt had believed that she had solved the dilemmas of "contingency" and "causality" within Origins. However, rather than being successful at this, Arendt, Disch contends, rather provoked a limitless debate over her method (HALPT 124). Arendt's response to Eric Voegelin's review of *Origins* contains "arguments that did not make it into the preface" (HALPT 124). Voegelin's written objections concern what he viewed as Arendt's particular attention to totalitarianism's "'phenomenal difference'," ignoring its "'essential sameness'," and relating the manifestation of totalitarianism in twentieth-century Germany to "the crises that follow from the agnosticism of the modern age" (HALPT 124).

Isolation, in this context, appears as one fundamental and not necessarily negative characteristic of the human condition. Prefiguring an argument she later explores in *The Human Condition*, Arendt writes (in the chapter "Ideology and Terror" in *Origins*) that "Man insofar as he is *homo faber* tends to isolate himself with his work, that is to leave temporarily the realm of politics" (OT 475).

The products of work are "always produced in isolation" (HC 161). *Homo faber*, therefore, needs a public realm in which to exhibit the creations. In Arendt's analysis, *homo faber 's* construction is in general the human artifice and his architectural structure is in particular the forum or public meeting and marketplace.[9]

Arendt writes that, traditionally, "the last public realm, the last meeting place which is at least connected with the activity of *homo faber*, is the exchange market on which his products are displayed" (HC 162).

Isolation as solitude may therefore serve*homo faber*. While I have already discussed the risks of allowing such solitude to become isolating, there is another risk of an even greater isolation, occuring within society, as well relating to *homo faber*. When the distinction in society between *homo faber* and *animale laborans*, work and labour, diminishes, isolation may become alienation.

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt portrays isolation as the modern experience of alienation. In becoming more isolated from the political and from each other, we are in a situation where loneliness has become "the condition of modern masses in the wake of the industrial revolution and the political crises

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[9] Arendt refers to socialist Rosa Luxemburg within her discussion of *homo faber*'s isolation. In The Russian Revolution, Luxemburg, partly following what Karl Marx wrote about the circuitous pattern that the "social requirement" of the pursuit of accumulation of capital and the desire for expansion for expansion's sake "seems at a closer look to be the accumulation of capital itself" (RR 50). See Rosa Luxemburg and Nikolai Bukharin. *Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital*. Trans. Rudolf Wichmann. Ed. Kenneth J. Tarbuck. London: The Penguin Press, 1972.

of the twentieth century" (HARPT 92).[10]

Arendt's discussion of isolation as an element of modern relations reflect her concerns over what she perceived as the recent changes to the character of *homo faber*. She was concerned about the transfiguration of the marketplace into a place where durable goods lose their meaning and the selling and purchasing of goods takes on primary significance. In addition, the public realm of discourse, the political, becomes serviceable to the buying and selling of goods. The centre of public discourse becomes the centre of consumerism, while political considerations become economical considerations, or judgment related to household management. Arendt writes:

> It is surprising . . . that the modern age -- with its reversal of all traditions, the traditional rank of action and contemplation no less than the traditional hierarchy within the *vita activa* itself, with its glorification of labour as the source of all values and its elevation of the animal laborans to the position traditionally held by the animale rationale -- should not have brought forth a single theory in which animal laborans and *homo faber*, "the labour of our body and the work of our hands," are clearly distinguished. Instead, we find first the distinction between productive and unproductive labour, then somewhat later the differentiation between skilled and unskilled work, and finally, outranking both because seemingly of more elementary significance, the division of all activities into manual and

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10 Arendt portrays isolation in the *Human Condition* as modern alienation. She examines the desire to escape earthly existence. Twenty years before Sputnik was launched (in 1957), with the relief that the "first 'step toward escape from men's imprisonment to the earth' " had been achieved (HC 1), the line " 'Mankind will not remain bound to the earth forever' " was carved on the funeral obelisk of one of Russia's well-known scientists. This desire for departure is obviously not exclusively modern, but is particularly expressed in the twentieth century through what is now seen as scientific and technological advancements. Arendt is not making an ideological anti-technological argument against these achievements, since, of course, all scientific enterprise pertains to our earthly existence, on one level or another. She is rather discussing the teleological (scientific) approach which has come to dominate much of our discourse. The scholar Maurizio Passerin D'Entrèves in *The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt*. New York: Routledge, 1994, discusses at length Arendt's concept of alienation. While world alienation would be isolation from human affairs, related to modernity's restrictions, earth alienation, Passerin D'Entrèves contends, is manifest in many ways. One is "a resentment against the human condition" (PPHA 40). Significantly, however, this alienation "epitomizes the desire to escape from the confines of the earth," towards where, in space, there would be an "infinite regress" (PPHA 40). Having "reached the Archimedean point with respect to the earth, we would need 'a new [one], and so on ad infinitum. . . [i.e.,] man can only get lost in the immensity of the universe, for the only true Archimedean point would be the absolute void behind the universe.' " (PPHA 40-1 [e.g., Arendt BPF 278]). Alienation from earthly existence "enabled a tremendous expansion in knowledge and mastery over nature, culminating in the ability of contemporary science to introduce cosmic processes into the earth – such as the splitting of the atom – and, in so doing, to endanger the survival not only of the human species but of the earth itself" (PPHA 40). Arendt contends that "[world alienation, and not self-alienation as Marx had thought, has been the hallmark of the modern age" (HC 254). She as well made an extremely contentious and, in many respects, perplexing argument that "[t]he fact that the modern age emancipated the working classes and . . .women at nearly the same historical moment must certainly be counted among the characteristics of an age which no longer believes that bodily functions and material concerns should be hidden" (HC 73). (See Disch's chapter "The Critique of Power as Leverage" HALPT, especially 20-27; and Pitkin, "Justice" in Political Theory, August 1981.) It is important to document the statement which follows in context: "It is all the more symptomatic of the nature of these phenomena that the few remnants of strict privacy even in our own civilization relate to 'necessities' in the original sense of being necessitated by having a body" (HC 73).

intellectual labour (HC 85).

Arendt conceives of political isolation in modern societies as beginning with the reduction of every activity of the *vita activa* into labouring. In other words, there is a valuing of labouring over work and action. Arendt argues that we have witnessed "an eclipse of a common public world" (HC 257). This world is "crucial to the formation of the lonely mass man and so dangerous in the formation of the worldless mentality of modern ideological mass movements" (HC 257). Finally, such a perspective rests on the "more tangible loss of a privately owned share in the world" (HC 257).[11]

Arendt's contestation over private property is Marxian to a point. She is speaking not so much about workers owning the means of their labour but about the collapse of the distinction between *homo faber* and *animale laborans*.. Labour is part of the *vita activa* and is necessary. However, labour has eclipsed all else; management has dominated invention. In addition, work, invention, the creation of durable tools have all become synonomous with labour. Production is more esteemed than invention and the goods more than the inventor. The human artifice becomes a structure which supports the proliferation of consumable products.

As opposed to *homo faber*, the worker who explores the creative potential, the *animale laborans* exists and is defined through a "metabolism with nature" ("Ideology and Terror" OT 475). Under the conditions of a world "whose chief values" have become "dictated by labor . . . only the sheer effort of labor which is the effort to keep alive is left;" while one's "relationship with the world" through the "human artifice[,] is broken" (OT 475).

Loneliness, in the context of totalitarianism, is related to the break-down which Arendt found endemic to twentieth-century modern societies. Isolation, then, is a severance from all ability to exert political influence. As well, while the feeling of abandonment and all reactions to it may stem from political isolation and the isolation of people on a mass scale, Arendt maintains a distinction between social isolation, or abandonment, and political isolation. Political isolation, which is the prohibition of freedom of association, becomes the drive behind the type of mass behaviour which indicates a departure from judgment.

11 Arendt precedes this quote with the following: "Just as the family and its property were replaced by class membership and national territory, so mankind now begins to replace nationally bound societies, and the earth replaces the limited state territory. But whatever the future may bring, the process of world alienation, started by expropriation and characterized by an ever-increasing progress in wealth, can only assume even more radical proportions if it is permitted to follow its own inherent law" (HC 257).

This behaviour is moved by the powerful will of its leader. The "hallmark" of such destructive isolation "is impotence insofar as power always comes from men acting together, 'acting in concert' (Burke) [and] isolated men are powerless by definition" (OT 474).

Section 4: The Two Spheres, Strength and Power

In *On Revolution*, Arendt distinguishes between strength and power. She writes of the inward-looking or self-driven qualities of the former and the collective quality of the latter: "In distinction to strength, which is the gift and the possession of every man in his isolation against all other men, power comes into being only if and when men join themselves together for the purpose of action, and it will disappear when, for whatever reason, they disperse and desert one another" (OR 175).

Strength pertains to the individual. The power within collective enterprise pertains to the ability of various individuals within a group to concede to some platform for discourse. Although it is practiced by an individual and although it occurs in the space of spontaneity and freedom, political action is an extension of such collective power. Strength, on the other hand, the endurance of Ancient Greek athletes, or the Homeric hero, is a wrapping of one's self in the vestments of courage. Courage, from *cuer*, heart and *age*, signifies "a measure of the heart." The engaged heart endures in order to conquer despair. While some of the desires of the political actor mirror those of the Homeric hero, the intended results are different. Action as Arendt speaks of it engages critical thinking. It operates within the conscious regard of others. Strength and courage pertain to the individual and involves the one. They are reflexive qualities, self-sustaining in that they can reproduce themselves. The political act occurs once. In addition, it is more of outward occurrence. Political action does not centre on the individual. It is, in this sense, more inclusive than agonistic action.

Many scholars contend that Arendt's portrait of action is agonistic, that Arendt views the actor as hero. A similar argument is that she devotes too much space to action, designating it as the highest in a hierarchical order of activities in the *vita activa*. In order to respond to such claims, we may view Arendt's portrayal of action within the paradigm of plurality. We could bear in mind Lisa Jane Disch's notion of publicity to offset the contentions that Arendt's

concept of action is agonistic. While I believe Arendt does portray the activities of the *vita activa* in an order which values action and work over labour, if we comprehend action as existing in a space designated by freedom and devised by the products of *homo faber*, or those products which comprise the human artifice, we see labour as a necessary and not entirely less valuable component. Work figuratively provides the mortar binding labour and action. *Homo faber* invents the tools for labour as well as constructs the human artifice where political discourse may take place.

Section 5: Arendt's Notion of Nationalism in Relation to Strength

Under the sweeping tide of nationalistic forces and the extremely potent belief system of nationalism, lineage, or group membership, is given as much worth as human life itself. When certain people's cultural and historic lineage is under siege, these isolated individuals may become quite readily the outcasts, the landless. In this case, in somewhat simplistic terms, superfluousness leads to exile or extermination. Within the politically expedient contextualizing, individuals, rather than ideas, become discardable.

Nationalism, like strength, rides on a unifying central force. Arendt's discussion of nationalism follows her brief description of strength. In *The Human Condition*, she procures an argument against sovereignty. She attempts to dismantle what appears (perhaps veiled) to be nationalism's intriguing promises of strength and renewed confidence.

Under the rationale of the importance of self-identity, sovereignty may engage 'strength' as power. Strength, as Disch aptly points out, "is accomplished by fusion" (HALPT 50) and relies on the sentiment of loyalty.[12]

"[O]chlocracy, or mob rule," Arendt writes in *The Human Condition*, "can be characterized by the much more promising attempt to substitute power for strength" (HC 203). When this happens, power appears without its "raison d'être," that is, the "scene of action and speech" which serves to protect against the abuse of power (HC 204).

Strength then defines the ability of the individual to resist adversity. A definition of power as collective 'strength' must therefore be phrased so as to avoid power's collusion with the strength which is inextricable from the

[12] Disch points out that a well-formed portrayal of Arendt's distinction between strength and power exists in her description to Karl Jaspers of the student protests against the Vietnam War at the University of Chicago, where "'there were no leaders before, but then leaders emerged'" (HALPT 30-1, from a letter dated May 21, 1966, in A-J Correspondence 641).

individual's need for control. In the public realm, Arendt argues, "no man" may be sovereign, meaning in the public realm. In keeping with her insistence that the public realm must be founded on an equally-shared respect for plurality, she asserts that "not one man, but men, inhabit the earth" (HC 234).

Arendt argues that defining power through strength results in all sorts of difficulties, and not, as Plato and the tradition since have held, because "of man's limited strength, which makes him depend upon the help of others" (HC 234). The argument that strength is power, Arendt contends, has contributed, throughout the ages, to a particular bias which posits sovereignty alongside a supposed " 'weakness' " of plurality. The argument which situates the individual as synonymous with 'every man' allows no room for the theme of multiplicity of individuals' experiences and of political opinions . Arendt writes that "[i]f it were true that sovereignty and freedom [were] 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" (HC 234).[13]

Strength must remain isolated in order to be effective and, by definition, cannot be expansive. The outcome of power, if it comes into being upon the shoulders of strength, is coercion. Arendt writes in *The Human Condition* that "sovereignty is possible only in imagination paid for by the price of reality" (HC 235).

Interestingly, Arendt employs the terminology "power" to express a supposedly pluralistic democratic debate. I would argue that her notions of plurality and diversity and her disparaging comments about modern human beings and their lack of political interest (see HC) fit into basic descriptions of anarchy: e.g., no one individual represents others but everyone takes a piece and, ideally, a responsible role in political activities.[14] By power, I believe Arendt meant political will, the political drive, which is integral to action. Anyone who

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13 See Disch's argument on this subject (HALPT 46).

14 William Kornhauser, in *The Politics of Mass Society*, sets up an interesting analysis of the manifestation of plurality in our political systems. Kornhauser's structure stands in opposition to Arendt's political paradigm. Whereas she proposes, in discussing the environment of spontaneity, each individual's freedom to act, Kornhauser is discussing group dynamics. He therefore refers to the plurality of groups, rather than of individuals. In this, he therefore envisions little relative "direct participation in national decisions, not because elites prevent them from doing so [as with a less heterogeneous population], but because they can influence decisions more effectively through their own groups" (PMS 82). According to Kornhauser's argument, the sheer number of different groups, and not the number of people involved in these groups– and in national politics – serves to regulate the entire system of groups and limit the opportunities for any one interest to supersede the others. Totalitarian regimes, then, "search out all independent forms of organizations in order to transform them or destroy them" (PMS 82). William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959.

would write a book titled *Origins of Totalitarianism* hopefully has had experience with power in its myriad of manifestations. Arendt, who was an admirer of such women as Emma Goldman and Rosa Luxemburg perhaps could have been more careful in her use of the term, as she could have differentiated between political determination (to resist the undermining of human rights) and the desire to rule over others.

Section 6: Isolation as a Mass Experience

Although an individual may experience a severance from public affairs and become politically disenfranchised, her private realm may remain intact. While I disagree with her distinctions between tyrannical and totalitarian forms of power, Arendt contends that under tyrannical as opposed to totalitarian rule, political thought and fabrication could yet exist. Someone who is, for instance, imprisoned, and not tortured to death, under tyrannical rule, may continue to think and sometimes to write. It is evident that some, under either totalitarian or tyrannical rule, retain their property ownership. I would argue, however, that as the contours of the private realm under totalitarian or tyrannical rule would change, that is the boundaries of solitude, the faculties of the *vita conemplativa* would be extremely affected. Critical thinking requires a degree of freedom. As well, I find it difficult to see how a severely compromised private realm portrays the argument that under tyrannical, as opposed to totalitarian, oppression, there is a greater chance that the private realm will remain intact.

Under totalitarian forms of government, a collapse of the private and public occur. The private is where labour of the*vita activa* and contemplation of the *vita contemplativa* both occur. The public is the place of interaction with others through speech and deed and the display of the products of works. Along with the collapse of the private and public -- a collapse which Arendt had

witnessed during the rise of totalitarianism.[15] Their power politically is taken away or becomes merely illusory. Their actions and their reason for being become essentially willed to the state. The "metabolism with nature" of *animale laborans,* which, in any situation, at any time, "is of concern to no one," then becomes the basis of every person's existence. As a result, the existence of certain individuals are of concern to no one; and those whose existence is important are alive merely so that they may carry out the will of the state. Every person's interactions with others is reduced to the lowest common denominator, that of survival (OT 475).

In the instance of political isolation on a mass scale -- an isolation, in this context, closely resembling the loneliness which as well may occur on a mass scale -- people have become isolated from themselves. Impotent, as Burke describes, yet not wholly free from the basic need for human companionship, the isolated individual may turn in any direction. Without any or very little thought or judgment, she attempts to find companionship, or to create connections with the world.

Under the emergence of totalitarian forces, the will to act politically is nullified through the abolishment of spontaneity and freedom; however this process is complicated. The root of totalitarian rule, according to Arendt, is isolation. She argues that those in power may successfully propagate particular myths only when people can react internally, in a psychological rather than political manner to the destruction of those elements which bind them together. Myths then provide some promise for psychological equilibrium; and people may seek such false gods at the expense of political freedom and the freedom to make decisions.

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15 Arendt is speaking from experience: the destruction of the private realm under totalitarianism. Without the possibility for a place where we may be by ourselves, the public becomes irrelevant. As opposed to the process by which tyrannical governments gain and maintain control, Arendt tells us that the "self-coercion of totalitarian logic" destroys our "capacity for experience and thought just as certainly" as our "capacity for action" (OT 474). There is a great deal of acknowledgment that Arendt's distinctions between tyranny and totalitarianism are somewhat arbitrary. Margaret Canovan attempts to address the concerns of many of Arendt's readers in this regard: "The crucial point is that in Arendt's account, totalitarian leaders believe that everything is possible without believing in human freedom and responsibility, not even their own. Unlike ordinary tyrants and dictators, they see themselves not as holders of arbitrary power, able to do as they please, but, instead, as servants of the inhuman laws that govern the universe. It is not only at the level of the followers and victims that human plurality and spontaneity have become superfluous, but even at the level of the leader himself" (HALPT 27). Later, Canovan states that, "Arendt claims that in totalitarian regimes even the rulers do not act freely, but only execute what they suppose to be natural or historical laws." Canovan admits that "in the early stages of their rule they must behave like ordinary tyrants to the extent of leveling the fences of human law that protect rights and 'the living space of freedom'." However, not only do totalitarian tyrants leave "individuals in the 'lawless, fenceless wilderness of fear and suspicion', but they, unlike other tyrants," use a terror which coerces the populace by eradicating "individuality altogether." This binds people "together in such a way that no space for individual action remains" (HALPT 89) Canovan is specifically referring to Arendt's essay "Ideology and Terror" (86-89).

While myth making creates more predictability in terms of people's behaviour, allowing space for decision making allows as well for the unpredictable. Dictators seek predictability, Margaret Canovan has argued. In Margaret Canovan's review of Arendt's essay "Ideology and Propaganda," Canovan describes human beings turning "humanism upside down, using their power to reduce themselves and everyone else to something less than human" (HALPT 25).[16]

Under totalitarian governments, she continues, "[h]uman spontaneity has to be destroyed and human beings reduced to predictable members of a herd so that they will not upset the logical system" (HALPT 25).

Besides creating predictability, totalitarianism manufactures superfluous human beings. It is important to note that despite the obvious distinction, actions taken by totalitarian governments or acts of terror cannot be equated to Arendt's concept of political action as the former do not occur in the space of freedom and spontaneity. Action requires spontaneity. This definition does not reduce action to something existing within virtually any precept of spontaneity. The freedom in the will to act may exist only where and when ideally all are equally able to act.[17] Arendt's definition of action presupposes, as I have described, critical independent thought. While political action can only exist if relationships can be established, isolation designates impotence.

Loneliness may delineate one of the essential aims of totalitarian governments -- serving as a fuel which allows them to achieve their aims. In a similar sense, power is derailed through isolation. Arendt refers, in "Ideology and Terror" in *Origins*, not only to the isolation of specific individuals who become the victims of brutish forces, but to the isolation, resulting from the process of totalitarian control, of every individual from politics and ultimately from each other. Totalitarianism, as well as any tyranny, cultivates and, ontologically speaking, feeds off of dispersion and desertion. People may believe that they are united in collective agreement. However such collectivity is founded on an omission of multiplicity and diversity or, in Orwellian terms, on a conscientious disregard for difference in order to further the aims of those

16 In briefing her discussion on Arendt's insistence on plurality being predicated by Arendt's own experience of totalitarianism, Margaret Canovan writes that the predictability which dictators seek is based on the condition that the space of spontaneity has been flushed out of all of society: "... according to Arendt, ... totalitarianism essentially is ... an attempt to exercise total domination and demonstrate that 'everything is possible' by destroying human plurality and spontaneity at all levels, and ironing out all that is human and contingent to make it fit a determinist ideology" (HALPT 27).

17 See Arendt's chapter *"Willing"* in *Life of the Mind.*

in power. The actions of such a group express a particular will.[18]

Section 7: Totalitarianism and Tyranny and Summary of Arendt's Discussion of Isolation in Relation to the Former

In a contentious maneuver, Arendt in *Origins* postulates a radical distinction between tyrannies and totalitarian regimes. She claims that isolation under tyrannies designates only the severance of political associations, as opposed to the isolation under totalitarianism which is the severance of all associations (political and societal). "Isolation and impotence . . . have always been characteristic of tyrannies," Arendt writes (OT 474). Under tyrannical governments, "[p]olitical contacts . . . are severed . . . and the human capacities for action and power are frustrated."

Arendt further distinguishes totalitarianism from tyrannical control, wherein "[t]he whole sphere of private life" with "experience, fabrication and thought" are left intact, through the argument that the private realm under

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18 Elias Canetti explores the tendency for human beings to seek out company in the form of crowds, or to seek out company in the mob in his book *Crowd and Power*. Trans. Carol Stewart. Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1987.

In this work, Canetti elaborates on various manifestations of the crowd as it essentially personifies the movement of individuals toward the one (will). In a subchapter, entitled "Persecution," Canetti points out: "One of the most striking traits of the inner life of a crowd is the feeling of being persecuted, a peculiar angry sensitiveness and irritability directed against those it has once and forever nominated as enemies" (CP 24). This crowd, Canetti suggests, seeks to grow rapidly, in a constant position of defense. It spreads determinedly and quickly, digesting anyone in its path. Anything which opposes its growth is perceived as "constricting." Canetti's metaphors for the crowd extend from the cliched swarm to a besieged city, whose subjects are walled-in. This city, Canetti continues, "daily gains new defenders, 17.08.00 but each of these brings with him that small invisible traitor...who quickly disappears in to the cellar to join the traitors already hidden there," while, meanwhile, "the siege continues" (CP 25). Built mostly on the sense of its own persecution, this crowd "never feels saturated. It remains hungry as long as there is one human being it has not reached. One cannot be certain whether this hunger would persist once it had really absorbed all . . . ." (CP 25). Yet, Canetti observes, "Everyone belonging to such a crowd carries within him a small traitor who wants to eat, drink, make love and be left alone" (CP 25). The crowd, whose survival depends upon the persecution of others, creates a vacuum of the imagination, which stifles individual dissension. The capacity for human spontaneity, however, may still be part of the crowd's imagination. Not one individual in this crowd, though, would be able to see that his or her identity, and then so-called 'actions', are solely contingent on the crowd's caprices. The crowd's aims preface one's being as dispensable at any time, or worse, in an instant, disposable. Canetti discusses religious believers, in a subchapter entitled "Domestication of Crowds in the World Religions." He refers in particular to the instance of marked changes in the liturgy and teachings of certain religions, which then allows for a continued appeal to the masses, despite the belief of the faithful in some illusionary steady surface (universal and temporal relevance). The appeal to the masses or the need to adopt adherents and inculcate the many, appears to be basic to all world religions, as does the construction of institutions to house them. According to Canetti, "[t]here is, too, a strong tendency to collect the faithful in separate units" so to avoid the "danger of disintegration, which must be continually countered" (CP 26).

totalitarianism is consumed through the tool of extreme isolation (OT 474).[19] The isolation under totalitarianism is not only the loss of a private retreat along with a public voice and space, but essentially the collapse of the public and private onto one another.[20] Arendt's distinction between totalitarianism and tyranny is interesting. I believe her argument cannot be supported as totalitarianism and tyranny belie such general categorical distinctions and that the circumstances -- cultural, political, historical -- of the rise to power are so particular as to resist such a formation. My argument, however, is far too extensive to elaborate here. Arendt's concept of a collapse and eventual obliteration of both public and private, however, sheds light on the power of political isolation. Although such isolation appears to exist within the contours of the public realm, it may permeate the borders of the private realm.

Summarizing Arendt's arguments in *Origins* on the nature of isolation, I believe she provides a somewhat confusing if contradictory analysis on the space of seclusion and exclusion. She wishes to lend isolation a political face. Such is the uncompromising sense of loss after the twentieth century's world wars, such is the insurmountable loneliness affecting all humankind -- the 'burden of our times'. Simultaneously, Arendt implies that isolation is in close proximity to solitude which is willfully reached: the chosen space and condition of the thinker.

I have attempted to form somewhat different categories of seclusion and exclusion in order to manage Arendt's analysis which in some sense, I believe, belies a strict delineation between the two. As the reader may see, action as collective power, occuring within a space which allows for a plurality of

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19 Arendt is speaking from experience. She had witnessed such a collapse under totalitarianism. Without the possibility for a place where we may be by ourselves, the public becomes irrelevant. As opposed to the process by which tyrannical governments gain and maintain control, Arendt tells us that the "self-coercion of totalitarian logic" destroys our "capacity for experience and thought just as certainly" as our "capacity for action" (OT 474). There is a great deal of acknowledgment that Arendt's distinctions between tyranny and totalitarianism are somewhat arbitrary. Margaret Canovan attempts to address the concerns of many of Arendt's readers in this regard: "The crucial point is that in Arendt's account, totalitarian leaders believe that everything is possible without believing in human freedom and responsibility, not even their own. Unlike ordinary tyrants and dictators, they see themselves not as holders of arbitrary power, able to do as they please, but, instead, as servants of the inhuman laws that govern the universe. It is not only at the level of the followers and victims that human plurality and spontaneity have become superfluous, but even at the level of the leader himself" (HALPT 27). Later, Canovan states that, "Arendt claims that in totalitarian regimes even the rulers do not act freely, but only execute what they suppose to be natural or historical laws." Canovan admits that "in the early stages of their rule they must behave like ordinary tyrants to the extent of leveling the fences of human law that protect rights and 'the living space of freedom'." However, not only do totalitarian tyrants leave "individuals in the 'lawless, fenceless wilderness of fear and suspicion', but they, unlike other tyrants," use a terror which coerces the populace by eradicating "individuality altogether." This binds people "together in such a way that no space for individual action remains" (HALPT 89) Canovan is specifically referring to Arendt's essay "Ideology and Terror" (86-89).

