

UPPSALA UNIVERSITET
Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen
Avd. för retorik
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Licentiatavhandling

Speaking the Anachronisms

Arendt, Politics, Temporality

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Framlägg den 11 juni 2015

Lokal: 6-0031, Engelska parken

Tid: 15.15–17.00

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Prologue: Towards a Question of Political Speaking

How can something be recognized as political speech and action? What phenomena have to be in place for political speech and action to appear and be known as such?

These questions have guided much critical activist and academic attention the last three decades. The answers have varied and many have pointed out that the possibility to be recognized as a speaker (and yet alone as a political speaker) depend on the speaking body's race, gender, class, functionality, sexuality, etc. Many have also pointed out the economic, social, cultural, and institutional support—or lack thereof—that has to be in place for anything like a political speaker to appear. Numerous power regimes have undergone critical scrutiny in order to provide answers the above questions, where, in short, they have pointed to the various conceptual horizons of politics, the subject, the speaking, the action, and what phenomena that are allowed to be included in these categories, through the uses of language, institutions, materials, affects, and symbols.

The above questions were also what led me on the search for alternative speakers, set in alternative political circumstances, and with alternative political agendas. Without too much scratching on the surface, thanks to the ones who had gone looking before me, I found Elsa Laula (1877–1931) (later Elsa Laula Renberg).¹ She was part of the Sami community, an indigenous population living in the north of Scandinavia and northwestern Russia, and in the beginning of the 20th century she managed to start, organize, and lead a political and civil rights movement in the scarcely populated north region of Sweden. Laula's political speaking and actions were immensely important for the political organization of the Sami: she raised the awareness of the suffering and colonization of the Sami, she spoke for Sami rights in front of the Swedish parliament, she raised support from the Women's movement and the Temperance movement, and she argued widely in the press for Sami land rights and rights to equal education. However, my findings showed that Laula was not recognized as a political speaker or political actor to any great degree by the Swedish majority press at the time (Buhre, 2011). How could it be that her political suggestions were not listened to? Why were her political demands not recognized as

¹ See Vuokko Hirvonen, *Voices from Sápmi: Sami Women's Path to Authorship* (2008), and Patrik Lantto, *Tiden börjar på nytt: En analys av samernas etnopolitiska mobilisering i Sverige 1900-1950* (2000), for discussions on Laula's importance for the Sami political movement.

legitimate and met with a political discussion? Indeed, why were they not even registered as political speaking and actions?

The answers came in many forms, but one very significant was that the Swedish majority press did not perceive of Laula as a political speaking subject because they placed her in a different time than the Swedish majority's. Her temporality was past, lost, and silent, and it could not offer the Swedish journalists conditions where political speaking and action were perceived to be possible. Based on the ways the Swedish press perceived her temporal belonging, her speaking was simply a paradox or a catachresis within the idea of the political, and as such it was met with silence, ridicule, questioning of her legitimacy, racism, sexism, and romanticism (Buhre, 2011). My conclusion was that her speaking was not recognized as political speaking because its temporality was not perceived as a political temporality.

With this brief reflection on how conceptualizations of time can be used in dominating ways, I start my inquiry, again asking: "How can anything be recognized as political speaking?" but with a small adjustment: "What are the temporal conditions that enable anything to be conceptualizations as political speaking?" And following from that first question: "Can we come up with alternative notions of time, and can these alternatives enable a more fine-tuned understanding of the possible temporalities of political speech and action?" My hope is that these alternative understandings of time can be mobilized in particular contexts so that more speaking and acting can be recognized as political.

1. Introduction: Speaking Political Temporalities

Within the contemporary late capitalistic and globalizing world, different groups have access to different temporalities in very real but multifaceted ways: most colonized peoples have been deprived of large parts of their history, children in the slums of the global south of the possibility to plan for a better future, and most refugee camps along the southern shores of Europe holds its inhabitants in an in-definite present. These examples of political distributions of time spur certain questions for rhetoricians and critics interested in the production and circulation of speech-action. In what intersection of time and speech do we recognize someone as a political speaker and something as a political claim? What notions of time in relation to what forms of speech enable such conceptual topographies as for example progress and the coming of the new to take political form? And maybe more important, what notions of time and what forms of speech are not recognized as political? Or, put more simply: how do we talk about time when we talk about politics, and what consequences does it have?

These questions concern the force that speech exercises over time: how speech is part of the production of certain notions of time (e.g. how political discourse makes it possible to consider colonized peoples as having no history), but also the force that temporalities exercise over speech: how temporalities structure what can be said and in what ways (e.g. if we see our time as a march towards progress, then how are we to account for and talk about the possibility of growing global inequalities?). Both of these forms of forces in the speech-time intersection distribute power in various ways.

To ask questions on political temporalities quickly leads into difficulties. Time is not usually understood as being political, or as having multiple layers of intersecting power dynamics. Rather, in the modern Western, scientifically oriented, and economically so called rationalized world, time has made itself known to us as one of the axes which constitutes 'reality,' and with that, it passes by as unmarked or unnoticed. From this perspective of 'reality.' it follows that time is perceived as quantifiable, measurable, natural, and fundamentally un-political. This unmarkedness of time prompts the need to point out its marked position, or simply, the language used to express it.

At the same time, time in politics has been coded into an idea of future-orientedness (the idea that the aim of politics is to bring a better future into being). This futurism is constituted by a trope in which the future has gained a self-given position and dominates all expression of politics and its various other modes of possible temporalities. In the wake of this over-arching futurism follows ideas of progression, exclusion of unwanted futures, and of given trajectories and models on how to achieve the most wanted future. I explore these topics from the perspective of anachronisms, that is, the non-rectilinear, non-chronological mode of time in which various temporalities function in ways out of the ordinary, out of its bounds. I use the term anachronism to name all the temporal anomalies I work with, both the ones that can be mobilized for dominative purposes and the ones that potentially can open for more optimistic ways to think about political change. As anachronisms take their starting point in being out of the ordinary, of corrupting the dominating modes of time, and futurisms are the ordinary in politics, it follows that I critique these futurisms by means of pointing out their anachronisms. In short, this thesis has a futuristic leaning, but with an anachronistic longing.

This thesis seeks to address the relationship between time, political speech-action, and power, or the temporal conditions of possibility for politics to appear. I go into dialogue with the works of Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), with the aim to find both useful critiques of time's dominative power, but also suggestive alternatives of time's enabling power. By engaging with the political thinking of Arendt I wish to entangle some of the reasons why the concept of political speech-action has such dangerous connotations, and potentially move to more enabling ways of thinking the political speech-action anew. My hope is that the temporal conceptual topographies that I find in Arendt's work can be used to understand the mechanisms of power as they are played out in the multifaceted and rich contexts in which something is or is not recognized as political speaking.

Arendt's work and the questions she poses have relevance for the field of rhetorical studies because it contributes to a theoretical re-evaluation of the role of political speech-actions (in a general sense), power (in both its enabling and dominative forms), and the rather hopeful theoretical position that the possibility to begin something new does indeed exist (without falling back on neo-liberal notions of agency nor on totalizing utopian longings) within the realm of politics. As I wish to suggest in this study, Arendt's concept of political speech-action can contribute to the

strand of rhetorical theory that focuses on speech acts, performativity and interpellation, in which naming (speech) and doing (action) are intertwined and interrelated and constitute each other and the world of appearances. By focusing on the temporal shape of this interrelation and constitution, the thesis offers a yet unexplored aspect of speech-actions in rhetorical theory. These matters—speech-action, politics, power—can be said to form one of the mainstreams in rhetorical scholarship, but up until recently, little attention has been given to the work of Arendt.²

This study provides a rhetorical frame of reference and therefore reads the political speech-action as the central concept. It also focuses on the triad of past, present, future, as Arendt conceptualizes it, and as such, the study offers a contribution to the existing field of Arendtian scholarship. My audience is twofold: the rhetoricians who seek to understand Arendt's concept of the political speech-action better and thus gain an alternative way of thinking of rhetoric, but also the

² Taking cue from Dilip Gaonkar's essay "Rhetoric and Its Double: Reflections on the Rhetorical Turn in the Human Sciences" (1990), David A. Frank argues in "1958 and the Rhetorical Turn in 20th-Century Thought" (2011) the curious coincidence that a large amount of books with obvious rhetorical relevance, such as Arendt's *The Human Condition*, Stephen Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* and Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's *Traite' de l'argumentation—la nouvelle rhétorique*, were all published in 1958. Frank argues that this revival of rhetorical interest should be understood in historical light of the genocides of the Second World War and the emergence of the Cold War (Frank, 2011, p. 240). Another essay that discusses Arendt's relevance for rhetoric is Guiseppe Ballaci's "Actualizing Democratic Citizenship: Arendt and Classical Rhetoric on Judgment and Persuasion" (2014) in which he argues that Arendt's turn away from philosophy and towards political practice makes her turn to the distinctly rhetorical writings of the Roman (mainly Cicero and Quintilian) and Humanist (mainly Vico) tradition, but also to parts of the rhetorical tradition of ancient Greece (Isocrates and Aristotle) (Ballaci, 2014, pp. 382ff.). Another example is Bryan Garsten's *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (2006) in which he devotes a chapter to criticizing Kant with the help of Arendt (2006, pp. 84–112). Garsten discusses Arendt's way of reading Kant in a rhetoric- and communication-friendly manner, and he sympathizes with what she wants to do and the argument that she develops, but Garsten claims that Arendt does too favorably a reading of Kant (Garsten, 2006, pp. 84ff., 101ff.) See also Linda G. Zerilli "We Feel Our Freedom': Imagination and Judgment in the Thought of Hannah Arendt" (2004) in which she notes the difference between rhetorical and rational speech. Worth noting is also the early and introductory article "Argument Without Truth? Hannah Arendt on Political Judgment and Public Persuasion" (1997) in which John S. Nelson argues that Arendt's rejection of metaphysical truths opened up for rhetorically relevant concepts such as persuasion, tropes and *mythos*. Others have noted the relevance of Arendt's interpretation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Jaekel, 1998) and Augustine's concept of memory and the will, and its importance for rhetoric (Tell, 2006). However, these studies either focus on the classical rhetorical tradition, and Arendt's affinity to it (Ballaci, 2014; Jaekel, 1998; Tell, 2006), or on how Arendt's thought can counter ideals of rationalized discourse (Garsten, 2006; Zerilli, 2004), or they utilize Arendt in order to show how rhetoric as a field of study can incorporate her concepts (Frank, 2011; Nelson, 1997; Zerilli, 2004). I am sympathetic to all these approaches, but none of them provide an analysis of her concept of political speech and action as a rhetorical theory of speech-action in which naming (speech) and doing (action) are intertwined and interrelated, nor do they focus on the temporalities of this interrelation.

Arendtian scholar who seeks to explore a central aspect of Arendt's work from a temporal perspective.

Three Aims Leading to Three Questions

The overarching aim of this thesis is to suggest how conceptual topographies of time can both dominate and enable political speech-action. I have chosen to focus on politics because the realm of politics in the 20th and the 21st centuries has developed into a fearful apparatus of dominative power, while simultaneously, politics offers the only possible realm in which this domination can be challenged. Politics is, so to say, both the problem and its solution.

By reading Arendt I wish to entangle some of the temporal power regimes of politics. This, I believe, is in line with Arendt's own purpose for working with politics, which she characterizes as: "a reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point of our newest experiences and our most recent fears" (Arendt, 1998, p. 5), even if I limit my scope to 'a reconsideration of Arendt's writing on the temporalities of political speech-action in relation to our newest experiences and our most recent fears.' Or more simply, with the help of Arendt, I attempt "to think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1998, p. 5).

In order to start the task of talking about time and politics, the first aim of the thesis is to map the various temporalities that Arendt, and the texts she chooses to go into dialogue with, describes as formative of political speech-actions, with a particular focus on explaining Arendt's notions of rectilinear and futuristic time in relation to anachronisms. The second aim is to discuss what power structures (both enabling and dominative) these topographies imply and reiterate, and therefore provide a conceptualization of these relations to use in critical rhetorical analysis. The third aim is to suggest alternative ways of understanding these topographies in ways that can potentially break out of the specific power regimes in the texts, and therefore provide some possibly new ways of thinking the temporal (underpinnings of the) political speech-action in particular circumstances. This third aim is not an attempt to formulate universalist or inherently non-dominative concepts to be used everywhere and in all political situations, but rather to suggest alternative conceptual temporalities that might be employed in particular situations in order to counterfeit dominant temporal understandings of the political in that particular context. The first aim is

therefore explanatory, whereas the second is exploratory, and the third is normatively engaged.

The broader aim of my dissertation is to map, explain and suggest conceptual topographies of time and political speech-actions, and therefore I want to read Arendt's work in dialogue with other theorists that develop similar themes and that her work can productively be intertwined with. However, as this licentiate thesis is the first out of two planned studies, this first part will only consider the writings of Arendt. In this licentiate thesis, I read Arendt's discussions of other theorists and examine her arguments, but I will not engage in any thorough discussion with these thinkers in their own right. In the dissertation, I will engage with questions that Arendt's work suggests but are not fully developed in her work, especially the relationship between the sphere of necessity and the sphere of politics, as well as the spatial topographies Arendt uses to delineate the political speech-action.

The questions that I put forth in the prologue (““What are the temporal conditions of possibility that enable anything to be conceptualizations as political speaking?” and following from that first question: “Can we come up with alternative notions of time, and can these alternatives enable a more fine-tuned understanding of the possible temporalities of political speech and action?”) can become more concrete if we structure them in relation to the three aims of the thesis: 1. What concepts of time enable political speech-action to come into existence, according to Arendt and in her reading of various dialogue partners? 2. What power dynamics come into play with these theoretical conceptualizations of the temporality of political speech-action? 3. Can we imagine these topographies in alternative ways that open up for other power dynamics to be formed, and thus enable a more fine-tuned understanding of the temporalities of the political speech-action to be mobilized in particular situations?

Speaking the Anachronisms

In Arendt's work, there is a persistent tension between a rectilinear notion of time, in which the succession of events is portrayed as fitted onto the scale of a past-present-future chronology, and all the other topographies of time equally important in her work. One of these alternative topographies of time can be found in her discussion of the circularity of the nature and cosmos in ancient Greece that according to her can be

broken only by the straight cut of the extraordinary deed; another is the clash between the forces of past and the future moving towards each other, in which the starting point of both past and future stretches out infinitely and where their endpoint is in the realization of the thinking human who stands in this clash; a third is the capacity of promising and forgiving, that works in the present to bind and release the future and the past; and so it moves on with more examples. I have chosen to focus on these tensions between chronology and the other modes of time in Arendt's work because I believe that by breaking the rigid time structure of chronology and most especially with its relation to the future, more possibilities to engage with the political speech-action can open up.

One of the ways in which to discuss alternatives to the past-present-future chronology or to find some of its paradoxes is to turn to its dismissed other: the anachronisms, the *ana-chronos*, or the trope that speaks against time.³ As noted by many scholars of queer temporalities and postcolonial temporalities, there will always be temporal anomalies that cannot fit into the model of past-present-future chronology, that resist “regulatory technologies of sequence” as Valerie Rohy puts it in *Anachronism and Its Others: Sexuality, Race, Temporality* (2010, p. 128). Elizabeth Freeman also reads counter-hegemonic temporalities as ways of interrupting “empty, homogenous time”—the term coined by Benjamin to name the spatialized calendar time, in service of progress and nationality. Freeman, in *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (2010), focuses on all sorts of rhetorical figures that queer proper time: “asynchrony, anachronism, anastrophe, belatedness,

³ In *Webster's Dictionary*, “chronology” is defined as: “[Gr. *chronos*, time, and *logos*, a description, from *legein*, to describe.] 1. the science of ascertaining the fixed periods when past events took place and of arranging them in the order of occurrence. [...]” (Webster & McKechnie, 1977, p. 322) In the same volume, “anachronism” is defined as: “[Gr. *anachronismos*, from *anachronizein*, to refer to a wrong time; *ana*, against, and *chronos*, time.] 1. the representation of something as existing or occurring at other than its proper time, especially at an earlier time. 2. anything out of its proper historical time.” (Webster & McKechnie, 1977, p. 63) It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss the etymology of *chronos*, but John E. Smith defines it, in “Time, Times, and the 'Right Time': *Chronos* and *Kairos*,” as “the uniform time of the cosmic system” and “time as measure” specifically of a quantifiable measure as opposed to *kairos* which is the qualitative measure of the position of a speech-action or event, the appropriate time or the time of a particular opportunity (Smith, 1969, p. 1). See also Hans Ruin in “Time as Ek-stasis and the Trace of the Other” (2011) who related the etymology of the word “time” to *di*, or partition, and relates this meaning of partition to *chronos* and the ordering of events (2011, p. 52). For an extended discussion on *chronos* and its relation to *kairos*, see also Philip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin (Eds.) *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis* (2002) and Kimberley Hutchings *Time and World Politics: Thinking the Present* (2008), esp. chapter 1 and 2, where the first concerns the concept of *chronos* and *kairos* and the second the history of their usage by early modern European thinkers (Hutchings, 2008, pp. 4–9, 28–52). For a review of the concept of *kairos* in rhetorical theory, see the literature review below.

compression, delay, ellipsis, flashback, hysteron-proteron, pause, prolepsis, repetition, reversal, surprise, and other ways of breaking apart” proper time (Freeman, 2010, p. xxii). Rather than naming all of these modes of breaking apart proper time ‘queer temporalities’ I have chosen to use the term ‘anachronisms’ because, simply, it connotes ‘against chronological time.’

The anachronistic mode of naming against time, of using the present concept to name the past (and possibly also the future), is often seen as doing injustice to the past. As Sara Edenheim discusses in *The Anachronism: Against the Historical Mania* (2011)⁴ the anachronism is often acknowledged as impossible to avoid (indeed, how could anybody hope to name the past accurately? To be able to erase the differences between the us in the now and the they in the then?). According to Edenheim, acknowledging the impossibility to avoid anachronisms is often coupled with the impossible solution of more “chronology, continuity, and reconstructions” (Edenheim, 2011, p. 13).⁵ For Edenheim, this impossible ideal of chronology (used in order to avoid the inevitable anachronism) is coupled with the moral task of writing history in a way that makes it useful for the present. To historicize is to teach the now how to avoid the dangers of the past (Edenheim, 2011, p. 20). I argue that chronology reduces the past to a means-end relationship, where the past becomes a means to inform the present on what to do in whatever particularity of the present. Anachronisms on the other hand, acknowledge that the otherness of the past cannot be reduced to sameness and that every attempt to force it into chronology works to utilize it for the present. The same is true for naming the future in terms of chronology: every attempt to force it into chronology works to reduce the future to a sameness of the present.

Anachronisms come in many forms and they stand in opposition to dominative, or in the words of Rohy, hegemonic time:

I use the term *anachronism* to name a range of temporal anomalies, from backwardness to prematurity, regression to anticipation, the ‘primitive’ to the future perfect. [...] Given the scope of temporal aberrations at play in American discourses of race and sexuality, then, a full account of such discourses must account for a broad field of effects opposed to the regular, linear, and unidirectional pattern that I will call *straight time*. Straight time is not simply heterosexual time, but it has, in tandem with the cult of reproductive futurism, served systematically to devalue queer subjects. Nor is it always white time, but its notions of linear progress crucially inform racist discourses (Rohy, 2010, p. xiv).

⁴ *Anakronismen: Mot den historiska manin*, my translation.

⁵ “[K]ronologi, kontinuitet och rekonstruktioner,” my translation.

Rohy's purpose is to read race and sexuality with the help of anachronisms and against dominative notions of time as the regular, linear and unidirectional time that she calls straight time.

My purpose is similar to Rohy's in the sense that I read speech-action with the help of anachronisms and against the dominative notions of time, but as I move in a tradition of thought more closely related to philosophy, political theory and rhetorical theory, I name the hegemonic time *chronological futurism*. The topography of chronology is composed of measurable units occurring at regular intervals in a unidirectional linearity (i.e. rectilinearity), whereas futurism presupposes that the force of the future 'acts back' on the present and structures it. There is a clash between chronology and futurism where the first acts forward in its explanatory power and the other acts backwards in its explanatory power, but it is a clash that is not acknowledged. Therefore, the chronological futurism is never purely chronological, but traces of anachronisms insert themselves even in its most assertive rectilinearity.