20 See as well *The Human Condition* 60-61. Arendt writes: "It seems to be in the nature of the relationship between the public and private realms that the final stage of the disappearance of the public realm should be accompanied by the threatened liquidation of the private realm as well."

discourse, guards against monopolised power. However, when fissures in the semblance of collective power occur, when individuals forfeit the ability to add their voices to public discourse, power takes on a new face. Hierarchical structures, I believe, always run the risk of becoming tools of exploitation for totaliatarian and/or tyrannical power. Such power, I believe, is synonomous with strength as Arendt describes it: the force used to protect oneself against adversary. The difference in simplistic terms between the strength of the individual and the strength of a governing body is that the latter becomes a protector of itself, uniting all forces against the threat of plurality, discourse and action.

PART II:
POLITICAL vs. SOCIAL ISOLATION

Section 1: Excursus: Rahel Varnhagen

Rahel Varnhagen was a Jewish woman from Berlin whose life (1771-1833) Arendt chronicles in *Rahel Varnhagen: Portrait of a Jewess*. Rahel knew extensive political isolation.[21] Arendt writes of Varnhagen as well in *Origins*. In this work, she discusses the isolation extending from the eighteenth century of European Jews (and their exclusion from the larger political picture). She analyses their impotence in regards to the changes which swept over the public institutions governing the societies in which they lived.[22]

Although social emancipation appeared to be within grasp for the Jewish people of Rahel's era, the possibilities for proportional political power remained minimal. These possibilities even arguably decreased with the pronounced rise of anti-Semitism in the ranks of both the bourgeois and aristocratic classes, who felt threatened by Napoleon's guarantee of civic rights to the Jewish people of Prussia. After Napoleon's victory in 1806 (Berlin was under French occupation until 1808) and the ensuing rise of anti-Semitism among the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, Rahel was isolated from the community of her friends and acquaintances, her 'fellow' thinkers.[23] The epistolary narrative which one may

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21 Arendt, Hannah. *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewish Woman*. Trans. Richard and Clara Winston. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1974. Revised Edition from *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*.

22 Whether individual Jews had the power to participate in politics, or in the higher echelons of government, and chose not to do so, is another matter; it is the state of their isolation from politics which Arendt, as historian, credits to these Jews' inability to address their victimization.

23 .f. Arendt's discussion of this in *Origins of Totalitarianism*, especially page 60.

construe from Rahel's letters, after she is cut off from society, leaves one with an impression of an impenetrable loneliness.[24] She had been deserted; everything familiar was lost. "It's all over with me in the world," Rahel wrote (RV 66), disclosing her intended departure from this world. Arendt points out that Rahel's despair contained the " 'disgrace' " which accompanies "unhappiness," which, in turn, becomes the "central experience" of such a life. The Pariah Rahel laments, "I know it and cannot feel it; I wear a red heart like others, and have a dark, inconsolable, ugly destiny" (RV 66).

I would argue that Rahel's isolation, as portrayed in Arendt's biography, is social as well as political. Whether there existed any possibility for political power for Rahel (the fact that she was a woman certainly did not help) or for other Jews during this era, or whether Rahel even had much political awareness is not, I believe, at issue. Rahel's social authority, or influence was taken from her.[25] Social isolation, then, I believe, not only more aptly describes Rahel's separation from society. The term serves to illuminate Arendt's text on Rahel better than an understanding of isolation in the context of its being exclusively political.

Arendt writes:

> The salon in which private things were given objectivity by being communicated, and in which public matters counted only insofar as they had private significance – this salon ceased to exist when the public world, the power of general misfortune, became so overwhelming that it could no longer be translated into private terms . . . personal matters [were becoming] separated from the things that affected everyone...all that really remained to be communicated was pure gossip (RV 122).

I would argue that social isolation, i.e., the severance of personal associations, may be as incapacitating as political isolation, i.e., the severance of

24 I believe Arendt's book on Rahel displays the author's own internal dilemma with her social-political argument. The salon is and was a social environment; Arendt constructs the interior space of the salon very much as an area of social liaisons. However, the salon, these liaisons and ensuing debates may have had an extremely influential effect on politic. As Rahel's great influence in elevating Goethe to literary hero already proves, if her salon had continued past its untimely death, perhaps, the ideas given voice there and the continued correspondence outside the confines of, but in relation to, the salon would have contributed still further to the political.

25 In this sense, it could be argued that Rahel was not lonely in the sense of Arendt's construct of loneliness in *Origins*. Solitude, which "requires being alone," is conversely related to loneliness, meaning here that which "shows itself most sharply in company with others" (OT 476). Loneliness, as Arendt envisions it, appears to suggest a separation from humanity in a more spiritual or existential way, or as Canovan writes, a "separation from human experience of reality as well as lack of community and consolation," (HALPT 92), an irreparable loss of what one has determined one's world. The experience of loneliness, though an experience wherein our associations may not literally be severed, marks the existence of an abyss between the subject of loneliness and the world which most importantly in reference to Arendt's arguments, determines one's actions within this world.

political affiliations. One's social isolation may, as well as political isolation, adversely affect the individual's capacity to add something new to the human artifice. Such isolation may increase in intensity as it develops into a larger loneliness which is "altogether unbearable" (OT 475).

Section 2: Isolation in Relation to the Solitude of the Conscious Pariah

In finding her own expression for her experience of isolation, Rahel managed, despite everything, to construct an unequivocal and therefore far from negative space for herself and her reflections. Partly through the kind of reflective thinking characteristic of the conscious pariah, Rahel eventually cleared the sorrow from her imagination. Critical thinking allowed her to evaluate her situation and demarcate the line between society's reprehensible actions and her resulting despair. In a broader respect, it was through the activity of thinking as an isolated person, yet as one who found her solitude and capacity to think critically, that Rahel resolved her relation to the world.

Arendt's study of solitude and isolation demonstrates the extreme mutability of both experiences. Isolation may affect a person emotionally, without representing total exclusion, or, it appears, without referring to desertion. In solitude, one may feel isolated or sense isolation without actually being deserted by others. This experience is in contrast to isolation which is so invasive that it succeeds in destroying all the subject's connections with the world.

For another study of solitude and political isolation, we may turn to Arendt's good friend Walter Benjamin and to her homage to him in the essay "Walter Benjamin 1892-1940," included in the collection Men in Dark Times.[26] Benjamin's writing reveal a person who experienced and suffered a myriad of senses of isolation: the solitude of the artist, the extreme isolation of the pariah, and, then, victimization by Hitler's regime. He was a pariah (arguably, due to his personality as a solitaire, as well as being a Jew) and yet an accepted member of society, a well-known German intellectual. Yet, Benjamin's decision to take his life on the border of Spain, while hiding from SS. troops, shows his despair over falling prey to what Arendt describes in Rahel Varnhagen's life as "a dark, inconsolable, ugly destiny" (RV 66).

In her essay on Benjamin, Arendt wonders if "Benjamin [would] ever

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26 Arendt's essay, originally published in *The New Yorker*, 1968, is as well the introduction to Benjamin's *Illuminations* and was translated from the German by Harry Zohn.

feel at home in twentieth-century Germany" (MDT 172). She responds to this query with Benjamin's own words. In a letter which Benjamin had sent to Gershom Scholem, dated April 17, 1931, he describes himself as "[s]omeone who has been shipwrecked, who carries on while drifting on the wreckage, by climbing to the peak of the mast that is already crumbling," where, from the peak, there is still a chance to send "out an SOS . . . ." (MDT 172, e.g. Benjamin Corr 378).[27]

Arendt precedes this 'confession', from Benjamin's letters, with a remark from another German-speaking Jewish writer and pariah, Franz Kafka: "Anyone who cannot cope with life while he is alive needs one hand to ward off a little his despair over his fate...but with his other hand he can jot down what he sees among the ruins, for he sees different and more things than the others; after all, he is dead in his own lifetime and the real survivor" (MDT 171-172).

Section 3: The Writer Herself

Arendt knew what it was to be isolated, to be a pariah. She as well experienced acceptance, mostly in intellectual circles, political isolation which at times was life-threatening, and had to eventually regain her private space of solitude and public space of action. In her earlier years, Arendt became known as a member of the German intelligentsia. Through her political actions during the war, she rescued her human dignity, finding a place for herself in the world as a political actor, and later, as a conscious pariah and writer.[28] Toward the end of the war, and for the rest of her life, Arendt was an American (Jewish) émigré literatus. She was someone who continued to make her presence known in political discussions, mostly concerning Germany and the United States. In a letter she wrote to Karl Jaspers after the war, Arendt described herself as a "stateless person" (January 29, 1946, A/J Correspondence 29).[29] She writes:

> Meine nicht-bürgerliche oder literarische Existenz beruht darauf, daß ich dank meines Mannes politisch denken und historisch sehen

27 See *The Correspondence* of Walter Benjamin 1910-1940. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, 378. In this letter to Scholem, Benjamin is addressing the "Arab question," a subject of which apparently Scholem had previously had spoken, to which Benjamin somewhat sardonically replies, "Your position on [this] question proves that there are totally different methods of unambiguously differentiating yourself from the bourgeoisie there than there are here."

28 The term 'conscious pariah' is from Margaret Canovan. See following chapter of this thesis, entitled "The Pariah."

29 Arendt, Hannah and Karl Jaspers. *Briefwechsel 1926-1969*. Ed. Lotte Köhler and Hans Saner. Zürich: Piper, 1993.

> gelernt habe und daß ich andererseits nicht davon abgelassen habe, mich historisch wie politisch von der Judenfrage her zu orientieren (29 Jan, 1946, A/J Briefwechsel 67).[30]

On January 1, 1933, Arendt expressed a similar biographical detail in terms of her Judaism and Germanness in the latter-twentieth century. She wrote to Jaspers(A/J Corr 16): "Für mich ist Deutschland die Muttersprache, die Philosophie und die Dichtung. (1 Jan 1933, A/J Briefwechsel 52) *For me, Germany is my mother-tongue, philosophy and poetry.*

After the war, Arendt had before her the difficult task, which, as with other Jewish survivors, would take the rest of her life: to reconcile the language of her birth, the birth of her intellect, as well as the poetry of her heart with the slaughter and the apathy or collusion on the part of many of her intellectual European (German) compatriots.

My reading of Hannah Arendt's work has followed a discussion of her configuration of various forms of isolation and solitude, of the various manifestations of the voluntary or involuntary physical separation and/or basic ontological fracture of one's entire (mental as well as physical) being from the world. I will proceed in the next chapter with a discussion of the pariah. The questions which bring us into the next chapter are the following: "How, generally, does the isolation of the pariah affect her consciousness, that is, how is the experience of isolation mirrored in the pariah's reflections?" The other compound question is, "How may the space of solitude and the exercise of critical thinking serve this individual in her struggle to endure the ordeal of isolation?"

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30 *My non-bourgeois or literary existence is based on the fact that, thanks to my husband, I have learned to see things politically and in a literary manner and, on the other hand, I never stopped being guided historically or politically by the Jewish question.*

CHAPTER III:
THE PARIAH

The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are;
And like a sister am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. Use well our father;
to your professed bosoms I commit him;
but yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both.
Cordelia to her sisters, King Lear, *Act I, Scene I*[1]

Herr Klamm is a gentleman from the Castle, and that in itself, without considering Klamm's position there at all, means that he is of very high rank. But what are you, for whose marriage we are humbly considering here ways and means of getting permission? You are not from the Castle, you are not from the village, you aren't anything. Or rather, unfortunately, you are something, a stranger, a man who isn't wanted and is in everybody's way, a man who's always causing trouble . . . a man whose intentions are obscure. . .
Frieda's landlady to K. in Franz Kafka's *The Castle*

PART I:
THE JEW AS PARIAH AND AS PARVENU

Section 1: The Autobiography of the Pariah

Arendt's 1943 essay "We Refugees" (collected in Ronald Feldman's *The Jew as Pariah*) documents the experiences of Jewish German *émigrés* living in the United States. The essay serves as a discussion of assimilation as escape -- from culture, from the past and the uncertain future.[2] Such assimilation, an effective donning of another's wardrobe, in order to achieve anonymity, not only had the effect of reducing the *emigré's* effectual self-identification. It allowed for the erasure of agency when political action was of utmost necessity. Arendt writes:

> Whatever we do, whatever we pretend to be, we reveal nothing but our insane desire to be changed, not to be Jews. All our activities are directed to attain this aim: we don't want to be refugees, since we don't want to be Jews; we pretend to be English-speaking people, since German-speaking immigrants of recent years are marked as Jews; we don't call ourselves stateless, since the majority of stateless people in the world are Jews; we are willing to become loyal Hottentots, only to hide the fact that we are

1 William Shakespeare, "King Lear." Cambridge: Pitt Press Shakespeare for Schools, 1880.
2 Ron Feldman writes that Hannah Arendt was "both a Jew and a European who through the darkest of times repudiated neither of these heritages and experiences but rather combined and built on them." He writes of her "distinction as one of the most profound thinkers of our age." ("Intro" *The Jew as Pariah* 47).

> Jews. We don't succeed and we can't succeed; under the cover of our "optimism" you can easily detect the hopeless sadness of assimilationists. ("We Refugees," JP 63)

Section 2: The Pariah and Parvenu on Arendt's Historical Map

Arendt's analysis of European Jewry throughout the mid-nineteenth century to the period of World War II in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* provides a general profile of pariahdom, of the outcast. The term pariahdom identifies a group of people, as well as the individual.[3] The Jewish *émigré* to the U.S., even after obtaining citizenship, remained a pariah -- in this instance, more socially and culturally than politically in the adopted country.

In his examination of the psychology of the Jewish *émigré* to the United States, Ron Feldman refers to Arendt as the " 'conscious pariah'," whose essays mark the experiences of the Jew in the modern world ("Intro" *Jew as Pariah* 18). Feldman identifies two "particular types" of Jewish people in Western Europe, following the Enlightenment and subsequent emancipation: *"conscious pariahs,* who were aware" of their status as outsiders and the *"parvenus,* who tried to succeed in the world of the Gentiles but could never escape their Jewish roots" ("Intro" JP 18). He writes:

> By affirming both their Jewish particularity and their right to a place in general European life, the conscious pariahs became marginal not only in relation to European society - as all Jews were - but to the Jewish community as well. They were neither parochially Jewish, like their Eastern European cousins, nor were they part of the wealthy Jewish upper class of bankers and merchants that controlled Jewish-Gentile relations .[4]. . . the conscious pariah is a hidden tradition: "hidden" because there are few links among the great but isolated individuals who have affirmed their pariah status . . . nor ties between them and the rest of the Jewish community; a "tradition" because "for over a hundred years the same basic conditions have obtained and evoked the same basic reaction" ("The Jew as Pariah" JP 18).[5]

The conscious pariahs, people such as Jewish nineteenth-century writer Heinrich Heine, Arendt proposes,

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[3] The argument that group 'identities' such as religion and race are purely sociologically, historically and culturally constructed categories succeeds in erasing particular reference points for understanding. On the other hand, it is obviously extremely problematic to pose an argument using the criteria of religion, race, etc. Such arguments, whose end is historical insight, become reductive, if theoretical constructions take the place of ghettos.

[4] The Rothchilds for example belonged to this group (see *Origins of Totalitarianism*).

[5] Such as Heinrich Heine, Rahel Varnhagen, Sholem Aleichem, Bernard Lazare, Franz Kafka, and Walter Benjamin.

> realiz[ed] only too well that they did not enjoy political freedom nor full admission to the life of nations, but that instead they had been separated from their own people and lost contact with the simple natural life of the common man, . . . yet achieved liberty and popularity by the sheer force of imagination" ("The Pariah as Rebel" JP 68).[6]

The parvenu is the counterpart of the pariah, the upstart "who [tries- to make it in non-Jewish society . . . the [product] of the same historical circumstances," who uses her "elbows to raise" herself rather than, as with the pariah, using mind and heart to "voluntarily [spurn] society's insidious gifts." (Feldman, "Intro" JP 18-19). The parvenu is engaged in the act of forgetting. She must shed her emotional, cultural and intellectual attachments (to the past), in order to open the door to the possibilities proposed by society's "insidious gifts." Nietzsche proposed that such a choice, based on a particular forgetfulness, may "bring about a conflict between our inherited, innate nature and our knowledge, . . . [calling forth] a battle between a strict new discipline and ancient education . . . a second nature so that the first . . .withers away" (Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, §3 22)

A discipline, especially a "new" one, carries the weight of necessary practice and adherence to structure. It suggests, despite the possible arena for creativity, a turning away, to a certain degree, from freedom and spontaneity. Ancient education, on the other hand, implies knowledge, gained or acquired through a revisiting of the past, a synthesis of past and present.

In her biography of Rahel Varnhagen, Arendt constructs an argument similar to Nietzsche's, cited above:

> . . . [t]he person who really wanted to assimilate could not pick and choose among the elements to which she would be willing to assimilate, could not decide what she liked and disliked. If one accepted Christianity, one had to accept the time's hatred of the Jews . . . . Both Christianity and anti-Semitism were integrating components of the historical past of European man and living elements in the society of Rahel's day. No assimilation could be achieved merely by surrendering one's own past but ignoring the alien past (RV 224).

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6 Michael Oakeshott has theorized about imagination in "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind." He writes: "It is not a condition of thought" but is rather a manifestation of thought (Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* 206). Drawing from this, I would say that the conscious pariah (the writer, or storyteller), for example Heinrich Heine, through the richness of the narrative, leave behind footprints or impressions which appear as historical illustrations. The *consciousness*, then, of the conscious pariah appears to be more than a simple cognizance of his or her situation; it is, rather, an extremely complex and indepth understanding, an intuitive grasp of the boundaries of and possibilities posed by existence.

Arendt's thesis on assimilation shifts from Nietzsche's on nature and time as she is arguing that the memory of one's cultural being is not in danger of disintegrating, as it is too integral to one's being. Such memory remains somewhere, embedded in one's consciousness, even while appearances suggest that it has disappeared. The difficultly lies in transposing one wholly new nature on to another, when the new has been, so to speak, "acquired." The new is created on a pretense of assimilation and integration and rests on one's sheer concern for survival.

Arendt had a particular antipathy for the parvenu. This aversion rests on her belief that the parvenu is untrue to her self and that her potential as critical thinker and political actor could not be realized without a (re)positioning of her self as pariah. Arendt's writings, however, suggest that she did recognize that the situation of assimilation is quite complex. It cannot be simplified by a matter of setting up an opposition between pariah and parvenu and may well concern a matter of the *degree* of assimilation, of how many elements of one's past one chooses to discard.

I would argue that far more important to the subject of assimilation and pariahdom is the paradoxical dislocation of the individual. The parvenu gains physical location and social acceptance without any *terra firma*, any firm ground to stand upon. The other paradoxical situation here is that of the conscious pariah: the person who finds a home in history or among her contemporaries while being physically, culturally, socially and politically dislocated, in all appearances, homeless.

The conscious pariah must seek solitude while being politically and socially isolated. Further isolated, the pariah risks falling into the metaphysical condition of loneliness. In solitude, a place separate from one's fellow creatures, the thinker may explore what would otherwise remain abstract or intelligible. The critical thinker who is as well a pariah may, similar to the actor of the Homeric legend who hurls himself into war for his great nation, gain immortality through expression. This is at no small cost, however: for the solitaire, the cost of a lonely existence, for the Homeric actor, generally, a premature death.

Section 3: The Actions of the Parvenu: Exchange for Social Privilege

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, referring to Arendt's essay entitled "Personal

Responsibility Under Dictatorship," draws a relationship between Arendt's concept of pariahdom and her notions of thinking. The conscious pariah's isolation can be viewed as a privilege, as this individual, isolated from society, is yet independent of mind. In a passage from Arendt's article, on the actions of certain "'non-participants'" living in Hitler's Germany " whose minds did not function in an "'automatic way'," Young-Bruehl detects the extension of "Arendt's early concept of pariahdom into a concept of good judgment" (MBP 16). She turns to Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (published in 1963) for evidence of this relation between the condition of the pariah and the faculty of the *vita contemplativa,* judging. Young-Bruehl perceives Arendt's "admiration for those who, rising above moral standards, can judge for themselves" (MBP 16-17).

While I am at odds with Young-Bruehl's thesis that Eichmann could be considered a parvenu in the Arendtian manner, her discussion of behaviour versus action, all within the context of judgment, does however pose an interesting teleological argument. Young-Bruehl's arguments suggest that one's actions may be adjectivally expressed as being pariah-like or parvenu-like. Forgetfulness is a prerequisite of the latter. Forgetfulness suggests a deterioration of the critical capacity. The act of forgetting, obviously, allows room for a fusion of one's new coat of identity with a given dominant paradigm.

In contrast to the independent and self-critical thinker and judge, Eichmann was a man who did not *act* in the Arendtian manner, i.e, with some critical reflection, but who simply *behaved.* Such human behaviour demonstrates a virtual devouring of volition, at least in part by an ubiquitous bureaucracy, of which the true source of power is systemically obscured. This is not to say that I nor Arendt may justify Eichmann's behaviour in terms of bureaucracy's power; Eichmann refused to act politically; he used the faculty of the *vita contemplativa,* the will, without engaging any of the other faculties. The bureaucracy before him and to which he willfully became a part simply aided in his refusal to engage the critical capacity of the will.

"[It] is true of the parvenu," Arendt writes in "The Pariah as Rebel" (JP 72), that she has "exchanged the generous gifts of nature for the idols of social privilege and prejudice." Crucial to Arendt's "topology" of the parvenu (see Feldman, "Intro" JP 18) is the illusion of power which such a person accepts in favour of critical thinking. This illusion is sustained through just as powerful an illusion of acceptance.

PART II:
THE CHARACTERS IN ARENDT'S NARRATIVE--
PARVENU AND PARIAH

Section 1: Excursus: Benjamin Disraeli, Parvenu

Arendt's sketch of the parvenu is, I believe most distinct in her portrayal of Benjamin Disraeli in *Origins*. Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, Prime Minister of England from 1846 to 1857, was perceived as a clever *gentleman* of political and intellectual pursuits. His parents were assimilated Jews; and as his father did not practice Judaism and had Benjamin baptized, Benjamin himself knew fairly little about the religious or cultural elements of Judaism. During his career, however, Disraeli enjoyed drawing attention to his Jewish roots. His unusual wardrobe -- "fantastic, coxicombical costume[s]," a "velvet coat of an original cut thrown wide open...ruffles to its sleeves, shirt collars turned down in Byronic fashion, an elaborately embroidered waistcoat . . . [with] voluminous folds of frill, and shoes adorned with red rosettes"-- resembled his 'adoption' of Judaism as a sort of gauntlet, a distinguishing mark, even as Disraeli essentially preserved his ignorance of this religion and culture.[7]

> . . . [Disraeli] knew . . . that Jews would have no better chances anywhere than in circles which pretended to be exclusive and to discriminate against them; for inasmuch as these circles of the few, together with the multitude, thought of Jewishness as a crime, this "crime" could be transformed at any moment into an attractive "vice." [His] display of exoticism, strangeness, mysteriousness, magic, and power drawn from secret sources, was aimed correctly at this disposition in society. (OT 69).

It requires a certain perspicacity and resolve to refashion the age-old stereotype of the Jew into an advantageous cloak. Disraeli paraded as the odd "man of mystery," someone whose political acuity was respected, but whose motives were not always apparent and whose actions were not always predictable. Despite numerous attempts to oust him from his position in Parliament and from his influential role in society, Disraeli dodged the fate of the pariah, remaining a celebrated socialite and an outspoken politician and intellectual.

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[7] William Flavelle Monypenny, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli: Earl of Beaconsfield 1866-1912*. 6 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1910-1920. See vol. II 239-40. The quotation within this text is abstracted from an account of Disraeli in 1833, printed in the *Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1889.

Section 2: Excursus: Rahel Varnhagen, Pariah

In her biography of Rahel, focusing upon the isolation which accompanies exile, Arendt journeys through the terrain of introspection. The lens of introspective mood colours every corner of the solitude which such an individual may create as a barrier from self-indignation. Arendt explores introspection as both a negative meditating process of the imagination, a sort of refuge for the intellect, and a positive necessary process for the exile, a refuge for the soul. When through introspection the intellect alights upon critical thinking, or when the former leads to the latter, the thinker becomes a conscious pariah.

At the end of the 18th century, Rahel (*née* Levin) held numerous salons which attracted a number of individuals from the nobility as well as a number of German and French intellectuals. At the close of the 18th century, during Goethe's life, "the German Jews," Arendt writes, "had attained social rootedness," and had come to represent social neutrality, so that their parlors represented a distinctive "neutral zone where people of culture met" (*RV* 58).

While these Jewish salons in Berlin allowed for cultural, economic and, in general, social integration, Rahel's garret room stood outside the conventions and customs of other Jewish salons. Arendt writes in *Origins*:

> The charm of the early Berlin salons was that nothing really mattered but personality and the uniqueness of character, talent, and expression. Such uniqueness, which alone made possible an almost unbounded communication and unrestricted intimacy, could be replaced neither by rank, money, success, nor literary fame (OT 60).

Arendt similarly documents in her biography on Rahel:

> The exceptional Berlin Jews, in their pursuit of culture and wealth, had good luck for three decades. The Jewish salon, the recurrently dreamed idyll of a mixed society, was the product of a chance constellation in an era of social transition. The Jews became stopgaps between a declining and an as yet unstabilized social group: the nobility and the actors; both stood outside of bourgeois society-- like the Jews-- and both were accustomed to playing a part...to displaying "what they were" rather than "showing what they had," as Goethe put it in *Wilhelm Meister;* in the Jewish houses of homeless middle-class intellectuals they found solid ground . . . which they could not hope to find anywhere else. In the loosened framework of conventions of this period, Jews were socially acceptable in the same way

as actors: the nobility reassured both that they were socially acceptable. (RV 57- 8).

In Europe, in the early nineteenth century, when the Jews were no longer socially influential, and the Christian bourgeoisie -- an emerging "cultivated middle class" -- had gained the social and political wherewithal to cause visible ripples in society, "the Jewish element was expelled" from society (RV 58). Since the European Jews at the turn of the century were not in control of their public destinies, as Arendt indicates, they were not in a position to foresee nor could they, then, prevent the isolation which followed civic emancipation.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, Rahel lost her salon, the associations cultivated through it, and those friendships outside of it. In a state of anguish over the unbearable finality to her social existence as well as to her indispensable intellectual discourse, and carrying the extra burden of failed love affairs, Rahel exiled herself abroad in Paris in July of 1800 (RV 69). Although she maintained a few close friendships (such as that with Bettina von Arnim, who never deserted her) after the demise of her salon, Rahel retreated for the most part into a period of thinking, into the great expanse of solitude.[8]

PART III:
THE AESTHETICISM OF INTROSPECTION

Section 1: The Aesthetic Filters the Wretched World

Aesthetic pleasure often provides an affiliation of subject who appreciates and object of (that experience of) beauty. The sheer enjoyment of this connection, however -- what Kant in the *Critique of Judgment*, in the introduction, refers to as the "receptivity to a pleasure arising from . . . reflection on the forms of things" -- does not reduce the interminable loneliness of one's isolation (CJ 32).

For Rahel, who was attempting to ward off misery and despair, only nature was consoling. The weight of her despair was in fact greatly alleviated by her walks "alone, after much vexation, in mild weather, under a fleecy sky," especially when she noticed "a great deal of sky," with "the air rural" and calm. "Like evil swathings," Rahel wrote, "it all fell away from me, all the alienation cast over me like a spell by the situation, and I too became still" (RV 166).

[8] As with all the letters, the correspondence between Rahel and Bettina and their supposed close friendship (which, incidentally, Arendt touches upon only briefly) is the subject of several works, most in German.

Rahel became agitated, being amongst the few whom she still kept in contact with after her social isolation. She felt herself to be in the semblance of some sort of charitable community. "Every social situation," Arendt writes, "was oppressive to [Rahel]," at the time she became a social pariah, "because she had nothing, was nothing, [was not] permitted to be natural" (RV 166).

Although she was immersed in profound isolation, Rahel eventually recovered her strength. She found, within her own solitude, a place for herself in the world. This space, in turn, allowed her to explore her now unfamiliar relation to the world. Through her introspection, Rahel had attained a new level of inspiration.[9] Now her reflections, which turned from the ubiquitous setting of introspective mood, became the conscious pariah's source of worldly understanding. Rahel's critical apprehension as an observer from the margins began to nourish her imagination in a new way.

Arendt writes that at first, for Rahel, "[t]hinking amounted to an enlightened kind of magic which could substitute for, evoke and predict experience, the world, people and society. The power of Reason lent posited possibilities a tinge of reality, breathed a kind of illusory life into rational desires, fended off ungraspable actuality . . . . (RV 9).

Arendt qualifies self-reflection, or introspection.[10] She explains:

> Introspection accomplishes two feats: it annihilates the actual existing situation by dissolving it in mood, and at the same time it lends everything subjective an aura of objectivity, publicity, extreme interest. In mood the boundaries between what is intimate and what is public become blurred; intimacies are made public, and public matters can be experienced and expressed only in the realm of the intimate -- ultimately in gossip (RV 21).

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[9] At twenty, Rahel wrote: " 'I shall never be convinced that I am Shlemihl and a Jewess; since in all these years and after so much thinking about it, it has not dawned upon me, I shall never really grasp it. That is why ' the clang of the murderous axe does not nibble at my root'; that is why I am still living." (R, p. 9). Arendt writes, in "Part 1: The Pariah as Rebel," (JP 70): Innocence is the hall-mark of the *shlemihl*. But it is of such innocence that a people's poets - its "lords of dreams" - are born. No heroes they and no stalwarts, they are content to seek their protection in the special tutelage of an ancient Greek deity. For did not Apollo, that "inerrable godhead of delight," proclaim himself once for all the lord of *schlemihls* on the day when - as the legend has it - he pursued the beauteous Daphne only to receive for his pains a crown of laurels?

[10] See Seyla Benhabib's recently-published essay "The Pariah and Her Shadow" in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1995, for another view on introspection. It is especially romantic introspection for Arendt, according to Benhabib, which cultivates and sustains one's isolation from the world. In short, the problem with introspection is not only the distancing of the subject between herself and the world, but the subsumption of her mind so that there can be no sustained reflected distance from emotive responses. Benhabib writes: "Romantic introspection leads one to lose a sense of reality by losing the boundaries between the public and the private, the intimate and the shared" (FIAH 91). This, Benhabib argues, contrary to my own opinion, "compounds the 'worldlessness' which Rahel Varnhagen suffers to the very end" (FIAH 91) Benhabib continues: "The category of the 'world' is the missing link between the 'worldless' reality of Rahel Levin Varnhagen and her contemporaries and Hannah Arendt's own search for a recovery of the "public world" through authentic political action in her political philosophy" (FIAH 91).

In the chapter "Magic, Beauty, Folly" in *Rahel*, Arendt is clearly indicating that Rahel's folly was not her turn toward the magic and beauty initiated and inspired by the imagination but the problematic relationship which she developed between thinking and aestheticism. In Rahel's "stand outside reality," she at once wanted to "take pleasure in the real" and "provide the soil for the history and the destinies of many people without having any ground of her own to stand on" (RV 80). She could no longer be a participant in the world. Yet, her insatiable desire to know about this world, only perhaps briefly interrupted, continued in earnest. Arendt writes:

> [Rahel] had not cast off her old indiscriminateness, in spite of the ennui people inspired in her, in spite of the disgust they aroused in her. But whereas her old indiscriminateness had been the expression of her alienation, of her indefiniteness, it now sprang from the feeling that people did not matter but only what happened to them, their suffering, their living and dying. To know about this living and dying of theirs was enough for her; for herself she wanted nothing more, neither suffering nor joy. Such was her composure (RV 79).

" 'In my heart,'" Rahel wrote, " 'people press on and die as on a battlefield; none knows about the others; each must die for himself' " (RV 79). Arendt observes:

> Rahel was no longer in the battle, had forgotten that she had once believed she was born to be a soldier; she would no longer co-operate, would not have anything told twice. She carried about with her the outrageous pretense of being herself the 'battlefield'; that being herself nothing but the scene of action, she in reality provided the essential connection between disparate events (RV 79-80).

In taking the stance of one waging battle, Rahel became devout. Rahel's devout meditations were fed through the paradoxical relationship between her desire to be critically aware and her desire to regain a position in society. Within society, Rahel "placed herself outside of. . . worldliness, because she wanted to contain everything in this world," couldn't do so, and yet, of course, "needed some link to 'other beings'" (RV 80).

Sheer aesthetic wonder can be described as thinking circumscribed by emotions and by the elements of imagination's dissociation with the world. The progression from introspection to understanding, would develop, to some degree, from the realization which occurs within the gap of desiring to belong,

to be a part of the world, and seeing to the heart of the hypocrisy within the desired society. The exiled may experience intensely the desire to belong, to be in the world, but yet have no access to the building material for any sort of home in the world: expression.

In the narrative of struggle, the pariah's introspection may give way to critical understanding rivaling any other stage of self-awareness. Such awareness, otherwise latent, follows the experience of being on the outside, and just as importantly, the exercise of looking in.

Section 2: Introspection Deflecting and Critical Insight Reflecting

Introspection, in view of the beautiful and sublime, becomes magical. Such magic, however, may only exist by virtue of its being instantaneous and fleeting. Arendt poses such immediacy in contradiction to the conscious deliberation of critical thinking.

Arendt notes of this particular aestheticism:

> By its very nature, the beautiful is isolated from everything else. From beauty no road leads to reality. To be sure, the beauty of a poem can provide the inspiration for endless meditation, but this meditation is tied to the magic of the moment, has neither past nor future . . . always day and night come to spoil the beauty of the evening, and only language, with its capacity for giving names to beauty, preserves the evening in an eternal present. Always the real evening shatters the magic of the word 'evening'; always the continuity of life would annihilate the beauty of twilight (RV 88-9).

Beauty's power, Arendt claims, is obtained through magic and retains this magic, winning imagination's ongoing battle with reality, as it inclines on thinking's ability to resist temporality.

The intersection of judgment and critical thinking, thinking with reference to the world, is predicated on the need for the space for solitude. The thinker may use this space to obtain critical distance. Solitude is elementary to the exercise of judgment, as the subject, while judging, procures a particular kind of critical distance from the world. On the other hand, the sort of meditation which allows one's intellect to be impressed by mood, to emotional rather than intellectual perception, creates an aesthetic panel and/or allows for

generalisations which may obscure critical perception.[11]

Arendt, however, does not qualify one province of contemplation as more rewarding than any other. While the experience of beauty may isolate the subject from reality, this aestheticism may yet elevate experience, in its stead, providing material for critical thinking and judging. Furthermore, Arendt does not suggest that the subject of such an aesthetic experience exists at some intractable distance from reality.

PART IV: AESTHETIC APPRECIATION OR UNDERSTANDING IN JUDGMENT

Section 1: The Senses' Apprehension of the World Manifest in Judging

The other study in reading Arendt's understanding of Rahel's introspection concerns the relationship between language and one's experience of the world. Another way of expressing this idea is that experience may lie somewhere between what appears through the senses and what materializes through language. The tacit acknowledgement of some 'truth' in one's first impression of beauty in a sense violates the very nature of truth, as this 'truth', in a moment, may vanish, leaving one with the "real evening." In Rahel's case, this was the 'real evening' of her isolation.

The scholar Werner S. Pluhar, in the introduction to his translation of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, points out that Edmund Burke, while delineating the sublime "along the same lines as the beautiful," similar to Kant's association of both taste and judgment with beauty, indicates that sublimity in fact is proposed through judgment. Judgment, then, provides context to the experience of sublimity, to a particular idea or feeling which has already been invoked ("Intro" Kant's *Critique of Judgment* lxix).[12] According to Pluhar's analysis, we may first encounter the sublime. Then, perceiving it so, through our senses' abilities to both comprehend the actual and to abstract, we lend this experience meaning through critical reflection. It is as well interesting to note

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11 Kant, for instance, in *The Critique of Judgment* implies that aesthetic judgment, similar to political judgment, empirically rests on the notion that there is distance between subject and object. However, in the arguments of this thesis, I have discussed an oppositional relationship between Rousseau's prose and the critical thinking which Arendt refashions from Kant, as political judgment.

12 The 'visiting' metaphor peeks through Pluhar's *exposé* of Burke and the sublime, as Burke, Pluhar writes, describes a sensation of astonishment or horror upon encountering the sublime, "but a horror that we feel only as we contemplate, without being in any actual danger" (Introduction to CJ lxix).

that Arendt, drawing from Kant's *Critique*, does not necessarily distinguish one judgment, aesthetic from the other, political. Instead, she abstracts areas of his thought on the aesthetic and on aesthetic perception to portray her ideas on the political and on critical reflection. Arendt does refer to Kant's notions on morality, and some scholars have perceived her as continuing his discourse.

Section 2: The Poet on the Political Landscape

I would argue that Arendt's musings in *Rahel* on aesthetic wonder, or introspection, actually delineate an important contradiction which is implied in her political philosophy. For instance, while Arendt rejected Rousseau's *fraternité* as a qualifier of political interaction, she had, in her doctoral dissertation, for instance, written of a love of the world in the spirit of St. Augustine. Worldliness then occurs in a loving relationship (respective love, perhaps) to one's fellow human beings. Some scholars have interpreted Arendt's concept of love as representative of that within Christian liturgy (e.g., James W. Bernauer, S.J., Patrick Boyle, S.J., and William J. Richardson, S.J.).[13] Even if we would choose to attribute a secular face to Arendt's condoning of the love expounded by St. Augustine, the important consideration is the apparent contradiction between this intimate emotional connection and the relationship founded on respect. The respectful distance which Arendt writes of as part of the *polis* would ideally be part of the equation of political interaction.

Neighbourly love, on the other hand, as Arendt qualified St. Augustine's concept of worldly understanding, bespeaks compassion, or what I would call a poet's emotional comprehension of her sensual impressions of the world. The two can fortify one another, but they are not interchangeable and are not synonymous.

Arendt's brief study of aestheticism in *Rahel* is an empathetic documentation of wonder. In her debt to Kant, it appears, Arendt imports a significant role to wonder as an agent in the development of one's relationship to the world. Wonder represents general human curiosity, the desire to seek knowledge. In Arendt's portrayal of Rahel, however, the latter is in danger of losing her perspective, as wonder enters her thoughts on the back of introspection. A purely emotional response, wonder conditions the imagination.

13 Bernauer, "The Faith of Hannah Arendt: Amor Mundi and Its Critique – Assimilation of Religious Experience" (1-28); Boyle, "Elusive Neighborliness: Hannah Arendt's Interpretation of Saint Augustine" (81-114); Richardson, "Contemplative in Action" (115-34). *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt*. Ed. James W. Bernauer, S.J. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987.

As a possible adjunct to the mood of introspection, this curiosity may blanket rather than expose any critical apprehension.

In his essay "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind," Michael Oakeshott, who bridges poetry and the aesthetic element of thinking in a similar manner as Arendt (I would argue), characterizes thinking as a mechanism for developing a discourse with the world. Oakeshott speaks of "poetry on the map of human activity" and of the "quality of the voice of poetry in the conversation of mankind" (VPC 241). As thinking, according to Arendt, should exist for its own end, so reasoning behind poetic contemplation, according to Oakeshott, is "not determined in advance," but unexpectedly may yield certain "sequences, patterns, correspondences." These three effects of poetic reasoning, through "poetic surprise," may yield "delight" in their responding to certain "expectations" (VPC 234).

Oakeshott continues:

> Every poet is like the Spanish painter Obaneja, of whom Cervantes tells us: when a bystander asked what he was painting, he answered, "Whatever it turns out to be." Consequently, 'beauty'. . . is not a word like 'truth'; it behaves in a different manner. It is a word the use of which is to describe a poetic image which we are compelled to admire, not as we admire (with approval) a noble action, nor as we admire a thing well done (such as a mathematical demonstration), but on account of the preeminent delight it plants in the contemplative spectator (VPC 234).[14]

Arendt expresses the folly of using the tools of aesthetic wonder to search for one's relation to or place in the world. Beauty may "abolish all ties and . . . thrust the human person into the same nakedness in which it was encountered" (RV 89). Yet, time has the greatest power, since "even the enchanted soul must die" (RV 89). While being humbly aware of time's power, of the fact of death, however, a person may momentarily sustain the magic of beauty. Her imagination is then only momentarily suspended within the illusion of eternity. Rahel may have briefly experienced extreme isolation but, in the end, departed from this loneliness. She exposed herself, "gave herself to love as though she were nothing but a creature of nature" (RV 89-90) and then went on to don the

14 Taking Oakeshott's argument that the preeminent force behind poetry is the determination of the poet to avoid the organized approach of scientific inquiry -- as Arendt writes, "organized knowledge" ("Intro" "Thinking" LM 7) -- I would argue that aesthetic wonder may be a part of thinking without, in the least, drawing it toward meditation, dreaming, or fancy. This is what Oakeshott himself appears to be concluding when he writes, "poetry is a sort of truancy, a dream within the dream of life, a wild flower planted among our wheat" (VPC 247). Aesthetic wonder could serve a critical role in thinking, coinciding with the curiosity and desire to go visiting.

"composure" of the critical pariah. Arendt writes:

> It is but natural that the pariah, who receives so little from the world . . . [who even interprets] fame . . . [as] . . . a mere sign of schlemihldom, should look with an air of innocent amusement, and to smile . . . at the spectacle of human beings trying to compete with the divine realities of nature. The bare fact that the sun shines on all alike affords him daily proof that all . . . are essentially equal. In the presence of such universal things as the sun, music, trees, and children -- things which Rahel Varnhagen called "the true realities" just because they are cherished most by those who have no place in the political and social world -- the petty dispensations of men which create and maintain inequality must . . . appear ridiculous. Confronted with the natural order of things, in which all is equally good, the fabricated order of society, with its manifold classes and ranks must . . . appear a comic, a hopeless attempt of creation to throw down the gauntlet to its creator. It is no longer the outcast pariah who appears the shlemihl, but those who live in the ordered ranks of society and who have exchanged the generous gifts of nature for the idols of social privilege and prejudice ("Part I: The Pariah as Rebel" JP 71-2).

Arendt refers in "The Pariah as Rebel" to a particular "joie de vivre" which Heinrich Heine possessed, which, similar to Rahel's, elevated his sensual as well as intellectual experiences. Heine's stories carry what Arendt refers to as "that passion which makes [people] revel in tales and romances, which finds its supreme literary expression in the ballad and which gives to the short love-song its essentially popular character" (JP 71).

Here, Arendt, who is otherwise critical of the "folly" of magic and beauty, professes that these elements yet serve the pariah's quest in attaining a connection with the world outside her isolation. Wonder over earthly things, essentially a curiosity inspired from the knowledge of our shared experiences as earth-bound creatures, may yet sustain our connection with things.[15] Heine, as Rahel, was able to turn from beauty and the world invoked by the imagination's contact with sensual pleasure and (re)turn to the world of human affairs.

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[15] In her critique of Heine as pariah, Arendt goes so far as to call those critics "stupid and undiscerning" who locate only a somewhat simple aestheticism and a subsequent materialism in his writing. The works in which Heine is turning away "from the world of men" to the "open and unrestricted bounty of the earth" are not, according to Arendt, representative nor characteristic of his work as a whole ("Part I: the Pariah as Rebel" JP 71).

PART V:
THE CRITICAL PARIAH'S EXPERIENCE

Section 1: Rahel's Contentment-- Absolving the Self from Destiny

In the conscious pariah's perspective, there is certainly a connection between judging and thinking. The political and social outsider or exile maintains a particular perspective through critical thinking, which becomes a vehicle for judging.

As thinking, which is solitary in nature, relies on the company of others as a reference point, so does the critical faculty of thinking, or one's intellect, in attempting a particular depth of study, rely on the 'play' of the imagination which occurs in aesthetic appreciation.[16] It is important to note that the conscious pariah is someone who, despite her isolation, is not only in possession of her faculties of reason, of doubting, of judgment, but is someone whose reality is profoundly intact. The conscious pariah would see for instance the distance between the beauty of nature, in which she may revel, and the political world.[17]

Rahel's hopelessness and the pain which so marred her personal life were eased as her perspective on her experiences was transformed. Rahel began to accept her situation, aided in part by her friendship with the much younger Alexander von der Marwitz (which began in 1809). She realized that "[h]er despair was no longer her own private affair; rather, it was merely the reflection of a doomed world" (RV 167). Although this hardly sounds more consoling, "Rahel interpreted her own alienation accordingly, no longer believed it was inflicted by an incomprehensibly abstract fate which could be understood only in generalized categories -- [i.e.] life in itself, *the* world" (RV 167).[18] In conquering one's isolation, one may reach a point of articulation which is, in essence, the privilege or license of the marginal thinker.

"Rahel," Arendt attests, towards the end of the book, "remained a

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16 See Arendt's discussion of intellect versus cognition in Kant's language in "Thinking" LM 57.

17 Rousseau could be considered a conscious pariah. However, the critical factor to consider here is that the narrative structure of the self-reflective thinker's thoughts must refer back to the world of human affairs in some capacity.

18 Unlike Rahel, Arendt became a political actor and human rights advocate during and after World War II. The war changed the intellectual into more of a political actor. Among her activities, Arendt in Germany collected and compiled information documenting anti-Semitic behaviour of the Third Reich. She was imprisoned for this and threatened with death. Later in France, she aided refugee Jewish children immigrate to Palestine, and was sent to an internment camp for these actions after the Nazis took over. Although Arendt escaped, during a period of three days of unrest in the camp, fortunate enough to have friends to whose places she could go and fortunate enough to realize the urgency of her situation, most of the interned women in the camp were sent to Auschwitz. In the U.S., Arendt was among several others in calling for a Jewish army, organized around the common bond of European nationality, to fight Hitler. She and Joseph Maier formed the group *Die jungjüdische Gruppe* (The Young Jewish Group) to appeal to the Jewish émigrés in the U.S. to aid in the formation of this army. (See Young-Bruehl's *For the Love of the World* 177).

Jew and a pariah. Only because she clung to both conditions did she find a place in the history of European humanity" (RV 227).

Section 2: Kafka's Pariah -- The Inevitability of Isolation

The character "K" in the novel *The Castle* by Franz Kafka (see Arendt's "The Pariah as Rebel" in JP 82) is the frustrated outcast, who is able to cast a critical eye on his situation. All K.'s attempts to become an accepted member of and, more importantly, participant within society -- this being a small village historically outside time and place -- are met with failure.

Arendt writes that K., whom she refers to as the "hero" of this story,

> is a stranger who can never be brought into line because he belongs neither to the common people nor to its rulers . . . He is charged continually with being superfluous "unwanted and in everyone's way," with having, as a stranger, to depend on other people's bounty and with being tolerated only by reason of a mysterious act of grace (JP 84).

K. seeks complete assimilation. His attempts to meet the elusive proprietor of the castle (or in a theological sense, the lord) of the villagers, and his desire to gain acceptance from, or entry into this entirely closed community are steeped in the absurd. In this fantastical world -- characteristic of many of Kafka's narratives, spatially and uniformly closed and verging on the pathologically claustrophobic --, the character K.'s predicament, appears, from the opening of the narrative, utterly hopeless.[19] As Kafka's narrative progresses, K.'s veiled attempts to encounter the essential force behind the villagers' tight-lipped faith, to reach a particular kind of enlightenment is revealed as a destined course of irresolution. K. is incapable of meeting the castle's proprietor, due to the elaborately concealed order of existence within the castle walls and within the village, which symbolizes the concealed relation of the castle to the village. The castle is architecturally labyrinthian and, figuratively this corresponds with the villager's circuitous rhetorical questioning in their responses, which are rebarbative replies to K.'s questions. Furthermore, Kafka's main character cannot discern the rules of the villagers' game of conduct and language. The friend and landlady of his lover Frieda, for instance, proclaims to K.: "You misconstrue everything, even a person's silence. You can't do anything else" (C

[19] One actually wishes, contrary to the resolve of the narrative, that K. would redirect his efforts towards some form of escape from the village.

105).[20]

Kafka's narrative voice constructs an atmosphere of inevitability, the inevitability of the futility of action.[21] Despite K.'s ability to retain a certain individuality in a sea of followers, he nevertheless follows the only semblance of meaning which he can: he is a pariah and will always be. In this, he has perhaps reached an answer, but it is not conclusive and is rather elusive. K.'s experience is the quintessential experience of the pariah.

In short, there appears in Kafka's narrative, both literally, in relation to the architectural design of the village, and figuratively, in regards to the narrative design, no space granted for K. to act. In essence, there is no space - hence the claustrophobic intensity of the narrative. As well, any resistance by any of the characters emerges as more passive than active.

Despite everything, K., I would argue, retains his dignity, maintaining his struggle and his ability to reason.[22] This is so perhaps because his cause is ultimately nobler than its trophy. He has made the decision and taken action to locate the source of power. He searches for the underlying reason, in literal terms, for the root of the elaborate bureaucratic defense set up by the villagers and those within the castle. In other terms, K. decides to find the source of *his own* meaning and of *his own* expression. In his exchanges with the villagers, K. ignores ridicule and scorn and continues his attempts to define the indefinite, to break through, to play the game which he has been called to play, but with integrity. In this, he reaches a sort of victory.

In one example of K.'s exchanges throughout the novel, he is "given [yet another] new explanation of [the] meaning" of the night interrogations which he had "been summoned to attend" (C 366-67). While K.'s attempts to provide

20 It is interesting to note that many of the passages deleted by Kafka provide greater detail to the characters' emotions. They provide more details to K's inner turmoil, for instance, and offer more circumspection to the conversations between K and the villagers. For example, Kafka discarded several passages from the exchange between K. and Frieda's landlady, which offer more depth to his character: "K. was not afraid of the landlady's threats. The hopes with which she was trying to ensnare him meant little to him, but the protocol was now beginning to be alluring to him, after all. Yet the protocol was not without significance; not in the sense in which she meant it, but in a general sense, the landlady was right in saying that K. must not give up anything" (deleted from 51; see 443).

21 K. continues to pursue his quest for reason in the nonsensical. Toward the end of the narrative, he sees that he has failed in his search for the Frieda with whom he had fallen in love during his period of introduction to the village. Yet he continues as an intrepid warrior, to search for some explanation of his predicament.

22 K.'s discovery of Frieda (she is a barmaid who informs him, in so many ways, that she needs him), his romantic interlude with her, and, then, his loss of her love all serve the subordinate theme to the greater one of failure to win acceptance. Other themes of the book are misjudging the structure of one's world and the motivations or true desires of the people one meets. K., however, gains strength through his solitary refusal to absent himself from the narrative, to bow before the irrational "order of things," as proposed, internally, by the characters of this story, and externally, by the narrative design. In this, K. becomes the subject in the subject-object relationship, while the other characters simply remain personae of two-dimensional proportions.

meaning and motivation to action are therefore again frustrated, he persists. This persistence, coupled with his ability to, despite the suffocating spatial enclosure, keep a distance (as "[h]e almost enjoyed the feeling of being in the midst of this bustle, looked this way and that, following -- even though at an appropriate distance -- the servants, who, admittedly, had already more than once turned toward him with a severe glance . . . ." (C 357)), allows Kafka's character a peculiar combination. He experiences isolation, the fate of the pariah, and comforting solitude, the hope of the artist and thinker who has, in her own solitude absented of others, managed to insert her self into the world.

PART VI:
ISOLATION AND SOLITUDE:
THE CRITICAL PARIAH

Section 1: Outside the Diameters of A Public Space-- Finding a Home

Isolation and solitude may, then, converge in the figure of the pariah. One reason that Arendt, herself a pariah, dreaded in any fashion the enterprising mentality of the parvenu was precisely due to the parvenu's inability to step back, to critically analyze, or 'take stock' of her pariahdom.[23] While Disraeli was perhaps in a position to do this, he chose not to. Rahel, a *femme de lettres,* perhaps did not have a similar degree of freedom in regards to her circumstances, being not only a Jew but as well a woman at the turn of the eighteenth century. Certain Prussian Jews who were well established parvenus (financially) in their societies were politically disenfranchised and not in any position, therefore, to change the political structure of power from within. While Arendt concerned herself with the idea that Jewish citizens found it virtually impossible to gain access to politics, she devoted considerable attention to their profound desire to be part of a society. Often, they would not question their positions. These people were, however, politically superfluous. They were financial benefactors of

23 Interesting in this regard is Arendt's suggestion that a certain brand of feminism makes women into parvenus, that is, accepts them not on their own terms, but as men, into a society of men. See for instance Young-Bruehl's *For the Love of the World* (96). Arendt made the following criticism of the women's movement in a review of Alice Rühle-Gerstel's *Das Frauenproblem der Gegenwart* ("The Contemporary Woman's Problem"), published in *Die Gesellschaft* 10 (1932): "'Not only must women accept, despite their legal equality, less pay than men in comparable positions, but they are still left with tasks which are no longer compatible with their new positions. These tasks are based partly on social, partly on biological facts: In addition to her profession, a woman must take care of a household and look after her children. Thus a woman's freedom to make her own living seems to imply either enslavement in the family or dissolution of the family.'" (FLW 95-6). See as well FLW (238), where Young-Bruehl point out that Arendt's maxim for women, in the context of a debate for their equality and freedom, was,"*Viva la petite différence!*"

political regimes, as they were financially desirable. The European Jews' isolation from the heart of politics, from the centre of the decision-making process, of course placed them in a dangerous, precarious position where at any moment they could be viewed as superfluous in society.