The anachronisms can name the anomalies of chronological futurism, and by this naming they resist some of its dominative power. Jeremy Tambling notes in *On Anachronism* that this resistance does not necessarily mean that anachronisms per definition constitute the time of the repressed and chronology the time of the hegemonic (Tambling, 2010, pp. 1f.). Rather, anachronisms can be used for all sorts of political ideas and ideals. Indeed, as well as it is true that chronological futurism forms the most powerful conceptual horizon of how time makes itself known to us in politics, it is equally true that anachronisms are immanent to chronology and can be adopted to either refute or reiterate chronology's power. For example, progression—arguably the most dominative political framing of time in the present moment—holds an inherent anachronism because it assumes that the future is both open to change and simultaneously already laid out as 'better.' As such, anachronisms are not by nature any less power-laden than chronologies, but because of their status as out of the ordinary, of acting against time, there is at least a subversive potential within them that could possibly counter dominative temporalities.

As such, I understand anachronisms as both the counterpart of chronological futurism—because they resist the ontology and regulation of sequence—and as inherent to chronological futurism—because chronological futurism itself must turn to anachronisms in order to be mobilized in particular situations. Chronology, I argue, is

always a fiction (albeit a powerful one) and its rectilinearity is never complete: it always leaks or overflows with anachronisms. These anachronisms can, I argue, be mobilized in the realm of politics in order to reinterpret what can appear as political speech-action.

Method: Conceptual Topographies

Physical Time is seldom used in its naked, chronological form. More often than not, chronologies shade into Mundane or Typological Time. As distancing devices, categorizations of this kind are used, for instance, when we are told that [...] certain styles of thought are identified as "savage" or "primitive." Labels that connote temporal distancing need not have explicitly temporal references (such as cyclical or repetitive). Adjectives like mythical, ritual, or even tribal, will serve the same function.

(Fabian, 1983, p. 30)

As Johannes Fabian indicate in the quote above, from *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983), time's explanatory power does not often come in the form of naked chronologies. Rather, the epistemological attempt to know an object, for example anthropology or political speech-action, is often made through various labels of temporal distancing (and closeness, I would add). These labels do not have to be explicitly temporal, but rather they form patterns of thought that relate to various temporalities. I have chosen to investigate these connotations in what I call conceptual topographies.⁶ By this, I mean spheres of conceptual relationships formed around certain overarching themes. I map these topographies of time in the theoretical texts, critically discuss them and construct some new topographies that can be used to better understand the functions of temporalities in politics.

Before discussing conceptual topographies, I want to make a short comment on conceptual care and its importance. The metaphorical character of conceptual work introduces some questions concerning reality and language. When I talk about anachronisms, am I referring the practices of ascribing incorrect terms to a particular

⁶ I want to extend my thanks to Elliot Heilman at Northwestern University, who first introduced the concept to me. Many others have used conceptual topographies in a similar way as I do. See for example Julia Brauch et al. in *Jewish Topographies: Visions of Space, Traditions of Place* (2008); Sabine Hake's *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (2008); and F. Theuvs et al. in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (2001).

historical period ('Jesus was a socialist,' etc.)? Or am I moving in a purely cognitive or linguistic reality where these words take on an aesthetic significance with no real or material implication? I would say that the answer is both. Following the argument that Judith Butler puts forth in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), the using of language is a way to interact with matter and this interaction has consequences. For example, if we assume that the political speech-action is an inherently temporal practice and call it such, it will affect it, and if we call it a spatial practice, it will affect it differently. These concepts produce, to use a terminology borrowed from Butler, regulatory practices through citational or performative powers (Butler, 1993, pp. 12–16). But this performative function of language (that it produces what it names) is not a one-way street where language produces matter. Butler claims that language itself is also material. This might seem post-structural in its core, but the claim that language is material was already integral to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The German Ideology* (1998). They argue that language is the manifest form of the Spirit, and that it is burdened with matter:

The "mind" is from the outset afflicted with the curse of being "burdened" with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language *is* practical, real consciousness that exists for other men as well, and only therefore does it also exist for me; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 49).⁷

This is a position rather similar to Arendt's: that language is the material form of consciousness, thinking and meaning, because it exists for other humans as well as for the individual's mind, and that it structures what can be known of sensory experience, or what she calls the world of appearances. Following from this train of thought, I do not make a clear distinction between matter and meaning, but rather, in line with the argument that Doreen Massey puts forth in *For Space* (2005), I see them as working in interactive and dynamic relations where they constantly and simultaneously constitute each other (Massey, 2005, p. 9). This interchange between language and matter means that if we care about the matter of politics, we must also care of the

⁷ "Der „Geist“ hat von vornherein den Fluch an sich, mit der Materie 'behaftet' zu sein, die hier in der Form von bewegten Luftschichten, Tönen, kurz der Sprache auftritt. Die Sprache ist so alt wie das Bewußtsein – die Sprache *ist* das praktische, auch für andre Menschen existierende, also auch für mich selbst erst existierende wirkliche Bewußtsein, und die Sprache entsteht, wie das Bewußtsein, erst aus dem Bedürfnis, der Notdurft des Verkehrs mit andern Menschen." (Marx & Engels, 1960, p. 27)

concepts of politics, even if it means that we must lose ourselves in metaphors. Because, again, we are already lost in, indeed constituted by, metaphors.

This interaction between matter and meaning becomes extra troubled when it comes to the concepts of time. Indeed, as soon as we try to explain what we mean by time, the confusion starts. Or, as Augustine famously stated in his *Confessions* (1991): “What then is time? Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know.” (Augustine, 1991, p. 230) Time is hard to put into words, maybe because its materiality is up for debate, but on the other hand, time is a theme that has been put into rather many words in Western intellectual history, and has thus been materialized at least in that way. And if thinking is done through our use of words, then thinking becomes, maybe not easier, but more productive by using certain words.

So, given that we care about the concepts of time and concept of politics because they have material consequences (they are material and they produce any understanding of materiality), I have chosen to focus on conceptual topographies. My understanding of conceptual topographies is wider than a collection of words laid out in a visual cluster, and I mean it to be concerned with: the ways in which certain words become thematically related to other words; the guilt-by-association of one word to another word; the performative functions that one word has on another word; the path words take to other words (and especially the short routes where one meaning, association and function immediately takes on other meanings, associations, and functions); the relational character of their historically placed grammar or meaning structure; and the ways in which they encompass, transmit and embody the possibility to communicate other realities. In short, these topographies tie theoretical bonds, and I have chosen to call them topographies because of the connection to both map-making, to the visual (and its connection to the imaginary) and to *topos* (Gr. place). To investigate the conceptual topographies of temporalities of political speech-actions is therefore to investigate the theoretical bonds between concepts of time and the political.

The lens through which I read these conceptual topographies is not etymological, even if I encourage etymological studies of them. One could also ask why I am not concerned with the spatial and temporal conditions of possibility that Arendt’s work appeared in. This is an undertaking which I generally encourage for anyone interested in understanding why theories evolve and develop the way they do,

but for the purpose of providing critical tools for understanding and ways of re-thinking the temporalities of political speech-actions in various rhetorical situations, I believe that a level of abstraction can be necessary. This abstraction must, of course, always be brought back to temporal and spatial concretion if anyone chooses to use these conceptual topographies for the purpose of doing rhetorical criticism.⁸

The theme of the first conceptual topography concerns the *anachronisms of reproductive eternity in relation to reproductive futurism* in Arendt's reading of Platonic political philosophy. When Arendt tries to break out of the dominative forces of the reproductive temporalities of political philosophy, she also dismantles many of the *topographies of authoritarian modes of time within the past-future interlude*, which is the second topography that I discuss. The last topography is more present-oriented and optimistic, and concerns the ways in which political speech-actions can be actualized in *the topography of multiple layers in the present* in Arendt's work.

Setting the Time: Finding the Concepts

All distinctions, as Derrida reminds us, become fuzzy at the edges whereas at the centers they only reiterate a pervasive emptiness. Definitions must always miss the mark, so to say. However, nominalism is a methodological necessity, even if it will always remain incomplete (Spivak, 1996, p. 143), and must function as a preliminary (or even pragmatist) delineation of the subject at hand. The concepts of this thesis will

⁸ This reference to the concretion of a particular rhetorical-political situation should not be mistaken for Lloyd Bitzer's discussion of the rhetorical situation in which a situation calls forth the rhetorical response (a model that I find too one-sided) (1968). Rather, I like the distinction that Laurent Berlant uses it in *Cruel Optimism* (2011) between "situation" and "event:"

A situation is a state of things in which *something* that will perhaps matter is unfolding amid the usual activity of life. It is a state of animated and animating suspension that forces itself on consciousness, that produces a sense of the emergence of something in the present that may become an event (Berlant, 2011, p. 5).

Berlant follows Alain Badiou in understanding the event as: "that element in the situation that elaborates the potential good in a radical break, and the antisovereign effect of the situation that undoes the subject and general sureties threatens ethical action." (Berlant, 2011, p. 5) The event is then the radical break with the given social order as well as the possible anti-sovereign or anti-hegemonic consequences of that break, whereas the (rhetorical-political) situation is a form of possible preclude to the event. The situation is not as 'eventful' as the event: it does not necessarily hold any radicality, and can be of very a mundane character. If the situation is a form of suspension which holds the possibility of opening up to an event, then the rhetorical character of it is the means by which the situation is both held in its suspension-ness but also the means by which it is possibly mediated into an event. In a situation, there is both the possibility to mediate stability as well as change, and any concept that enters into this situation can be mobilized for both of these.

be discussed underway and this section only offers some preliminary remarks so as to start the process of untangling the various conceptual topographies. I begin with time and temporality, move on to power and how politics is power's scene of actualization, and finally I discuss speech-actions as the modality through which power is made both in enabling and dominating forms.

As I hope is clear by this point, the subject of this texts is not time itself. My aim with this text is not to, based on a reading of Arendt, formulate an answer to the question 'what is time?' It is not even 'what is the time of politics?' Rather, my question is: what are the temporalities of the political speech-action, and what consequences do they have? And in order to answer that question, I have chosen to discuss Arendt's answer to the question: what is the time or temporality of the political speech-action?

With that, I simply treat time as a conceptual formation—hereafter referred to as the 'concept of time' or 'temporality.' If 'time' is the word that Arendt or any of the other theorists use in order to describe succession, progression, the future, movement, or anything else, then 'temporality' is the word I use to describe their uses of the word 'time.' These temporalities can be grammatically organized as follows: if I use the form 'future' I mean it as it is portrayed in the texts, and if I use the word "futurity" it is the regularization of 'future' into a trope with certain systematized and powered characteristics, and by 'futurism' I intend the overarching system where futurity overtrumps any other temporality.

Different temporalities can be actualized in different settings, and no full-fledged answer can be given to their epistemic or ontological status, because it depends on the situation where they are actualized. Often, though, they are actualized with some characteristics in common: 1. Any temporality has duration and effects transgressing that of any individual person or any particular place and often tend to have a bearing that is wide in scope. 2. Any temporality also always exists alongside other temporalities, and they form a pattern or system that together affirms certain power mechanisms. That means that the dominance and importance of certain temporalities increase in some political discourses and decrease in others. The same temporality can also be perceived differently at various places and in different time periods, and can become coded as for example speeded, slow, dominant, passive, curious but insignificant, or directly threatening depending on situation.

With this argument it follows that I give temporalities a certain agency, or force, at least in their reiterated form. One could argue that it is not temporalities that make time, but actors who have ideas about time that make time, but I take a more performative-oriented perspective. Ideas and concepts of time are part of the grammar of everyday life and powers, and their interpellations into subjects are just as crucial as any subject's use of a particular temporality according to her or his purposes. Indeed, temporalities are often effective speech-actions because of their unmarkedness and perceived universality. For example, we often do not see that future-orientedness shapes our political speech-actions and ourselves, because we take it to be self-evident, universal and timeless. However, that givenness is the performative effect of a "reiteration of a norm or a set of norms, and to the extent that it acquires an act-like status in the present, it conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition" to borrow a phrasing from Butler (Butler, 1993, p. 12). Therefore, it is beyond the power of any one individual to change the total forceful function of any particular temporality, but it is within the possibility to misuse the grammar of its reiteration and therefore partly to replace or redirect its criteria of intelligibility. This can be done through speech-actions.

My understanding of political speech-actions is to a large extent gathered from Arendt and I see *politics as the sphere of human plurality (difference and sameness), held together by power relations, in which both enabling and domination is made and maintained by human action grounded in speech.*⁹ These are condensed sentences but there is a sort of consequential line here that can be represented as follows: plurality → power → politics → speech-actions → enabling/dominating. Let me unpack this conceptual linkage a bit.

Politics starts from the ontological claim on Arendt's (and my) behalf that humans are both different and the same from one another. Arendt uses the terms "distinction" and "equality," but it seems to me that they are charged with normative ideals (distinction comes close to excellence, and equality comes close to a organization of human relations) and I rather want to highlight difference and

⁹ This is a conundrum of Arendt's position, where I have gathered her notion of politics as the sphere that both separates and relates humans; that makes us the same and different simultaneously (Arendt, 1998, pp. 7ff., 22f., 52, 175, 182f.), and that speech and action are the political means of expression of politics (Arendt, 1998, pp. 3, 12ff., 25f., 175–180). This is combined with her idea of natality, or the ontological ability to start something new (Arendt, 1998, pp. 9ff., 176ff., 189, 247) which is coupled with the ability to create permanence within the frailty of human affairs (Arendt, 1998, pp. 55ff., 197, 232ff.).

sameness as epistemological functions (Arendt, 1998, pp. 175f.). If we were all the same, no differences (of language, thinking, acting, bodies, etc.) would exist and there would be no need to negotiate these differences, but if we were all different, we would not enter human relationships and there would be no interaction and hence no need for speech-action or politics. This is the epistemological claim of plurality, and it is important to note that for both me and for Arendt, it is extended temporally so that difference and sameness are also part of being with humans and the world of human affairs in the past and the future (Arendt, 1998, pp. 175f.). If plurality is the basic ontological claim, the rest of the concepts above are more interrelated and they reinforce or recreate each other.

The simultaneity of difference and sameness creates a tension that is negotiated in the sphere of politics. Politics is thus the in-between sphere that arises as soon as humans *inter-act*, and this in-between can be mobilized to both uphold the power dynamics already present in this interaction or it can work to change them. It is both immanent to the interaction (it does not come from outside, as a cause, the will, or a godly interference) and changeable. Action in this interactive form is always undergirded by speech which is a point mostly, but not always, clear in Arendt's understanding and that I have chosen to emphasize. Speech provides the framework for making the world appear as it does to us individually (language precedes our interaction with phenomena) and together (language is also always already shared, so this world of appearances is structured by language and can never be the property of one speaker-actor).

Speech-action is therefore a term that brings together two of Arendt's main concepts, and I discuss this in relation to her writing more in detail further on under "Political Speech-Actions, Plurality, and Newness." Now it is sufficient to say that *speech-action* resembles *speech acts* and the *force* of speech-action resembles *performativity*, as Butler discusses it (Butler, 1993, p. xxiff.). Speech-actions are similar to speech acts because they both act and name at the same time, i.e. they are constitutive of what we call reality because language is tied up with any experience of reality and we cannot separate the one from the other. Speech-actions also have a force or performativity in the relation between humans and matter because they structure what is possible to experience. Force is a problematic concept to use in relation to Arendt's work, because she uses it differently in different texts (see p. 58 n. 43, for a longer discussion). I have here chosen to use it as the effect or energy that

is released when movements of some sort (physical or social) appears, which is the way she uses it in *Between Past and Future* in relation to the performativity of time (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 10ff., see also, 1970, pp. 44f.)

With the risk of repeating myself: speech-actions are never the property of any individual, but receive their agency from the chain of articulation in which they are a part, and without which they could never make sense and even less make common sense. Speech-actions, rather than being statements by individuals with the will to do or say something, are therefore one of the sites of actuality in which both politics and its power tension is constantly in a state of becoming.

I have chosen to look upon speech-action as either enabling or dominating. This is somewhat moving away from Arendt's conceptual scheme, because for her, the political speech-action is always enabling of the coming of the new, spontaneity and freedom (and with freedom, the recognition of difference and sameness). For her, rulership is what holds the dominating modes of expression in the form of command and obedience (a point I develop more in Chapter 3). However, I believe that the concept of the political speech-action must be balanced with a characteristic that is not altogether enabling, but does not fully enter the realm of rulership and command. Something that is also actualized in the sphere of the political and its power dynamics of difference and sameness, but that does not always work in exactly the idealized way that Arendt portrays the political speech-action.¹⁰ Speech-actions of domination exclude difference and forcefully demand sameness. Speech-actions of enabling recognize difference and attempts to speak within the framework of seeing and hearing the world from the perspective of the other. Politics provides the scene of this enabling or domination of difference and sameness, and speech-actions are the modalities through which the tension between the two is made. The outcome of these modalities can either be the coming of the new or of permanence, or simply change or stability. Neither of these is inherently good or bad, but the possibility of the coming of the new is a prerequisite for any form of durability that is not dominative.

¹⁰ One option had been to use a Foucauldian conceptual framework and call these the productive and repressive functions of the power of speech-action (Foucault, 1990, pp. 92–97). However, for Arendt, 'production' is never a concept that denotes enabling of newness or change, rather it is always *re*-production, i.e. the repetitive production of things for immediate consumption. Repression is not a term that she uses very often, but when she does, it is closer to regression, see chapter 3 for a longer discussion. Both the terms of 'productive and repressive power' are functional within a Foucauldian framework, but they lead the thoughts in the wrong directions when discussing Arendt's writing, and therefore I have chosen 'enabling' and 'dominating' as a way to name the tension within power.

There are a few border concepts that become important for the way in which they inform or relate to the political speech-action, mainly thinking, morality and beginning, but they are discussed in the various chapters. Thinking is most important in chapter 3 where I argue that its relation to speech-action becomes temporally tangled in the work of Arendt. Morality is important in chapter 4, because for Arendt, it is intertwined with history, tradition and acting with the past. Beginning, even if its temporality is predicated in the present for Arendt, I discuss in chapter 5 how it can also be understood in relation to past and future.

Selected Materials

Up to this date, there is no critical edition of Arendt's collected works, so I want to briefly comment on the materials I use. For the dissertation, I will include all published material by Arendt, both during her lifetime and her posthumous works, but for the licentiate thesis, I have made a selection based on the direct relevance of the material for questions concerning political speech-action and temporalities.

Arendt is probably most famous for her writing on the radical evils of the 20th century: totalitarianism, Nazism, racism, imperialism, the Holocaust's industriousness, the Nazi and Soviet claim to intervene in every aspect of the life of the citizens, and the propaganda machine of Nazism that turned traditional morality on its head and disabled the capacity to think.

This strand is what Garreth William, in *Hannah Arendt: Vol. 1, Arendt and Political Events* has called Arendt's "encounter with modern political evil" (Williams, 2006, p. 4), but parallel with this engagement with the most horrific versions of politics in the 20th century, Arendt also had a more hopeful side. Williams simply calls this "Philosophy, politics and plurality" (Williams, 2006, p. 7), and it contains Arendt's engagement with the Western intellectual tradition that she was schooled in. In this broad characterization of her work, I engage most directly with the latter, hopeful side.¹¹ That means that I will leave *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1966) (hereafter *Origins*), first published in 1948, and *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (2006b) (hereafter *Eichmann*), first published in 1963, for others

¹¹ I nonetheless recognize the validity of Margaret Canovan's remark that Arendt's political engagement and her hope of thinking politics in new ways stems from the experience of the risks involved in neglecting politics, namely the risk of totalitarianism (Canovan, 1992, p. 276).

to discuss. *On Violence* (1970) cannot be counted in this category, because it deals with the political question of whether violence can be justified to reach political ends, or whether violence functions in opposition to politics. However, because of the racism Arendt expresses in it, as well as her much criticized misreading of the intellectual sources she draws from, mainly Fanon and Sartre, I have found this volume less useful. In *On Violence* Arendt puts forth a useful distinction between power, force, strength and violence, but it is a distinction that she also largely presents in other writings, so I draw mainly from them.