The struggle of the pariah as artist calls to mind the citation at the beginning of Arendt's "Preface" to the series of essays composing *Between Past and Future* (entitled "The Gap Between Past and Future"), from the French Revolutionary writer René Char: " *'Notre héritage n'est précédé d'aucun testament:"* our inheritance is proceeded by no testament, no testimony or element which is remembered" (BPF 3). The pariah's isolation may assure an erasure of all familiarity, of essentially his or her home in the world. The pariah as artist, however, as Arendt wrote of Char and the actors in France after the French Revolution, may painstakingly pave the path anew (see "Preface" BPF).

The task of remembering which befalls revolutionaries and critical or conscious pariahs is beset by the difficulty of existing either within a public realm, vacant of the essential elements of *inheritance,* positioned in-between no-longer-existent and not-yet-existent, or, as is the case with the politically isolated, with no public realm at all. For the person who has no public voice, there is no place to integrate the ideas acquired in solitude with the ideas and actions of others. There is no history, as there is no present (no public realm) and therefore no foreseeable future of reclamation.

In this sense, it is not enough for the conscious pariah or the revolutionary *homme de lettres* to simply find a voice, to cultivate expression from her or his experiences. There must be some entrance to the public realm. The pariah attempts to locate this entrance. The definitions of its form would vary, depending upon the time and circumstances.

In either a solitude which matures to integrate other spaces of solitude, or within an *in grata* public space, the critical thinker and pariah may create meaning from the otherwise intelligible. She can extend this meaning as a legible marker of her life, an imprint of her identity on to the world, on to the past and future.

Chapter IV
THE PAST AND THE FUTURE: ONE'S HERITAGE AND THE IN-BETWEEN

Mein Flügel ist zum Schwung bereit,
ich kehrte gern zurük,
denn blieh ich auch lebendige Zeit,
ich hätte wenig Glück.

Gerhard Scholem, "Gruss vom Angelus" from
Walter Benjamin "Theses on the Philosophy of
History," *Illuminations*

Time past and time present
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation . . . .
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

T.S. Eliot "Burnt Norton" *Four Quartets*

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us naught but grief and pain,
For promised joy.
Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear;
An' forward, though I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

"To a Mouse" by Robert Burns (1785)[1]

"Was du erbst von deinen Vätern, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen."-

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe[2]

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1 Robert Burns, *The Poetical Works of Robert Burns*. London: Oxford University Press, 1919.

2 What you inherit from your fathers, acquire it so that you may own it.

PART I
A CRITICAL PRECIPICE BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE

Section 1: The Temporality of Being, In the World and Within the Imagination

Throughout the essays of *Between Past and Future,* Arendt expresses the contention of her contemporary Walter Benjamin, that the elemental condition of our existence is inscribed by our temporal cognizance. This awareness is present in our actions and in our thoughts. Benjamin, in "Thesis on the Philosophy of History," quotes Herman Lotze:

> One of the most remarkable characteristics of human nature . . . is, alongside so much selfishness in specific instances, the freedom from envy which the present displays toward the future ("Theses" II, Ill 253).

Benjamin adds that our reflections reveal that "our image of happiness is thoroughly colored by the time to which the course of our existence has assigned us" ("Theses" II Ill 253-4).

Later in this essay, Benjamin converts Paul Klee's painting "Angelus Novus" into a metaphor for the "angel of history" ("Theses" IX, Ill 257). The angel, whose "eyes are staring," whose "mouth is open," and whose "wings are spread," is facing backwards. At the same moment, a storm is propelling the angel "irresistibly . . . into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward." This violent storm, Benjamin claims, is what "we call progress" ("Theses" IX Ill 258).[3]

While we may be conscious to a certain extent of time when we are thinking, it is only in the world of our thoughts that we may imagine a presence preceding birth and succeeding death. Arendt attempts to answer one of the first questions of "Thinking," that is,*"What makes us think,"* by addressing Plato's sentiments in the *Timaeus* (90c). Looking at Plato, she writes, "Part of the Greek answer lies in the conviction of all Greek thinkers that philosophy enables mortal men to dwell in the neighborhood of immortal things and thus acquire or nourish in themselves 'immortality in the fullest measure that human nature admits'" ("Thinking" LM 129).

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[3] See Arendt's introduction to this collection in *Illuminations* 12-13. She inserts the *flâneur* into the Klee image, discussing the changing face of the "purposeless [stroller]" ("Intro" Ill 13), who is caught by history, by tradition, who does not "dialectically move forward in the future . . . ," but is rather propelled by events which, in all their appearances, are external to this individual's ability to act upon them ("Intro" Ill 12).

We are corporeally bound to the world, while the products of thinking exist outside such boundaries. In Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's understanding, "[t]he past and future 'exist' only in the images given by thinking" (MBP 26). We may well ask, "What sort of images link thinking to past and future; what images reveal the world to us?" "How may human beings reconcile their present corporal experience to something that cannot be so strictly bound by images?"

Similarly, we might ask, "What sort of thinking, as thinking's nature is the a-temporal and a-spatial, would permit the intangible to become tenable?" The expression of experience, according to Young-Bruehl's phrasing, would paradoxically have to be free of particulars (particulars being Arendt's term for actualities), of which experience is formed, and identity as it informs our actual state of being, and history, or historical concepts -- i.e., images provided by concepts.

The past, not narratives of history necessarily, but any past experience, including the impressions elicited by the senses but unqualified with words, is conceptualized through expression. However, expression, similar to action involves spontaneity and flexibility. How do we simultaneously release ourselves from preconceptions, or habits, or traditions which have formed our consciousness and reside in a space within these ways of seeing in order to name them?

Nietzsche renders this question in an entirely different way in *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben,* in a metaphoric discussion on tradition and being present in the moment which calls for one's attendance. Here, there is no room for reconsiderations of the past, or one's own identity. The tree *(Baum)* may be aware of its roots, content, happy to know "[itself not to be wholly arbitrary and accidental, but . . . . as growing out of a past as its heir" (*On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life,* § 3 p. 20).[4] It may have what Nietzsche designates as his culture's reference to "the proper historical sense," but the tree's greatest difficulty would be to divorce itself from the subjectivity of its own rooted sensation and develop a notion of the forest's other trees. Nietzsche writes:

. . . das Wohlgefühl des Baumes an seinen Wurzeln, das Glück sich nicht

[4] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life.* trans. Peter Preuss. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1980.

> ganz willkürlich und zufällig zu wissen, sondern aus einer Vergangenheit als Erbe, Blüthe und Frucht herauszuwachsen und dadurch in seiner Existenz entschuldigt, ja gerechtfertigt zu werden -- dies iest es, was man jetzt mit Vorliebe als den eigentlich historischen Sinn bezeichnet. . . . dass die Vergangenheit selbst leidet, so lange die Historie dem Leben dient und von Lebenstrieben beherrscht wird . . . . Der Baum fühlt seine Wurzeln mehr als dass er sie sehen könnte: dies Gefühl aber misst ihre Grösse nach der Grösse und Kraft seiner sichtbaren Aeste. Mag der Baum schon darin irren: wie wird er erst über den ganzen Wald um sich herum im Irrthum sein! von dem er nur soweit etwas weiss und fühlt als dieser ihn selbst hemmt oder selbst fördert -- aber nichts ausserdem (*Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben*, § 3 267).[5]

While Nietzsche appeals to metaphor in the paradoxical attempt to make the abstract more concrete, my question is, how might the symbolic represent the contradictions implicit in personal historical sensibility. One desires roots in some cases, in others one cannot escape them; but how do we then reconcile this with the actual, the present "forest?" How do we in the Arendtian sense recognize others, through respect rather than empathy?

In turning my attention to this question and the particular combination of the themes of expression, political versus empathetic identification and the quality of memory in our present actions, I wish to first address metaphor as a tool of expression. Metaphor cannot completely fill in the gap between consciousness and articulation. In his essay "Some Reflections on Kafka," Walter Benjamin writes that Kafka "listened to tradition." The problem, Benjamin avers, is that ". . . he who listens hard does not see." Furthermore, the main reason why ". . . listening demands such effort is that only the most indistinct sounds reach the listener. There is no doctrine that one could absorb, no knowledge that one could preserve. The things that want to be caught as they rush by are not meant for anyone's ears" ("Kafka" Ill 143).

Benjamin argues that there is a certain "[haggadic] consistency of truth [which] has been lost" ("Kafka" Ill 143).[6] To Benjamin, then, truth is consistency which has been given voice through haggadic narrative, or interpretation. Such consistency is jeopardized, I would argue by tradition which is violable when it remains unquestioned or unexamined and hence not entirely understood. The

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5 "... the tree feels its roots more than it can see them; this feeling, however, measures their size by the size and strength of its visible branches. The tree may already be in error here: but how much greater will its error be about the whole forest which surrounds it! of which it only knows and feels anything so far as it is hindered or helped by it - but nothing beyond that" (*On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History* for Life § 3, p. 20).

6 An argument which emerges in Benjamin's discussion is that truth, itself, or what I would refer to as the apparent, is not, in any case, meant to be grasped by any one of our five senses.

context of Benjamin's argument here is the following: "Kafka's work presents a sickness of tradition. Wisdom has sometimes been defined as the epic side of truth. Such a definition stamps wisdom as inherent in tradition; it is truth in its haggadic consistency" ("Kafka" Ill 143).

Kafka, Benjamin believed, did something entirely authentic: "he sacrificed truth for the sake of clinging to its transmissibility, its haggadic element" (Ill 144). Kafka illustrated the *transmutability* of understanding. Whether we choose to call such understanding "wisdom" or not, Benjamin is alluding to the very difficult question of tradition's worth, its value next to the need for change. In other words, Benjamin is finding in Kafka the question of the coexistence of adaptation, in relation to the ever-changing, and retention, in relation to models which provide some ritual of connecting to the past.

As I analyse expression and metaphor and their service to past and future, I ask the following: "How may we, through critical thinking, create a connection between the mind's abstract image-bound world and the viscerally-experienced world of appearances?"

In the rest of this chapter, I examine the question above in relation to past and future and look at memory as both a tool to obtain perspective and as an obstruction, compromising future action.

PART II:
INHERITANCE: ACQUIRING HISTORY IN THE ABSENCE IN REMEMBERING

Section 1: Exercising Judgment After An Annihilated Past

In her preface to *Between Past and Future* (1), Arendt discusses the breach between the past and present, starting with the testimony of one 18th Century French Revolutionary, René Char, who stated, *Notre héritage n'est précédé d'aucun testament"* ("Preface" BPF 1). After the revolution, inheritance for the *frères de la revolution* appeared elusive. The old structures had been obliterated, at least from the perspective of those attempting to forge a constitution. Although the old political architecture may very well have been archaic, systemically inefficient, or even oppressive, for a time, no public realm, or area for debate had yet taken its place.

Arendt prefaces her work in the essays in *Between Past and Future* by

questioning the validation of particular ideas through actions. Plans which in theory may be coherent prove unwieldy when confronted with the haphazardness of deeds, or acts, and speech. Haphazardness is reflected in the pool between remembering and the existence of the past and the *modus operandi* of creating something authentic.

Goethe's remark that one should acquire one's past in order to own it suggests that a legacy cannot be inherited unless it is clearly delineated. In turn, what comes before cannot be clearly understood unless we emerge from the struggle in one piece, having created a foundation to relieve the fragmentation. In *History for Life*, Nietzsche writes:

> Occasionally . . . the same life which needs forgetfulness demands the temporary destruction of this forgetfulness; then it is to become clear how unjust is the existence of some thing . . . how much this thing deserves destruction. Then its past is considered critically, then one puts the knife to its roots . . .[and] . . . cruelly treads all pieties under foot. It is always a dangerous process, namely dangerous for life itself: and men or ages which serve life in this manner of judging and annihilating a past are always dangerous and endangered men and ages. For since we happen to be the results of their aberrations, passions and errors, even crimes; it is not possible quite to free oneself from this chain (HL §3 22).

In the dialectic between Char's and Nietzsche's statements, I see the argument that past experiences are always at risk of dilution, or worse, dissolution. If our memories remain beholden to experiences which are too painful or to which we foresee no immediate resolution, then the choice will be the narrative which best resolves the psyche's conflict. Such a narrative occurs after a burial, not a complete denial or forgetting but an entombing of the past in order to focus on present circumstances and on the future.

It is therefore tricky to see, or even reinvent the past so that we may inherit or own it, to include some historic elements while renouncing others. As action itself occurs during the moment of forgetting -- action being a-temporal and boundless -- a temporary destruction, or forgetfulness of some sort occurs, so that action is not hindered.

The narrative which emerges from action does rely on particular traditions and on some elements of the past. The purpose of this narrative is to propose a place for public action; and we may see this in Arendt's argument for

a constitution and a human artifice. *Artificial* is etymologically related to *artful, assemblage,* as well as to *imitation,* or in the Latin, *artifici(um),* skilled workmanship. The human artifice is part of public space; and, although Arendt speaks of only *homo faber* in relation to artifice, and not explicitly of the political actor's role, I would include political institutions as part of this human artifice. Within the *polis,* accumulated knowledge may be be assimilated, but in a somewhat arbitrary manner, as action occurs within a space of spontaneity, freed from particular constructs. In sum, however, we cannot entirely absolve ourselves from the deeds of the past, from, significantly, the failures which have occurred in the attempt to create a realm for deed and word.

Section 2: Kafka's Parable

Arendt recounts a parable by Kafka, where a man, meeting with the forces of the past and future -- the past at his literal back, the future in front -- must wage battle with both forces if "he wants to stand his ground at all" (BPF 10). What is most significant to the content of Arendt's thesis is that the reason "there is a fight at all seems due exclusively to the presence of the man, without whom the forces of the past and of the future . . . would have neutralized or destroyed each other long ago" ("Preface" BPF 10). Arendt writes:

> In the words of Faulkner, "the past is never dead, it is not even past." This past, moreover, reaching all the way back into the origin, does not pull back but presses forward, and it is, contrary to what one would expect, the future which drives us back into the past. Seen from the viewpoint of man, who always lives in the interval between past and future, time is not a continuum, a flow of uninterrupted succession; it is broken in the middle, at the point where "he" stands; and [this] standpoint is not the present as we usually understand it but rather a gap in time which "his" constant fighting, "his" making a stand against past and future, keeps in existence. Only because man is inserted into time and only to the extent that he stands his ground does the flow of indifferent time break up into tenses; it is this insertion . . . which splits up the time continuum into forces which then, because they are focused on the particle or body that gives them their direction, begin fighting with each other and acting upon man in the way Kafka describes ("Preface" BPF 10-11).

The dilemma which the (anti-)hero of Kafka's parable faces is that he must somehow reconcile himself to the past, in the centuries'-old problematic relationship between subject and memory, and to the uncertain future. His

struggle mirrors the undertaking of each generation, first to reconcile past and future and, secondly, to locate a symbolic definition of the broad struggle and yet not allow such a definition to take over perspective.

What does the discovery or recovery of heritage mean? Critical thinking, which can otherwise be defined as reflection (*reflectere*, meaning to bend back), in giving meaning to the otherwise untenable, may offer a tenable bridge between events witnessed and our emotional reaction to them. In doing so, such reflection may provide lucidity, releasing the subject from her paralysis due to the improbability of succinctly ordering the pieces, past and present and future. In short, this reflection allows us to seek out a space, or compromise a space in which we may best locate our selves in present circumstances so as to imagine our role in the future.

The risks are great if thinking is omitted at the point where the battle between the forces of past and future occurs. Arendt's concern is reflected in both Kafka's parable and in Char's statement. Again, there is metaphor: here, the metaphor of being wedged permanently, without reflection, between the holding-back, or regression, and the unpredictable nature of progression.

It is important to consider that at the end of "Thinking" (LM), where Arendt returns to Kafka's parable, she is speaking about a past and future which "have nothing to do with historical or biographical time, the self's domains," as in the "time sequence of ordinary life" (*Mind and the Body Politic* 29). The past and future of Kafka's parable, represent, according to Arendt "our 'inner state' in regards to time, of which we are aware when we have withdrawn from the appearances and find our mental activities recoiling characteristically upon themselves" ("Thinking" LM 202).

I would refer to the 'inner state' as the present being of the imagination, located somewhere between past and future. This loci of the imagination serves to balance the thinking ego between time preceding and time following.

Section 3: Entering The Parable; Etching History on to Time Passing

As readers and as critical thinkers, rather than assuming we may rely on past generations and on historians to represent our own struggles, as depicted within Kafka's parable, we are asked by Arendt to enter the parable ourselves. In obtaining such a perspective through critical thinking, we may avoid neglecting the unavoidable "gap" between past and future. Arendt

reflects:

> The gap, I suspect, is not a modern phenomenon, it is perhaps not even a historical datum but is coeval with . . . [existence] . . . It may well be . . . the path paved by thinking, this small track of non-time which the activity of thought beats within the time-space of mortal men and into which the trains of thought, of remembrance and anticipation, save whatever they touch from the ruin of historical and biographical time. This small non-time-space in the very heart of time, unlike the world and the culture into which we are born, can only be indicated, but cannot be inherited and handed down from the past; each new generation, indeed every new human being as he inserts himself between an infinite past and an infinite future, must discover and ploddingly pave it anew ("Preface" BPF 13)[7]

As she attempts to uncover the link between thinking and reality -- that is between thinking which exists within a realm in which the imagination exercises some degree of control and defines the boundaries of freedom and the world of contingency and human experience -- Arendt is as well revealing a method of facilitating thinking's passage over the hurdle of avoiding and yet thinking within temporal boundaries. Arendt is successful, I believe, in *Between Past and Future*, in raising thinking out of the realm where it may only relate to itself. She asks why there is no "spatial dimension" to Kafka's parable, "where thinking could exert itself without being forced to jump out of human time altogether" ("Preface" *BPF* 11).

While we may be losing (but not irretrievably) our esteem of the capacity to think in a discerning manner, as importantly, society as Arendt knew it places such deliberation solely in the hands of the few who are seen as powerful and articulate. Thinking is not perceived as a quality of the masses. We forfeit the responsibility of publicly expressing our own critical attempt to derive meaning to the so-called thinkers or philosophers of our society.

The "experience in thinking," to which Arendt eludes in her discourse on thinking in *Between Past and Future* ("Preface" BPF 14), must be distinguished from that manner of thinking which proceeds toward some conclusive text. The *ipso facto* manner of the latter sort of thinking is a form of deduction, where the hypothesis is given, or induction, whose ontological

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[7] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, studying Arendt's inclusion of Kafka's parable at the end of "Thinking," (in "Reading Hannah Arendt's *Life of the Mind*" in *Mind and the Body Politics* 29), comments: "Arendt presents a 'thinking ego' that moves between a past and future that have nothing to do with historical or biographical time, the self's domains. Her metaphor of past and future flowing toward each other, colliding, is a 'time construct . . . totally different from the time sequence of ordinary life'."

structure allows for the conclusion to veer from the given in some manner, but nevertheless within the consensus of an eventual conclusion. In carefully considering Arendt's analysis, we ought to value thinking as a struggle, whose fortitude exists in the acceptance that there may be no absolute, no resolution. There may be only the "melancholy haphazardness" of daily living (Arendt quoting Kant; "Truth and Politics" *BPF* 242). The six essays of *Between Past and Future*, Arendt professes, are "exercises" whose purpose is to allow for the experience of thinking (*"how* to think" ["Preface" BPF 14]).

The kind of thinking which refers its subject to the world, even while she may be completely isolated in solitude, allows for such an individual to make herself "the representative of everybody else" (*BPF* 242) in mind only. Such a method of reflection, which becomes self-reflection is precisely what we may offer the individual of Kafka's parable, so that he may stand his ground "between the clashing waves of past and future" ("Preface" BPF 14). Arendt claims:

> The trouble, however, is that we seem to be neither equipped nor prepared for this activity of thinking, of settling down in the gap between past and future. For very long times in our history, actually throughout the thousands of years that followed upon the foundation of Rome and were determined by Roman concepts, this gap was bridged over by what, since the Romans, we have called tradition. That this tradition has worn thinner and thinner as the modern age progressed is a secret to nobody. When the thread of tradition finally broke,the gap between past and future ceased to be a condition peculiar only to the activity of thought and restricted as an experience to those few who made thinking their primary business. It became a tangible reality and perplexity for all; that is, it became a fact of political relevance ("Preface" BPF 13-14).

PART III:
THE REMEMBERED TEXT

Section 1: Tradition and Critical Thinking, The Individual's Role

Tradition is important for Arendt. She professes:

> Without testament or, to resolve the metaphor, without tradition -- which selects and names, which hands down and preserves, which indicates where the treasures are and what their worth is -- there

> seems to be no willed continuity in time and hence, humanly speaking, neither past nor future, only sempiternal change of the world and the biological cycle of living creatures in it ("Preface" *Between Past and Future* 5.)

We live, then, in a world which is necessarily shaped by the deeds and words of our ancestors; however, without the resolve to forward this knowledge, we are fated to a life defined solely by what Arendt in *The Human Condition* (discussing Marx's theories on labour in *Capital*) refers to as the circular biological life process.[8] Individual life, rising out of the biological, is "rectilinear," cutting through the circle in a linear fashion: from birth, to life, to death. Humans as one species among others appears in the biological circular process. It is individual life, however, which distinguishes human beings from other beings.[9] Arendt argues:

> The distinction between man and animal runs right through the human species itself: only the best *(aristoi)*, who constantly prove themselves to be the best *(aristeuein...)* and who "prefer immortal fame to mortal things," are really human; the others, content with whatever pleasures nature will yield them, live and die like animals [Heraclitus] (HC 19).

Actions, or deeds and speech (language) distinguish individuals; and the realm of human affairs allows for the interactions which help fashion the rectilinear narrative.[10]

Section 2: The Kantian Spectator as Narrator

I see the storyteller or Kantian spectator who ascribes meaning to action -- as the actor is "dependent on the opinion of the spectator," (*Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* 55) -- as an actor who exists beyond the event itself, and view

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8 See *The Human Condition*, Chapter III, "Labor" under "Labor and Life," Chapter 13 96-101. Arendt writes: "When Marx defined labor as 'man's metabolism with nature,' in whose process 'nature's material [is] adapted by a change of form to the wants of man,' so that 'labour has incorporated itself with its subject,' he indicated clearly that he was 'speaking physiologically' and that labor and consumption are but two stages of the ever-recurring cycle of biological life. This cycle needs to be sustained through consumption, and the activity which provides the means of consumption is laboring." (HC 99).

9 I find this notion questionable. Perhaps an interesting discussion in this context would begin with the query, "just how much more individuality may we attribute to human existence, over that within other species?" If we find that Arendt's distinction between human beings and other species is too neat, as one could argue that all members of every species seek a home (on earth), then could we not seek to evaluate the perhaps particular (and by no means particular to humans) permanence in the home, or place on earth, which human beings seek?

10 In *On Revolution*, Arendt illustrates how this mark of uniqueness, as an act of many rather than of one, may be forged in a constitution. Most significantly, I believe, Arendt indicates that founding a country profoundly reveals the desire to create the unique act, to begin something anew.

recounting, therefore, as a form of action.[11] Narration, similar to speech, may be close to action, as the act may have the form of speech. Through oral as well as written expression individuals "distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct" (HC 176). As Arendt views speech and action, historical narration is a "[mode] in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects [or in the case of a well-written or recounted narrative, as characters] but *qua* men" (HC 176).

While Arendt relates the spectator to the theoretician seeking truth in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* 55, Kant in *Critique of Judgment*, in the portion *"Restriction of the Validity of the Moral Proof of the Existence of God,"* and in *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 634-35 / B 662-63) discusses speculative theoretical cognition, which can only exist through analogy.[12] Theoretical cognition may be speculative if the subject of speculation cannot be reached through any experience. Arendt is therefore writing of the theoretician who participates in some manner in the action, even if it is spectator. Such a person may be able to relate to the experience only through analogy or through identification, rather than by experiencing. This person can therefore never reach Platonic truth, or in Kant's understanding, can never actually experience God except through analogy and symbolism. To reiterate from the first chapter of this thesis, however, what is important for Arendt is the pursuit of understanding. Such a mental exercise predicates truth as she speaks of it. The theoretician in such a paradigm, I believe, practices speculative theoretical cognition but in close relation to what Kant terms *"cognition of nature*, which concerns only those objects or predicates of objects which can be given in a possible experience" (*Critique of Judgment* § 88, footnote 51). In other words, the spectator, similar to the theoretician, uses both speculation and experience.

Arendt writes that *bios theoretikos*, theoretical reasoning on human existence originates from *theorein*, "to look at" (*Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* 55.)[13] In addition to combining speculation with the actual through

11 See Arendt's *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, especially pages 55-6.

12 See Kant's *Critique of Judgment* §88 "Restriction of the Validity," footnote 51.

13 See as well Arendt's "Willing" in *Life of the Mind* 195: "Just as thinking prepares the self for the role of spectator, willing fashions it into an "enduring I" that directs all particular acts of volition." For a discussion of the relation between *theoria*, theoretical truth, and sight, see"Thinking" LM 111-12. Arendt, quoting Hans Jonas, points out that "seeing necessarily 'introduces the beholder,' and for the beholder, in contrast to the auditor, the *'present* [is not] the point-experience of the passing *now,'* but is transformed into a *'dimension* within which things can be beheld . . . as a lasting of the same.'" It is the sense of sight, Arendt writes, which is present in some form in virtually every metaphor. She continues quoting Jonas, " 'Only sight therefore provides the sensual basis on which the mind may conceive the idea of the eternal, that which never changes and is always present'" ("Thinking" LM 112).

critical interpretation, the author or storyteller who looks at the past juggles the need for preservation with the equally important need to transcend (experience). Within the act of writing or telling, there is a constant tension between the imagination and the faculty of reason which includes imagination but is not solely constituted by it, and between the imagination's need for expression and the actual which is not entirely explicable. If the tension isn't resolved or the author/teller is ignorant or chooses to ignore the contradictions, the narration may be doctrinaire or merely rhetorical. The storyteller has failed to look at her audience.