There is another dividing line in Arendt's work, between the writing that she did before and after the Holocaust. As is often noted, these events made her conclusively leave the realm of ideas—exclusively dealing with questions concerning humans in their singularity and away from the world—and instead enter the realm of plurality, human affairs and the world of appearances. Even in her late work, more focused on the activities of the inner mind, Arendt is still clearly situating them in the world, in politics, and in plurality. This dividing line has made me exclude both her dissertation on the concept of love in Augustine's writing, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin: Versuch einer philosophischen Interpretation* (1929) (hereafter *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin*) and the biography *Rahel Varnhagen: Lebensgeschichte einer deutschen Jüdin aus der Romantik: mit einer Auswahl von Rahel-Briefen* (1959) (hereafter *Varnhagen*) that discusses Varnhagen, a Jewish woman who became part of the Berlin intelligentsia in the early 19th century and led one of the most influential Berlin literary salons.¹² Some of the themes that she would later develop can be traced in these books, but I rely on previous research insofar as I draw from that.

The work on political thought that forms a red thread throughout the licentiate thesis is *The Human Condition* (1998), first published in 1958, because it is her standard and most recognized work on political speech-action.¹³ Another key material is *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (2006a) (hereafter *Between Past and Future*), because it is one of Arendt's main theoretical

¹² Arendt wrote most of *Varnhagen* in German before the war, but due to emigration, the war and other matters interfering, the book was published in English translation (as *Rahel Varnhagen: The life of a Jewish Woman*) in 1957, and with the German original coming out two years later in 1959. Arendt begins it with a comment that she cannot provide thorough notations and exact quotations because the archive's location is lost in East Germany (Arendt, 1959, p. 7). The archive has since been found and made accessible, but *Varnhagen* is published in the form Arendt wrote it.

¹³ I use the second edition with the introduction by Margaret Canovan. There are no major revisions done compared to the first edition, only corrections of typographical errors and an expanded index (Arendt, 1998, p. 328).

contributions on temporality. It is a collection of essays that Arendt published between 1954 and 1968, and the first collected edition was published in 1961, but I use the expanded version from 1968.¹⁴ *On Revolution* (2006c), first published in 1963, also forms an important role in the thesis because it is focused on political thought in relation to various revolutions and their political significance.

The posthumous work *The Life of the Mind* (1978) was supposed to entail three parts, *Thinking*, *Willing*, and *Judging*. Arendt only finished the first two, and the third part, and the most political, Arendt had only begun at the time of her death. The book is based on series of lectures that Arendt gave at University of Aberdeen and the New School for Social Research, and *Thinking* was also published in an earlier version in *The New Yorker*. The published two volumes have naturally undergone much editing after Arendt's death. The editor, Arendt's friend Mary McCarthy, had edited many of Arendt's writing previously and she involved the friends and editors who had helped Arendt with other works (the rather extensive "Englishing" process that Arendt always engaged in) (Arendt, 1978, pp. xiii, 243).¹⁵ I only discuss Arendt's arguments in *The Life of the Mind* in relation to the tension that is created in it between worldly political activities and inner mind activities.

I have chosen to include some collected lecture series and posthumous work. The *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (1992), first published in 1982, consists of lecture notes from a lecture series that Arendt gave at the New School for Social Research in 1970.¹⁶ In it, Arendt gives a brief outline of the theme of judgment, and it is often understood as an incomplete indication of her ideas for *Judging*, the third part of *The Life of the Mind* (Beiner, 1992, p. 91). It will be read in a similar fashion as *The Life of the Mind*, namely for the tension it presents between politics and activities of the mind. *The Promise of Politics* is a compilation of writings, lecture notes, and book proposals from the 1950s, collected by Jerome Kohn, Arendt's teaching assistant at the New School. It is centered around two book proposals of books that Arendt never wrote: one following the *Origins*, and planned to discuss totalitarian elements in Marxism, and the other was to complement Jasper's *Einführung in die*

¹⁴ I use the expanded version from 1968 with an introduction by Jerome Kohn.

¹⁵ I use the one volume edition, where both *Thinking* and *Willing* are included.

¹⁶ These lecture notes were also published unedited as an appendix to *The Life of the Mind*, but I have relied on the separate publication edited by Ronald Beiner because of the commentary he has contributed to the manuscripts. Worth noting is that also in this edition, the text consists of unedited lecture notes which bear a clear mark of orality (for example, it lacks complete citations).

Philosophie: Zwölf Radiovorträge (1950) by an *Einführung in die Politik*, “introduction into politics” (Kohn, 2005, p. viif.). Even if this is not writing that Arendt herself chose to publish, it forms an important part of this thesis, not only because it consists of lesser discussed aspects of Arendt’s work, and therefore can shed new light on her thought, but also because in it, Arendt develops some of the themes that were crucial for both her engagement with Marx and revolutionary theory, and also some expanded discussions on Socrates and the ideal she finds in his mode of thinking. *Responsibility and Judgment* (2003) is a collection of speeches and lectures that Arendt gave between 1964 and 1975, as well as a few essays, and it is also edited by Jerome Kohn. I will mainly focus on the first part, *Responsibility*, since the latter, *Judgment*, is a collection of essays that Kohn finds illustrative of Arendt’s own capacity for judgment in practical political affairs (2003, pp. xxxiv, xxxvi). As it is not part of my purpose to explore Arendt’s role as a political activist or as someone making political judgments in political questions, nor do I find these essays to be illustrative of this capacity, I have omitted them. In the first part, Arendt discusses the question of morality and judgment in relation to politics and various political events of the 20th century. It forms an important part of this thesis because of its clarification of the relationship between politics, judgment and morality.

Arendt’s various writings on Jewish political concerns, collected in *The Jewish Writings* (2007), with publications from throughout her life, have also been omitted because they mostly discuss the experience of anti-Semitism, as well as her suggestions for (and later her disappointment of) the political development in Israel. Other collected essays, such as *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism* (2005a) and *Thinking Without Banisters: Essays in Understanding, 1954-1975* (2015), her correspondence with various friends, as well as her *Denktagebuch*, her diary of thinking, have also been omitted. The essays in *Men in Dark Times* (2014) and *Crises of the Republic* (1972), both deal with topics rather specific to their contexts, and they have only been included when these topics are discussed in relation to Arendt’s political thinking. Again, the excluded material will be part of the dissertation, but for pragmatic purposes for this licentiate thesis, I have stayed within the material that most explicitly discusses political speech-action and temporality.

Arendt: Biographical Notes and Intellectual Tradition

Arendt's biographer, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, was one of Arendt's students, and the biography *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (1982) is based on Arendt's own writing on her life, extended interviews with friends, archived materials and personal memories.¹⁷ Arendt was born in Hanover in 1906, by a German Jewish family from Königsberg with Russian origin. Königsberg had large Jewish communities, many of whom had fled from Russian pogroms. Arendt's extended family came from a wealthy bourgeoisie, merchant class and they were part of the group of liberal Reform Jews, as opposed to more traditional or Orthodox Jewish communities in Königsberg. Her parents became part of the professional middle-class, and they developed socialist political sympathies. Arendt's father died when Arendt was only a child, in 1913 (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 5–32). Arendt's Jewish identity has been much discussed, but the short answer is that her public stance on this matter was political rather than religious ("One must defend oneself!" Young-Bruehl, 1982, p. 12), even if she remained attached to the tradition of Jewish theology and it influenced her public stance on politics.¹⁸ She was ambitious in school, and had read Kant, Kierkegaard and Jaspers by the age of sixteen (Williams, 2006, p. 2).

Arendt studied at the university between 1924-1929, and began at Marburg University, where she took classes in philosophy for Heidegger, with whom she had a short love affair (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 42–50). After Marburg, she went to Freiburg for one semester and studied with Husserl, and then left to go study in Heidelberg for Karl Jaspers, her life-long mentor and friend, where she finished her dissertation on Augustine's concept of love (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 66, 74ff.). In 1929 she married her first husband, Günther Stern, whom she divorced in 1936 (Williams, 2006, p. 2; Young-Bruehl, 1982, p. 78). In the late 1920s and all of the 1930s she spent much time in communist and Zionist circles, and began to develop her political activism (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 92–102). She wrote almost the entire

¹⁷ Although I find the biography immensely helpful, there are some troubling aspects of it. Part of it concerns precision, were Young-Bruehl for example changes the surname of female married relatives and friends back and forth. Another concerns the selection of telling or anecdotal episodes: much focus is put on Arendt's love life and her social manners in relation to men. Another aspect concerns the interpretation of Arendt's inner reasoning and psychic motivation for her intellectual engagement with various writers, most notably Heidegger and Kierkegaard, through Young-Bruehl's interpretation of Arendt's private poems.

¹⁸ See *The Jewish Writings* (Arendt, 2007) and parts of "Walter Benjamin" in *Men in Dark Times* for a discussion on the "Jewish Question" (Arendt, 2014, pp. 177–192), see also the section on Kurt Blumenfeld in the biography (Young-Bruehl, 1982, p. 70).

manuscript on Rahel Varnhagen, but due to growing persecution of Jews in Germany she could not finish the manuscript (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 85–92).

Stern had already fled to Paris, and Arendt followed in 1933 with her mother after having been arrested by the Gestapo because she was working on documenting the history of anti-Semitism (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 102–110). She came to France and came to work for Agriculture et Artisanat, an organization that prepared Jewish refugees for immigration to Palestine, and then later for Youth Aliyah, also an organization that prepared young refugees for immigration (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 117–122, 137ff.). She married her second husband, Heinrich Blücher in 1940 (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 122–136). She was interned for a short time at Camp Gurs in France, before she, Blücher, and her mother managed to flee to the US in 1941, carrying with her Benjamin's *Illuminations* (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 153–163).

In New York she worked for the German Jewish newspaper *Aufbau*, in which she argued for the Americans to join the war against Nazi-Germany and for the creation of a Jewish army within the allied forces (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 169–181). In the early 1930s, Arendt endorsed Zionism, but from early on she had a troubled relationship with the Zionist movement, which intensified in the 1940s because of her public expressions of resentment and disappointment with the ways Israel was founded. Arendt started working on *Origins* right after the end of the war (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 199–211, 222–233). She worked for Schocken books as an editor, as well as the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, an organization that tried to rescue Jewish cultural heritage in Europe after the end of the war (Young-Bruehl, 1982, p. 188). In the 1950 she concerned herself more thoroughly with Marxism, and *The Human Condition*, *Between Past and Future*, and *On Revolution* all stem from this engagement (Young-Bruehl, 1982, p. 279). In 1961 she was asked to cover the trial of Adolf Eichmann for *The New Yorker*. The resulting book sparked much controversy and many Jewish public figures, both in Israel and elsewhere, broke with her (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 328–378). The book made her a well-known and controversial public figure. Arendt held many academic positions, for example at Princeton, Berkeley, University of Chicago, the New School for Social Research, and Northwestern. She continued to work on her later manuscripts, most notably *The Life of the Mind*, and she had just begun the first sentences of the third part, *Judging*, when she died of a heart attack in USA in 1975.

The intellectual tradition that Arendt draws from is, mildly speaking, extensive. She was, as mentioned, the student of both Heidegger and Husserl. But according to Lawrence Rosenfield, a student of Arendt's who later became a well-known speech and rhetoric scholar, she characterized Jaspers, as "the only real philosopher I have known since Kant" (Rosenfield, 1984, p. 91). According to Rosenfield, it was not Jaspers' existential-psychological philosophy that she endorsed and admired, but that he introduced communication into philosophy. Undeniably, Arendt has given significant contribution to rhetoric and communication theory on the public sphere and on the ethical burden of communication. But emphasizing the communicative side of her work does not result in a neat categorization and, of course, what the quote above indicates more than anything is that Kant is Arendt's main intellectual inspiration. She begins *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* by stating that Jaspers is the only disciple that Kant ever had because he took the *political* implications of Kant's thinking seriously (Arendt, 1992, p. 7). With this Kantian undercurrent, her engagement with critical theorists ('critical' in a post-Kantian sense) such as Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard follows. However, this is not biographically correct, because Arendt started her philosophical studies with reading Kierkegaard and Kant, and Hegel and Nietzsche came later, and it was only with Blücher's involvement with Marxism, that she began reading Marx' writing more thoroughly. However, in her major publications, the influence from these thinkers is important.

The presence of modern thinkers of republican thought and political economy, such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Hume, Mills, and Smith, are all frequently referenced in her work on political theory. Another source of intellectual inspiration comes from ancient thinkers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and the writings of the pre-Socratics, along with scholarship on these figures and the society they were active in. Her own dissertation on Augustine's concept of love speaks of her Christian influences as well as the presence of early modern, Christian thinkers in her work such as Aquinas and Descartes. The Christian influence is also visible because she uses the bible and some of Jesus' core concepts in order to outline her political thinking. Arendt loved literature, and her books are scattered with references to Goethe, Rilke, Kafka, and Blixen. Arendt personally knew or had close proximity to many of the public intellectuals of her time, such as Benjamin, Weber, Adorno, Horkheimer, Tillich, Luxemburg, Cassirer, Brecht, and Sartre. Her physical location in both European and American academic and intellectual circles is also

important for the shape of her work, and she is not easily defined either as a ‘continental thinker’ nor as an American influenced communicative theorist.

The only remark that can be made on the intellectual tradition that Arendt draws from is perhaps this; her work, as well as her own person, is found at the intersection of diverse traditions and she makes of them what she wants. Her work and the conceptual topographies that she develops must therefore be read with caution against any particular tradition. In creative ways, she incorporates the thinking of others and attempts to think past thoughts anew in order to illuminate the present human condition.

The Structure of the Thesis

In this thesis I discuss conceptual topographies of time and political speech-action. Chapter 2, “Setting the Scene: Framing the Problem,” presents notions of time in various canonized intellectual discussions, and should be seen as an overview of problems that arise as soon as one speaks of the ontology of time, both in its scientific form and how it is part of modern social structures. These discussions situate the historical background to the various concepts that Arendt uses but it also highlights the contingent relationship between time and politics.

In chapter 3, “ I introduce Arendt’s division of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, and discuss Arendt’s reading of Socrates as a possible model for how to integrate thought and speech-action. Then, I read Arendt’s critique of Platonic political philosophy and how its concept of eternity becomes intertwined with the concept of the future. This anachronistic mode of political time functions to reproduce itself in its own image, and in my reading of Arendt’s critique, it becomes a form of temporal rulership. In chapter 4, I read Arendt’s historical discussions of Greek, Roman and Modern modes of thinking of political practice and time. I focus on the various modes of acting politically in relation to a concept of multifaceted pasts in Greece, and how it combined a rectilinear and a circular notion of time. I discuss Arendt’s reading of the Roman concept of a foundational past, and how this turns into a notion where the foundation serves as a reiteration of itself. I then move on to Arendt’s critique that the Roman foundational past turns into progressive futurity in modern times, and how this foretelling of the future reduces the capacity of the

speech-action. In chapter 5, I discuss Arendt's more optimistic notions of the present, and its relationship to the future and the past, and explore how these relationships take anachronistic shapes. The licentiate thesis will conclude by summarizing the discussion on these various anachronisms within political speech-actions, and how they can help re-think the political speech-action, and its potential for working in enabling power relations.

Literature Review

As far as I have found, no theoretical consideration has been given to the relation between rhetoric, the political speech-action, time, and Arendt. In this section, I will therefore limit my discussion to a more narrow selection of rhetorical theory and temporality on the one hand, and give a brief overview of research on Arendt's work on the other. Discussions on Arendt's notions of temporality in relation to politics and her relation to rhetoric have been omitted here because they will be presented underway.

Within what can be called a more narrow, or academically defined field of rhetoric, there is a unanimous consensus that the temporality of rhetoric and of rhetorical practices is contingent, situational, and changeable, as opposed to eternal, measurable or stable. The temporality of rhetoric is a distinctly worldly time, in some sense or the other of that word, rather than an extra-worldly. Within this worldly time, however, there are many variations, where first, there is the position that rhetoric is constituted by conditions given to it by time, or more general, a historical materialist approach. Second, the "narrative" strand holds that rhetorical practice unfolds in time and it pays attention to the stylistic dimensions of this aspect. Third, the position that rhetoric enables a construction of time that is separate from measurable time is prevalent. Fourth, the kairotic element of rhetoric (its timeliness in a given situation) takes a prominent position. Fifth, and finally, there are various discussions of how concepts of time affect the ways in which rhetoric is defined.

Many early theorists in the American field simply state that rhetoric is a temporal practice, but they do not always explain what they mean by that. However, I will take three canonized examples of what I call the first, second and third strand, that I find to be more in depth. Thomas B. Farrell presents, in "Knowledge in Time:

Toward an Extension of Rhetorical Form” (1982), a perspective where time constitutes an external influence on rhetorical discourse. Farrell goes into dialogue with Aristotle, claiming that the orator does not ‘own’ the argument, but rather its meaning develops in the course of (historical) time. This, according to Farrell, means that rhetorical discourse cannot be actualized in the moment of *kairos* but rather in its historicity (Farrell, 1982, p. 126). Farrell argues that the idea of rhetorical form (in the sense of style, as I understand Farrell) must change with the various positions of people encountering it, and form can therefore no longer be “self-contained, temporally compressed, and [with a] recognizable structure” but must rather become a “narrative succession of discursive anticipations” in particular situations (Farrell, 1982, pp. 127f.). With this focus on the relation between form and the historical context, Farrell’s discussion opens up to the discussion of how historical material circumstances affects and constitute the form of rhetorical discourse.

Michael Leff represents a more ‘narrative’ position.¹⁹ In “Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G. P. Mohrmann” he acknowledges Farrell’s position, but argues that this type of theoretical position has seen time as something external to the text, something that is connected to change in the world and thus influences rhetorical practice, rather than seeing it as a constituent of the text and constituted by the text (Leff, 1986, p. 384). Leff states that the texts both “emerge in time; they are conditioned by other discourses and by the progression of events [i.e. Farrell’s position], but they are also constructed things that occupy a span of time [i.e. Leff’s position].” (Leff, 1986, p. 384) Rhetorical discourse takes up stretches of time, and Leff argues for a close examination of this temporal surface of the text. Without stretching Leff’s argument too far, I believe, this position has an aftermath of focusing of rhetorical style and time as a trope in rhetorical artifacts.²⁰

¹⁹ We can also see in Leff’s argument the rather common trend among the earlier American rhetoricians to set a hierarchy between space and time. Leff contrasts the temporal order with the “conceptual space of discourse”, and he argues that this spatial substructure of the rhetorical text is a founding aspect of it, but that it should not be given the same critical engagement as the temporal and unfolding surface of the text because a rhetorical text is action and action is temporal, according to Leff (Leff, 1986, p. 387). This conceptual hierarchy where time is seen as more important than space, and where time is equated with action, is also seen in for example Karl Wallace who writes in “Speech Act and Unit of Communication” that: “A speech act is also a particular kind of movement; it unfolds, progresses through time. It is thus a temporal object, not a static one, although perceptually we may sometimes treat it as if it were spatial.” (Wallace, 1970, p. 174)

²⁰ These studies discuss how time tropes are used as dimensions of style, as in Brian Amsden “Dimensions of Temporality in President Obama’s Tuscon Memorial Address” (2014), Michael J. Steudeman “Entelechy and Irony in Political Time: The Preemptive Rhetoric of Nixon and Obama”

Thomas S. Frenzt presents a third version of the ways in which rhetorical practice can be temporal, when he argues that rhetoric has a constructive rather than a measurable relation to time. Frenzt claims that language-action can become moral because the experience of it develops in time, and “*time is pure change*” (Frenzt, 1985, p. 6). Frenzt does not elaborate in detail on what he means by this claim, but he assumes the affinity between rhetoric, morality, change and time.²¹ With the help of Cassirer and Kant, Frenzt puts rhetorical time in contrast to Newtonian absolute time, which Frenzt claims is changeless. Frenzt argues that there are two forms of time on the level of experience: encounter-time and life-level time. The first is the time duration of a conversation (similar to Leff’s position). Life-level time, on the other hand, is a form of narrative and rhetorical time where the experience of the present is accompanied by the past and the future and incorporates all these (Frenzt, 1985, p. 7).

The arguments put forth by Farrell, Leff, and Frenzt are telling of three trends in rhetorical theory and its relation to time and temporality. It is outside of the scope of this literature review to discuss the later developments of these positions, although they are numerous.

Fourth, there is the extensive research on *kairos*. First, there are studies that investigate *kairos* as rhetorical timing in rhetorical practice—to say the right thing at the right moment. One example is Edwin Black’s “Electing Time” that discusses election campaigns in the US and how the ethos of the presidential nominees is tied up with their public uses of time, both as metaphor and in a timely fashion (Black, 1973). Second, there are also theoretical considerations on *kairos* as a distinctly rhetorical notion of time, bound up with rhetorical practice. The most extensive is Philip Sipiora and James S. Baumlin (Eds.) *Rhetoric and Kairos: Essays in History, Theory, and Praxis* (2002), but an early example is also John E. Smith, in “Time, Times, and the ‘Right Time’: *Chronos* and *Kairos*” (1969). Another example is Helge Jordheim’s “Conceptual History between *Chronos* and *Kairos* - The Case of ‘Empire’” (2007) in which Jordheim discusses the relationship between *chronos* and *kairos*, in relation to Kari Palonen’s interpretation of Koselleck and Skinner, where

(2013), or Barbara Biesecker’s “No Time for Mourning: The Rhetorical Production of the Melancholic Citizen-Subject in the War on Terror” (2007).

²¹ For a development of Frenzt’s perspective on individual morality and agency into a concept of collective agency in which the individual agent’s choice is met and negotiated into a collective morality, see Celeste Michelle Condit “Crafting Virtue: The Rhetorical Construction of Public Morality” (1987).

the former is more oriented to historical, diachronic perspectives and the latter to the event that breaks through historical continuity (Jordheim, 2007, p. 118). Jordheim argues that in order to conceptualize and understand the temporalities of ruptures, events and the moment, a conceptual turn towards *kairos* can work as a intermediary concept between the longer time frames of German *begriffsgeschichte* and American rhetorical theory's focus on the moment of change (Jordheim, 2007, p. 119). Kimberley Hutchings, in *Time and World Politics: Thinking the Present*, discusses the concepts of *chronos* and *kairos*, and acknowledges the rhetorical tradition of the latter, as well as discusses the influence of these concepts on early modern European thinkers (2008, pp. 4–9, 28–52). See also John J. Carey's *Kairos and Logos: Studies in the Roots and Implications of Tillich's Theology* (1984), that discusses Tillich's engagement with the relationship between *kairos* and *logos* from a theological perspective but that also acknowledges the rhetorical tradition of the concept.

Fifth, the last strand of rhetorical literature on time and temporality that I want to comment on is how concepts of time change the ways in which rhetoric is defined, and thus its possibility to act, influence, or persuade.

Temporality is a key component in Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (1971), but in a newly translated article that preceded *The New Rhetoric*, called "On Temporality as a Characteristic of Argumentation" (2010) they claim that all argumentation seeks to create a future. They go against Aristotle's axiom of the different suitable temporalities of the rhetorical genres, but more importantly they make a distinction between the time-free (or eternally true) demonstrative logic and rhetorical argumentation which is fundamentally time-dependent and future-oriented (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, pp. 316ff.).

Another version of this redefinition of rhetoric in relation to its temporality is presented by Paul de Man in "The Rhetoric of Temporality" in *Blindness and Insight* (1983), in which he argues that the temporality of rhetoric has a closer affinity to allegory rather than the symbol. Allegory, in de Man's understanding, expresses its meaning through analogy and there is no attempt to deny the figural ontology of language, nor its duration in time through narrative succession. The symbol on the other hand attempts to express a relationship, though the image, between the symbol and that which it symbolizes. This symbolic attempt to form a (a-temporal) dialectical movement between mind and body, subject and object, etc., that leads into various

paradoxes that result in “a defense strategy that tries to hide from this negative self-knowledge”. For de Man, the allegory is thus a more authentic concept to describe the ontology of language (De Man, 1983, p. 208).

A more recent essay is Roger Stahl’s “A Clockwork War: Rhetorics of Time in a Time of Terror” (2008), in which he combines a close textual analysis and a reformulation of the temporality of rhetoric. Stahl uses Paul Virilio’s concept of the *chronopolis* in order to show how different time tropes are used in television portrayals of the war on terror. First, he argues that three such time tropes are common: the deadline/countdown, the infinite/infinitesimal war, and the ticking clock, and that they construct a new form of temporal subject. Second, Stahl argues that time tropes has gained a rhetorical agency in the modern form of warfare, rather than being the passive outcome of human deliberation or persuasion.²² Stahl even claims that “time replaces persuasion as the main political currency” (Stahl, 2008, p. 77).

When it comes to previous research on Arendt, it is impossible to grasp it in its entirety. Following the model of the previous section on rhetoric and temporality, I only give a few illustrative examples of various aspects of Arendtian scholarship.

To my knowledge, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl’s *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (1982), presents the most extensive work with a biographical focus. John McGowan sketches a good summary of her life in *Hannah Arendt: An Introduction* (1998); as does both Patrick Hayden in *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts* (2014) and Heuer et al. in *Arendt-Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung* (2011). See also Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt: Female Genius: Life, Madness, Words* (2001) in which Kristeva interprets Arendt’s professional life within a psychoanalytic framework. For a discussion on the influence on her political thought through her correspondence with Blücher, Heidegger, Jaspers and McCarthy, see Jon Nixon’s *Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Friendship* (2015). Another source for biographical reflection can be found in “Part I: Personal Encounters” in Gareth Williams, *Hannah Arendt: Vol. 1, Arendt and Political Events* (2006, pp. 27–50), in which some of Arendt’s friends write about various aspects of her life.

²² Stahl also argues that there are different levels of agency in the different tropes he investigates (Stahl, 2008, p. 87).

There are quite a few introductory books to the work of Arendt. One of the earlier is Hinchmann and Hinchmann (Eds.) *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays* (1994), which includes essays by some of the more influential Arendt scholars: Beiner, Benhabib, Canovan, Habermas, Young-Bruehl. It deals with the some of the major topics of Arendt, such as evil, history, identity, politics, power, democracy, thinking and judging. Helpful and in depth introductions are also Karin Fry's *Arendt: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2009), and Patrick Hayden's (ed.) *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts* (2014). There is also the text book *Hannah Arendt* by Simon Swift (2009).

The literature on Arendt's discussions of evil, totalitarianism and genocide is extensive. Valerie Hartouni, in *Visualizing Atrocity: Arendt, Evil, and the Optics of Thoughtlessness* (2012), reads Arendt's discussion of Eichmann and her main ideas surrounding the trial in relation to genocide, Nurnberg, and the correspondence between thoughtlessness and evil. In *Political Evil in a Global Age: Hannah Arendt and International Theory* (2009), Patrick Hayden relates Arendt's concept of evil to the radical evils of today: genocide, poverty and radical economic inequality, refugees and migration, and neoliberal domination over the political sphere. Michal Aharony's *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Total Domination: The Holocaust, Plurality, and Resistance* (2015) reads Arendt's discussion on the form of total domination in which the state seeks to control and rule every aspect of biological life. This is a form of domination that can never fully succeed, but that reached its most extreme form yet known in the form of the camps, and Aharony reads Arendt's concept in relation to Holocaust survivors' own stories of resistance. See also chapter 9 in Mary Dietz *Turning Operations: Feminism, Arendt, and Politics* (2002, pp. 183–200) that deals with Arendt's discussions of the Holocaust; chapter 6 in Robert Fine's *Political Investigations: Hegel, Marx, Arendt* (2001, pp. 100–121) that deals with the rationality of totalitarianism; and Part IV on evil and Eichmann in *Thinking in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics* (2010, pp. 129–157), edited by Berkowitz et al.

For a discussion on Arendt's Jewish identity and the way it intersects with her position on politics, see Seyla Benhabib, chapter 2 in *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (1996, pp. 35–61); Margaret Betz Hull, chapter 4 in *The Hidden Philosophy of Hannah Arendt* (2002); and Judith Butler's review of *The Jewish Writings*, "I Merely Belong to Them" (2007). See also Part V in *Thinking in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics* (2010, pp. 159–217) on influences from

Judaism. For a discussion on *Varnhagen*, see Seyla Benhabib “The Pariah and Her Shadow: Hannah Arendt’s Biography of Rahel Varnhagen” in Bonnie Honig (Ed.) *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (Honig, 1995, pp. 83–104).

For a discussion on *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin*, see Lucy Tatman’s “Arendt and Augustine: More Than One Kind of Love” (2013), in which Tatman traces the concept of *amor mundi*, that Arendt often spoke of but wrote of less, back to her dissertation and the Augustinian notion of *cupidas*. See also David Grumett’s “Arendt, Augustine And Evil” (2000) for a discussion on how Arendt draws some of her insights concerning evil from Augustine and theology more broadly. There are quite a few studies that traces Augustine’s influence on Arendt’s later thought, see for example Dean Hammer who discusses memory and reflection as an ontological category for beginning and equality, in “Freedom and Fatefulness: Augustine, Arendt and the Journey Of Memory” (2000).

Kathryn T. Gines discusses Arendt’s position with regards to race in *Hannah Arendt and the Negro question* (2014) for a critique of Arendt’s position on race politics in America. See also Richard H. King in “On Race and Culture: Hannah Arendt and her contemporaries” (2010) and Anne Norton’s “Heart of Darkness: Africa and African Americans in the Writings of Hannah Arendt” (1995). For discussions on exclusionary aspects of her other concepts, see “Arendt’s Critics” in Fry (2009), which summarizes the critiques of her position on feminism, race relations, Jewish thought, and her alleged elitism.

These are mere indications of the extense of scholarship that engages with the work of Arendt, and I have omitted the literature on Arendt’s political thought because it will be incorporated in the discussions that follow.

2. *Setting the Scene: Framing the Problem*

In this chapter, I summarize influential discussions on time and make some remarks on the presuppositions or epistemologies that guide these discussions. I rely on previous research, rather than arguing in direct relation to the source material. The chapter can thus function both as a literature review over various scientific or philosophical discussions concerning time, and also a genealogy of the thought process leading up to the problem which concerns this thesis. Its purpose is to highlight how seemingly self-evident statements about time, such as ‘time is movement,’ ‘time is divided in past, present, and future,’ or ‘time and space are the two dimensions of reality,’ have a history with both epistemological and political (or at least pragmatically motivated) underpinnings. I want to illustrate with a set of canonized examples how these epistemological and political underpinnings have consequences for how time can be understood.

The chapter begins with a short introduction to various ways of understanding time as external/internal to matter within empiricists’ accounts. It briefly goes through the themes of time as a consequence of experience, time as change within matter or movement of matter, and time as an external measurement. These themes are mainly to point out the great variety in empiricist discussions on time, but also to already at this point circumvent some objections (e.g. ‘but time *is* movement’) that might otherwise obscure the problem with which the later part of the text is concerned (e.g. ‘what power dynamics come into play within the realm of politics if we assume that time is movement?’). I point to a few of the various answers given to the question of time’s being and function within the natural sciences. This is not to prove any of them right or wrong, which is beyond my competence, but merely to highlight that different sets of epistemologies and purposes will result in different answers to the question ‘what is time?’

The chapter continues with a discussion on conceptions of time within modern social structures. It begins with some comments on the history of standardized, public clock time so as to show one example of the connection between time and technology. This section is meant to de-naturalize clock time by historicizing it, and show how clock time can only capture certain types of experiences and social structures. The chapter continues with a discussion of the idea of progressive time, and how it was introduced and mobilized into political and social structures in the 18th century,

borrowing from Koselleck and Foucault. After that, the chapter discusses some of the academic literature on capitalist temporalities with a specific focus on the paradoxes inherent in these systems' temporalities, so as to show how paradoxes can be productive within power dynamics. This latter discussion on temporalities within social structures is more important, since it is mainly the one that I want to tap into and contribute to, but also the one with a more particular understanding of the puzzle I am trying to, maybe not solve, but highlight.

Time and Matter: Some Stopping Points

Let us start with empiricist accounts of natural or scientific time because they are perceived to be the most 'objective' and the least political. As such, I would also argue that they are the most powerful in the contemporary moment. Incidentally, Arendt ends her discussion on politics in *The Human Condition* with a discussion on the relation between mind and matter in the modern scientific worldview and she claims that it comes to its conclusions in Einstein's theory of relativity. She traces this worldview and its epistemologies back through Newton, Leibnitz, Kant, Galileo and Copernicus, and argues that it finds its most condensed version in the Cartesian doubt, in which the attempt to find an Archimedean point (a universal perspective, rather than a relative) moved inside the human mind. For Arendt, the Cartesian doubt poses the question of what we can and cannot know and answers it with a claim that we can only know that which comes from inside our minds (Arendt, 1998, pp. 248–289 esp. pp. 273-285). However, my reason for choosing to start with science and matter is not because Arndt ends there (more on Arendt's position on the Cartesian doubt in Chapter 3), but because the question of matter's relation to time carries with it a set of epistemologies that are often taken for granted, but where indeed, there are many conflicting versions.

Even if it sounds a bit imposing, I would say that in one common, everyday-type of conception in the Western world today, time is considered as a natural phenomenon, where infinite but measurable time, together with infinite but measurable space, make up the totality of everything that exists. This is similar to how Philip Turetzky describes the Newtonian notion of time, in his introductory book, simply called *Time* (1998):

In the Newtonian system, each indivisible moment of duration exists everywhere, while the whole of space exists at each moment. Since all motion occurs against the uniform rate of time, the whole of space and its contents develops from instant to instant, or, rather, in the path of the flowing instant (Turetzky, 1998, p. 74).

As such, time becomes the distinctive dimension that explains the fact that events in the world happen in a particular order and that one state of things does not always stay the same. However, as Adrian Bardon states in *A Brief History of the Philosophy of Time* (2013), how this relationship between time and change within matter is constituted is not self-evident. As Bardon and many others claim, the relationship between matter, change and time introduces a whole range of epistemological problems and questions. If time is the dimension that separates a state of a material body from the next state (for example, the separation of one cell into two cells or the distance that sound waves travel when somebody speaks, or simply, any event), then in what relation does time stand to that material body? Is time an inert quality of matter and the eventual changes that take place in it (empirical time), or is time fully external to all matter and to be understood as a container of matter (absolute time)? If it is external to matter, then of what does it consist (Arthur, 2010; Bardon, 2013, pp. 3f., 8f.)? The relationship between time, change, and matter simply introduces a whole set of questions, for which there is a long history of answers.

There is a conventional story of describing the history of ideas around these questions and it usually separates empiricist accounts (time is real and a separable phenomenon in the material world), relationist accounts (time is real but relative to change in matter and/or space) from idealistic accounts (time is a construct of the human mind/God/ideal forms in order to make sense of matter) (Bardon, 2013, p. 7). The questions that I will engage with in the rest of the thesis can in some way or another be understood as either idealists or relationists, so here I want to briefly summarize some of the empiricist accounts and their different approaches to absolute accounts of time and to the materialist aspects of relationists accounts of time.

Answers to the question “what is the relation between time and matter?” go back as far as recorded history, with various debates in antiquity.²³ If we start

²³ In the canonized history of how ancient Greek thinkers took on the question “what is time?” and proposed various solutions, Parmenides, Zeno, Plato, and Aristotle took notably different positions and discussed each other’s interpretations. For ancient primary sources concerning the relationship between time and change in matter, see Parmenides *On Nature* (1986); Plato *Timaeus* (2008, esp. from p. 16, §27 where he makes the distinction between being and becoming and p. 25, §37d where he defines time as a copy from the model of eternity, ordered by numbers); Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV (1983).

somewhat later, according to Bardon as well as Turetzky, John Locke assumed that time was measured duration, a phenomenon that humans could experience through the succession of ideas in the mind. These ideas came from both their senses, i.e. their sense experiences of the empirical world and from the human mind that organized these senses into ideas. Because Locke also assumed experience was an empirical phenomenon that found its evidence in matter, the experience of time was an empirical fact external to the human mind, but conceptualized in the mind. This was revolutionary in its equality because it meant that time could be known in a similar fashion by any human mind, as opposed to more qualitative notions where some experience a more normative time and other less so (Bardon, 2013, pp. 28–33; Turetzky, 1998, pp. 76ff.).

Locke's empiricist conception introduced a whole set of problems, and Stephen Hawking, in his popular book *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (1996) points to how it differs from the conception of absolute time in Isaac Newton's theory of gravity. Most philosophers and scientists up until Newton had assumed that any body of matter's natural state of being was at rest, and that it only moved if acted upon by some force.²⁴ This sometimes led to the empiricist conclusion that matter provided an empirical measurement for both space (how long, wide, and

According to Bardon, Zeno's idealist position denied the possibility of change, because it implied movement of objects and, Zeno argued, any object moving across space would at any particular point in space take up exactly its own space and nothing else, and that is the definition of a thing at rest and not of a thing moving. Therefore, our senses might deceive us into thinking that a thing is moving, whereas logically, however, movement is impossible. This would mean that change becomes impossible, and, because Zeno equated time with change, he denied both the possibility of time and of change (Bardon, 2013, p. 9; Strobach, 2013). In Aristotle's relationist account, on the other hand, change in matter could be logically proven to take place, because change could not be reduced to be happening at any particular spatial or temporal point (because a point is of zero length and any object cannot exist in such a non-space, and thus not move temporally either). Movement (and change), according to Aristotle, can therefore not logically be reduced to the space any object takes up at any particular point in time. In Bardon's account, Aristotle went further with his critique of Zeno because he did not equate movement and change in matter with time, but rather saw time as a means of external measurement in relation to matter (Arthur, 2010, pp. 42ff.; Bardon, 2013, pp. 14ff.; Falcon, 2013; Casey, 1997, pp. 50–71 for how this affected the notion of space as container). For Parmenides' idealist position, the problem was somewhat different, because he was concerned with question of whether the past, present and future exist. According to Parmenides, the past is no longer, and the future is not yet, but nonetheless, any designation or definition of a present is composed of the assumption of these two. Both the past and the future are also non-existent, which either makes the present equally non-existent, or alternatively, it makes the present the only thing that is and everything that has happened before and that might happen in the future has no existence (Rondald C. Hoy, 2013). This is Parmenides question or paradox, and according to Bardon, Aristotle does not fully answer it (Bardon, 2013, pp. 17ff.). See also Coope, *Time for Aristotle* (2005); Hoy, "Parmenides' Complete Rejection of Time," (1994); Strobach, "Zeno's Paradoxes" (2013); Falcon, "Aristotle on time and change", (2013); and Turetzky, *Time* (1998, pp. 5–70).

²⁴ For a detailed account of the intellectual debate around Newton, both predecessor and followers, see Zvi Biener and Eric Schliesser *Newton and Empiricism* (2014).

deep is any particular object, and how long is the extension if you use any force to move it?) and for time (two different material events happening at the same empirical point in space must be happening at different times and the interval between those events make up for time). However, with Newton's claim that all bodies were constantly moving unless acted upon, the connection to matter was disturbed because there was no particular material body from which to measure movement empirically, and to do so became a relative measure of time.²⁵ Newton therefore asserted that there was absolute (geometric) space and absolute (metric) time, which essentially functioned as empty measurements for all the motion of matter within the universe and could not be experienced by humans (Hawking, 1996, pp. 18ff.; Turetzky, 1998, p. 73).²⁶ Here, time "of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external" (Newton, quoted in Bardon, 2013, p. 52). This, in short, meant that time for Newton was an absolute container for matter, and thus not strictly empirical in a material sense.

Newton's version of absolute time was challenged with Albert Einstein's special and general theory of relativity, developed between 1905 and 1916. The theories changed the conception of time in the natural sciences, and especially physics, radically, but it is also worth noting that the medial success of Einstein's theory did much to open the discussion of the nature and functions of time to a larger audience (Rowe, 2012; Wazeck, 2009, 2013).²⁷ Hawking asserts that with Einstein's

²⁵ Relative motion was the movement of any particular body in relation to another body and this make up for the "relative, apparent and common time" which is useful in everyday life (Newton, quoted in Turetzky, 1998, p. 73; see also Hawking, 1996, pp. 18ff.).

²⁶ Eric Schliesser argues in "Newton's Philosophy of Time" that there is a distinction in Newton's understanding of time that separates absolute time and metaphysically real time, where the first serves to explain time in his laws of physics, whereas the second aims to explain time on a theological basis (Schliesser, 2013a, see also 2013b). I have here only discussed his notion of time in relation to physics.