Tradition may preserve some of the past, allowing for some consistency. In turn, consistency may provide permanence. I would argue that although tradition in some sense is metaphor as gesture and that consistency and permanence may be illusory, such an attachment to memory may prevent a fall into the irrevocable gap between past and future. Again, it is up to critical thinking to guard against the creation of a mere film over the gap, a protective covering that merely blots out individual experience by creating a standard which deflects this actual experience.

Testimonial allows us some access to the past and may provide context for our own experiences. Thinking and acting which occur within a vacuum, without the capacity for critical thinking, cannot present the conditions for *theroin*, truth, or the seeking of knowledge and reconciliation. The act of reconciling past, present and future, then, relies on tools which create context. Testimony and tradition may lead toward some context with which one may transcend inconsistency, but the critical capacity to think and to judge must be present. While I am attempting to avoid a simplistic hermeneutic closure to the questions which I posed earlier in this chapter, the tools which provide context to present events through analysis of past experiences help counter what René Char and his confrères confronted: a loss of testament, or witness.[14]

Without history, without a *proviso*, of some sort, for cultural memory --

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14 We, however, cannot be quick to assume that Arendt's understanding of tradition is the common understanding or that she wasn't critical of tradition. Testament and heritage, for instance, are, in René Char's and presumably Hannah Arendt's understanding, two entirely different things. The former is an expression and lends itself, I believe, to Arendt's notion of individual narrative whereas heritage is what cannot be changed, has to do with one's ancestry. The word *heir*, in fact, is akin to the Greek *cheros* which means bereaved. In "Tradition and the Modern Age" BPF, Arendt discusses history and tradition against the backdrop of the later 20th century's understanding of totalitarian's possibility: "The end of a tradition does not necessarily mean that traditional concepts have lost their power over the minds of men. On the contrary, it sometimes seems that this power of well-worn notions and categories becomes more tyrannical as the tradition loses its living force and as the memory of its beginning recedes; it may even reveal its full coercive force only after its end has come and men no longer even rebel against it" (BPF 26).

the enactment of traditions, gestures, icons or artifacts representing cultural interpretation, written texts, and even, in some form, constitutions -- the future becomes a present without understanding or purpose. In the statement "*Notre héritage n'est précédé d'aucun testament*," René Char could as well be referring to the lack of historical models in post-revolutionary France. After, so to speak, the ashes had settled and the time come to build, the French Revolutionary leaders experienced the futility of their efforts to build a future public realm, as they found themselves leading a public life for which they could find precious little relevance in general and historical relevance, in particular. After the desecration of the old, those connected to the Revolution were hurled into the void of a particular sort of public realm whose design, despite all meanly efforts, appeared to engulf rather than satisfy the needs of the citizens of a new country. Rather than a manufactured space of solitude and reflection, there was only a public realm where "all relevant business in the affairs of the country was transacted in deed and word" ("Preface" BPF 3).

Whether many historians would agree with Arendt's portrayal of post-Revolutionary France, she appears to adhere to the notion that there existed a profound lack of critical assessment of, or reflection, on things, on the world of affairs. She is speaking of a 'taking-stock' of the past. The revolutionary fighters were catapulted into an existence with severely limited resources and with little collective strength for action.

When those elements which bind people together are fractured, people are left with the remnants of a culture which have no inherent meaning. Instead of testimonial, these scattered pieces are all that remain to define heritage. For Arendt, the activities of public life -- work, through which we may find continuity, engaging in the human artifice, and action, which sets an individual's efforts apart from the course of daily human activity -- ensure that *notre héritage* is not on one end, passed down to us weightless, on the other, given to us *instead of* rather than *alongside* the allowance for critical thinking. In other words remembrance lies within narrative, narrative in turn supplies context and context in turn gives us a means of reflecting about our present situation. Context as well grants perspective which we need to make choices for the future.

PART IV:
THE CRITICAL ACT OF REMEMBERING

Section 1: The Conflict of Remembering

Arendt's observations on the situation facing refugees during and after World War II, recorded in "We Refugees," contain an ominous ring. She writes that there was a "dangerous readiness for death" among the community of Jewish *émigrés* to the U.S. (*The Jew as Pariah* 57). The charge of the defeated is partly due to the burden of compromising tradition -- having to dispel one's memories -- in order to relieve the pain of remembering. The question, then, underlying this implicit conflict could be phrased in the following manner: "when we feel intuitively that we are confronting or when we rationally decide to confront certain terrifying events, how may we recover those fragments without causing great injury along the way?"

Even the critical sense and expression of this awareness by the conscious pariah may not be sufficient for this sort of recovery. However, the optimistic approach to recovering a traumatic past is to position anger in place of despair and accompany this with critical thinking. Despite the attempt to mount the insurmountable, critical thinking offers dimension to introspection. Towards the end of Arendt's biography of Rahel, she presents Rahel's and consequently her own position on suicide. Arendt writes, in *Rahel*:

> How easily age can mislead one in seeking a place for oneself on another planet, since, after all, "every heart desires a home." How easily weariness can deceive and represent the monotonous similarity of events as inexorability, always the same for two thousand years: "Our history is nothing but the case history of our illness." How strong the longing for death must have become, how consoling the thought that everything would end sooner or later: "Just imagine, we *here* were told by the domestics that two Jews had poisoned the wells *here* . . . I want peace at last, I tell you," she wrote to her brother at the time of the great Berlin cholera epidemic of 1831. How hard it must have been, having no children and not being part of any continuing line, to realize that such disgust and such hopes for death were false, that death was never any kind of solution for human beings (*Rahel* 226).

Section 2: The Thinker as Critical Spectator, Judge and Narrator

The actor makes her appearance in the real world of birth and death, even while she acts for and within the moment. Similarly it is the task the critical

thinker (who, as I argued before could be any one of of us) whose struggle has generated a fortitude of will and yet flexibility of judgment to provide context to fragments. Action does not presuppose responses to itself, neither in the form of judgment, nor in the form of the stories told. The understanding that action is finite to the extent that human life is lived within a beginning and an end is reflected in judgment. Critical judgment aids our account of our short existence on this planet, existence constituted by birth and death.

If thinking can occur within the knowledge of finitude, thinking existing alongside the temporal apprehension of past, present future, I would argue, becomes judging. The critical precipice of thinking may be obtained through the integration of all that is remembered with elements of the present. To provide somewhat simplistic analogies, the temporal critical centre is to thinking what the *polis* is to political action, the forum to association, and the theatre, or *theatron* --seeing place -- is to drama, theatrical representation. The thinker, or, more appropriately within the context of Arendt's understanding, thinkers, could be intermittently actors, spectators, and scribes who, through metaphoric language (i.e., speech, gestures) engage the spectators of history and the subjects of the present in particular conflicts which may be resolved by effective decision-making about the future.

PART V:
THINKING, JUDGMENT, AND FILLING IN THE GAPS

Section 1: The Thinking Ego Traverses A-Temporal Boundaries

Arendt contrasts the awareness of temporality with the a-temporal context of the thinking subject:

> The inner time sensation arises when we are not entirely absorbed by the absent non-visibles we are thinking about but begin to direct our attention onto the activity itself. ("Thinking"LM 202-3)

It is when we, while thinking, direct our attention 'outwards' toward the world of appearances, where our thoughts are allowed entry into the world, that we as well give voice to time, to the contradictions arising from the paradox of intellectual expanse on the map of corporal finitude. We may not be entirely conscious of finitude while immersed in thinking; however, we may be

aware of it. The relational thinking which involves relating the self to the world becomes judgment as one approaches the finite world. The elements of experience are tied to the body's place in the world. It is, in other words, through thinking about one's self in relation to the world that thinking may, I would argue, become or may engage the faculty of judging.

Arendt argues that through thinking we refer our intellect to the general, *general* being a term which she employs to qualify the abstract. Through judging, she proceeds, we refer this intellect to particulars, or to *objects* in the world of appearances. I believe these arguments about particulars and generals, or deduction as taking the abstract and providing the particular, serve as Arendt's blueprint to critical thinking. She is speaking of an involvement of the imagination and the critical capacity of the intellect, which *does* relate particulars to abstract notions. It is not that judging allows entry into this world, but that the individual provides this entrance through critical thinking, which, in turn, allows for judgment.

I would argue that it may only be through taking these steps that we may reconcile the a-temporality of thinking with biological temporality, and in an historical sense, with both past and future. We remain stationed in the solitude of the thinking act, in the inner struggle of Kafka's (anti-)hero if we do not enter the debate. If we sense any resolution at all in this stance, it is fictitious and elusive. Without actual experience or without a public realm in which to carry forth the dialogue within our imaginations, our thoughts lie outside human experience. Without disclosure, thinking becomes circuitous and ostensibly isolated from actuality and isolating for the thinker.

Section 2: Reflection As An Exercise in Contrasting

Critical thinking allows for a definition of self and existence in terms of contrast, rather than simply in terms of relation. The internal struggle gives way to a more general struggle addressing Arendt's notion of place, a home on earth. The idea of struggling over one's own place on earth and validating, submitting, or consciously choosing to omit certain historical events is, I believe, voiced in a quotation which Arendt attributes to Cato (in a discussion about history and "the enterprise of reclamation"): *'"Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni', . . .* The victorious cause pleased the gods. The defeated one pleases Cato.'" ("Thinking" LM 216).

I would say that defeat summons the challenge of remaking history. It may lead to a reevaluation of the past, as a previous recording of it is no longer sufficiently critical or representative. Thinking is met by opposition, or struggle. The voice of the victorious, as it produces a context for all proceeding images, emerges as the master narrative *(le grand récit)*, which Postmodern Critic Jean-François Lyotard in *La Condition Postmoderne* contends asserts its claim over any minor narrative *(le petit récit)*.[15] Both sorts of narrative, by virtue of their being conditioned ways of seeing the world, hinge on a particular finality, on an *a priori* consensus of the senses' interpretation of the appearances of the world. Lyotard writes:

> . . . Le principe du consensus comme critère de validation paraît lui . . . insuffisant . . . Il faut distinguer ce qui est proprement paralogie de ce qui est innovation: celle-ci est commandée ou en tout cas utilisée par le système pour améliorer son efficience; celle-là est un coup, d'importance souvent méconnue sur-le-champ, fait dans la pragmatique des savoirs . . . [En somme] consensus est un horizon, il n'est jamais acquis" (CP "La Legitimation par la paralogie" section 14 98-9).

Public space, according to Arendt's definition, is by its very nature paradoxical. Publicity, that is, anything which occurs within this space, occurs in accordance with a structure particular to some preexisting consensus but, as importantly, exists only by virtue of an approbatory opposition, or dissension. The public realm is constituted by a plurality of opinions.[16] Cato's phrasing of the defeated cause serves, I believe, in allegorical (*al*, or *allos*, from *ol*, meaning beyond; and *agoreuein*, to speak (in public), from *agora*, assembly) relation to dissension within debate -- either pertaining to the dissimilarity of ideas of the constituents before coming to the *polis* or to the nature of the debate itself (discordant, for instance). Defeat and an evaluation of it, rather than signifying futility and closure, summons the individual to a questioning, or refocusing, specifically on the nature of what is deemed truth and what is called historical accuracy. Defeat becomes an analytical tool in questioning the identity of the agent of power within the historical narrative.

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15 Lyotard, Jean-François. *La condition postmoderne: rapport sure le savoir*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979. Lyotard generally uses the plural terminology *"les grands récits"* and *"les petits récits."* He categorizes different types of narrative in this manner throughout his text.

16 c.f. Lisa Jane Disch writes: "Agonistic storytelling supersedes the master narrative of ultimate reconciliation, and consensus-building critique cedes to 'paralogy' (e.g. Lyotard): the continual provocation of dissent by argumentation whose purpose is to bring to light and provoke contestation over the implicit rules that constrain the production of new ideas and determine the boundaries of political communities" (*Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy* 9).

PART VI:
JUDGMENT WITH AN AWARENESS OF FINITUDE

Section 1: Seeking Dissension Through One's Associations

A study on agency and power, on the identity of the various constituents of the collective, could be prefaced with Cicero's contention: "I prefer before heaven to go astray with Plato rather than hold true views with his opponents [the Pythagoreans]" (Young-Bruehl MBP 44). This statement, I believe, reflects Arendt's belief that judgment in choosing one's company means finding people from whom one might attain insight, just as judgment in thinking is based on and provides insight. Since the beliefs of the individuals whose company one keeps are easily reflected in one's own beliefs and judgments, it was most important to Cicero to confront opposition and challenge to his perception of the world.

Young-Bruehl points out that "[b]eing able to choose your company by communicating your choices and wooing the consent of others is for Arendt a manifestation of *humanitas; humanitas* is, so to speak, the trait that underlies the enlarged mentality (MBP 44).[17] This would not occur through solipsistic argumentation but rather through the sort of discussion which follows conviction. It is with conviction that one attracts people to one's side, as it is with a certain amount of conviction that one 'sees' the objects of the world and forms an interpretation.

Arendt writes in "The Crisis in Culture" in *Between Past and Future:*

> . . . we may remember what the Romans -- the first people that took culture seriously the way we do -- thought a cultivated person ought to be: one who knows how to choose his company among men, among things, among thoughts, in the present as well as in the past (BPF 226).

While being in good company is significantly part of Arendt's perception of judging, having one's solitude is just as critical. Isolation may have created

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[17] Arendt had turned to Cicero earlier in her writings (in the essay entitled "The Crisis in Culture"): "In what concerns my association with men and things, I refuse to be coerced even by truth, even by beauty" (BPF 225).

the break or tear in the fabric of tradition; but it is the space provided by the solitude of reflection, alongside the space of public intercourse, which allows for the task of repair.

Hannah Arendt and her friend Karl Jaspers shared the "conviction that philosophy and politics concern all people" (MBP 2). This, Young-Bruehl writes, is:

> the key to understanding how [Arendt] drew a distinction between what concerns everyone and what is private [and] individual . . . [In her storytelling, Arendt] used the objective and objectified categories of times when the public and the private were distinct; she spoke of Fama and Fortuna; she spoke of *déformations professionelle* where others would not have feared to rush in with psychological analysis. When she spoke of the "banality of evil" rather than of Adolf Eichmann's perversity . . . she spoke as one who cared more for clarity and what concerns everyone than for vengeance. (MBP 3)

Arendt's understanding of judgment is inherently related to her discussion of past, present, and future and is given spatial significance in the chapter entitled "Where are We When We Think?" (within her essay "Thinking" in *Life of the Mind*). According to Arendt's understanding, we should not be judging through some moral standard paradigm. We should not regard judgment as moral justification, on the basis of what it *is* or *should be*. Instead, we should be looking at the faculty of judging in terms of what it *does*, taking into account the relationship of the judge to judgment, and of the thinker, as judge, to the world. Arendt writes that Jaspers' use of the term 'existence' (in the quotation *" becoming the Existenz we potentially are'"* (quoting from *Philosophy* [1932], trans. E. B. Ashton, 1970 vol. 2 178-79),

> . . . gets its suggestive plausibility less from specific experiences than from the simple fact that life itself, limited by birth and death, is a boundary affair in that my worldly existence always forces me to take account of a past when I was not yet and a future when I shall be no more ("Thinking" LM 192).

The ability to judge is the ability to transcend *in thinking* one's own life and one's own finitude, while yet remaining aware of such boundaries. Ultimately, ideally, one then is able to sense the world as others experience it. Critiquing Jasper's discussion on existence, Arendt reflects, "whenever I

transcend the limits of my own life span and begin to reflect on this past, judging it, and this future, forming projects of the will, thinking ceases to be a politically marginal activity" ("Thinking" LM 192).

Arendt is not speaking here of judgment in the narrative of morality, the sort of thinking which posits an immutable right and wrong, which she claims, "does society little good" ("Thinking" LM 192). Thinking as moral certitude does not accommodate the experiences of others and actually refrains from establishing values, since "it will not find out, once and for all, what 'the good' is; it does not confirm but, rather, dissolves accepted rules of conduct . . . [and actually] has no political relevance unless special emergencies arise" ("Thinking" LM 192).[18]

Arendt, I believe, was attempting to form a particular paradigm for her notion of judgment which would depart from previous moral conceptualizations. Many critics contend that in attempting to distinguish judgment without the use of any moral paradigm, Arendt was working herself into a proverbial corner. However, more to the point, I believe, Arendt, in her writings in general and in the essays and lectures in *Life of the Mind*, in particular, is searching for an element of judging which would fulfill her notion of thoughtfulness.[19] By its very nature, thoughtfulness, or critical thinking, which relies on the individual's independent comprehensive reflection on the world and her role within it, avoids moral determinants. It would, in its course toward worldliness, or towards an understanding of the world, rely, in the Arendtian sense, on *humanitas*, on the sort of communication which presumes the relevance of other individuals' ideas and types of expression.

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[18] The case for emergencies is interesting in regards to Richard Bernstein's argument in *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*, in which he concludes (and can only do so in keeping with his, in my opinion, brilliant although misled argument) that Arendt's judgment only serves us in emergencies, such as when totalitarianism becomes an actual threat. Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. See specifically page 174. See as well Bernstein, Richard. "Judging – The Actor and the Spectator." *Philosophical Profiles: Essays in a Pragmatic Mode* 238-31. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986.

[19] For instance, see Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 1992. As well, Bernstein extensively explores what he views as problematic in Arendt's conception of judgment as existing, essentially, outside moral boundaries.

Section 2: The Collective Power of Critical Thinking And Judging

Wishing to advance an argument which she believed was made by Jaspers, Arendt proposes that judgments -- the products of critical thinking -- may only come to fruition and affect the world and people's experiences if people are ready to leave, at least momentarily, their world, or let go of their interpretations. The world is constituted by habit, by what one has made familiar, as much as interpretation.[20] Arendt incorporates this argument in her notion of thinking within a political context. She writes, "Here the point is that whenever I transcend the limits of my own life span and begin to reflect on this past, judging it, and this future, forming projects of the will, thinking ceases to be a politically marginal activity" ("Thinking" LM 192).

Finally and simply, as Arendt succinctly points out in *On Revolution*, the seat of power of action lies in the ability of human beings to recognize their 'fellowship'. She writes of collective power, in opposition to strength:

> In distinction to strength, which is the gift and the possession of every man in his isolation against all other men, power comes into being only if and when men join themselves together for the purpose of action, and it will disappear when, for whatever reason, they disperse and desert one another. (OR 175)

It is through the interaction of thinking and acting, through a public recognition of the importance of guarding certain relics of the past, while allowing for the spontaneity and freedom of action, that the power of remembrance may be achieved.

In an examination of testament and heritage, it is important to consider that alongside each generation's will to remember, there may be an even greater will to forget. The power illustrated in Arendt's words above relates as well to power of remembrance, *restoring* or *reconstructing* memory. This power is always fragile, balanced precariously on the brink of the pain and hope in remembrance and on the brink of past and future. It may be lost not in ignorance, in never-having-been-known, but in having been discovered, or revealed, and subsequently (for whatever reason) forgotten. Interestingly, action itself has the potential to obliterate all that has come before, while it carries as significantly the potential to construct.

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20 Karl Jaspers apparently coined the term " 'boundary situations'," meaning "the general, unchanging human condition.," referring to the notion that life exists within only the small frame of birth and death.

The dilemma facing Kafka's (anti-)hero as storyteller (one who carries forth testimonial) in reconciling past and future is how to render significance of the old and how to critically engage the value of the old with the unfamiliar and new. A further question is how do we create a critical dialectic over elements of the past, present and future while maintaining political distance, as Arendt speaks of this distancing in terms of political discourse. How, using pride and the desire for change rather than the kind of empathy or pity which obstructs political action, do we create a home on earth? How could we look at what is inherited, a*théritage*, belonging by birth, without elevating or reducing its significance? These questions ride on Goethe's words, on acquiring our inheritance, to discover and refound it rather than merely accepting it as a standard given to us as a birthright.

CHAPTER V
THINKING BECOMING JUDGING

PART I:
THE RELATION OF THINKING AND JUDGING IN THE LIFE OF THE MIND

While thinking I am not where I actually am; I am surrounded not by sense-objects but by images that are invisible to everybody else. It is as though I had withdrawn into some never-never land, the land of invisibles, of which I would know nothing had I not this faculty of remembering and imagining. Thinking annihilates temporal as well as spatial distances. I can anticipate the future, think of it as though it were already present, and I can remember the past as though it had not disappeared.

Arendt "Thinking" *Life of the Mind*

Kien abhorred falsehood; from his earliest childhood he had held fast to the truth . . . . Knowledge and truth were for him identical terms. You draw closer to truth by shutting yourself off from mankind. Daily life was a superficial clatter of lies. Every passer-by was a liar. For that reason he never looked at them. Who among all these bad actors, who made up the mob, had a face to arrest his attention? They changed their faces with every moment; not for one single day did they stick to the same part. He had always known this, experience was superfluous.

Elias Canetti *Auto Da Fe*

Action is not like reading a book; you can do that alone, but when you act you act with others, and that means you leave aside all this theorizing and keep your eyes open.

Arendt, commenting on her students' political activities during the 1960's, recounted by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *For the Love of the World*

Section 1: The Vita Contemplativa in Objectus to the Vita Activa

The impetus behind Arendt's exploration of the *vita contemplativa* in "Thinking," "Willing," and "Judging," collected in *Life of the Mind*, was a desire to address one rather lengthy question, which, she claimed "imposed itself," that is:

> Could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happens to come to pass or to attract attention, regardless of results and specific content, could this activity be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even actually 'condition' them against it?

She continues, "The very word 'con-science,' at any rate, points in this direction insofar as it means 'to know with and by myself,' a kind of knowledge that is actualized in every thinking process" ("Thinking" LM 5).[1]

In the opening to the collection of essays in *Life of the Mind*, Arendt explains that her extensive investigation of the *vita activa* led her quite naturally to her work on the *vita contemplativa*, a return, in many ways, to her earlier studies on the nature of thinking.

In Marburg, under the direction of Martin Heidegger, Arendt, encouraged by his manner of philosophic expression and renowned lectures, explored the world of the *vita contemplativa*. Later, under the tutelage of Karl Jaspers, she wrote a dissertation entitled *Der Liebebesgriff bei Augustin*, "Saint Augustine's Concept of Love" (FLW 74-6).[2] When, many years later, after the war, Arendt followed a course of philosophical inquiry on the nature of action and the human condition (leading her to the arguments elaborated in *The Human Condition*), her early writings on St. Augustine's concepts of neighborly love and friendship proved indispensable. The conceptual relationship of the *vita contemplativa* to the *vita activa* lies, in Arendt's analysis, on the quality of neighborly love which may be interpreted as worldliness and would be publicly rendered through the exposure of one's thoughts to the realm of public interaction.

Arendt's historical and conceptual explorations of the *vita activa* hinge on her hypothesis that our common interest in our earthly existence with other human beings, our shared attachment to the world of human affairs underlies the condition of being human. One of her motivations, then, in returning to the

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[1] Ronald Beiner writes that Arendt originally entitled *The Human Condition* the *vita activa*, as she was reserving the other "half of the human condition," the *vita contemplativa* for later treatment" (Beiner "Interpretive Essay" *Hannah Arendt: Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* 128).

[2] See Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's *For the Love of the World*, Chapters 1 and 2.

subject of thinking, after working on the *vita activa*, appears to have been her belief that an inquiry into the innate philosophical desire to reveal what makes us human might be partially resolved by finding a coherent thread between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*. The theme of human engagement in the former would offer insight into the constitution of the latter.

Arendt introduces the essay "Thinking" with an admission that the title she chose for the lecture series, "Thinking," "Willing," "Judging," appeared, to her, pretentious, and that "to talk about Thinking [seemed] so presumptuous that [she felt she] should start less with an apology than with a justification" ("Thinking" LM 3). The questions which Arendt contemplates in these writings proceeded the sudden and shocking realization, especially after Adolf Eichmann's trial, that "[his] deeds were monstrous, but [that] the doer was quite ordinary, commonplace . . . neither demonic nor monstrous" ("Thinking" LM 4). Arendt brings into relief her own critique of our struggle over evil and its possible banality through her oppositional paradigm of thought*less*ness versus thought*ful*ness.

Behind the phrase which she used during Eichmann's trial,"the banality of evil," banality serving to fill the gap of disbelief, there was "no thesis or doctrine," she relates, some fifteen years later in "Thinking." Eichmann "behaved; he did not act" (Young-Bruehl MBP 17). During the trial, Arendt recalls, she was "dimly aware of the fact that" what she was witnessing could not simply be categorized as *evil*, that it "went counter to our tradition of thought -- literary, theological, or philosophic -- about the phenomenon of evil" ("Thinking" LM 3). Instead, she would ultimately qualify Eichmann's display of what she at first termed stupidity, as *thoughtlessness*, demonstrating an absence of internal dialogue (MBP 25).[3] She writes:

> It was this absence of thinking -- which is so ordinary an experience in our everyday life, where we have hardly the time, let alone the inclination to *stop* and think -- that awakened my interest. Is evil-doing (the sins of omission, as well as the sins of commission) possible in default of not just "base motives" (as the law calls them) but of any motives whatever, of

[3] See Jasper's correspondence with Arendt, in a letter from Heidelberg, dated 19 October, 1946, in *Hannah Arendt/Karl Jaspers Briefwechsel 1926-1969* 99, in which he uses this phrase "banality of evil" to characterize the motivational standard behind the Nazis' extermination of so many people during the war. Jaspers writes: "Mir scheint, man muß, weil es wirklich so war, die Dinge in ihrer ganzen Banalität nehmen, ihrer ganz nüchternen Nichtigkeit - Bakterien können völkervernichtende Seuchen machen und bleiben doch nur Bakterienn" (*Briefwechsel* 99). Interestingly, Jaspers eloquently continues: "Ich sehe jeden Ansatz von Mythos und Legende mit Schrecken, und jedes Unbestimmte ist schon solcher Ansatz" (*Briefwechsel* 99). In many ways, this describes the landscape which lay stretched before those Jewish *émigrés* who had survived: uncertainty being the only point of departure from the events of the war.

> any particular prompting of interest or volition? Is wickedness, however we may define it . . . *not* a necessary condition for evil-doing? Might the problem of good and evil, our faculty for telling right from wrong, be connected with our faculty of thought? . . . The absence of thought I was confronted with sprang neither from forgetfulness of former, presumably good manners and habits nor from stupidity in the sense of inability to comprehend -- not even in the sense of "moral insanity," for it was just as noticeable in instances that had nothing to do with so-called ethical decisions or matters of conscience. ("Thinking" LM 4-5).

Arendt points out that language, as well being critical to perception, reflects our problematic valuation of motivation: for instance, our qualification of action through a precept of moral certitude. She explains that the etymology of the term "ethics" is traceable to the Latin and Greek*e*(long line over e)*hos*, meaning customs and habit. In Latin, this word is associated with "rules of behavior" and in Greek, "habitat" ("Thinking" LM 5). Action is predicated to some degree on customs, on cultural, on societal "rules of behaviour." Even as a revolutionary or countering force to cultural or societal norms, action, I believe, is not wholly free from the past, from learned behaviour. However, we misconstrue action as a constructive independent force if we define it in terms of behaviour, of habit, that is, as a circular repetitive process.

While she was still engaged in working out the distinctions between the activities of the *vita activa* (labouring, working, and acting), Arendt relates that she was struck by the traditional notion of utter "stillness" in thinking: the vita *contemplativa's* main characteristic:

> What interested me in the Vita Activa was that the contrary notion of complete quietness in the Vita Contemplativa was so overwhelming that compared with this stillness all other differences between the various activities in the Vita Activa disappeared. Compared to this quiet, it was no longer important whether you labored and tilled the soil, or worked and produced use-objects or acted together with others in certain enterprises [a reference to concepts of labor, work and action in *The Human Condition*]. Even Marx, in whose work and thought the question of action played such a crucial role, "uses the expression '*Praxis*' simply in the sense of 'what man does' as opposed to 'what man thinks.' ("Thinking" LM 7,

quoting Nicholas Lobkowicz).[4,5]

Arendt found an inconsistency between the traditional perception of the *vita contemplativa* and her experience of it. While the absence of external distractions -- a stillness -- allows one to pursue one's studies indepthly, thinking as an *activity* designates movement, not stillness, of the imagination. As well, observation, adjusting and then attempting to relate to the world, a world which is constantly in motion, occurs in a particular solitude which is not inherently still. We consign our solitary selves to the role of observer of the external, to experience a world which is in constant flux. In doing so, we engage the tools given to us by the imagination to attempt to control what appears arbitrary. In this role, within solitude, we yet imagine that we may subdue the arbitrary nature of the world by consigning our senses' perceptions to a relative *a priori* explanation. Many years before her lecture series on the *vita contemplativa*, Arendt wrote in *The Human Condition*:

> Traditionally and up to the beginning of the modern age, the term *vita activa* never lost its negative connotation of "un-quiet," *nec-otium, a-skholia.* As such it remained intimately related to the even more fundamental Greek distinction between things that are by themselves whatever they are and things which owe their existence to man, between things that are *physei* and things that are *nomo.* The primacy of contemplation over activity rests on the conviction that no work of human hands can equal in beauty and truth the physical *kosmos*, which swings in itself in changeless eternity without any interference or assistance from outside, from man or god. This eternity discloses itself to mortal eyes only when all human movements and activities are at perfect rest. Compared with this attitude of quiet, all distinctions and articulations within the *vita activa* disappear (HC 15-16).

Arendt's study of the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* begins with Hugh of St. Victor's phrase that "the active way of life is 'laborious'" and that "the contemplative way is 'sheer quietness'. . ." ("Thinking" 6, c.f. Hugh of St. Victor).

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[4] Toward the beginning of *The Human Condition*, Arendt writes : "The human condition comprehends more than the conditions under which life has been given to man (9). She continues by explaining that he condition of men on earth is inextricable from the *Condition of Man*: "Men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence. . . Whatever touches or enters into a sustained relationship with human life immediately assumes the character of a condition of human existence . . . . To avoid misunderstanding, the human condition is not the same as human nature, and the sum total of human activities and capabilities which correspond to the human condition does not constitute anything like human nature" (HC 9-10).

[5] I turn again to Philip Koch's assertion in *Solitude: A Philosophical Encounter*, that of course the thinker is not the only one who may define the boundaries of solitude. Someone who is 'tilling the soil', so to speak, or engaging in any one of the activities of the *vita activa*, may be in a state of consciousness which can only be qualified as solitude. Solitude is hard to achieve obviously in the midst of a group of people. As well, we may appropriately describe the space of labouring and work as solitude.

These words illustrate the traditionally-held notion that "the contemplative way" goes on "in the 'desert'" and is devoted to the "'vision of God'," while " 'the active one goes on in public and is devoted to 'the necessity of one's neighbor,'" [*"Duae sunt vitae, activa et contemplative. Activa est in labore, contemplative in requiem. Activa in publico, contemplativa in deserto. Activa in necessitate proximi, contemplativa in visione Dei."*) ("Thinking" LM 6).

Section 2: The Unterredung- (a meeting with, or discussion) of the Autonomous Thinker and Judge

The essay "Thinking" is structured along the tension between activity and stillness, company and solitude, and between the atemporal location of the thinking self and (the awareness of) life's finitude. Arendt writes,

> Man's finitude, irrevocably given by virtue of his own short time span [is] set in an infinity of time stretching into both past and future [and] constitutes the infrastructure . . . of all mental activities [and] manifests itself as the only reality of which thinking qua thinking is aware, when the thinking ego has withdrawn from the world of appearances and lost the sense of realness inherent in the *sensus communis* by which we orient ourselves in this world ("Thinking" LM 201).

Merleau-Ponty observed that insofar as thinking relies on a perception of infinitude, the thinker may never be able to "convince [himself] that anything actually exists . . . that . . . human life is more than a dream" ("Thinking" LM 198).[6] Arendt argues that the intensity of the thinking experience manifests itself in the ease with which we may reverse the opposition of thought and reality, so that only thought seems to be real whereas all that *is* appears as transitory ("Thinking" LM 198). We cannot, she claims, as Paul Valéry apparently thought, locate an essential spatial point in which the thinking ego exists. While Valéry claimed that "when we think, we *are* not," meaning that the "everywhere of thought is . . . a region of nowhere" ("Thinking" LM 201), Arendt points out that while thinking, we are stationed by both space and time, "collecting and recollecting what no longer is present out of the "the belly of memory" (Augustine), anticipating and planning in the mode of willing what is not yet" ("Thinking" LM 201).

In order to think through experiences, or a particular experience, Arendt

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[6] As well, Merleau-Ponty wrote,:"We are truly alone only on the condition what we do not know we are; it is this very ignorance which is our [the philosopher's] solitude" ("Thinking" LM 198).

writes, we must transform a *"juxtaposition"* between the way in which experiences are given to us, and our consciousness ("Thinking" LM 202). This transformation takes the shape of a linear pattern, a *"succession* of soundless words" which is the only form that adequately distributes the information of experience into thought-images ("Thinking" LM 202). Consequently, through this process we "de-sense" and "de-spatialize" original experience ("Thinking" LM 202). Arendt's notion posits thinking as existing within a paradoxical spatial non-space, a temporal a-temporality.

Interestingly, according to Arendt's analysis, thinking, willing and judging are autonomous and cannot be directly conditioned in any way by our surroundings. The property of autonomy in each of the three faculties of the mind is, Young-Bruehl claims, necessary in order to allow for the freedom of movement of and spontaneity in exercising each one. Autonomy is as well prevents one faculty's subordination to the other (Young-Bruehl MBP 26). Young-Bruehl writes:

> Thinking, willing, and judging are all autonomous, both in the sense that they follow only the rules inherent in their activities and in the sense that they are not all derived from one single source. As in Arendt's political theory, freedom and plurality always go hand in hand; to make any of the faculties the slave of any other or to make them all subjects of a sovereign One would be to deny their freedom. Each faculty, furthermore, is self-motivating or spontaneous, and each "recoils upon itself;" each faulty is intra-active. And for this intra-activity to arise, each faculty must to some extent and in its own particular way withdraw from the world of appearances, from external determinations (MBP 26).

The particular withdrawal, or degree of departure from reality, which the subject experiences in exercising either thinking, willing, or judging is different in each case. Young-Bruehl discusses the different degree of departure of each faculty:

> In comparison to the other two faculties, judging withdraws least: it remains close to the particulars. And the judging person stays in the company of others, a spectator among spectators. Willing "takes a position" near but radically free from objects. The radicalism of its freedom is that it affirms or denies the very existence of objects. Thinking itself withdraws most completely from the world (MBP 26).

Yet, Young-Bruehl maintains, thinking does not fully withdraw, as it is linked "to the world by language, and particularly by metaphor" (MBP 26).

Arendt explains that while each faculty "obeys the laws inherent in the activity itself; all of them depend on a certain stillness of the soul's passions, on that 'dispassionate quiet' *('leidenschaftslose Stille')* which Hegel ascribed to merely thinking cognition" ("Thinking" LM 70). She points out that the singular experience of thinking, willing and judging is reflected in the fact that "it is always the same person" who thinks, wills, and judges. Arendt attributes the Platonic notion of "reason's uncontested rulership in the household of the soul" to the concept of the individual body exercising the faculties of the mind. The Platonic notion, in turn, has been converted to the monistic approach of identifying the singular individual as the 'every one' -- observed in Plato's analysis as well as in Christianity -- the determination that either reason or the soul is the centre of human understanding. The reversal of Plato's conceit (as David Hume understood) into the conception of an inherent "inability to remove the will" in reason, or of an inherent inability to change the past, while being cognizant of it in thinking ("Thinking" LM 70), contains the monistic assumption that only one internally and hermetically unified mind or soul may comprehend experience. This model is in opposition to the pluralistic model which posits the exchange of experiences as crucial to self expression and configures general awareness through a pluralistic understanding of the world.

While exploring the *vita contemplativa,* it is not only important to consider in the *vita activa* the exchange of experiences and the plurality of opinions and experiences, but to recognize that we may be cognizant of plurality while exercising any one of the faculties of the *vita contemplativa.* I would argue that multiplicity in-of-itself is a component of thought*ful*ness, or critical thinking. In opposition to meditation, the critical engagement of one's thoughts with one's experiences turns the mind toward the external. The critical agent of thinking goes beyond emotional imprinting on the imagination. It allows for a reflection of the world on to the imagination. In this way, thinking, willing and judging, exercised in acknowledgment of each other, and with some awareness of the existence of other bodies exercising thinking, willing and judging, all preface action as it is based on judgment. Action, although spontaneous, without judgment may prove to be debilitating in that it risks being motivated purely by self-interests, or by willing alone. Without the cognizance, the *in-betweenness* among the three faculties of the mind, action would risk becoming self-perpetuating, becoming removed from the world, which is made up of a

plurality of experiences. Without thinking or judging, or critical thinking, willing's effects are potentially destructive. The thinker, buoyed by the "wind of thought," critically grounds herself, returning to earth to encounter the world through judgment's critical perception of it.[7]

Section 3: Thinking Within An Awareness of the World

In her move to resolve the oppositions in a study of thinking -- worldliness and self-enclosure, cognizance of finitude and inherent a-temporality -- Arendt discloses a perplexing inconsistency, which appears irresolvable: the paradoxical relationship of thinking to the world. This paradox begs the question, "how may the 'thinking ego' exist in an extrinsic relationship to any awareness of the spatial and temporal peripheries of its existence?" As the conscious spirit of Hegel's narrative in *Phenomenolgy of Spirit* may only gain its independence following an awareness of its dependence (PA 134-5), so is it that while thinking must remain within itself, or intra-active, to be spontaneous, it is yet bound by the corporeal identity of the thinker. This identity pertains to how the thinker appears *within* the world.

Arendt employs Kant's term, the "thinking ego," to distinguish the subject who, deep in thought, is unaware of the external. Interestingly, this term relates to her discussion of *"con-science"* --"to know with and by myself" -- a term whose accepted meaning epitomizes, as I see, the traditional notions of thinking and judging, as pertaining to the singular subject ("Thinking" LM 5). Kant allows the "thinking ego" to venture into the public arena, where it becomes both spectator *and* judge. Arendt writes in "Thinking" (in the Chapter "Appearance and Semblance"):

> Self-presentation [as opposed to self-display which "has no choice but to show whatever properties a living being possesses"] would not be possible without a degree of self-awareness -- a capability inherent in the reflexive character of mental activities and clearly transcending mere consciousness . . . . ("Thinking" LM 36)

She is inserting self-awareness and the exercise of self and worldly comprehension into a discussion concerning a plurality of mental faculties, rather than the faculties of thinking or judging alone. Thinking, willing and judging rely on the plurality of experience. The body which employs these faculties is a plural

[7] See Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's use of the metaphor of thinking, from the Greek, in her discussion on metaphor and Arendt's use of it in Mind and the Body Politic 26.

body. The products of the thinker, the attestations of the spectator in the form of traditions and of continuance reflect the plurality of the thinker's or spectator's experiences. In "Thinking," Arendt attributes Kant's philosophy of the spectator to this notion of plurality. She writes:

> . . . [I]t is not through acting but through contemplating that the 'something else,' namely, the meaning of the whole, is revealed. The spectator, not the actor, holds the clue to the meaning of human affairs -- only, and this is decisive, Kant's spectators exist in the plural, and this is why he could arrive at a political philosophy. Hegel's spectator exists strictly in the singular: the philosopher becomes the organ of the Absolute Spirit, and the philosopher is Hegel himself. But even Kant, more aware than any other philosopher of human plurality, could conveniently forget that even if the spectacle were always the same and therefore tiresome, the audiences would change from generation to generation . . . ("Thinking" LM 96).

Toward the beginning of "Thinking," Arendt writes that "[n]othing is [perhaps] more surprising in this world of ours than the almost infinite diversity of its appearances, the sheer entertainment value of its views, sounds, and smells," met by an "astounding diverseness of sense organs among the animal species, so that what actually appears to living creatures assumes the greatest variety of form and shape" ("Thinking" LM 21). This wonderful (literally wonder-filled) syllogism, in which Arendt posits appearance and the sensual understanding of appearance as embodying human experience, which, in its turn, is plural, lies in strict relief next to the singularity or monism which has been traditionally the podium of most philosophic inquiry. As well, the contrast between the traditional dictum of philosophy and Arendt's more political, plurality-framed *modus operandi* offers a window into her own difficulty in stepping beyond the singular experience of thinking, willing and judging. In general, this difficulty is apparent in her concept of distance in judgment, a necessary putting-aside of one's cultural and personal biases in order to critically approach the subject one is facing.

Throughout *Life of the Mind*, Arendt is proposing that thinking by one individual is yet an exercise which allows for an awareness of one's interdependence with others. Arendt places the notion of the singular nature of the mind, of willing, and judging in historical terms. St. Augustine saw the mind "as will" which is " 'at war'," instead of the "spirit" and the "flesh," "with itself," a war which Arendt writes is between "man's 'inmost self' with itself"

("Thinking" LM 214). Willing, Arendt writes, was and is still perceived as volition, a particular "shape" individuals decide they will present to the world ("Thinking"LM 214). Finally judging was and has been seen as the singular experience of conscience ("Thinking" LM 215).

When Arendt opens "Thinking" with the disclosure that "nothing . . . insofar as it appears, exists in the singular, everything that is meant to be perceived by somebody" and "[p]lurality is the law of the world," she is not writing about politics but about and within the tradition of that single subject which has traditionally been conceived of as the identity of the "I." This would be *Dasein* in Heidegger, Spirit in Hegel, or Reason in Hume: the singular subject as the every in the philosophic exercise.

Characteristic of all eloquent philosophers, Arendt, in order to reach a new understanding of both the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa,* must use the tools created by those thinkers whose arguments she attempts to transcend (I would not say deconstruct). Arendt perceives the *vita contemplativa* veering from an elemental monism, from merely the thinker's self-perception. Arendt projects an image of plurality: many thinkers and of many subjects. Despite disparate elements within her reflections and partly through the rhetorical style of presenting the problematic arguments of her predecessors without actually discarding them, Arendt is then able to reveal the complexities, along with her distrust, in that unflinching continuation of the tradition of singularity or monism over plurality or pluralism. Her skepticism is evident in her critical response to Hume's concept of Reason's slavery to the passions, to his apparent blindness to pluralism. She writes that he was far too accustomed to "the claim that behind the obvious multiplicity of the world's appearances and . . . behind the obvious plurality of man's faculties and abilities, there must exist a oneness" ("Thinking" LM 70).

Section 4: Reflecting the World: The Exercise of Thinking and Judging

Arendt's expression, earlier in her writings, of the contradistinction between the singular experience of agonistic strength and the pluralistic experience of power of action coincides with her phrasing of that between the monistic and pluralistic notions of the nature of thinking and of the thinker's relation to the world. Arendt's proposed binary opposition between thinking and judging rests, firstly, on thinking as related to the abstract, in terms of the

thinker's conception of the world. Arendt describes judgment, on the other hand, as being related to particulars, meaning the elements of the world, therefore signifying an awareness of the plurality or diversity of the world. With reference to Kant, Arendt writes, "Judgment deals with particulars, and when the thinking ego moving among generalities emerges from its withdrawal and returns to the world of particular appearances, it turns out that the mind needs a new 'gift' to deal with them" ("Thinking" LM 215).

If judgment only relates to particulars, then how may we define the movement from generalities to particulars; and what would be the catalyst for this movement? Arendt's understanding is that, preoccupied with thinking, we are isolated from the particulars, since thinking's setting is solitude, isolation from the world, and thinking generally relies on a suspension of belief (of one's own mortality and of finitude, so that thoughts play out *ad infinitum*, outside a sense of temporal boundaries. Young-Bruehl provides the tentative claim that although the faculties of the mind are autonomous and non-hierarchial, thinking nevertheless holds a certain authority. She writes, "[t]hinking presents the other two faculties with 'desensed' thought objects, invisibles, afterthoughts; it presents the will with images of the future, and it presents judgment with images of the past" (MBP 26).

At the end of "Thinking," Arendt posits a relation between the judging activity and the "inquiring" person who becomes a judge. She writes that "[i]f judgment is our faculty for dealing with the past, the historian is the inquiring man who by relating it sits in judgment over it" ("Thinking" LM 216).

I then must redefine the question concerning the direction of judgment towards the particulars: first, isn't the exercise of inquiring (that of the "inquiring man") equivalent to thinking? Secondly, would the realm of the abstract, the context of the thinker, be a place *from which* the judge sets off, or a place *to which* she returns? If the historian or the spectator employs thinking, which comprehends in the abstract, in order to relate to the particulars of the world, in order to judge, then how would each faculty, *thinking and judging*, exist exclusively, autonomously, and have the freedom to move independently of the other? By positioning judgment in thinking, for instance, as a prologue to her ruminations in "Thinking," Arendt herself appears to have worked her way into the heart of the thinking-judging paradox. Young-Bruehl makes several salient points when she states that Arendt

> . . . held that judging is a process of reflectively moving from particular events and actions to the general principles appropriate to them . . . [contrasting] this process to the kind of judgment that had been emphasized in traditional philosophy - that is the application of an already maintained general principle to a particular event or action" (MBP 92).

Ronald Beiner contends that "judgment must be free, and the condition of its autonomy is the ability to think" ("Interpretative Essay" to *Hannah Arendt: Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* 101). The "critical movement of thinking," or "critical thinking," as Beiner sees it, "[in loosening] the hold of universals (e.g., entrenched moral habits ossified into inflexible general precepts) . . . frees judgment to operate in an open space of moral or aesthetic discrimination and discernment" ("Interpretative Essay" LKPP 112).

According to this precept, when critical thinking provides the conditions for 'appropriate' decisions regarding what is right and what is wrong, what is fact and what is fiction, then the space opened to judgment is left unencumbered. The critical movement, then, of thinking frees judgment from being beholden to the "ossified," or "inflexible." Judgment then may operate independently of the universal or standard precepts of what is right or wrong (LKPP 112) and instead concentrate on thinking's critical apprehension. This critical faculty of thinking, of reflecting, allows one to engage the faculty of judgment by referring experiences to the realm of ideas.

Beiner distinguishes "reflective judgment," which, he believes, according to Arendt,

> . . . offers a form of contemplation that is not restricted to the beholding of necessities and, at the same time, is not divorced from the worldly phenomena of human action . . . thus [providing] some measure of respite from the antinomy of freedom and nature that characterizes the first two *Critiques* ("Thinking" and "Willing"). ("Interpretative Essay" LKPP 119).

While I would agree with most of this, I differ in that Arendt, in the introduction to "Thinking," employs the term "contemplation" to signify the eventual resting point of thinking. In this sense, contemplation is not an active exercise, or not one of active, critical engagement. I would as well argue a semantic point, that reflective judgment is merely another term for critical thinking.

Section 5: Distinguishing Contemplation from Thinking as Critical Reflection

Contemplation, then, is a pause, a place to rest from one's stream of ideas; but, more importantly, perhaps, from the evolving struggle inherent in the sort of thinking which Arendt designates as self-reflexive. She writes that "thinking aims at and ends in contemplation, and contemplation is not an activity but a possibility: it is the point where mental activity comes to rest" ("Thinking"LM 6). Philosophy, during what Arendt terms "Christian time," had become "the handmaiden of theology." At this time, thinking, she contends, actually became meditation, and meditation "ended in contemplation," which she concludes, interposing the methodology of Descartes *Méditations,* is "a kind of blessed state of the soul where the mind was no longer stretching out to know the truth but, in anticipation of a future state, received it temporarily in intuition" ("Thinking" LM 6-7)

Contemplation, then, I would simply argue, according to Arendt, is akin to meditation. Her discussion of the mechanisms and movement of critical thinking -- thinking as reflection -- therefore, posits an opposition between this sort of active, reflective reasoning and contemplation. I believe, therefore, that we must conduct our study of Arendt's discussion of the *vita contemplativa* while casting a somewhat critical eye in the direction of the Latin terminology *contemplativa. Contemplatio -onis* means "attentive looking at," while "contemplation" is the term used for thoughtful observation *as well as* meditation. *Contemplari,* the original Latin, prefers the former definition; and *con* pertains to intensive, while *templum* refers to an opening provided by particular tools. It is precisely an "open space marked out by augers for observation."[8] However, in keeping with Arendt's discourse on contemplation, as opposed to thinking, the *object* of one's contemplation , or meditation, is less a *reflected subject,* or less a subject which has been carefully observed through a process of reflection, than a *deflected* subject, one which *deflects* the thinker's own concerns, that is, reflects what the thinking ego *wishes* to sense or experience rather than what the subject -- in relation, to a degree, to the thinking ego -- actually does.

I therefore differ with Beiner's contention that judgment "offers a form of contemplation." As he is here apparently identifying the oscillation between, on

[8] An auger is a tool for boring holes in wood or in earth.

the one hand, judging, making decisions, and, on the other, thinking, or contemplating, Beiner's phrasing of judgment as contemplation appears rather inadequate. I would arrange this schema differently and say that critical thinking instead informs his understanding of reflective judgment, and that an integration of the two, the faculty of judging along with that of thinking, provides context to one's ideas and, therefore, to one's thinking about the world.

While I would then agree that there is an "antinomy of freedom and nature" in Arendt's critiques of thinking and willing ("Interpretive Essay" LKPP 119), it appears to me to be far more significant that, within her terminology for thinking, there is this tension between the historical and traditional notions of thinking as passive, meditative, soothing to some degree, and her understanding of this as an *activity*, that being reflective and probably involving a great deal of discomfort.[9] This critical component may be an element of both thinking and judging; however, I would argue that the faculty of judging appears in this role as more of a receptacle for bearing out the products (or judgments) of critical thinking, rather than being *eo ipso* the reflective enterprise itself.

Section 6: The Nous as Subject, Thinking Truth v.s. Knowledge

Thinking's relation to the general, to the abstract, and judgment's relation to the particulars, to the world of appearances, are relations which individually serve to describe different instances of the same sort of interaction *with* the world. Arendt contends that "[t]hinking is out of order because the quest for meaning produces no end result that will survive the activity, that will make sense after the activity has come to its end," the "delight" of the "thinking ego" is "ineffable by definition" ("Thinking" LM 123).

Thinking, Arendt, in agreement with most philosophers, argues, is circuitous, without an end or a beginning, a concept which, she professes, has never seemed to worry the philosophers since *nous* (which Aristotle uses as the organ of seeing and beholding the truth --"Thinking" LM 6) and *theoria* have, she argues, been frequently mistranslated as the sort of "knowledge" ("Thinking" LM 124) which is interchangeable with Truth. We may therefore acknowledge how thinking, as a circular process, without beginning or end, or apparent entry

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[9] See Lisa Jane Disch's argument, regarding Arendt's storytelling, (158-9), especially 158, where Disch provides, in a footnote to the theme of discomfort, a summation of the plot of Anne Tyler's novel *The Accidental Tourist*. This is the story of a "self-contained" man named Leary who, through an affair with a rather challenging individual, sheds his reserved persona and the familiar, and finally opts for the impulsive, the uncontrollable and the unknown.

into the world of appearances, would have to abstract. Judging, on the other hand, in close proximity to the world and serving as thinking's entry, would relate more to the world's particulars, or would, rather, be more inclusive of our senses' perception of what surrounds us.

We may examine this question of thinking's relation to the abstract and judging to the particular partly by reconfiguring judgment and thinking as faculties which concern humanity as a whole, rather than as a privilege of a few. In other words, we may posit a scenario whereby every individual has the capacity to think and judge critically. Plato, who, concerned with "true" realities, worshipped Truth as being beyond our sensual perception of the world -- contending that "what we perceive through our physical senses must be taken as the most certain reality" (*Timaeus and Critias* 71) -- believed in a demarcation between intelligence and what he termed 'true opinion'. He dismisses the assumption that "there is no difference between true opinion and intelligence" and claims that the two, true opinion and intelligence, must be different, as "they differ in origin and nature," and as intelligence "is produced by teaching" and "involves truth and rational argument," while opinion is produced "by persuasion" and is irrational. He then concludes that, as "true opinion is a faculty shared, it must be admitted, by all men," while "intelligence" is only the property of "the gods and . . . a small number of men" (TC 71).