²⁷ The theory of relativity was controversial, not only based on its scientific revolution, but also because it questioned much Christian theology that depended on a distinction between space and time and where eschatology assumed a clear border between lived, earthly time and an after-life in eternity. The theory of relativity also made Henri Bergson enter into a heated debate with Einstein on the nature of time in his *Durée et simultanéité: à propos de la théorie d'Einstein* (1923). In short, Bergson took the position that time could only be known by the human mind and that Einstein's time dilation (proved with the famous example of two hypothetical twins where one travelled with the speed of light from earth and the other stayed on earth and, because time is relative to space and speed, the time would run at a different speed for the two twins) is not absolute, but rather a question of perspective (because the two twin's experience of the different times would be different, the experiment measured two different entities as if they were the same, according to Bergson) (Canales, 2005; Topper, 2013). According to Canales, the conflict was based on a misunderstanding, where Bergson did not mean to question whether the theory of relativity was right or wrong in terms of the physics of time, but he wanted to argue that it did not address the meaning of time, for which metaphysical or philosophical reflection was needed (Canales, 2005). This debate had high-stakes because it concerned which field—

theory, time was no longer a dimension of reality separated from the spatial dimension of reality, but rather, Einstein argued that space-time is a tied-up dimension where the one affects the other, with a primacy to space.²⁸ This meant that the speed of time could go faster or slower depending on time's relation to matter in space, and that time and space were not flat but "curved or 'warped'" in ways that mass and energy in the universe make it curve (Hawking, 1996, pp. 23–39 quote on p. 34). In short, this questioned the primacy of time and made it relative to matter (still in an absolute, empirical and measurable manner) rather than external to it.²⁹

Charles Darwin is another point of departure for empiricist accounts of time, both because his theories had a great influence on popular discussions and because it provided a bridge between natural time and human time. According to Elizabeth Grosz in *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (2004) Darwin's theories see the change in matter as a form of development according to biological mechanisms that aim at enhancing life. As Grosz discusses, the Darwinian revolution is paradigmatic in the ways it looks upon time because *The Origin of the Species* "precisely refuses to deal with the question of origin" (Grosz, 2004, p. 20). Instead, Grosz argues, it favors evolution and with that a notion of time as dependent on change in the world and in the species (through life forces such as natural selection, individual difference, and reproduction). Grosz claims that the multifaceted aspects of

philosophy of science or science proper (especially physics)—that should have the final word in matters of nature, with the most leading figures in each field taking charge at each other. It had a big impact on further discussions on these matters during most the 20th century (Canales, 2005, pp. 1168f.; Topper, 2013, p. 134). On a more political level, it was also a debate about nationalism and internationalism, and on whether intellectual cooperation was possible across national boundaries. With Bergson coming out on the losing side of the debate, French intellectual influence waned and the status of philosophy was seriously harmed (Canales, 2005). According to Karen Barad in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007), Einstein never meant to distance time from human or practical affairs (and in extension from politics). Barad claims that for Einstein, time simply meant clock time, not because clock time is the nature of time, but because it is the way time is used (Barad, 2007, p. 55).

²⁸ Einstein's ideas were not conceived in isolation, and maybe most prominent among his predecessors was Henri Poincaré. Also, Einstein was not the first to coin the term "space-time," a phrase that came from Hermann Minkowski, a contemporary of Einstein. Minkowski and Einstein's theories did not overlap (especially because Minkowski asserted that space-time was absolute, i.e. not dependent on any point of reference), and Minkowski used the term space-time to assert that reality should be divided up four-dimensionally and that it is pointless to distinguish space and time from each other in both a physical and a mathematical sense (Turetzky, 1998, pp. 5–70).

²⁹ It is worth noting that the distinction between matter and space is not made explicit here. I have decided to use "matter" to signal the acting forces in relation to time, and leave out the concept of space here. However, Einstein calls this interaction between time, space and matter 'space-time,' because matter also affects space and not only time. This distinction of space and matter is a discussion that I will return to in my dissertation, and for now it is sufficient to say that time is tied up with matter in the theory of relativity.

Darwin's theory effectively rejected an essence and a clear-cut linearity of time in favor of the multifaceted changes in the genetic chain (Grosz, 2004, pp. 17–94).³⁰ As I understand Grosz' argument, for Darwin, time was enacted in matter according to the logic of life mechanisms. There have been numerous accounts of the political and economic thought that influenced Darwin, and the consequences his theory has had on political rationales, and here it suffice to say that Darwin is one example of how conceptions of time become connected to political reality.³¹

Already with these various answers to the question “what is time?” as it is conceived in its most scientific form, there are different ways of describing time and these ways have different meaning, different imaginations and different functions depending on what purposes and pragmatic uses they are put to. With that in mind, we leave the various answers to the question ‘what is time?’ to instead focus on the question ‘what does time do?’

Time and Society: Reviewing the Debates

Starting with the claim that time does something, or at least that it is utilized by humans, formed by social structures, as well as forming social structures, I will here focus on various modern societal notions of time that I believe are dominant, naturalized, or often go unmarked, but that have been given considerable attention in critical and anti-hegemonic theories.

The chapter begins with a discussion of clock time; its history and utilized space of appearance, so as to show how new technologies can change conceptions and uses of time. In order to highlight the progressive temporality as it gained dominance in the 18th century in the West, I discuss Koselleck and Foucault's readings of this period. Within the idea of a progressive temporality coupled with the technology of clock

³⁰ Grosz argues that Darwin was not concerned with ontology in the sense of origin, but rather with ontological questions in the sense of genealogy (Grosz, 2004, pp. 19ff.). Foucault would probably say Darwin rejected *Ursprung*, as an all-encompassing and founding origin which determines trajectories, in favor of *Herkunft*, as the multiple paths of heritage.

³¹ Grosz goes through the influence that economic thought had on Darwin (Grosz, 2004, pp. 32–39), and the transposition of Darwinian thoughts on evolution onto ideas of racial and gendered separation (Grosz, 2004, pp. 64–92 esp. 89ff.). See also John Campbell's “Scientific Discovery and Rhetorical Invention: The Path to Darwin's Origin” (1990) for a discussion on how social and rhetorical considerations affected Darwin's method and thought, and Alan Gross' *The Origin of Species: Evolutionary Taxonomy as an Example of the Rhetoric of Science* (1990) for a discussion on the persuasive aspects of Darwin's *Origin*.

time and its power to regularize social structures, we find important presuppositions for the temporalities of capitalism, and I summarize some of these discussions.

Time and Technology: Clock Time as Example

The interface between technology and concepts of time cannot be underestimated, and indeed a whole field of research is concerned with this topic. As Kevin Birth argues in *Objects of Time: How Things Shape Temporality* (2012), with each new technological invention our cognitive shape of time will change, as will the notion of time in society, and often dramatically (2012, pp. 1–5). The uses of the clock, the introduction of the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), the telegraph, telephone and radio, the TV and mass communication, computer technology and the internet, all shape our ways of being human, both cognitively and socially. Here, I will use the example of standardized metric clock time, as it is the time that most people in the world (but not all) interact with on a regular basis. It is the particular form of time that has become naturalized on an everyday, practical level, and it is also the public time with which most of the world organizes its social and political affairs. As will be seen, however, it holds a particular set of epistemologies and has historical and political underpinnings.

As Glennie and Thrift argues in *Shaping the Day: A History of Timekeeping in England and Wales 1300–1800* (2009), there are four standard ways of thinking about clock time historically in Europe: that it stands in opposition to natural time (whatever anyone means by that), that it is the public time of organizing contemporary societies, that it is delineated into units such as the hour, and that the ways in which these units are measured was not self-evident and was dependent on contextual and historical factors (Glennie & Thrift, 2009, pp. 23–28).

The standardization of clock time took place in the late 19th century in Europe, and as Stephen Kern shows in *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (2003), it happened at the intersection of politics, technology and human needs. Kern notes that mechanical clocks were invented already in the 14th century, but that it was the train transportation in the 19th century that created the need for a standardized time.³² In the

³² Arendt also takes the invention of the watch as an example of one of the first modern instruments, and as an example in technological history where the invention was not done for a means-end relation

beginning of the 19th century there were many local clock times around Europe, with the result that train time tables were adjusted to fit these various local clock times at various places, with adjustments ranging from a few seconds to minutes to full hours (and anything in between).

Standardized clock time was introduced with the argument that it would become easier for travellers to know when the train would arrive if all places within a time zone had the same clock time. From the middle of the 19th century up until the first decade of the 20th century various ways of standardizing clock time was put in place, with the most important happening in 1884, when a universal clock time was introduced, with its zero meridian in Greenwich, England (GMT) (Howse, 1980; Kern, 2003, pp. 11ff.; Nguyen, 1992, pp. 30ff.).³³ Kern claims that the telegraph and radio waves were the required technologies that made GMT possible (because they transmitted signals almost instantly on a global scale). Thus, the train and the Eiffel tower have come to stand as the most emblematic modern symbols for time (Kern, 2003, pp. 11ff.).³⁴ Kern is critical of how the clock as a means of public time has dominated over notions of private time (for which he uses a Bergsonian perspective where time is seen as movement or flux). He also criticizes that clock time, in accordance with the measurability or atomism of Newtonian time, separates time into units (seconds, minutes, etc.).³⁵ He argues that the private time and the flux time can be utilized in more varied ways than standardized clock time allows (Kern, 2003, p. 20).³⁶

(i.e. not because of the, later discovered, usefulness of the watch in social affairs), but for the theoretical purpose of measuring nature according to scientific methods (Arendt, 1998, p. 289).

³³ The practice of using 24 units to measure the day (hours) and 60 units to measure the hour and the minute (minutes and seconds) are much older, though, the first stemming from ancient Egypt and the second from ancient Babylon (Birth, 2012, p. 3).

³⁴ See also Glennie & Thrift (2009), especially chapter 2, "Clocks, Clock Time, and Social Change," that introduces the history of clock time (Glennie & Thrift, 2009, pp. 22–64). For a discussion on the colonial reasoning of this standardized clock time, see Ritika Prasad, "'Time-Sense': Railways and Temporality in Colonial India," (2013); and Dan Thu Nguyen "The Spatialization of Metric Time The Conquest of Land and Labour in Europe and the United States" (1992). For the role of clock time in contemporary, post-WWII warfare and the ticking clock as a rhetorical trope, see Stahl (2008).

³⁵ The critique of this monadic position is extensive and with ancient roots in Zeno's paradoxes. For a 20th century example, see Peter Fenves discussion in *The Messianic Reduction: Walter Benjamin and the Shape of Time* (2011), on how Benjamin grapples with this problem in relation to mathematics, and ends up taking the position that any movement cannot be equated with the separable points of its trajectory.

³⁶ I am critical of Kern's unanimous celebration of Bergsonian time. To me, there is nothing inherently good about thinking of time as flux or movement (it can be equally dominative as thinking of it as stable) and Bergson's hierarchical separation between time and space seems to offer few ways out of a streamlined version of time, despite Bergson's assurance of the opposite. Kern's examples (which are almost all concerned with modernist literature) also show a blind-eye to the possible multiplicity of

When the surface of the earth was divided up into time zones of one hour each in 1884, each country had to fit its spatial boundaries within these. This might make sense for a country like Sweden that runs on a narrow south-north axis, but for countries like Russia it introduces practical problems that has resulted in political regulations and drawn borders for time zones. For other large or semi-large countries, this division into multiple time zones has not always been the preferred solution. For example, as Jonathan Hassid and Bartholomew C. Watson discusses in “State of Mind: Power, Time Zones, and Symbolic State Centralization” (2014) the Chinese government has chosen to have just one time zone throughout China. It means that 12pm in Beijing is 12pm also in Xinjiang in the west, but the position of the sun in the sky is noticeably different. As Hassid and Watson argue, this decision is part of the nationalist and centralist ideology dominating the Chinese government today, where the unity of China is emphasized through a united time zone, so as to underline state authority through temporal symbolic power (Hassid & Watson, 2014, pp. 180ff.). This regulation is of course also dependent on power relations where the clock time in Beijing fits better with global standards on what time it is supposed to be when the sun is in a particular position, than it does in Xinjiang. For example, right now as I write this in the end of May 2014, zenith is at 12:11pm in Beijing and at 14:55pm in Xinjiang. Birth argues for something similar when he claims that the global power structure that is enforced by clocks and calendars, and especially the GMT, enables the activities of a few dominant cities, such as New York, London and Tokyo, to direct the activities of most other places (Birth, 2012, pp. 121f.).³⁷

Standardized clock time is always politically connected to the borders of the nation states, global power structures, as well as dependent on technological factors. Metric time is an important idea, with an influential power regime that is both practical and impractical, but it cannot be said to be ‘natural’ in any regular use of that word. As Michelle Bastian discusses in “Fatally Confused: Telling the Time in the

public time because for him, the public time is always streamlined and the private is flux time. However, I think his discussion is important because it highlights the history of the technological and political character of clock time.

³⁷ I am hesitant about the argument of behalf of Birth to compare the using of calendar time to a concept of “biological time” which he locates in the rotation of the earth in relation to the Sun and in the human body in relation to the earth and the sun. Even if Birth argues that these are intersected by culture on each level, so that there is no strictly biological time, it seems to me that the concept carries too much historical weight of essentialism (where the concept of “biological time” runs the risk of being read as better) (Birth, 2012, pp. 124ff.). However, as far as Birth’s claim is only that human’s relation to the earth results in a multiplicity of temporalities, I find it useful.

Midst of Ecological Crises” (2012), societal ideas about clock time, as “a blank, seemingly objective, framework,” cannot capture the relation between nature and culture and ultimately depends on a separation between the two (Bastian, 2012, pp. 24f.). She claims that metric time is too narrow a conception of time in relation to the complexity of human affairs. Instead, she argues for a framework of time that admits to more relations being formed: “Indeed, what I want to propose in this article is that [...] time needs to be more clearly understood, not as a quantitative measurement, but as a powerful social tool for producing, managing, and/or undermining various understandings of who or what is in relation with other things or beings.” (Bastian, 2012, p. 25) Time, in Bastian’s proposed understanding of it, becomes the medium that mitigates who we are in relation to other things, rather than a quantitative technological measurement of separable units.

Time, Progression, and Modernity: Koselleck and Foucault

The rectilinear, progressive time that has become the hallmark of Western modernity is a rather recent phenomenon and, even if it has gained an almost universal dominance at this particular point in history, it originated from a geographically and historically specific Western conception. There are many historic junctions that could be mentioned as relevant when the formation of progressive time took place in the 18th century in Europe, and here I want to just summarize Koselleck’s argument on how progressive time overran previous notions and Foucault’s argument that this progressiveness closed the future according to laws of normation and normalization.

Koselleck discusses in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (2004), how various notions of time have shaped the ways in which politics and history has been made. He starts his discussion of these notions in the Christian European Middle Ages and how they differed from Roman ideas of time and history. For Cicero, argues Koselleck, history and politics is tied to a notion of oration and persuasion/rhetoric. Koselleck claims that in Roman antiquity, the rhetor competes against historical *exempla*, i.e. narratives that served to tell the stories of diverse but great actions (history), in order to gain immortality. Therefore, history functioned as a pedagogical tool on how to behave politically, the *historia magistra vitae* (Koselleck,

2004, p. 28). Political history was thus made by a combination of immortal fame and of restaging of past events (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 26–42).³⁸

According to Koselleck, this adaption of the historical record and its political importance continued into the European Middle Ages, where it remained bound up with *exempla* as a didactic canon for how to behave in public. Worth noting is that these *exempla* were not historical artifacts in a modern everyday sense of the word (i.e. ‘true’ representations of events in the past), but rather creative tools for the contemporary political situation. They could often take the form of anachronisms if it served the creative purpose of the speaker (e.g. a series of events could be displayed or narrated as simultaneous if the purpose was to show the full account, or narratives of past events could be placed in the present if it was useful) (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 9ff.). Or, as Koselleck describes it: “The present and the past were enclosed within a common historical plane.” (Koselleck, 2004, p. 10) So, in the European Middle Ages, both the notion of history and of the political depend less on linear notions of time, and more on a multiplicity of temporalities enabled or secured by the static or tradition-bound political system.

Koselleck also discusses how this notion of political time was tied to a theological Christian temporality in which the End of the World/Time was to come within the near future. As I read Koselleck’s argument, the task that was laid upon the present in such a conception of end time was to stabilize the social order while waiting for the apocalypse. As such, the earthly future was not a very forceful conceptual formation, or rather; it was forceful by the means of its coming conclusion, which served to intensify the temporal power dynamics of the present (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 12ff.). Koselleck asserts that a modern notion of politics was born out of the Reformation and the subsequent wars. Peace was no longer understood as an inherent quality to the Christian religion but could instead be achieved by a restriction of its domain and an enhancement of the domain of the state. That enabled a concern “about the temporal, not the eternal” (Koselleck, 2004, p. 14), and thus a political, earthly time with a future. In the subsequent years leading up to the Enlightenment and the French and American revolutions, the introduction of ideas of human equality and freedom (and not only heavenly equality and freedom) made

³⁸ This is similar to Arendt’s argument, see Chapter 4 on Greek and Roman notions of history and tradition respectively.

social mobility a possibility and a political virtue. This potential social mobility opened up for the idea that the future could be otherwise or indeed better than the present, i.e. progression became the virtue of modernity. According to Koselleck, the turn towards making the better future a key component in political life was also propelled by a growing interest in astrology and the natural sciences, which prolonged the possibilities of an earthly future.³⁹ The temporalities of the social order moved from a Christian practice of *predicting* the end of the world, to a scientific and political *prognosis* where the former prolonged earthly time and the latter was concerned with a set of stable stakes to be calculated with, according to rules of repetition (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 18f.).⁴⁰ The logic of prognosis, that is, the repeatability of bringing the past into the future, met with the already existing idea of salvation, and formed an idea of progression in which it became possible to transcend the already given towards something better. We have here a form of political temporality that assumes scientific methods of calculation and prognosis, for as long into the future as humans could be expected to live on earth. As I argue in Chapter 3, Arendt is also critical of this notion of prognosis in political temporality, even if she takes a more theoretical route to explain it, with Platonic political philosophy in its ancient form as well as (in her view) its modern equivalents as her main target.

For Koselleck, progression also had the characteristics that it introduced the notion of a future that approached the present with ever-increasing speed, and thus it

³⁹ This scientific interest in earthly and cosmic time also propelled scientific inquiry into the earthly past, from the late 18th century and onwards. As Kern remarks: “In just over a century the age of the earth had oscillated from the cramped temporal estimates of biblical chronology to the almost unlimited time scale of Lyell, down to Kelvin’s meager twenty million years, and then back up to hundreds of millions of years.” (Kern, 2003, p. 60) Kern also claims that this discussion did not reach popular consciousness, but rather that it was Darwin who influenced a societal discussion on humankind’s limited time scale on earth (Kern, 2003, p. 60). Discussions on the geological “age of man” was of course not only purported in the 18th century but has continued to spark interest and thus shaping various temporalities implied in such a discussion. Recently, in 2000, the term “anthropocene” was coined to describe a geological epoch in the history of the earth in which humankind fundamentally alters the destiny of the earth. However, as Julia Nordblad shows in “The Future of the Noosphere,” a similar idea was launched already in the 1920s through the concept of the “noosphere”, or a time of human self-consciousness. Nordblad claims that the different modes of temporalities of this concept (most notably, its vision of development or evolution as a fundamental characteristics of the earth and of humans) led to a conclusion that the future was both open-ended and at the same time being laid out according to certain purposes (Nordblad, 2014, pp. 37f.). As I read Nordblad, this is the fundamental paradox of progression: it assumes an open future at the same time that it assumes a path towards betterment.

⁴⁰ Parallel to this increased focus on the future, Koselleck also pinpoints how, during the 18th century, it becomes more important to report on history for its own sake rather than to use it as a creative tool (this is part of reasons for the demise of the importance of rhetoric) (Koselleck, 2004, p. 33). The notion that time could be productively repetitive and bring the past into the present, was turned into a sense of rectilinear time where the past was supposed to be stipulation in a ‘correct’ series of facts.