Arendt, in agreeing with Kant that "truth is located in the evidence of the senses" ("Thinking" LM 57), certainly did not perceive that opinion would be irrational and that knowing what is true and what is opinion is an exclusive property. Plato's arguments here, however, may further our understanding of thinking and judging. Since it is through thinking that we form opinions and as one elemental nature of opinions is their mutability, we may see how judgment, too, is open to persuasion.[10] It is problematic, I find, and somewhat reductive to categorically position thinking and judging as separate faculties. By doing so, I believe, by not allowing the two to be intercepted by a discussion of their supposed mutual exclusiveness to one another, or by a discussion of their related natures, we then abstain from a further discussion on critical thinking. Such a

10 This, I believe, is the case, whether or not we agree with the contemporary philosopher Nancy Fraser,who, throughout her essay "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy," *Justice Interuptus: Critical Reflections on the "Post-Socialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge,1997) contends that decision-making must be, at least in public political discussions, separated from opinion-forming, in order to delineate the critical component of judging in the former. The problem of relating the subject to the world is that which Fraser chooses to resolve through the decision-making versus opinion-forming dichotomy, by providing expression to the opposition between debate which is concerned with public interests and that which is based on self-interests.

discussion might focus on the capacity of every person to think critically, to make the distinction between thinking in a worldly fashion and thinking in the abstract.[11]

Thinking moves toward judging when the thinking subject becomes aware of her own finitude and the finitude 'in general' of birth and death, of past and future. While Kant contends that the imagination provides *ideas* which strive "toward something that lies beyond the bounds of experience," I do not believe this would be possible without imagination's engagement, or comprehension of experience (*Critique of Judgment* 182). While, then, imagination -- serving as well in introspection to extend the subject, who is yet bound by the sensually-circumscribed, beyond the sensual -- is thinking's tool for abstraction, it is as well thinking's tool for reflection. I would argue, therefore, that thinking, while engaging imagination, takes up form, or residence, in judging.

Section 7: Critical Reflection and Action: Being in the World

Action, by nature, concurs with the world, while judging, although qualifiable as interaction, is certainly more self-contained. While judging, one nevertheless "weighs the *possible* judgments of an imagined Other, not the actual judgments of real interlocutors" ("Interpretive Essay" LKPP 92). This imagining of the Other is, I would argue, an element of the storyteller's understanding. Such a person who, according to Lisa Jane Disch "goes visiting," or "hoboing" (the characteristic which Mary McCarthy read into Arendt's narrative style within *Men in Dark Times*), commencing the process of "situationed impartiality," or situationed judging, demonstrates that the ability to interpret the past lies in the application of critical thinking to storytelling.[12]

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11 Richard J. Bernstein discusses Arendt's views of the relation of political thinking to the philosophical. He writes: "Arendt claimed that one of the deepest tendencies in the tradition of political philosophy was not really to understand and do justice to politics, but to be concerned with the relation of politics to philosophy, where either implicitly or explicitly the realm of politics is measured by and judged to be deficient according to the standards of truth. The thrust of her political thinking was to provide an *apologia* for the political life against the claims of the philosophers"("Interpretive Essay" KPP 227). Bernstein points out that political truth is necessarily separate from opinion formation, or, as he terms it, "representative thinking" ("Interpretive Essay" KPP 227). In this case, it is only through plurality that we may expect to have representative thinking, or opinion-forming outside the hierarchical placement of what is considered true, or factual, over what is considered opinion. This is similar to Levi Strauss's claim-- and that to which the many so-called "Straussians" would adhere -- that political philosophy could be founded on a particular truth, that judgment could pertain to standards of truth [viz. Allan Bloom et al.]. Arendt detested Strauss for this reason, despite many intellectual affinities [for example, he taught at University of Chicago]). See C. Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978; and *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

12 Again, the "hoboing" reference is from a letter to Arendt from McCarthy, dated December 16, 1968, in *Between Friends: The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy 1949-1975* 225. See Lisa Jane's discourse on "situated impartiality" toward the end of *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy*, in the chapter "Training the Imagination to Go Visiting," especially 161-4.

Arendt's placement of Kafka's past-future parable at the end of "Thinking" is aptly positioned, as thinking is then envisaged paradoxically as a directed and culminant exercise (admitting time, that is) which is positioned, or stationed (admitting space), yet exists beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries posed in and by the world. In the context of this discussion, Kafka's parable illustrates the dilemma of finding one's place in the world through the gifts of freedom and spontaneity of thought and action, while struggling with the recognition of one's own finitude and the finitude of thought and action: the "epiphany," as Arendt refers to it, "the relatively short time span of . . . appearance" ("Thinking" LM 22). Thinking and acting may occur spontaneously, without the possibility that the subject would fully account for their limitations. On the other hand, the awareness of the finitude of this experience defines a stage of thinking, that is, critical thinking, or the entirety of judging.

While it is precisely the solitary nature of thinking which gives rise to one's sense that one is 'alone with one's thoughts,' critical reflection must take place within a consciousness of being situated amongst others to be fulfilled in judging. Arendt, referring to the German which Kant uses to describe intellect and reason, writes that *Verstand* (the intellect) "desires to grasp what is given to the senses," while *Vernunft* (reason) "wishes to understand its *meaning*" ("Thinking" LM 57). Both Arendt's citation of Cicero, at the beginning of "Thinking" (ascribing to Cato that " 'never is a man more active than when he does nothing, never is he less alone than when he is by himself' "), alongside her discussion of Kant's understanding of the sociability of judging and the "public use" of thinking, more than intimate that it was her understanding that thinking should be perceived as interaction.[13]

In a study of the dichotomy between solitude and isolation, then, we may see how, in opposition to solitude which is freely chosen, isolation deprives the individual of a place in the world and subsequently upsets the equilibrium of the thinking-judging self. Political isolation, therefore, would not be a description of a state of being where the muting of thinking occurs. It would, more appropriately, honour the definition of the absence of an environment in which the subject's ability to judge may be publicly exercised.

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13 See Arendt's *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (otherwise known as the essay entitled "Judging") 40-1.

PART II: THINKING

Section 1: Thinking Conditioned by Being of the World

While the dichotomy which provides much of the platform for Arendt's work is that between thinking and acting, or more precisely between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*, the question arising here is whether we may configure the faculties of the former and the activities of the latter as categorically autonomous. If the activities of the *vita activa* and the faculties of the *vita contemplativa*, as well as sharing certain characteristics, act in concert in some way, then how may we integrate the notion that they are autonomous -- free in expression from one another -- with the notion that they in some way intersect? Arendt, who is cognizant throughout her explorations of the perils of seizing upon a response to this question, that is, sealing any related debate with an abrogating response, instead allows particular aspects of this question to remain unresolved. In *The Human Condition*, she writes:

> . . . the conditions of human existence -- life itself, natality and mortality, worldliness, plurality, and the earth can never "explain" what we are or answer the question of who we are for the simple reason that they never condition us absolutely. This has always been the opinion of philosophy, in distinction from the sciences -- anthropology, psychology, biology, etc. -- which also concern themselves with man. But today we may almost say that we have demonstrated even scientifically that, though we live now, and probably always will, under the earth's conditions, we are not mere earth-bound creatures. Modern natural science owes its great triumphs to having looked upon and treated earth-bound nature from a truly universal viewpoint, that is, from an Archimedean standpoint taken, willfully and explicitly, outside the earth (HC 11).

Arendt's own efforts to explore what are invariably earth-bound experiences are here recorded. The paradox of her position as a writer is that she must work within the tradition of philosophy in order to critique it. Arendt's inclusion of a discussion on the Archimedean standpoint within her discourse on the foundation of modern scientific inquiry gives her the discretion, or latitude, to highlight the dilemma with regard to science's claim on philosophy. Philosophy is a field whose aim, as she believes, should be to reveal what drives our attachment to this earth and to its creatures; however it cannot do so within the context of impartiality, or through a purely methodological approach. The

scientific method, on the other hand, being structured according to Archimedes' principle -- the claim to the ability to step outside and importantly *above* the earth -- extends the notion that we must depart from our earth-bound experiences. We must position ourselves outside the emotional and sensual elements of human experience (essentially outside human experience itself) in order to draw any conclusions. Importantly, scientific inquiry dictates that we establish proof, actuating a theorem which proceeds towards a precise conclusion. Although scientific language is nevertheless capable of evincing poetic dialogue, the plane from which the scientist examines her subjects, as a rule of thumb, should never be one from which objectivity is compromised, from which any reduction of objectivity's hierarchical status is permitted. We may as well ascertain from the Arendt's discussion of scientific inquiry that while the poet's recourse to understanding is precisely her affinity with other earth-bound creatures, the scientist's approach, while relying on such an affinity, yet paradoxically presumes a stance beyond the five senses' version of the world.[14]

The mind allows for some transcendence of this world while it is related to this world. The objects of thinking "arise from . . . life in the world," as human beings (and the members of other species) "are not just in the world, they are *of the world* . . . ." ("Thinking" LM 20). This expression of thinking's qualification of human existence through an evocation of ideas from experience stands in opposition to that of labouring, working and acting, whose 'objects' exist *within* this world, as opposed to arising *from* it and becoming abstract. According to this argument, a further paradox of thinking arises. Even while the faculties of the *vita contemplativa* (along with those activities, on another level, of the *vita activa)* all rely on the senses' reactions to particular events, experiences, ideas, people, and objects of the world, thinking is yet the one faculty which, through its property of the imagination, creates the verisimilitude of departure from the world. In thinking, we may suspend all cognizance of possible consequences arising from the construction of thoughts into action. Arendt contends:

> [Human beings] can judge affirmatively or negatively the realities they are born into and by which they are also conditioned; they can will the

[14] The argument that poetry and philosophy are part of science hinges, I would argue, on what we perceive to be the role of the scientist and what we perceive to be the inherent nature of scientific inquiry. In reflecting the inquisitive nature which we may have in common as earth-bound creatures, science evokes a poetic force, or reveals poetic motivation. Whether or not one chooses to agree with Arendt's somewhat severe delineation between science and other disciplines of reasoning, it is not science *per se* which she perceives as clouding our perception of the world. It is rather her contention that the modern scientific process -- impartiality serving as critical distance -- as a conceit, has entered our approach to thinking in general. Critical political thinking, on the other hand, should resist such an *a priori* formula.

> impossible, for instance, eternal life; and they can think, that is, speculate meaningfully, about the unknown and the unknowable . . . . although this can never directly change reality -- indeed in our world there is no clearer or more radical opposition than that between thinking and doing-- the principles by which we act and the criteria by which we judge and conduct our lives depend ultimately on the life of the mind. In short, they depend on the performance of these apparently profitless mental enterprises that yield no results and do 'not endow us directly with the power to act' (e.g. Heidegger) ("Thinking" LM 71).

Our underlying consideration in the practice of philosophy should be that our understanding of human experience is facilitated by the act of engaging the faculty most removed from action. Although the particulars (ideas, cognizance, self-awareness) of thinking, willing, and judging may derive from a connecting of the self with the corporeal, our experiences are yet fundamentally conditioned or given meaning through the non-corporeal engagement of these three faculties. Without the functioning of human understanding, criteria for truth and error, conditions for experience and scientific cognition (the latter of which Kant supposed was exclusively a property of being human), the products of the mind remain invisible, incoherent or ineffable.[15]

Section 2: Metaphor as the Carrying-Over

Arendt writes that "[t]hought without speech is inconceivable" or, in Merleau-Ponty's more analytical statement, " thought and speech anticipate one another [continually taking] one another's place. . . . " ("Thinking" LM 32). In the dichotomy which Arendt develops in her discussion of "our soul experiences [which] are body-bound," and that which we experience rationally, she argues:

> Thought with its accompanying conceptual language, since it occurs in and

15 "The only outward manifestation of the mind is absentmindedness," Arendt writes in "Thinking" in *Life of the Mind*, referring (in her discourse on the soul and its passion, feelings and emotions) to the concept that we could never coherently present what the poets describe as the churning passions within us. This absentmindedness, she insists, is "an obvious disregard of the surrounding world, something entirely negative which in no way hints at what is actually happening within . . . ." ("Thinking" LM 72). Arendt elaborates, arguing that the "intuition of introspection" becomes a sense of that which occurs "within," in contrast to the senses -- sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell -- which all relate to what occurs without. It is not perhaps so much the *absence* of thought which she is focusing upon in describing the visible, but how this plays out, so to speak, in terms of one's motions and gestures. I don't believe Arendt is implying that thinking, as it effects one's actions, is not visible, but that it is more difficult to ascertain where the change towards a worldly thinking occurs. In other words, it is perhaps more difficult to actually *see* this effect; whereas one may notice absentmindedness in contrast to what one expects action to be. In any case, we may examine this passage with regards to many critics' assertion that Arendt, searching for a definition of thinking in relation to action, seems to be inconsistent in parts of *Life of the Mind*. Is it Eichmann's absentmindedness alone which is visible? Perhaps the consequences of his thoughtlessness were immediately and grossly apparent, whereas the consequences of thoughtfulness, excepting the sainting of someone and the publicized acknowledgement of a person's *good* deeds, resist categorization. Arendt too wished to resist categorization (and this, it is the argument of many scholars, is where she runs into trouble) and not to examine actions in terms of a moral paradigm, as one may more readily do when evaluating behaviour.

> is spoken by a being at home in a world of appearances, stands in need of metaphors in order to bridge the gap between a world given to sense experience and a realm where no such immediate apprehension of evidence can ever exist ("Thinking" LM 32).[16]

Arendt later writes, "Yet language, the only medium through which mental activities can be manifest not only to the outside world but also to the mental ego itself, is by no means as evidently adequate for the thinking activity as vision is for its business of thinking" ("Thinking" LM 102)

Metaphor connects our reasoning in solitude with the rationale in communication, linking the ineffable with the world of appearances. "The metaphor," Arendt proposes:

> provides the "abstract" imageless thought with an intuition drawn from the world of appearances whose function it is "to establish the reality of our concepts" and thus undo, as it were, the withdrawal from the world of appearances that is the precondition of mental activities . . . . [It] achieves the "carrying over" -- *metapherein* -- of a genuine and seemingly impossible *metabasis eis allo genos,* the transition from one existential state, that of thinking, to another, that of being an appearance among appearances . . . . ("Thinking" LM 103, e.g., Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, no. 59).

In her discussion concerning the link between thinking, which is considered autonomous, and the world of appearances, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl writes that although we may perceive the distance between thinking and the world as being greatest in respect to the relationship of willing and judging to the world, thinking is nevertheless linked to appearances through language. It is linked to the world particularly through metaphor, in which thought is manifest and by which thinking is reminded, so to speak, of the world it has left behind. One example of metaphor is the Ancient Greek phrasing "wind of thought," which draws on worldly appearances to illustrate an abstract concept (MBP 26).

Arendt discusses the danger in neglecting meaning in the use of metaphors. Language, she assert, is "the only medium" by which the invisible

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16 *Arendt adds, a few paragraphs later: "[T]he language of the soul in its mere expressive stage, prior to its transformation and transfiguration through thought, is not metaphorical; it does not depart from the senses and uses no analogies when it talks in terms of physical sensations" ("Thinking"LM 33). She is identifying one of her central concerns in regards to positioning thinking within the world of appearances. The metaphorical consideration of a particular state where one has actually withdrawn from the physical into the "soulful" is not entirely adequate. According to this paradigm of understanding, we are not truly withdrawing from the world of appearances when we turn to a space of solitude. The physical sensations which we experience as that of the "soul" are real. They may be, in a particular sense, as much of the world of appearances, as are the sensations which we attribute solely to the body. Such sensations are rather attached to a kind of body which we term "soul" or "psyche." In general, Arendt's arguments here are quite complicated and, for some, perhaps troubling, or inadequate.*

elements of human existence -- ideas, the portrait of the passions as expressed through the soul, for instance -- "can become manifest in a world of appearances" ("Thinking" LM 112). Our senses, whose business it is to "[cope] with the perceptible world," are far better at fulfilling their purpose than is language at introducing our thoughts to the world.[17] While the use of metaphors may relieve this inadequacy, the danger "lies in the overwhelming evidence the metaphor provides by appealing to the unquestioned evidence of sense experience." ("Thinking" LM 112). Arendt continues:

> Metaphors therefore can be used by speculative reason which indeed cannot avoid them, but when they intrude, as is their tendency, on scientific reasoning, they are used and misused to create and provide plausible evidence for theories that are actually mere hypotheses that have to be proved or disproved by facts ("Thinking" LM 112).

Young-Bruehl suggests that Arendt is appealing to her readers to think not in order to satisfy a quest for some concept of almighty Truth, but to enrich the understanding of experience. Our consideration of this proposal may help us locate the thread of Arendt's argument concerning thinking and speech.[18] She writes disparagingly about the followers of the "pseudo-sciences," in contrast to "the great philosophers," the latter of whom develop arguments, although bearing "an uncomfortable resemblance" to the arguments of the "pseudo-scientists," yet display an

> almost [unanimous insistence] on something of which [these philosophers], when they thought and did not write, were very clearly aware and which nevertheless refused to be pinned down and handed over to others . . . something that refused to lend itself to a transformation that would allow it to appear and take its place among the appearances of the world ("Thinking" LM 114).

In sum, Arendt is concerned with a philosophy which refuses to entertain the notion of a universal Truth. She therefore scorns those who attempt to solve particular problems using "pseudo-scientific" inquiry, essentially developing, in her eyes, an *a priori* construct under which the non-contingent elements of human experience are supposed to fall.

17 Kant writes that symbols, or signs, are not in any way related to the object, insofar as they do not contain anything "whatever that belongs to the *intuition* of the object" (italics added). Rather, signs are used, subjectively, to serve "as a means for reproducing concepts in accordance with the imagination's law of association. They are either words, or visible (algebraic or even mimetic) signs, and they merely *express* concepts" (Kant's *Critique of Judgment* Part 1 "On Beauty as the Symbol of Morality" §59 227).

18 See Young-Bruehl's *Mind and the Body Politic*: in general the Chapters "Reading *Life of the Mind*, What Are We Doing When We Think?" and "What Thucydides Saw."

Plato, Arendt writes, held that the true nature or principle of philosophy, is wonder and astonishment ("puzzlement," translated into the Greek *aporein*) ("Thinking" LM 114). He argued that men philosophize in order to escape ignorance. In a similar expression, Wittgenstein writes that " '[t]he results of philosophy are the uncovering . . . of *bumps* that the intellect has got by running its head up against the limits of language'." Some of these bumps, Arendt suggests, could be termed " 'metaphysical fallacies' " ("Thinking" LM 115). According to Plato, the "art of living speech," of the spoken word, as opposed to the written word is that it "knows how to select its listeners" ("Thinking" LM 116). Speech, in particular, or communication, in general are inept at fully expressing the emotions which come to us via our senses (implying that our experiences of the world remain ineffable).

As any metaphor referring to sight does not adequately relate experience, neither does any metaphor related to hearing. Although I believe there are inaccuracies in her statement, Arendt reminds us that in the Hebrew tradition, "The Hebrew god can be heard but not seen, and truth therefore becomes invisible" ("Thinking" LM 119).[19, 20]

Hearing as metaphor, Arendt contends, finds itself disqualified in language because "it 'intrudes upon a passive subject.'" According to this argument, "[i]n hearing, the percipient is at the mercy of something or somebody else.'" ("Thinking" LM 112).

While metaphoric language -- or language in general -- may be incapable of fully expressing our senses' experiencing of the world, there is a tacit acknowledgment within communication of something palpable beyond the metaphor. Despite all the inefficiencies of language, we may yet grasp or

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19 There is historical and literary evidence that Yahweh was, at times, meant to be seen; and that conceiving of this god as invisible and formless wasn't firmly established until Maimonides. See for instance Moses Maimonides. *The Book of Knowledge: from the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides*. Trans. H.M. Russell and J. Weinberg. Edinburgh: The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 1981.

20 I refer here to *The Jerusalem Bible*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968. Among other examples of Yahweh's or God's appearance, in Exodus 3:1, Moses goes to the burning bush in the centre of which Yahweh appears "in the shape of flame of fire" (62). Yahweh, or God calls out to Moses, who seems to believe he will and shouldn't be seeing this God, and covers "his face, afraid to look at God" (62). Since the flame of the bush, serving as a metaphor as well as a guise for God, conceals him, one must ask why Moses finds it necessary to cover his eyes. In Exodus 19:1, at the Covenant at Sinai, Moses goes to meet Yahweh and later, after Yahweh indicates that he would appear as a dense cloud to Moses so as to affirm Moses' leadership in front of the Israelites, Yahweh decides to meet the mortals. After this, Moses goes up Mount Sinai to meet God: "Yahweh came down on the mountain of Sinai, on the mountain top, and Yahweh called Moses to the top of the mountain; and Moses went up" (80). In all these passages, it is not completely apparent that God, or Yahweh, does not appear in some visible physical form. It is most unclear in the end of the The Covenant at Sinai chapter, 24:4. Moses ascends the mountain. "To the eyes of the sons of Israel the glory of Yahweh seemed like a devouring fire on the mountain top. Moses went right into the cloud. He went up the mountain, and stayed there for forty days and forty nights" (86). Did the Israelites see God and then simply recount this, using metaphoric language? Did Moses commune with God, or Yahweh, during the forty days and nights, conducting his visit with a visible being?

understand the author's underlying meaning behind the metaphor. Such recognition generally takes place in relation to the context of what is being said, and to the participant's understanding of this. We all know that sometimes comprehension occurs even with very little depth of understanding of the culture from which the metaphor emerges. The palpable entity we find behind metaphor may not be some Platonic *a priori* Truth. Rather, it may exist simply as reaction, as recognition which cannot be qualified. There may be in advance of the appearance of metaphor a common or shared experience.

Through critical or reflective thinking, we may enter the world of appearances and shared experiences -- through imagination's ability to relate the subject of solitude to the world of action and speech. In a similar manner, I would argue, the metaphor (along with of course all components of speech, of language) carries the world to the imagination through figures, or "tropes." We may metaphorically refer to the dynamics of this movement as an oscillation from the world of appearances, or the world as conveyed through our senses, to the inner realm of imagination.

I would describe metaphor as reflective, in its ability to carry information from one realm to the other (and, in this fashion, it is related to the reflective component of critical thinking). There is as well, I would argue, an element of recognition in each of the activities of the *vita activa*, in labour, in work, and in action. As I have argued that the activities of the *vita activa*, like those of the *vita contemplativa*, are all related to earth-bound experiences, the recognition or reflection I am speaking of may occur between subject and object and between subject and subject examining particular objects. In other words, as human beings, we are all operating from the same perspective of our being earth-bound creatures.

I would further hypothesize that in engaging the faculties of the *vita contemplativa*, thinking, willing, and judging, the subject allows for all these faculties to eventually encounter one another. In doing so, the faculties become reflective of one another.

PART III:
THE IMAGINATION
OF JUDGMENT: ANOTHER LOOK AT THE *Vita Contemplativa*

Section 1: The Imagination and the Reflection of the Abstract

Our imagination allows us to experience existence beyond the construct of time or space. While thinking, experiencing a particular sort of movement in this realm, we may entertain relations with the external (in remaining aware of the world of appearances and then in working toward an enactment of our ideas in public). According to Kant, the imagination presented through *ideas* is at work in the suspension of all preconceptions, so that the spectator envisages beauty in an 'ugly' object.[21] It is only fine art, Kant argues, which can transcend a judgment we may have regarding an object's ugliness, and describe it as beautiful in such a way that we suspend all previous judgments and turn toward what we then recognize as beauty.[22]

The imagination, which concurs or in essence synthesizes thinking, willing, and judging, as well affects the external, the world of appearances, in the manner by which Kant describes the aesthetic principle at work: for example, one's appreciation effects no structural change in the object of appreciation. The fundamental nature of the particulars of this world are therefore immutable and cannot be structurally altered by the faculties of the *vita contemplativa.* That is, the faculties of the *vita contemplativa* cannot touch or qualify the structural results of the activities of the*vita activa.* Another way of looking at this notion could be through Kant's conceit of the 'beauty' of the object of fine art, or the object of genius: aesthetic qualities may be manipulated by the imagination, by the invisible activities of the mind, while the intrinsic elements of the object remain immutable.

As imagination may be used "to entertain ourselves when experience strikes us as overly routine" (CJ §49 182), and therefore resists instruction,

21 In the chapter *On the Relation of Genius to Taste* in *Critique of Judgment*, Kant insists that fine art is another matter, separate from natural beauty. It is the "*production* of such objects" which "requires *genius*" (CJ §48 179).

22 In the next chapter "On the Powers of the Mind Which Constitute Genius," therefore, Kant may speak of the imagination which "in its role . . . as a productive cognitive power . . . is very mighty when it creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it" (CJ §49 182).

Arendt finds that judgment in Kant's writings "emerges as 'a peculiar talent which can be practiced only and cannot be taught' " ("Thinking" LM 215). When she describes the oscillation of the thinking ego as a movement "among generalities" to an emerging "from . . . [a] withdrawal . . . to the world of particular appearances" with (this time) the *mind's* "new 'gift' to deal with them," Arendt appears to be creating a connection between thinking and judging ("Thinking" LM 215). In this conceptual framework, thinking and judging, inextricably linked through the movement *amongst* generalities and between the world of appearances and the imagination, can each only be relatively autonomous. One cannot exist fully without the other.

Section 2: The Recognition of the Imagined and of the Concrete

By placing Arendt's understanding of thinking and judging alongside Kant's we may reach a better understanding of imagination's capacity to relay information from one world to the other. If we were to describe each faculty of the *vita contemplativa*, thinking, willing, and judging as not only autonomous but as faculties which cannot materialize in the world of appearances, how then may we explain the transformation (albeit a non-foundational one) of an object by the imagination? How may we characterize the descriptive component of imagination, which lends substance to particulars? As she closes the essay "Thinking," Arendt poses the following two questions: "how are we to arrive at answers to the 'whole set of problems by which modern thought is haunted'" and how are we to attempt "to arrive at a halfway plausible theory of ethics' ?"("Thinking" LM 216) These question are prefaced a few pages earlier in "Thinking," as Arendt distinguishes judging from thinking. She writes, "The faculty of judging particulars (as brought to light by Kant), the ability to say 'this is wrong', 'this is beautiful', and so on, is not the same as the faculty of thinking ("Thinking" LM 193).[23]

As I have argued, the activities of the *vita activa* require recognition in order to exist, and in doing so, call upon imagination and the faculties of the *vita contemplativa*, thereby forming a substantial link between the realm of thought and the realm of action. I would argue that the bridge of the thinking ego towards judging fashions the bridge between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita*

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[23] Arendt continues the above argument with the following: "Thinking deals with invisibles, with representations of things that are absent; judging always concerns particulars and things close at hand" ("Thinking" LM 193).

activa. My metaphor here, however, does not so much provide an actual prescription of how we are to live amongst others as it attempts to describe the path from the imagination, expressed most profoundly in solitude, to the area of shared human experience.