“robs [the present] of its materiality and actuality” (Koselleck, 2004, p. 23). It introduces a future that both abolishes the present, as well as constructs a Hegelian futureless future in which the agent is captured in the “not yet” (Koselleck, 2004, p. 23). For Koselleck, the idea of progression does not open up for the possibility of the coming of change and the totally new. Rather, it erases the particularity of the present. This, indeed, is also Arendt’s critique of progression, which I discuss in Chapter 4, but she is more hopeful in relation to the coming of the new in modernity, which I discuss in Chapter 5.

The prognosis that predicted different versions of the future opened up for the possibility to steer political measures towards the better of these versions and this led to a power dynamics different from simply stabilizing the present order. Investigating these new forms of power that aimed at producing the better of the possible futures was the task that Foucault set for himself in his various discussions of how the power of the sovereign (the power of the ruler/king) developed into the power of governmentality (the power of the state), and then onwards to modern bio-politics, disciplinarity, securitization, and policing (the power of societal norms to enhance life, productivity, progression, etc.). According to Foucault, these modern forms of powers—i.e. bio-politics—were made to enhance life on the level of the population through careful calculations, separations, foresights, and a constant state of preparedness for threats (Foucault, 1990, pp. 53–159, 2003, pp. 239–263 see also pp. 43-84, 189-237, and 2007, pp. 1–57, 255–357). This continuous enhancement of life on the level of the population mobilized all sorts of state regulations, social practices, discourses and other forms of power that functioned to foretell the future based on what had happened in the past. For example, Foucault discusses in *Security, Territory, Population*, how the charting of diseases was followed by risk management and vaccination programs, and how these measures created a certain normal and expected life course and thus a predicted future for the population (Foucault, 2007, pp. 90f.).

These bio-politics functioned through establishing certain norms for the life of the population that the individual could or could not measure up to. The disciplinarity of bio-power is incorporated, actualized, and circulating through the bodies and the mental construction of individuals. Here, one distinction can be made between the norm as model (normation) and the norm as average (normalization). Both serve to delineate the normal from the abnormal, but disciplinary normation works through a qualitative predetermination of the norm, through 1. Breaking individuals, actions,

movements, times, places into components 2. Classifying these components according to certain objectives or wished for results 3. Deciding the optimal way of getting these results by establishing a model or norm for it 4. Fixing a process and a permanent control to make sure that the progression towards the wished-for results is secured (Foucault, 2007, p. 57). Securitized normalization, on the other hand, works through a quantitative measure of the normal and the abnormal and thus deduces a norm from these statistics. Thus, it requires an awareness and calculation of case, risk, danger, and crisis with the help of statistics (that can always become more fully grasping in its scope, indeed, the whole mechanism is to enlarge its range of knowledge). From this quantified normalization, a whole set of regulations can also be put in practice in order to reduce risk on behalf of the life process of the population (Foucault, 2007, pp. 61f.). Both normation and normalization work to foretell the future through the prognosis, with the help either of the ideal or of the average, and then it works through various disciplinary and securitization processes to make sure this prognosis is reached.

As I read Foucault, these modern bio-powers did not only govern the practices of individuals and populations, but also governed the notion of time, because securing (through both normation and normalization) a normal progression, along with a normal future and a normal past, become part of all these regulatory practices and discourses. As such, it leaves very little space for the temporality of the unexpected or the contingent in the present.

The turn towards an open or inventible future in the sphere of the political from the 18th century and onwards paradoxically led to a closing of the multiplicity of possible futures and various attempts to regularize the unexpected in the present; all through the image of progression. This is the fundamental paradox of progression: it presupposes that we can act in the present to change the outcome of the future, but at the same time the form of that future is already decided upon and thus the action leading to it are too.

Time and Capitalism: Regularization and Paradoxes

This new mechanism of power applies primarily to bodies and what they do rather than to the land and what it produces. It was a mechanism of power that made it possible to extract time and labor, rather than commodities and wealth, from bodies.

(Foucault, 2003, pp. 35f.)

The new power mechanism that Foucault discusses in the quote above is the one where medieval bureaucratic forms of power, with the sovereign ruler on the top of the power pyramid in the form of the Hobbesian Leviathan, were abandoned in favor of disciplinary power. Disciplinary power is the modern form of power that works to ensure effectiveness through various modes of securitization, policing, and normalization, all of which made it possible, according to Foucault, to launch industrial capitalism. Within this new societal system of capitalism, one particular maxim is dominating: Time is money. As E.P. Thompson argues in “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism” (1967), there is a fundamental difference in seeing time in relation to some task that needs to be done, and seeing time as capital, as something that can only be spent: “Those who are employed experience a distinction between their employer's time and their ‘own’ time. And the employer must *use* the time of his labour, and see it is not wasted [...]. Time is now currency: it is not passed but spent.” (Thompson, 1967, p. 61) The temporality of the employed is thus very different from the employer, where the former works to sell individual labor time and the latter works to invest this time for future dividend.

It seems easy to assume a certain rectilinearity to capitalist temporalities—that the production and circulation of commodities constantly goes faster, with the aim to increase surplus value—but as David Harvey discusses in his *The Conditions of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1990), the temporalities of capitalism are much more complex, or paradoxical than so. Noel Castree, in “The Spatio-temporality of Capitalism” (2009), discusses Harvey’s notion of time. Castree claims that Harvey sees time “as a regulatory force that obliges the mode of production to reach compulsively for the future by eliminating the historical present.” (Castree, 2009, p. 36) This futurist temporality in which all the modes of production are to be faster, more efficient and more productive so as to reach the future faster, however, is coupled with one in which capital requires a slowing down, or an investment of capital in the present, for future surplus value to be generated. These two temporalities (the futurist that speeds up and the investment that stabilizes the present for the sake of the future) work, according to Castree’s reading,

in a paradoxical, and as such powerful, way to enhance modern capitalism.⁴¹

This is a temporal paradox of capitalism on a structural level, but another and related, is the paradox on the level of the commodification of human time and bodies, in which there is a simultaneous speeding up and slowing down. Hartmut Rosa argues in *Alienation and Acceleration. Towards a Critical Theory of Late-Modern Temporality* (2010) that the ever-increasing lack of time (“time-famine”) alienates us from most of our everyday experiences and thus function to enhance the capitalist system. We are constantly lacking time, and attempts to discipline ourselves in the present in order to gain time. This speeding up of the present alienates us from it. Sarah Sharma, on the other hand, claims in *In the Meantime* (2014) that this notion needs to be modified according to the uneven distribution of time, speed and slowness. Sharma argues that both speeding up and slowing down can function as bio-political social control (“power-chronography”) and the distribution of time and power cannot be divided up according to clear-cut lines such as: a lot of time = a lot of power, little time = little power. For example, Sharma investigates through an ethnographic case study how the temporality of a taxi driver and a business traveller are interconnected. She shows how the taxi driver’s temporality must concede to alternatively long waits, fast driving, and the ticking of the meter, depending on the needs of the business traveller. This is in stark contrast to the temporality of the business traveller as conceptualized around speed and efficiency. However, as Sharma makes clear, the business travellers’ claim to speed and efficiency ultimately depends on a temporal infrastructure with certain distributions and intersections, where for example, the taxi driver’s adjustment to alternatively speed time and slow time is one the cogs to support this idea (along with other). This distribution of slow time and speed time is connected to the various power structures that both are a part of (Sharma, 2014, pp. 27–80). In a similar fashion, Matthew Sparke discusses in “Fast Capitalism/Slow Terror: Cushy Cosmopolitanism and Its Extraordinary Others” how there are contrary demands for capitalism and counter-terrorism strategies. The former demands speed as well as movement of bodies, capital and products, whereas

⁴¹ William H. Sewell, Jr. argues for something similar in “The Temporalities of Capitalism” (2008), where he claims that there are many inherent paradoxes to capitalist temporalities. One such is the simultaneous notion of the hyper-eventfulness of capitalism (how it generates significant happenings *en masse*, supposedly at an increasingly faster rate) but also its repetitive character that ensures a recurring logic.

the latter demands slowness and spatial bordering of bodies, capital and products (Sparke, 2008).

The notion of the future seems to be the most contested temporality in many works on the functions of (late) capitalism. There are many explanations that attest to that fact, but one is that the progressive promise of a better future, as it was envisioned in Western Enlightenment and modern capitalism, became seriously questioned after the Holocaust (how could the West claim to move towards a technologically better, more equal, and richer society after the Holocaust had taken place within these modes of power and with the help of their technology?). A more recent explanation is that the vision of a better future has had serious cracks with the looming environmental breakdown and an end to endless natural resources. The political project of capitalism has been dependent on this über-ideology of the future and alterations to this vision will undoubtedly affect the role of politics. The question is of course how. Without an answer to this, it is nonetheless certain that the keywords guiding Western capitalist modernity have been set rocking: ‘progression,’ ‘development,’ ‘growth,’ and ‘futuraity’ are up for debate.

3. For Fear of the Future: Reproductive Eternity in Political Philosophy

As outlined in the introduction, this thesis is concerned with Arendt's discussion of the temporalities of political speech-action, with a particular focus on the various anachronisms and their power regimes, that I argue are constitutive of her theories. This chapter seeks to introduce how the political speech-action can be understood and discuss its relationship to political philosophy in Arendt theories. Even if I argue that Arendt's concept of the political, as she introduces it in *The Human Condition*, undergirds almost all of her later theoretical undertakings and that it therefore can be said to form a ground stone for anyone interested in her work, I want to emphasize that the choice to focus on Arendt's concept of the political speech-action has not been made in order to excavate Arendt's concept for its own sake. Rather, I believe that it is relevant in contemporary society to re-consider the concept of the political speech-action because I understand domination and the forceful introduction of sameness to be one of the corner stones in making the political a fearful rather than an hopeful concept today, and I wish, with the help of Arendt, to think it anew.

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the critique that Arendt develops of political philosophy, its fear of unpredictable futures, and the tyrannical elements of that fear. I do so in three steps: first, by presenting a summary of the forms of government in Arendt's political thinking, as well as a summary of the activities of the *vita activa* and their respective temporalities, as Arendt outlines them in *The Human Condition*. This is a bit of a roundabout way of getting to political philosophy, but in order to understand Arendt's critique of the *vita contemplativa*, a rudimentary understanding of the *vita activa* is necessary. As the topic of the thesis concerns the temporalities of political speech-action, this is only a preliminary introduction and the two following chapters will elaborate and deepen this discussion. Second, I discuss Arendt's reading of Socrates and his notion of thinking in relation to political speech-action, and I argue that her reading presents a form of ideal where there are intersections of various temporalities that enable an integration of thinking and speech-action. Thirdly, this discussion of Socrates leads to Arendt's disagreement with Plato on the most fundamental activities of politics (speech-action versus thinking/rulership). Arendt argues that this Platonic tradition of political philosophy

presupposes an eternal set of standards or ideas. In my reading, this leads to, first, a forced entry of eternal stability founded in the realm of ideas into the world of natality, second, an a-chronological but nonetheless rectilinear path between thought and speech-action, and thirdly (when the first two fail to work in the realm of human affairs), a reproductive futurism of threat that works to preempt political speech-action by means of a future that rules the present. These are the modes of anachronisms that the temporality of political philosophy establishes in its conceptual topographies, according to my reading of Arendt's critique of Plato.

I have chosen to call these three anachronisms Arendt's critique of *reproductive eternity*, taking influence from the concept of reproductive futurism, developed by Lee Edelman. In *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004) Edelman argues that the image of the future in the sphere of politics functions not as an enabler of new forms of speech-action (as in its more positive, visionary sense), but as a reproduction of power dynamics in the present.⁴² He calls this the Fantasmatic Child of the future that "alone embodies the citizen as an ideal, entitled to claim full rights to its future share in the nation's good, though always at the cost of limiting the rights 'real' citizens are allowed" (Edelman, 2004, p. 11). Reproductive futurism can be seen as a mirror to Nietzsche's concept of monumental history in "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life," where the burden of the past represses the actions of the present (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 132ff.). The concept of reproductive futurisms captures the burden of the future that we have to submit to in the framing of the political debate in order to "register as politically responsible" (Edelman, 2004, p. 2).

I have chosen to re-phrase this concept and call it reproductive eternity because the image of eternity, as Arendt portrays Plato's version of it, becomes an image that the realm of politics has to submit to in order to register as philosophically responsible. This, according to Arendt, is a temporality simply not fit for the realm of politics, which is characterized by the unexpected and the plural.

⁴² Edelman uses the concept of speech acts and not speech-action, but I rephrased it to stay within the Arendtian conceptual scheme.

Forms of Government

Reading Arendt for her conceptual contribution introduces a set of problems. First of all, for a contemporary reader informed by deconstruction it is sometimes frustrating that Arendt tends to draw lines and make distinctions around concepts and phenomena in a way that seems exclusionary for all sorts of practices, and sometimes hard to motivate on a conceptual level. I have chosen to stay within Arendt's conceptual distinctions and borders, in an attempt to see the productive possibilities of these. I use the concept of *vita activa* and of political speech-action in order to distinguish levels of differences within them, but also to explore the tension that is created between these and forms of government that Arendt discusses as similar or as different from politics.

Arendt makes various distinctions between forms of government, and to some extent they overlap. The most defining one, I would say, is the one between politics and rulership. According to Williams, the former, in the form of equalitarian action, is concerned with "consent and persuasion" and the second with "force," here best understood as coercion (Williams, 2006, p. 9). Arendt writes in *The Human Condition* that Plato attempts to escape the frailty of politics by means of finding a division between the ruler and the ruled (Arendt, 1998, p. 222). She claims that this distinction influences political philosophy ever since and that rule can come in many forms: "rule by one or monarchy, rule by few or oligarchy, rule by many or democracy" (Arendt, 1998, p. 222). For Arendt, democracy is just one form of rulership and it is therefore different from politics, in which there is no division between a ruler and a ruled (Arendt, 1998, p. 222, see also 32, and 1970, pp. 36–42). However, she writes in *Between Past and Future* that this distinction between ruler and ruled is problematic for both Plato and later Aristotle because it seems to suggest the limitation of freedom.

According to Arendt, freedom is the hallmark of the citizen, the highest subject, in the ancient Greece understanding, and it is contrasted to the despotism in the household or the tyrannical form of ruler. Neither the household master and sovereign nor the tyrant are free in the Greek sense, because both rules over inferior subjects and that means that they are isolated in their rulership. For the Greeks, freedom cannot arise in isolation because it needs the company of equals in order to be recognized and sustained (Arendt, 1998, pp. 13, 32, 2006a, pp. 104–110., 152).

According to Arendt, what Plato and Aristotle are looking for is the governing through authority, that is, the rule through tradition with an established foundation, but they lack conceptual predecessors to call it such, and it is only with the Roman notion of foundation that authority can become prevalent (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 93, 105f.). To make things a little more complicated, in *The Promise of Politics*, Arendt claims that the Platonic idea and its rulership is a-traditional in the sense that it bases its rulership on eternal standards rather than on traditional standards (Arendt, 2005b, p. 10).

As such, we find in *The Human Condition*, *Between Past and Future*, *The Promise of Politics*, and *On Violence*, the distinctions between various forms of rulership in authority, despotism, tyranny, and mastership, as well as distinctions to dictatorship and totalitarianism, and they all have some forms of expression in rule, command, obedience, domination, force, strength, coercion, or violence.⁴³

⁴³ Authority, despotism, tyranny, mastership, dictatorship and totalitarianism are all different forms of government. The latter is by far the most unfree of these, because in it, there is no attempt to establish a partial freedom (as in authority) or to establish sovereignty on behalf of anybody (as in the others). Instead, totalitarianism aims for “the total elimination of spontaneity itself, that is, of the most general and most elementary manifestation of human freedom, at which only totalitarian regimes aim by means of their various methods of conditioning.” (Arendt, 2006a, p. 96) In *On Violence*, Arendt makes a distinction between power, authority, strength, force, and violence, but it is a distinction that she rephrases elsewhere, especially power and authority. I just want to give a brief account of the latter three, because I do not engage with them to any greater degree later on. Strength is an individual characteristic that springs forth in isolation and is made by material factors, including the “wits” of the individual (Arendt, 1970, p. 44, 1998, pp. 200f.). The most telling characteristic of violence is its instrumentality, that it can be used as a means to reach an end, and it seems to me that Arendt means by use of either strength, coercion or physical violence (Arendt, 1970, pp. 46, 51f.). Arendt usually discusses violence in its physical form, but there are also violent forms of speaking, such as the threat (Arendt, 2005b, p. 13). The division between violence and the other phenomena is not unproblematic, and for example, it does not adequately address the conceptual difference between violence, coercion, and obedience in the form of the authoritative statement (can accepted standards of command be violent or coercive?). And even if Arendt states that violence can be justified (Arendt, 1970, p. 52), she does not fully address the difference between violence on behalf of a ruler as opposed to violence on behalf of the ruled. Force is the most ambivalent concept of these because it ranges from being an “energy”—a concept with positive connotations to power and politics, to forces of nature that condition humankind, to a form of violence and coercion. In *On Violence* it is the least discussed concept and Arendt only says that violence and force should not be confused and that the latter “indicate[s] the energy released by physical or social movements.” (Arendt, 1970, pp. 44f.) However, in *The Promise of Politics*, this distinction between violence and force is not clear-cut, and force is discussed as something that someone can possess (similar to strength and violence), and Arendt claims that when one is forced by another, it is a characteristic of being unfree (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 146ff.). As I read Arendt in this discussion, force is synonymous to coercion. To make this yet more complicated, in *Between Past and Future*, force is used to name the effect that time has on the human mind, and Arendt calls the past and future “forces” that “struggle” in a battle, and where they “drive,” “presses” and “pulls” humankind (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 10ff.). This is also the meaning that Arendt gives to “force” in *On Revolution* when she describes the metaphors of “waves,” “torrents” and “storms” in the French revolution. There, force is clearly meant as a release of social energy (Arendt, 2006c, pp. 38f.). It is in this latter, performative or energetic notion that I use it, but it can function both dominative and enabling.

It is outside the scope of this thesis to discuss all of them, and in this chapter I focus on the differences and tensions between politics and ideal rulership in the Platonic sense (before it receives any particular denominations, but with similarities mainly to tyranny, despotism, and mastership). In Chapter 4 I emphasize the tension between politics and authoritarian rulership, in Arendt's discussion of Greek, Roman, and modern tradition of political practice. In the final chapter, I read the tension within politics itself, and especially in relation to the connections that the moving present has to other temporalities.

For the sake of clarity, I have chosen to call the Platonic form of rulership *ideal rulership* and the traditional form of rulership *authoritarian rulership*, and they are both different from politics in which there is no rulership. If we want to make a preliminary delineation of these forms of government, we could say that politics is the most ideal form of being in public and it depends on power and plurality in order to exist, and its goal is a shared freedom (Arendt, 1998, pp. 8, 32, 175–180, 199–206, 2006a, pp. 142–169). Power is never an entity that belongs to any individual, but springs up between humans whenever they acknowledge each other as similar and equal in their humanity and separate and different in their individuality (Arendt, 1998, pp. 199–206). The forms of expressions of politics are speech-actions, and they secure the condition necessary for newness to appear even if they can also sometimes enable duration without rulership (Arendt, 1998, pp. 8, 177f., 189ff., 2006a, pp. 151, 164–169). Speech-actions take different forms in Arendt's writing, as in promising and forgiving, dialogue or persuasion, but they share the characteristics in Arendt's writing that they start from the attempts to understand the world as it appears to the other (Arendt, 1998, pp. 26, 243ff., 2005b, p. 16).

Authoritarian rulership is different from politics because it does not rely on equality that springs up between humans but rather on the acceptance of a hierarchal order of the one above the other. The source of authority is the foundation in the past, especially through religion and tradition (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 93ff.). Its forms of expression are not political speech-action but command and obedience (Arendt, 2006a, p. 93). The reason behind this authoritarian restriction of speech-action is not to abolish freedom, but to limit the destructive potential of politics and speech-action, in order to enable a stability of human affairs. The governing bases its authority on something that is superior to the ruler, as for example laws in a judicial system or religious commands (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 96f.). Authority is different from ideal

rulership because the hierarchal order it implements is accepted on behalf of the participants which is not necessarily the case with ideal rulership, but also different from politics because authority presumes a hierarchy and takes its justification from something outside of the sphere of human speech-action itself (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 92ff.).

Ideal rulership (which, as mentioned, is my attempt to name the combination of tyranny, mastership, and despotism in combination with the idea of eternity that Plato takes as his model) is similar to authority in its forms of expression, that is, rulership through command and obedience. However, ideal rulership makes a sharp separation between ruler and ruled, where the former has the capacity to think or reason before issuing a command, whereas the ruled merely obeys it without knowledge, reason or thinking (Arendt, 1998, pp. 222ff., 2006a, pp. 106ff.). Ideal rulership does not rest on mutual acceptance of the hierarchy as in authority, but rather on coercion for the sake of the higher ideas. In my congested understanding of ideal rulership, the laws it implements in the political realm are not there for the sake of the stability within the political as in authoritarian rulership, but for sake of the higher ideas themselves.

Even if I have chosen to engage with the more ‘hopeful’ side of Arendt’s notion of politics, as not only the source of the problem but also its solution, I nonetheless attempt to find a tension within Arendt’s notion of politics, not to its most evil forms as in totalitarianism, but ideal and authoritarian rulership. Within these, the possibilities of enabling difference and the coming of the new, but also of excluding difference and the possibility of the new in order to achieve sameness and stability, are all negotiated in some form.

Leaving the World of Ideas

The concept of *vita activa* that Arendt develops in *The Human Condition* is an enigmatic term: on the one hand it can simply be divided into three activities: labor, work and speech-action, but on the other, it is developed as a conceptual attempt to understand politics and ethical concerns. On a biographical level, this ethical concern can be seen as Arendt’s departure from the philosophical tradition within which she wrote her dissertation on Augustine, and a departure from the focus on introspection that formed a read thread in her book on Varnhagen. This ethical concern is

developed in *The Origin of Totalitarianism*, but mostly in contrastive ways (totalitarianism does *not* offer any way of understanding human affairs in a political or ethical way), and it is arguably in *The Human Condition* that she establishes a theoretical scheme that she would largely follow all through her remaining writing.

According to Young-Bruehl, the two last texts in which Arendt argues for the autonomy of thinking and the transcendence of love are written around 1929: one is a review of Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* and the other, that she wrote together with Stern, is a review of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 83ff.). Arendt's political engagement became more manifest from the 1930s and onwards, and she leaves the world of ideas and enter the world of plurality and human affairs (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 92, 102). During the Second World War and the Holocaust, the problems of politics, of the frailty of human affairs, and of human evil, presented themselves to Arendt, with what can be euphemistically called urgency.

The question becomes for Arendt how to deal with the fact that, in a formulation she repeats in her writing, "men, not Man, live on the earth" (Arendt, 1998, p. 7, see also 1978, p. I:19). Following from this plurality of humankind comes the question of its potential to do great things but also its potential to do evil and murderous things. For Arendt, this question becomes even more pressing with technological and scientific development, which make it possible to extend the range of evil almost indefinitely: "[...] there is no reason to doubt our present ability to destroy all organic life on earth. The question is only whether we wish to use our new scientific and technical knowledge in this direction, and this question cannot be decided by scientific means; it is a political question of the first order" (Arendt, 1998, p. 3). Even if *The Human Condition* is almost silent on these pressing issues, many scholars have pointed out that it should nonetheless be read equally as a response to the dangers of politics as to its enabling possibilities for freedom to appear in the world. For example, Williams writes concerning this silence in *The Human Condition*:

The totalitarian horror resonates darkly even as Arendt delineates perennial features of human action: the novelty of human affairs (what was more novel than this new form of government?), the unpredictability of action (what less predictable than the collapse of all certainties within the space of one generation?), the unreliability of men (who less reliable than the mobs and adventurers, race-thinkers and plutocrats who undermined the nation state?), the darkness of the human heart (where darker than when its moods and caprices determined life and death in the concentration camps?); and, above all, the

frailty of human affairs. Arendt's silence, one may say in retrospect, was very loud indeed (Williams, 2006, p. 5).

Because of these pressing issues, as well as her experiences of the Second World War and the Holocaust, Arendt turned away from the realm of ideas in order to engage with the world of human affairs and politics. This is also why she would not call herself a philosopher, but rather a political theorist or political thinker (Buckler, 2011, p. 1).

Arendt's choice of terms for her own profession—a political thinker—indicates what I would argue follows as a read thread in her work: the wish to reestablish the link between speech-action and thinking, that she argues was lost when Plato misinterpreted Socrates' thinking, and that has haunted philosophy and politics since (Arendt, 1992, p. 21, 2005b, pp. 5–39).

Labor, Work, Speech-Action: The Vita Activa

*Is it not a “dreadful” truth that all that we know about an act is never sufficient to accomplish it, that the bridge connecting the knowledge of the act with the act itself has never yet been built? Acts are never what they appear to us to be.*⁴⁴

(Nietzsche, 2013, p. II:116)

Arendt did not intend for *The Human Condition* to bear that title, but rather, she wanted to name it *Vita Activa*. This is corrected in the German translation of the book which is called *Vita activa oder von tätigen Leben* (1960). According to Arendt, the original title is misleading because the book does not deal with the human condition in its generality,⁴⁵ but only with the active way of life, and leaves the mind activities

⁴⁴ “Ist es nicht gerade die ‘schreckliche’ Wahrheit: daß, was man von einer Tat überhaupt wissen kann, *niemals* ausreicht, sie zu tun, daß die Brücke von der Erkenntnis zur Tat in keinem einzigen Falle bisher geschlagen worden ist? Die Handlung sind *niemals* das, was sie uns erscheinen!” (Nietzsche, 1964, p. II:116)

⁴⁵ Arendt uses “condition” in a two-fold manner that are hard to reconcile. In *The Life of the Mind*, her argument remains close to her reading of Kant in which the “thing in itself” is equated with the capacity to think the possibility of the unknowable. She claims that because everything that is, such as a sense experience, must have a cause that is different from that which it causes, and therefore there must be something behind sense experience. These are “the conditions of the *possibility of experience*” (Arendt, 1978, p. I:41). These conditions of possibility are therefore *a priori*, or the “thing in itself.” However, Arendt also claims that we cannot know anything about this thing in itself, and she stresses that it does not exist in the world of appearances. Rather it is the *absence* of the “thing in itself” that prompts us to ask questions of it, and this question asking is within the faculty of thinking (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:40–45). In *The Human Condition*, Arendt presents another perspective that is more oriented

of the human condition for *The Life of the Mind* (Arendt, 1978, p. 1:6). The term *vita activa* relates to three modes of being in the world: labor, work, and speech-action, or alternatively the *animal laborans*, the *homo faber*, and the *vita activa/bios politikos*.

There is some conceptual overlap in Arendt's writing on the *vita activa*, where she sometimes states that all of the three activities make up the *vita activa* (Arendt, 1998, p. 7). However, she also discusses Aristotle's distinction, who, according to Arendt, did not consider the first two activities, labor and work, as dignified enough to constitute life at all, because they were not free activities but conditioned by necessity. Arendt sometimes follows this distinction and uses the term *vita activa* when she is clearly often only referring to the political speech-action (Arendt, 1998, pp. 12f.). When this is clear from the circumstances in the text, I have chosen to call this the 'political *vita activa*.' Whenever the *vita activa* also refers to the *homo faber* or the *animal laborans*, I emphasize this inclusion.

Arendt uses both the Greek and the Latin phrase, the *bios politikos* and the *vita activa*. A relevant argument against this Latin bias is that Arendt more often is drawing from Greek thinkers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle) rather than Roman (Cicero). However, Arendt uses the Latin terms nonetheless, so in order to avoid confusion, I

towards how sense experience is negotiated in the realm of human affairs, and how the one condition the other:

Whatever touches or enters into a sustained relationship with human life immediately assumes the character of a condition of human existence. This is why men, no matter what they do, are always conditioned beings. Whatever enters the human world of its own accord or is drawn into it by human effort becomes part of the human condition. The impact of the world's reality upon human existence is felt and received as a conditioning force. The objectivity of the world—its object- or thing-character—and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditioners of human existence (Arendt, 1998, p. 9).

In this quote, things in the world cannot be understood as constituting (naïve) reality, but nor are they only absences that functions as conditions of possibilities for thinking. The word play that Arendt draws from does not come out as fully in English. The German word that Kant uses for "conditions" is "Bedingungen" where "ding" translates to "thing" or possibly "object", which means that "Bedingungen der Möglichkeit" could be understood as "the forms that make it possible for thingly-ness to appear as things" (or "materiality to appear as matter" if one prefers a materialist's choice of terms). I believe the same underlying word play is meant in the phrase "objectivity of the world" where "object," thing, becomes "objectivity," thingly-ness. This process of making it possible for thingly-ness to appear works in a two-way manner here, where the things of the world condition humankind—they act as forces that shape humankind—but without humans, they would be a "heap of articles, a non-world." As I read Arendt, these thing-characters are changeable and can condition human existence differently depending on their different forces. Of course, this is also true the other way around since human existence conditions the thing-character of the world.

follow suit. The political *vita activa* also stands in opposition to the *vita contemplativa*, and with this concept, Arendt almost exclusively refers to the Latin term, even if she also sometimes makes brief reference to *bios theōrētikos*.

The three activities of the *vita activa* do not correspond to aspects of human nature. This should be understood in a double sense: first, these activities cannot be said to represent some people's identities or their proper activities (that some people should be identified as *animal laborans* and some as *homo faber*, etc.). There is the troubling aspect that Arendt personifies them (speaking of the *homo faber* as a "he" with certain abilities and as someone that does certain things), but she nonetheless defines them as activities rather than personalities. These activities are "within the range of every human being" and can therefore not be said to belong to some and not to others (Arendt, 1998, p. 5). Second, the question of human nature is one that Arendt wants to avoid because she claims that is unanswerable. She states that the question of human nature, as in Augustine's "*quaestio mihi factus sum* ('a question have I become for myself')" cannot be answered without moving from asking the question 'who is man' to 'what is man' (Arendt, 1998, p. 10). We would need a position external to ourselves in order to answer this question. This external position can be offered either by the Christian God, the Platonic idea of man, or, it can "easily" lead down the dangerous path to identify the "superhuman" (Arendt, 1998, pp. 10f.). Needless to say, none of these solutions are compelling for Arendt, and humans can thus only know the other, but never the self, and they need the other in order to be confirmed in their sense of themselves and the world (more on this under "Plurality, Newness, and Political Speech-Actions" in this chapter). As such, *animal laborans*, *homo faber* and the political *vita activa* are activities and not human natures.

As mentioned before, Arendt uses ancient Greek thinkers to outline her theory, and that means that the three activities corresponds to activities that Arendt claims are present in ancient Greece. In the following discussion, I will make references to these activities, but only in so far as Arendt discusses them and only when it is relevant for the outline of how Arendt's critique of the temporalities of political philosophy is laid out, and I do not comment on the historical accuracy of her claims. In order to understand Arendt's critique of the tradition of political philosophy, with Plato as its beginning point, we need to have a preliminary outline of the division within the *vita activa*. This is because Arendt claims that Plato takes the *homo faber*, rather than the political *vita activa*, as the foundation and logic of the *vita contemplativa*. So, in order

to parcel our Arendt's critique of political philosophy and how it gives politics a temporality not fit for it, we need to first introduce the three activities of the *vita activa*, and their respective temporalities.

Labor and Repetition

The most defining characteristic for the activity of labor is that it is performed by necessity. The Greek understanding, according to Arendt, of a free man is that he is not conditioned by necessity to labor and therefore has free time to spend on politics. Arendt stays within this delineation and for her, necessity and freedom are fundamentally opposed categories, and humans only labor out of necessity whereas what they do out of freedom is a political question. The *animal laborans* is concerned with the life processes, i.e. the necessity to labor in order to survive (Arendt, 1998, p. 7). In a repeating formulation, Arendt calls this humankind's metabolism with nature.⁴⁶ This, as I read her, means that nature is intertwined with the life process of every human being, and that this is expressed in the labor mode of being in the world. This is also the reason, in my interpretation, why she calls it the animal side of humans, the *animal laborans*. It is an activity that human animals share with other animals, because it concerns all the activities that animals need to do in order to stay alive.

According to Arendt, in ancient Greece and Rome, the laboring activities are spatially delineated to the private sphere and are the task of women and slaves. For women, that means the labor of securing the survival of the species and for the male slave laborer to provide for the material maintenance of the free man and the master of the household (Arendt, 1998, p. 30). This gender system seems to condemn women by necessity to the realm of the household and away from politics. Read as Arendt's historical description of the division of labor in ancient Greece, it is not so problematic (even if, of course, then the historical accuracy must be assumed), but Arendt's usage of ancient Greek sources is, as I have mentioned, also done in order to crystalize her own opinion.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ A concept Arendt borrows from Marx (Taminiaux, 1997, p. 26).

⁴⁷ Given that Arendt is ambiguous of whether the sphere of necessity is changeable and dependent on cultural norms or if it is simply an ontological given, this position is troublesome for any feminist reading of Arendt. If it is simply a description of what Arendt thinks the division of labor in antiquity

When the *animal laborans* labors, it does so for immediate consumption and there is no real endpoint to the laboring process but it must repeat its laboring process again and again (Arendt, 1998, pp. 99f.). I interpret this as a chain of means to reach further means without ever coming to an end. Through repetition, the topography of its temporality is circular in the same way that Arendt thinks that nature and the life process are circular life (Arendt, 1978, p. II:17, 1998, p. 96, 2006a, pp. 41–46). Labor and life in its biological function are thus connected to the point of being the same thing in Arendt’s writing. To borrow a phrasing from Jacques Taminiaux in *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker: Arendt and Heidegger*, labor is “the repetition of the same, to what Nietzsche, a philosopher of life, called ‘eternal return’” (1997, p. 26). This eternal return of life and labor is for Arendt a necessary aspect of the human condition, but it cannot be seen as the activity that constitutes humankind as humankind, as she claims that Marx argues: “the seemingly blasphemous notion of Marx that labor (and not God) created man or that labor (and not reason) distinguished man from the other animals” (Arendt, 1998, p. 86). Nor can life and labor be the value of humankind, as Nietzsche claims, according to Arendt (Arendt, 1998, p. 117). As we shall see, for Arendt, the source of humankind lies not in God or reason, but nor does it lie in labor or life.

A critique that could be leveled against Arendt’s understanding of the temporalities of labor is that they are more multifaceted than the repetition of sameness; that they can be straight, circular, speeded, slowed, or any mish-mash of

looked like and the way it imposed itself as necessary in the world-view of antiquity, it becomes a question of historical accuracy and historical interpretation (were there alternative understandings of this division? Did it function similarly for all men and women, or was it contingent on class, race, etc.? Were there resistance or examples of behavior in which its status as a necessity was questioned?). If Arendt means that this particular form of necessity in the labor activity is a necessary given in all times, then this delineation of the labor of women and of men is one of Arendt’s most anti-feminist approaches. However, as *The Human Condition* continues, Arendt’s argument is that the activity of labor has far extended the sphere of necessity in modern times, compared to what it looked like in antiquity, and since she claims that it can magnify, it can perhaps also lessen, and thus she opens of for a reconsideration of its ontological status as a given. The fact that the citizens in antiquity could free themselves from the labor activity also shows that it is an activity that necessarily had to be done, but it does not necessarily states by whom. However, it is clear that the sphere of necessity is the sphere of taking what nature provides and consume it, so it is to some extent always anchored in the natural, and thus again, we are back with normative ideas about what natural labor would look like for women and men. For discussions, see Mary Dietz, “Hannah Arendt and Feminist Politics” (1994) and *Turning Operations: Feminism, Arendt, and Politics* (2002), esp. chapter 5, 6 and 8, which deal with Arendt’s position on the “woman question” in relation to the writing of Simone de Beauvoir and Simone Weil. Another source is Bonnie Honig (Ed.) *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt* (1995).

these, depending on the needs of capital reproduction.⁴⁸ I think that is a valid critique if one looks upon Arendt's discussion as an empirical description of how labor actually functions. Another way of understanding Arendt's discussion of labor is as a description of a particular mode of being in the world, or a particular form of activity in the world. As such, it does not have to correspond to what we usually refer to as 'labor,' but must function to catch the meaning of a particular aspect of human activities.

This aspect, I think, is the temporal circularity of repetition, that I believe Arendt wants to highlight in order to claim that there are activities that do not have a beginning or an end. This characteristic of Arendt's concept of labor makes it impossible for labor to produce, make or do anything new that could enter into the world. Labor, in Arendt's understanding, is caught in its own reproduction. As I read this in temporal terms, the future functions in the same way as the present, which in turns functions in the same way as the past.

Work and Means-End

The second activity, that of the *homo faber*, is work, production, or fabrication. The *homo faber* builds a world that is distinct from nature, in order to make the earth inhabitable for humans. The *homo faber* builds the human artifact and creates permanence and stability (Arendt, 1998, pp. 7f.). Arendt makes a distinction between labor and work, where the former produces commodities for immediate consumption whereas the latter produces tools to make labor and thus survival of human life easier and more comfortable in the longer perspective. Similar to labor, work is also an activity that stems from the conditions of necessity, but is performed for its *usefulness*; its fundamental logic is the utility of the means-end rationale. It is worth noting that Arendt changes the Latin phrase from *animal* to *homo*, which indicates that this is an activity higher up in the hierarchy and one that human animals do not share with other animals.⁴⁹ The spatial delineation of the fabricator is that of the

⁴⁸ See Chapter 2, "Time and Capitalism: Regularization and Paradoxes," for a discussion on some of the many temporal paradoxes within capitalist systems and experiences.

⁴⁹ Arendt does not discuss this choice of terms, but in *On Revolution* she notes that the original meaning of *homo* was "the equivalent of 'man' [...], a rightless person, therefore, and a slave." (Arendt, 2006c, p. 36) This connection to the word "slave" might indicate that Arendt wants to connect the activity of the *homo faber* closer to necessity. In order to name the political activity, she uses the

marketplace where goods are displayed. This display is not a display of an actor *in-between* other actors, but a display of the producer *behind* the products. It is not a political relationship in between humans, but a relationship between products and humans (Arendt, 1998, pp. 160f.).

The *homo faber's* negotiation with nature creates a different temporal framework than labor; if the products of labor are consumed and therefore destroyed immediately after their production and therefore dependent on endless repetition, the products of work have a longer and a more definite duration because they are made to be used. This durability is marked by the completeness of the production process, that it has a beginning and an end:

To have a definite beginning and a definite, predictable end is the mark of fabrication, which through this characteristic alone distinguishes itself from all other human activities. Labor, caught in the cyclical movement of the body's life process, has neither a beginning nor an end. Action, though it may have a definite beginning, never, as we shall see, has a predictable end (Arendt, 1998, pp. 143f.).

The temporal topography of the *homo faber* therefore looks altogether different than that of the *animal laborans* and of the political *vita activa*. Its beginning point is in the mind of the fabricator and its endpoint in the finished product. Arendt claims that the fabricator works in two steps: "first, perceiving the image or shape (*eidos*) of the product-to-be, and then organizing the means and starting the execution." (Arendt, 1998, p. 225) Fabrication has a beginning point in the idea in the mind of the fabricator, and after the fabricator conceives of this idea, the production of the product is a simple execution of it.

The *homo faber* produces for the end result, and the relation that it has to the production process (the events in between the idea in the mind and the endpoint product) is destructive, and as soon as the product is produced, it "extinguishes the process" of its production (Arendt, 1998, p. 206). The means of the fabrication is not important, and all the means necessary can be justified for the sake of the end result. This reduction of the importance of the means is a dangerous enterprise:

We are perhaps the first generation which has become fully aware of the murderous consequences inherent in a line of thought that forces one to admit that all means, provided that they are efficient, are permissible and justified to pursue something defined as an end. [...] For to make a statement about ends that do not justify all means is to

word life, *vita* and *bios*, following Aristotle, for whom labor and work were not dignified enough to constitute life (Arendt, 1998, pp. 12f.).

speak in paradoxes, the definition of an end being precisely the justification of the means (Arendt, 1998, p. 229).

This brief reference to Arendt's own experiences of the Nazi regime and its logic of reducing humans to materials that could be produced or destroyed according to whatever ends, highlights the political danger that Arendt sees in this conceptual topography of means-ends. It is the danger of justifying anything that is efficient and any means to reach an end.