As the thinker may be conscious of, or cognizant of movement from the world of ideas to the world of appearances, so*homo faber*, the worker, may as well be aware of the innate need to return to the world from the realm of imagination.[24] In the following passage, Kant expresses the elemental process of recognition within the activity of work and the recognition which the spectator finds in the finished product:

> In order to judge a natural beauty to be that, I need not have a prior concept of what kind of thing the object is [meant] to be, i.e., I do not have to know its material purposiveness (its purpose). Rather, I like the mere form of the object when I judge it, on its own account and without knowing the purpose. but if the object is given as a product of art, and as such is to be declared beautiful, then we must first base it on a concept of what the thing is [meant] to be, since art always presupposes a purpose in the cause (and its causality) (CJ §48 179).

PART IV:
THE PLURALITY OF
THE
VITA CONTEMPLATIVA

Section 1: Solitary Thinking Imposing upon Communal Action

At least one reader of Arendt, Barry Clarke, perceives in Arendt's work a delineation of the ultimately unbridgeable dichotomy between the solitariness of thinking and the communality of action. He writes:

> In separating thought and action . . . [,] Arendt is attempting to show that there is an unbridgeable dichotomy between the solitariness of thought (the essence of which she regards, following Socrates, as the 'inner dialogue between me and myself") and the communality of action . . . .

[24] There is an element of recognition within each of the activities of the *vita activa*. In labouring, there is a recognition of one's similarity to other species, the inherent need for survival. The recognition which one receives in regards to one's work hinges on the reflection of particular elements of the world in the product and as occurring in the production. Finally, action (deed or speech) while being spontaneous, outside any temporal reference, yet bound by it, involves a recognition of our commonly-experienced earth-bound existence.

> This distinction between the solitariness of thought and the communality of action is crucial to Arendt's political thought. For her, politics is not to be found in bureaucracies or highly structured organizations. It is instead to be found in communal action in the public realm: in what she refers to as 'the space of appearances'. It is the decline of this public space where men can act as citizens, that is, as members of a community, that has led to the decline of politics and to the dangers of mass society ("Beyond 'the banality of Evil' " 421).[25]

Clarke is describing one critical precipice in Arendt's work, concerning her understanding of the public and private. For one, we may determine that the quality of solitariness fundamentally defines the dimensions of thinking. We may argue as has been (mistakenly) reasoned throughout history that thinking is the fabric of only the philosopher's existence, of the person who spends days and nights in the solitary space of the one If we then in addition reason that community or commonality defines public space but not the realm of thought, how may we, on the assumption that these two conditions exist, speak of thinking as embodying a certain plurality? This question is especially significant if we maintain that thinking is autonomous. We cannot surely mean that thinking, independent of the other faculties, for instance, is exercised by an autonomous rather than interdependent body. How may we, on the other hand, define the realm of thinking as analogous to the public realm, with its plurality of experiences and diversity? In the process of ascribing the element of plurality to judging, how may we avoid the ever-present possibility that our imagination will presume our perception of the actual and ultimately that we will grant primacy to the faculty of the will over thinking and judgment?[26]

Clarke perspicaciously observes that Arendt did not view procedure, the procedures of bureaucracies or highly structured organizations as comprising politics, but rather viewed politics as communal action. In light of this, I will now return to the dichotomous nature of judgment as Arendt characterizes it, a faculty which exists within the *vita contemplativa*, but is exercised in the realm of human affairs.

Section 2: Partnership or Autonomy: Thinking and Acting

We may regard the dichotomous nature of judging by first turning to Arendt's emphasis on the *absence* of thought. She claims:

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25 Clarke, Barry. "Beyond 'the Banality of Evil." *British Journal of Political Science*. 10.4 (1980): 417-39.

26 See all of the chapter entitled *"Duns Scotus and the primacy of the Will"* in Arendt's "Willing," in *The Life of the Mind* 125-46.

> Absence of thought is indeed a powerful factor in human affairs, statistically speaking, the most powerful, not just in the conduct of the many but in the conduct of all. The very urgency, the *a-scholia*, of human affairs demands provisional judgments, the reliance on custom and habit, that is, on prejudices. As to the world of appearances, which affects our senses as well as our soul and our common sense, Heraclitus spoke truly, in words still unburdened by terminology: "The mind is separate from all things" *(sophon esti panton kechroismenon* ("Thinking" LM 71).

Heraclitus' words do not so much illustrate the general notion that there is a separation between the mind and the world of appearances, but rather specifically emphasize the tacit understanding that there is an inability of the faculties of the mind to become a part of that world. The autonomous nature of the faculties of the *vita contemplativa* would not be at issue; it is rather more relevant that separation between the mind and the world elicits a necessary pause between thought and action.

Although diversity is a component of the public realm, where individuals' opinions may appear in a discourse of otherness, it would be a flawed statement which suggests that such questioning arising from an awareness of diversity or otherness may only exist within the *polis*. The public individual is as much a person of contemplation as of debate; and it is in the ability to marry public action with private thought that the particular elements of solitary thinking, willing and judging are drawn together and then out into the public realm. In the space of public confrontation, a continuum may be sustained through debate, which brings exclusive solitudes into a forum.

Arendt writes that Plato's political philosophy, to a large extent, centres on the notion of the philosopher as an individual who may use his superior insight to influences politics ("Thinking" LM 14). Aristotle too argued that politics rests on contemplation, even while he made the distinction between the quiet and the unquiet, or the realm characterized by the activity of the mind and that characterized by human interaction.[27]

Plato's concept of the philosopher-king is certainly akin to the monistic inclination of occidental philosophy; and Aristotle evidently placed far too much emphasis on the *vita contemplaitva*, versus the *vita activa*, as an edifice of the human condition. I would argue, however, that both these philosophers' insights

[27] See Aristotle's Politics, Arendt's source for this discussion. See especially *Politics* 1333a30-33, footnoted by Arendt, "Thinking" LM 15, footnote 11. She also mentions Thomas Aquinas' qualification of contemplation as that which is absent of outer activity, occupying a place, metaphorically and literally, to which one has consciously retreated. Aristotle. *Politics*.

concerning the root of political action pertain to Arendt's understanding of the sort of action which would reinvent, so to speak, the political landscape. The spirit of her political understanding, I believe, rests on the hope that spontaneity which had once been valued as critical to action will regain its vital role in cultural sensibility.

While "the principles by which we act and the criteria by which we judge and conduct our lives depend ultimately on the life of the mind" ("Thinking" LM 71), in essence we cannot (in the world of appearances) wholly depend on thinking, willing, and judging to assist us in fully developing our capacity to be worldly beings. However we do, Arendt concludes in the words of Heidegger, "depend on the performance of these apparently profitless mental enterprises that yield no results and do 'not endow us directly with the power to act'" ("Thinking" LM 71 e.g. Heidegger).

Since Hegel and Marx, Arendt contends, questions of ethics and problems of theory and practice in philosophy have been "treated in the perspective of History and on the assumption that there is such a thing as Progress of the human race" ("Thinking" LM 216). While Arendt would disagree with the presumption, which she has here formulated, that the conceit of all "philosophy . . . since Hegel and Marx," is that history may be qualified in terms of a monistic meta-narrative, she yet must rely on those historical narratives which we have inherited (*eo ipso*, meta-narrative) in her attempt to supersede the influence of the meta-narrative style.

Arendt is searching for a narrative structured on a pluralistic versus monistic qualification of past deeds and events. She is not incorporating a theory of ethics, a general framework of principles in order to comprehend the past, but is assembling those historical narratives and memoirs left to us by tradition, and then forming these into a sort of incomplete, or undefined guide (that is, not as an overarching idiom) to her explorations of the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*.[28] The judge, the "historian," as it were, aspires to comprehend the past, for the purposes of present generations as well as to satisfy her own curiosity. She reclaims the past, re-records particular experiences.

As Beiner suggests, "For Arendt, the judging spectator -- the historian, the poet, the storyteller -- rescues these unique episodes from the oblivion of history, thereby salvaging a portion of human dignity, which would otherwise

[28] Arendt is here securing her argument on history upon the Greek origin of the word *historein*, to inquire in order to tell how it was, and upon a discussion by Homer in which he employs the noun *histor* ("historian," as it were). The Homeric historian is the *judge* "Thinking" LM 71.

be denied to the participants in these doomed causes ("Interpretive Essay" LKPP 127).

In-and-of-themselves, the products of action and the products of work serve as open-ended responses, each one providing the preface to another dialogue. In the same manner, while the activities of the *vita activa*, such as action and work, may create the possibilities, or space, for continuance, it is through the active, critical process of thinking that continuance is created. While philosophy as well as poetry may offer a window to the active world of human experience, the philosopher and poet are figuratively individuals who pursue their particular crafts in solitude. Those whose stories they recount are, in the same figurative manner, actors who, in character, have not devoted their hours to the pen but instead to deeds. The storyteller becomes something of an actor as she helps to bridge that gap between past and future.[29]

29 Perhaps it is best to think of the actor and the person who carries on the narrative as one-and-the-same individual. In this fashion, we do not reduce any discussion on thinking and acting by consigning it to, essentially, a pendulum, which would oscillate between what thus become two fundamentally opposite criteria. Seyla Benhabib, in her book *Situating the Self*, in the Chapter "Autonomy, Feminism and Postmodernism," comments on Arendt's belief in the multiplicity of narratives, and in turn, her own belief in the multiple paths one's life might take. Benhabib writes: "As Hannah Arendt has emphasized, from the time of our birth we are immersed in "a web of narratives," of which we are both the author and the object. The self is both the teller of tales and that about whom tales are told. The individual with a coherent sense of self-identity is the one who succeeds in integrating these tales and perspectives into a meaningful life history (SS 198).

CONCLUSION

> So there is a kind of heroism in K.'s quest . . . . To the quandaries posed by the Castle, K. [represents a "solution,"] which [does not provide] any assured path to "the reason of things." The very negations entailed by Kafka's great work imply a steadfast refusal of certainties, a clear-eyed persistence with doubt. The world will not yield to lucidity.
> Irving Howe, Introduction to *The Castle* by Franz Kafka

> Storytelling, at any rate, is what in the end made her wise-- and, incidentally, not a "witch," "siren," or "sibyl," as her entourage admiringly thought. Wisdom is a virtue of old age, and it seems to come only to those who, when young, were neither wise nor prudent.
> Arendt, speaking of Isak Dinesen
> in *Men in Dark Times*

I have argued that judging appears in Arendt's writings as a stage of critical thinking. The exercise of judging involves reflecting about the world and one's place in it: worldliness. While Arendt has argued that *absence* of thought, or thoughtlessness is visible through the visible products, or consequences of this lack of thinking -- critical thinking, I would add-- how would thoughfulness, the presence of thought manifest itself in the world of appearances? We could infer from Arendt's notes on judging that she believed the exercise of judging, which occurs within the context, spatially, of independence yet belonging and alongside an awareness of temporal boundaries would most significantly allow entry to the world. It is synonomous with thoughtfulness.

As diversity, or multiplicity is important in both one's conceptualization of the *vita contemplativa* and of the *vita activa*, so is it elemental to the act of judging, a faculty of the former, whose effects are carried into the latter. The critical thinker's engagement of plurality brings her closer to the perspective of others and to an indepth understanding of the various shemata of relativity.

Arendt writes in the essay "Truth and Politics" (in *Between Past and Future*) that since the necessities of daily existence create a clashing of the factual with the political, "as Plato's philosophical truth clashed with the political," and subsequently obscure our vision of political life, we remain unaware of the actual content of political life, the joy and the gratification that arise out of being in company with our peers, out of acting together and appearing in public.

Inserting ourselves into the world means acquiring and sustaining our personal identity while beginning something entirely new (BPF 263).

The idea of "beginning something entirely new" informs all of Arendt's work. While there are several themes through which we could explore the issue of authenticity of identity, I have chosen to look at the pariah, the individual who lives on the margins of society, at solitude and isolation and the idea of creating permanence through an inclusion of history. Political action is an act of insertion and involves a conscious historical analysis involving various narratives. Such historical consciousness calls for a critical alliance with the past and future.

In closing, I wish to return to Barry Clarke's discussion of Arendt (see again Clarke, *Beyond 'the banality of Evil'*). One question which I've pondered in regards to his study is: "if solitude describes the space of thought and if community or the ability to engage one's *sensus communis* is a marker of the public realm, how may we perceive of plurality as a component of the thinking faculty, and by extension, how can plurality, or diversity enter judging?"

I find a partial response to my question in my study of the pariah, of a person such as Kafka's autobiographical character K., the conscious pariah, whose marginality and exile provide him with the ammunition to question the status quo. The pariah, politically isolated, is cut off to some degree from the possibility of political action but is not, I would argue, cut off from action altogether. Through the possibility for realization given by one's circumstances and the expression of this in the solitude of one's own thoughts and judgments, one may find a beginning to one's struggle.

Arendt's discussion of K.'s receipt of a letter in Kafka's *The Castle*, in the essay "Part I: The Pariah as Rebel" (*The Jew as Pariah*) demonstrates that isolation from political action may be coupled with the cognizance of the necessity for struggle. Arendt is drawing an analogy between K.'s situation and that of the Jew in 1944.

K. receives a letter, pressing him to make up his mind on " 'whether he prefers to become a village worker with a distinctive but merely apparent connection with the Castle or an ostensible village worker whose real occupation is determined through the medium of Barnabaas (the court messenger)' " (JP 84). For Arendt, K's dilemma is most perfectly analogous to the dilemma of the assimilationist Jew. Since "K. . . . is of the opinion that everything depends on his becoming 'indistinguishable,' and '. . . as soon as possible', [admitting] that the

rulers will assuredly obstruct the process," he cannot forfeit the belief that he will, despite the incredible improbability, achieve assimilation and gain acceptance. Arendt contends that "the modern would-be assimilationist Jew. . . is faced with the same alternative, whether to belong ostensibly to the people, but really to the rulers-- as their creature and tool-- or utterly and forever to renounce their protection and seek [their] fortune with the masses" (JP 84).

Since the person who wishes to assimilate seeks to become "'indistinguishable'" from others in that society to which she so desperately wishes to belong, she must "behave as if [indeed she] were . . . utterly alone," to part company, "once and for all, with all who are [similar to her]" (JP 85). K. represents all humanity. His dilemma signifies as well a larger problem, beyond, what in Arendt's day, was the 'Jewish dilemma': "[K.'s] desires are directed only towards those things to which all [people] have a natural right, and he will be satisfied with no less . . . 'a home, a position, real work to do. . . to become a member of the community' "(JP 85).

"[A]s a stranger," Arendt points out, Kafka's character in *The Castle* "is not permitted to enjoy these obvious prerequisites of human existence, [and to this degree] cannot afford to be ambitious" (JP 85).

Towards the end of Kafka's novel, K. loses this innocence. I would argue that it is less innocence than *naiveté* that he will achieve his ambitious proposal *and* strike a blow against oppression (JP 85-87). In his loss of innocence, K. becomes the conscious pariah.

The conscious pariah, while being physically and seemingly entirely absent from the political, or public arena, yet manages to initiate debate and become politicized. Critical thinking as exercised by the conscious pariah is the practice of thinking from the margins. It is not only fundamentally critical thinking but the critical distance of isolation which may offer the person with some intellectual acuity a critical element to the thinking-willing-judging process.

Arendt writes that K.'s realization, at long last, is that

> . . . normal existence which he desires has become something exceptional, no longer to be realized by simple, natural methods [that everything] natural and normal in life has been wrested out of [everyone's] hands by prevalent regime of the village, to become a present endowed from without [or, in Kafka's word], from "above." Whether as fate, as blessing or as curse, it is something dark and mysterious, something which a [person] receives but does not create, and which [he or she] can therefore observe but never fathom . . . . K.'s aspiration, far from being

commonplace and obvious, is, in fact, exceptional and magnificent (JP 87).

The pariah in the role of actor becomes someone whose critical thinking has been followed by expression. Storytelling is not simply a recounting of (fictional or factual) events but, in its most powerful form, acts as a parable of human existence. The telling of a tale is foundational to Arendt's teachings. A story often temporarily locates the reader within a particular perspective, within a respectful distance to history and tradition, without adhering the reader to the narrator's perspective. In other words the story doesn't bow to the hierarchial development of one person's Truth and instead concentrates on narrative form or communication. In this manner, the narrator convinces rather than persuades.

Here we return to Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's discussion of Arendt's "charming disregard for mere facts," signatory to, *"se non è vero, è bene trovato,"* and her "unfailing regard for the life of the story," her stories and sayings being "the threads with which she wove her conversations and her works" ("Hannah Arendt's Storytelling" MBP 1). Young Bruehl writes:

> When Hannah Arendt told stories, she did not gossip in this sense; she told of people in the world, not the worlds in people. Thus she used the objective and objectified categories of times when the public and the private were distinct; she spoke of Fama and Fortuna; she spoke *déformation professionelle* where others would not have feared to rush in with psychological analyses. When she spoke of the "banality of evil" rather than Adolf Eichmann's perversity or sadism, she spoke as one who cared more for clarity and what concerns everyone than for vengeance ("Hannah Arendt's Storytelling" MBP 3).

The desire for clarity, for a communication of ideas beyond the emotional response to the events of the world, illustrates, as Young-Bruehl points out, Arendt's "quality of . . . mercy," her belief that " '[t]o judge and to forgive are but two sides of the same coin [that] while justice demands that all be equal, mercy insists on inequality, implying that every man is, or should be, more than whatever he did or achieved.' " (MBP 3).[1]

In a letter to Mary McCarthy, May 31, 1971, Arendt professes that she wishes her friend (McCarthy) "would write about [what] it is in people that makes them want a story," that it was, according to her, "the telling of tales, [of ordinary] life of ordinary people, Simenon-like," which allowed for that richness of life, of living. "One can't say how life is," she continued, "how chance or fate

[1] Here, Young-Bruehl is citing from page 137 of Albrecht Wellmer's *Critical Theory of Society*. New York: Seabury Press, 1971.

deals with people, except by telling the tale" (A-M corr 294-95).

While Arendt did not orient her writing toward aesthetic comprehension, we may turn to Kant's discussion of the sublime as a factor in the imagination to investigate from another angle Arendt's notion of storytelling. Kant writes of nature and the sublime:

> Hence nature is here called sublime [*erhaben*] merely because it elevates [*erhebt*] our imagination, [making] it exhibit those cases where the mind can come to feel its own sublimity, which lies in its vocation and elevates it even above nature (Kant, Critique of Judgment §28 121).

There is an echo of Kant's discussion of the elevation of the imagination in the notion of the mind's visiting, leaving the familiar to travel. Lisa Jane Disch's notion of storytelling, of the role imagination, and her description of Arendt's understanding of 'situated impartiality' or 'visiting' rely "on the premise that human differences are *irreducible* to one another but not *incommensurable*," and that "the experience of [this] world-travel 'is of being a different person in different 'worlds' and yet having memory of oneself as different without quite having the sense of there being any underlying 'I'.' " (HALP 168-69).

Kant asserts that the "self-estimation" involved in the elevation of circumstance to sublimity "loses nothing from the fact that we must find ourselves safe in order to feel this exciting liking, so that (as it might seem), since the danager is not genuine, the sublimity of our intellectual ability might also not be genuine" (CJ §28 121).

I would argue that, as with his insertion of publicity, of spectator and actor, into the context of the traditional philosophic dialogue, Kant, in his lengthy discussion of aesthetic judgment, frees another area for a study of Arendt's impression of storytelling, that is, her study of the suspension of belief. Rather than allowing the imagination's link with critical thinking to be swallowed by imagination's attainment of the sublime, the storyteller who tells of people in the world, rather than the worlds in (or the solitary imaginings of) people, assumes that the critical component of imagination's role in storytelling does not allow for the liberty by the imagination to do whatever it pleases, to create a self-inscribed narration about the world. Arendt's storytelling rather follows the concept of creating possible routes of discovery of human beings' different portions of experience on this planet.

This storyteller, someone who, as stated in the title of Elias Canetti's

compilation of essays, is *Conscious of Words,* is as well aware of the following notion:

> Among the most sinister phenomena in intellectual history is the avoidance of the concrete. People have had a conspicuous tendency to go first after the most remote things, ignoring everything that they stumble over close by. The elan of outgoing gestures, the boldness and adventure of expeditions to faraway places camouflage their motives. The not infrequent goal is to avoid what lies near because are not up to it. We sense danger and prefer other and unknown perils. Even when these are found-- and they are always found-- they still have the glow of the sudden and the unique. One would have to be very narrow-minded to condemn this adventurousness of the mind . . . . It has led to an expansion of our horizon, of which we are proud. But the situation . . . today . . . is so serious that we have to turn to what is closest and most concrete. We don't even have an inkling of how much time is left for us to focus on the most painful things. And yet, it could very well be that our fate is contingent on certain hard knowledge that we do not yet have. ("Power and Survival" CW 14)

Canetti's contention reverberates in the search and struggle of Kafka's pariah character K. I would extend his summons, calling for a revealing of the up-close, the near-at-hand, to the storyteller of today, the person who, even while "visiting" the world and the people within it, may attain a credible version of truth without pursuing galactic enterprises of discovery. While Arendt proposed risk-taking in political action as well as in the fabrication of storytelling -- to follow the desire to venture into the unknown -- in the same instance, Canetti's words may be interpreted to mean that we need not be adverse to certain seemingly mundane experiences and that we need not make a commitment to experience simply because it does not satisfy our desire to witness, first-hand, the extreme. In the same instance, Canetti offers a proposal for experience and for action: that, simply by acceding to what does not immediately appear monumental, we may nevertheless achieve non-conventional and historic points of discovery. He writes:

> . . . we are not concerned with [the] open stage of an experience, for which we need not feel ashamed as victims and which therefore stands in the bright light of the religions. What we are concerned with is the next stage, which we do not like to admit, which was of greater consequence than the earlier one and not at all humane, which exists in the hearts of both power and greatness, and which we must focus on fearlessly and ruthlessly if we hope to understand what power is and what it does ("Power and Survival" *Conscious of Words* 15).

These words illustrate Arendt's desire to explore, rather than to examine or investigate history (as the storyteller, versus the scientist, explores rather than investigates), to find some form of resolution in deciding to tell the tale. The release is not instantaneous and may not be cathartic. Arendt, in correspondence to Jaspers after the war, suggests that the sort of writing which may provide some cathartic release for the storyteller, cannot wholly free the storyteller from her own painful experiences. "It seems to me that none of us can return," Arendt wrote to Jaspers, on 29 January 1946, meaning the Jews who had escaped Hitler's forces in Europe, "(and writing is surely a form of return)" (A-J Corr 31-32). Arendt wrote that Jews could only return to Germany, for instance if they were welcome *as* Jews and not as primarily anything else. As this letter is in German, I continue here with Arendt's words in the original: "Das würde heißen, daß ich gerne schreiben würde, wenn ich als Jude über irgendeinen Aspekt der Judenfrage schreiben kann . . . . " (29 Jan. 1946 A-J Briefwechsel 68).

The storyteller's record is therefore bound but surely not limited by self-identity. The possibility of being pedantic, of allowing the passion of personal experience to become the story's directive may of course pose as a dilemma for the writer, whose actual experience may be limited by an identity which has not overcome such difficulty in order to be a part of the world. This dilemma may be diluted by writing as a pariah, as someone whose position on the margins affords a perspective on both the *meta* and minor experience and therefore on limitations: of full critical comprehension as well as of language. In any case, I believe the most brilliant, while belying, component of certain kinds of writing is the inability to step beyond human experience, beyond our earthy existence, while attaining, in imagination at least, a qualifiable proximity to it.

The author who succeeds in such a process does not need the dedication of the seasoned traveller but rather the wisdom of the critical reader. The insight, for instance, which Franz Kafka expresses is certainly not that of the explorer introduced to various cultures but is rather a foray into the dense regions of the mind. This region, unlike that to which Canetti's character Kien, "his sapless legs [pressed] hard against each other," retreats (i.e., to History, which will not forsake him, to the circumscribed world of the intellect) (*Auto Da Fe* 147) is not such a self-inscribed region for the conscious pariah. It would

rather be a place where the pariah may exercise her introspective capacity, removed from the romantic, from the self-circuscribed comprehension (of the experiences of others). The solitude of the conscious pariah may be served initially by a sort of introspection which is capable of being extended into critical thinking. Solitude may be a region where she may transcend the boundaries of romantic imagination and, with this consequential more agile imagination, traverse the obstacles created by isolation. (See again Seyla Benhabib, "The Pariah and Her Shadow" in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* 91).

In 1946, Arendt, in correspondence to Jaspers, used metaphor to describe her experiences as a pariah. With more or less humour, she wrote that living on the margins of society puts one at risk of either being pelted with rocks (*"gesteinigt"*) or being driven mad with hunger *("oder zum Hungertode")*; both kinds of vicious out-casting leading ultimately to one's condemnation *("verurteilt zu werden")* (29 Jan 1946 A- J *Briefwechsel* 65). In such an apparently bleak existence, however, in the struggle to exist on the margins, the innate desire of the isolated to find a home in the world might very well propel her into the world and reduce her isolation. The powerful desire to find a home may very well urge the solitary meanderings of the mind into expression, into the world, where experiences of the solitaire become accessible.

The characteristic Otherness of the person living on the margins, which, in turn, endows her perspective, as Ronald Beiner writes, allows her then to "[weigh] the *possible* judgments of an imagined Other . . . , " (Beiner, "Interpretative Essay" in *Hannah Arendt: Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* 92). In being a student, the pariah becomes a teacher. It is, then, the storyteller's dexterous hand, the exercise of inscribing, which grants entry for debate and critical thought. It is not so much that otherwise seemingly hapless or random events are given meaning through storytelling but that the storyteller allows for debate where meaning or expression might otherwise be stifled by the lack of discussion. It is then the responsibility of this craftsperson, this *homo faber,* to extend reason to impulse by naming, or by ascribing meaning to the sensuous element of human experience. The storyteller, who may be the autobiographical character of the tale, may as well be the pariah and the judge (or critical thinker). In enlarging individual experience within a critical consciousness of the Other, such a person creates inclusion from exclusion. She broadens the horizons of

our sensibilities by revealing the Other as foundational to the human condition, to a *"man eine menschenwürdige Existenz"* (Arendt to Karl Jaspers 29 Jan 1946 A-J*Briefwechsel* 65) and by simultaneously showing that plurality and publicity are principal concepts of disclosure and awareness.

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