As Taminioux' discusses, the *homo faber* works to reduce nature to a means to reach an end, and as such the end regulates the means: "it is the end that regulates the means, selects them, and rules over the entire process of fabrication. Yet no sooner is the end reached than it falls within a new sequence of mean-and-ends and in its turn becomes a means for further ends." (Taminioux, 1997, p. 27) In Taminioux' interpretation of Arendt, the end of fabrication rules retroactively over the means, and therefore the temporality of the *homo faber* can be said to work backwards, justifying the means by the image of the end product.

So, the temporal topography of the *homo faber* is a combination of first, the stable, un-worldly temporality inherent to the idea in the mind of the fabricator that starts a process of fabrication moving forwards. Second, it creates material durability with the endpoint, the product of the idea, be it a tool, a house, or an art piece. Thirdly, when the end rules over the means, the endpoint functions in a retroactive rulership over the starting point, and acts backwards to justify the starting point.

As I understand the *homo faber*, its temporal topography is one where it is possible to foretell the future through the idea, because the idea is both the starting point and the endpoint of production. This can be related to Edelman's concept of reproductive futurism, in which the image of the future acts back on the present in order to regulate it. The *homo faber* temporality is similar but, as I argue, this justifying image is a curious combination of both beginning and end in one, in a temporality that re-produces itself according to the means-ends rationale. As will be seen, Arendt picks up these temporal traits of the *homo faber* in her critique of political philosophy.

Political Speech-Actions, Plurality, and Newness

The initial definition of the third activity, the political life of the *vita activa*, is: “Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 7)⁵⁰ The plurality of humankind is the core assumption of this activity and always underlies all other definitions. Plurality is a combination of difference and sameness where the one presupposes the other: “Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the *same*, that is, human, in such a way that *nobody is ever the same* as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 8, emphasis added) In a very basic sense, plurality is both the fact that we recognize each other as humans, but also that no one is the same as anyone else. We are both equal and distinct, same and different, similar and unique. We need both of these parameters to be human (Arendt, 1998, pp. 175f.). Note that in this quote, plurality entails, what I believe is the only temporal absolute in Arendt’s writing: it is the condition that will always be so for as long as humankind exists.

The main activities of the political *vita activa* are speech and action. Given that these two activities are the forms or means of expression that politics can take, I will pause at the distinction between these two for a bit. Aristotle’s term, *bios politikos*, incorporates action, *praxis*, as well as speech, *lexis*. According to Arendt, in pre-Socratic thought, these were the highest forms of activity (rather than thinking or contemplation) and belonged together:

Of all the activities necessary and present in human communities, only two were deemed to be political and to constitute what Aristotle called the *bios politikos*, namely action (*praxis*) and speech (*lexis*), out of which rises the realm of human affairs [...] from which everything merely necessary or useful is strictly excluded. / However, while certainly only the foundation of the city-state enabled men to spend their whole lives in the political realm, in action and speech, the conviction that these two human capacities belonged together and are the highest of all seems to have preceded the *polis* and was already present in pre-Socratic thought (Arendt, 1998, pp. 24f.).

⁵⁰ In *The Life of the Mind* Arendt extends this formulation of plurality as everything that goes on between humans to also involve everything that goes on between humans and matter/phenomena. Because matter cannot exist without appearing to a living creature (human animal or non-human animal), there is a constant interaction between matter and humankind. As Arendt claims: “Plurality is the law of the earth.” (Arendt, 1978, p. I:19)

Action and speech were thus the highest activities of the human condition in pre-Socratic Greece, strictly separated from necessity (i.e. labor) and usefulness (i.e. fabrication). The point I want to emphasize is that Arendt claims that these two activities belonged together. But in what way?

To some extent, it seems obvious: the activity of speaking is speech and the activity of acting is action and they both arise in the “realm of human affairs” (Arendt, 1998, p. 25). However, it is clear that for Arendt, engaging in human affairs is hard to do at all without using words, so what activity is action if not conditioned by language? The answer is not clear-cut, and often Arendt privileges action as the overarching term for all political activities, as in the distinction between the three activities (where speech becomes a sub-category of action, or one of its forms of expression), but sometimes speech is considered as the *foremost* activity of political action, as in this statement in the prologue: “Wherever the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes man a political being.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 3) A similar position is found later in the prologue, where the importance of speech is extended even further: “And whatever men *do* or *know* or *experience* can make sense only to the extent that it can be spoken about.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 4, emphasis added) The full realm of doing, knowing and experiencing (the stakes are high as much of her theories, along with much post-Kantian thinking, circle around these concepts) can “make sense” (again, the stakes are high, because “sense” is both the means of experience, the means of understanding, and the means by which common sense is established) only if they can be spoken about.⁵¹

The position that language undergirds both experience, action and thinking for Arendt is also visible *Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy*, where speaking, communication or persuasion (she uses all three terms) are the means by which thinking can function and become truthful to itself (Arendt, 1992, pp. 39ff.). It is also prevalent in *The Promise of Politics* where speaking, persuasion and *logos* (she uses all three terms) are the means by which thinking can appear in the mind of the thinker

⁵¹ In a similar formulation, Arendt claims that Aristotle’s two famous definitions of man as “a living being capable of speech” and as being capable of a political life should not be seen as definitions at all, nor as a claim on what activity is the highest (which undoubtedly for Aristotle was the quiet contemplation), but rather as popular opinion. “In his two most famous definitions, Aristotle only formulated the current opinion of the *polis* about man and the political way of life, and according to this opinion, everybody outside the *polis*—slaves and barbarians—was *aneu logou*, deprived, of course, not of the faculty of speech, but of a way of life in which speech and only speech made sense and where the central concern of citizens was to talk with each other.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 27)

(Arendt, 2005b, pp. 7, 23), and thus be part of the world and used in its practical affairs. And, we could add that Arendt calls Socrates' apology an example of rhetoric, and that Socrates is Arendt's prime example of this capacity to think within language (Arendt, 2005b, p. 7). In her essay on Karl Jaspers in *Men in Dark Times*, she speaks admirably of Jaspers' insistence that for philosophy and thinking to work, it needs communication (Arendt, 2014, p. 86). I would therefore say that language and speech are more fundamental categories for the human condition than action, even if action is the term that she most often uses for the political manifestation in the human condition.

As far as I have found, Arendt never defines how action could look like if it were not made within speech, although she says that speech has a closer affinity to the revelatory capacity to display who the actor is, whereas action has a closer affinity to the capacity to begin something new (Arendt, 1998, p. 178). As I read this, the tension between the sameness and difference of plurality is foremost negotiated and enacted in speech, through its revelatory capacity (it can reveal difference and sameness between actors and within the actor) (Arendt, 1998, pp. 176ff.). Speech is consequently the medium that creates an in-between between humans, a web of relations, into which each new action is inserted. However, Arendt also states that the action that begins something new and unexpected creates the "texture of everything we call real" (Arendt, 2006a, p. 168) and as such, it seems that action is the world-creating activity. But, relating to the above discussion, the experience of reality can only be known through the faculty of language. So, it seems to me that Arendt's discussions of action always move in a circle, coming back to the undergirding assumption of speech. Therefore, I have chosen to put a hyphen in between speech and action, in order to emphasize their relation.⁵² This is to some extent a re-interpretation of the choice of terms that Arendt makes, but I believe it makes her notion of action clearer (because it highlights its undergirding speech-character) and her notion of political speech clearer because it highlights its capacity to begin. Or, as she writes: "Speechless action would no longer be action because there would no longer be an actor, and the actor, the doer of deeds, is possible only if he is at the same time the speaker of words." (Arendt, 1998, pp. 178f.)

⁵² This is also a choice that Keenan does in "Promises, Promises: The Abyss of Freedom and the Loss of the Political in the Work of Hannah Arendt" in which he states that political speech and action can be abbreviated to speech-action (Keenan, 1994, p. 304)

We must note that the underlying reason for the political *vita activa* is not necessity as in the case of *animal laborans* or usefulness as in the case of the *homo faber*, but to enable *shared* human freedom to appear in the world (Arendt, 1998, pp. 12f., 30f., 71, 2006a, pp. 144f.). She borrows this from the Greek difference between a free man—a citizen who has free time to engage in public affairs—and women and slaves, who are all conditioned by necessity, or artists and fabricators, who are conditioned by usefulness and means-ends relationships. These citizens are not free as a form of natural condition, but rather enact and create freedom in the *polis* by displaying themselves through deeds and words to other free men. In the households, the role of these free men shifts and they become isolated sovereigns, who possess the right to rule through command. It is thus the fact of publicity, of being seen and heard by others, that enables freedom, in Arendt's understanding of the Greek *polis*.

Arendt's focus on freedom should not be read, I argue, as something that could work as a guiding principle in speech-action. Even if Arendt is concerned with politics and the possibilities of politics, it would be contrary to her whole idea of speech-action to set out a moral imperative of what we ought to do, in the form of guiding principles or ideologies, even if it were for the purpose of freedom (Arendt, 2003, pp. 50ff., 67ff., esp. 70). What we ought to do can only be known in the moment of speech-action, in which questions of political concerns come to us unexpectedly and without return. This is the unpredictability and irreversibility of political speech-action (Arendt, 1998, p. 233). As I understand Arendt, no moral model can be established because of these two traits.

As I read Arendt, freedom is a flexible concept whose essence does not come forth in rights and liberties, but rather depends on the possibility to be seen and heard—the possibility for humans to be recognized in their humanity—by others in the moment of speech-action (Arendt, 1998, pp. 233ff.). Read in this way, freedom becomes an essentially plural concept, because it can never appear in isolation, and it also becomes an essentially momentous concept that can only appear in the shared recognition of the other. And, consequentially, any lack of this recognition means that the condition of possibility for freedom is also lacking.

But what are the ends of freedom and politics? Arendt writes that the *polis* is an arena in which “excellence produces beautiful deeds” (Arendt, 1998, p. 13),⁵³ and that excellence is what the Greeks called *aretē* and the Romans *virtus* (Arendt, 1998, pp. 48f.). In the later part of *The Human Condition* she moves to discuss these *aretai* or virtues in more general terms (but she nonetheless uses Greek terms and with constant references to Greek thinkers, so this is one of the sections in her writings where the delineation between her preferred understanding of politics and her discussion of Greek thinking is not made explicit). She writes that the virtues “are not qualities which may or may not be actualized, but are themselves ‘actualities.’ In other words, the means to achieve the end would already be the end” (Arendt, 1998, p. 207) Virtues are actualities in themselves, and this actuality does not produce a result but a form of end within itself, because the means to achieve it would be the same as the ends. Arendt referenced Aristotle’s use of the term “actuality:”

It is from the experience of this full actuality that the paradoxical “end in itself” derives its original meaning; for in these instances of action and speech the end (*telos*) is not pursued but lies in the activity itself which therefore becomes an *entelecheia*, and the work is not what follows and extinguishes the process but is imbedded in it; the performance is the work, is *energeia* [actuality] (Arendt, 1998, p. 206).

This actuality, the paradox of an end that is within itself, is enacted in political speech-action, and this is judged according to its greatness. Arendt says that greatness reaches for the extraordinary and that it is enacted in the deed itself, not in its endpoint or the motivation on behalf of the actor (Arendt, 1998, pp. 205f.). This focus on greatness and the extraordinary might sound as if Arendt celebrates the individual speaker or actor, but all of these terms—greatness, *aretē/virtus*, the end in itself, actuality, *energeia*—all presuppose the existence of the *polis*, and she references Democritus in claiming that “as long as the *polis* is there to inspire men to dare the extraordinary, all things are safe; if it perishes, everything is lost.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 206) An interpretation that is more in tune with Arendt’s basic foundation in plurality is therefore that greatness can only be achieved in a world of plurality, and that it is Arendt’s attempt find an expression that captures the possibility of an activity that is greater than the activities of instrumentality. The concept of politics is therefore the

⁵³ According to Arendt’s reading of Aristotle, the beautiful can either be consumed in bodily pleasures, be created in beautiful deeds, or inquire into the beauty of the eternal (Arendt, 1998, p. 13).

way Arendt expresses a more positive belief that humankind has the potential to do great things.

In *Hannah Arendt and Political Theory: Challenging the Tradition* (2011) Steve Buckler compares Arendt's conception of virtues to Machiavelli's and he also stresses the emphasis on plurality and the particular context: "By contrast with a purely moral conception of virtue, its political formulation invokes the concept of virtuosity: the application of particular competences in relation to specific contexts and practices." (Buckler, 2011, p. 113) As Shmuel Lederman argues in "Agonism and Deliberation in Arendt" (2014) this focus on virtuosity has led some commentators to conclude that Arendt proposes an agonistic model of politics, in which competition is the only moral standard, whereas others take a more plural position and emphasize that this virtuosity is dependent on others and constituted and judged by their presence (Lederman, 2014, pp. 327f.). I acknowledge the claim of the first version if we stay within the writings of Arendt, but if we want to use her theories in order to understand what we are doing, I believe the latter is more fruitful. This latter interpretation is commonplace in the scholarship on Arendt, and I would only add that it can also be read in relation to time: that Arendt can be read in order to find a plural relationship to temporalities. The temporalities of speech-action, as we shall see, can function both to actualize simultaneity in thinking and acting, as well as the present's being with the past in a way that refuses to let it go but without reducing it to its own image, as well as a possibility to bind stretches of time in the interaction with others and thus to overcome some of the dominative functions of time.

But these require further discussions, and now it is sufficient to say that there is a chain of characteristics that condition each other where the fact of plurality results in politics, and politics is negotiated in speech-action that has the potential capacity to enact freedom and virtues.⁵⁴ The way I read Arendt, the outcomes of this chain are two aspects of appearances: the space of appearance and the appearance of newness or novelty.⁵⁵ I will discuss space of appearance in more detail in my dissertation, but

⁵⁴ Kohn summarizes the characteristics of political speech-action in a somewhat similar way in the introduction to *The Promise of Politics* as "venturing forth in speech and deed in the company of one's peers, beginning something new whose end cannot be known in advance, founding a public realm (*res public* or republic), promising and forgiving others." (Kohn, 2005, p. viii)

⁵⁵ In *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt discusses the old philosophical dichotomy between (mere) appearances as opposed to (true) being, and argues that "the relevant and the meaningful in this world" are located in appearances and surfaces (Arendt, 1978, p. I:27). Indeed, she claims that "*Being and*

for now it is sufficient to say that in *The Human Condition* it is the sphere where the actor is seen and heard by others, and thus confirmed in its existence (Arendt, 1998, pp. 199–207, see also 181–188). With this perspective, Arendt solves, or at least dodges, the philosophical question of being and reality—i.e. how can I know that I am, given that my sense perception cannot be trusted as proof of my existence and that it is a fundamentally private sensation?— by bringing the question of being out into the world of humans. It is the confirmation, not of the Cartesian ‘I think, therefore I am,’ but of what can be formulated into ‘others see and hear me, therefore I am.’ It is this being seen and heard by others that constitutes the *sensus communis*, according to Arendt (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:45–53, 1992, pp. 66–72, see also 1998, pp. 208f.). Political speech-action has the potential to create a space in which both appearances and humanity can make sense.

However, as Sharma notes, the idea that there can be a public in which citizens can confirm each other, presupposes that there is not only a space in which they can do that, but also a time:

Shared space is quite often treated as an intrinsic social good, the condition of possibility for democracy. [...] But as *In the Meantime* has shown, there is no common experience of time, no universal free time in which the spatialized ideals of democracy and social change can be realized. In short, the radical revising of the public via spatial pluralism requires temporal pluralism (Sharma, 2014, p. 146).

Sharma’s statement in support of the need to spatial pluralism is an appropriate critique in relation to Arendt’s work: Arendt’s notion of a space of appearance would hold a more positive potential if it were put in the plural and with more varied intersections, a matter that Arendt is not fully attentive to and that I will return to in the dissertation. But, as Sharma notes, this plurality of spaces would also require a plurality of times, and this is a matter that I think Arendt is more attentive to in her various accounts of the multifaceted layers of the temporality of speech-action.

The basic assumption on the temporalities of speech-actions is that they enable the coming of the new or natality. This is one of the core focuses in chapter 5, so here I just summarize it. Humankind has an ontological faculty to begin something new, first by being born: “the constant influx of newcomers who are born into the world as strangers.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 9) Each child born-into-the-world constitutes a potential

Appearing coincide,” and that matter and phenomena are essentially the same because matter must be/appear in relation to living creatures (Arendt, 1978, p. I:19).

new beginning because it is a stranger; it does not yet know the world and its customs of the past. Or, as Arendt states in *On Revolution*, the fact of birth introduces change into the world (Arendt, 2006c, pp. 18f.). In a second step, this natality is realized if the human actor begins something new of her own accord in a second birth, through speech-action (Arendt, 1998, pp. 176f.). Arendt often equates the coming of the new with political speech-actions, and as such, the definition of the new is to a large extent the definition of the speech-action.

It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before. This character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings and in all origins. Thus, the origin of life from inorganic matter is an infinite improbability of inorganic processes, as is the coming into being of the earth viewed from the standpoint of processes in the universe, or the evolution of human out of animal life. The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes amounts to certainty; the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable (Arendt, 1998, pp. 177f.).⁵⁶

Speech-action breaks apart the predictability of the world of appearances and human affairs. The coming of the “wholly unexpected”, the “infinitely improbable,” or the event that happens as a “miracle” of breaking automatic processes, has two characteristics: it is irreversible (as opposed to the repetition in labor, in which there is a constant coming of sameness) and it is unpredictable (as opposed to the means-end in fabrication in which the end is always known from the beginning point in the idea). We return to these characteristics in Chapter 5, where I will develop them further and contrast them to the function of promising and forgiving, where time is again partiality bound.

Basically, the three modes of being in the *vita activa* constitute a three-step movement where labor enables birth and life within the realm of nature and is bound by necessity and repetition. Fabrication is also bound by necessity but it creates an objective (i.e. human-made) world that make life-labor easier according to the means-end instrumentality. Finally speech-action is not conditioned by necessity but can only appear within a shared freedom conditioned by plurality, and it enables the coming of the new and of change in the world. That leads us to the problem of the tradition of political philosophy, as Arendt conceptualizes it, where the *vita*

⁵⁶ See also “What is Freedom?” in *Between Past and Future* for a similar formulation (2006a, pp. 166ff.)

contemplativa takes hold of the *homo faber*, and places the activity of fabrication in the place properly occupied by the political *vita activa*.

Vita Contemplativa, Homo Faber, and the Political Vita Activa: *The Critique of Political Philosophy*

There is an inherent difficulty in discussing thinking and acting in Arendt's writings: on the one hand it is clear that she contrasts the concept of political *vita activa* with that of the *vita contemplativa*, the contemplating life of the philosopher. On the other hand, so many of her discussions suggests that the (proper) task of philosophy is not contemplation but mind activities, and that these are located somewhere interstitial to the binary couple of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* and are connected to politics and morality. Margaret Canovan, in *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (1992) also emphasizes this tension in Arendt's work, where on the one hand, she can be read as arguing for the integration of thinking and speech-action, but on the other hand, also to be less optimistic about such a possibility (Canovan, 1992, pp. 253–274, esp. 259–264). I agree with Canovan that Arendt's position is ambivalent—she never gives a definite answer in either direction—but I have chosen to interpret the passages in her writings that seems to suggest such a possibility.

In this section, therefore, I will shortly summarize two relations between thinking and acting, as Arendt presents it in *The Life of the Mind*, and contrast them to her reading of Socrates in *The Promise of Politics*. With the help of this reading of Socrates I argue that there is a possibility of connecting thought and speech-action in Arendt's work, and I elaborate on the possible temporal relationship in this connection. This leads to the critique of Platonic rulership that she also levels in *The Promise of Politics*, and I elaborate on how it turns the temporalities of political speech-action into a three-step anachronism.

Speech-Action from the Perspective of Thinking

In order to understand Arendt's ambivalence on the integration of thinking and speech-action, we need to elaborate shortly on what thinking is, according to Arendt. *The Life of the Mind* is divided into the three invisible activities of the mind: thinking,

willing and judging.⁵⁷ The cause of thinking lies in the human mind's search for meaning by asking unanswerable question in dialogue with itself in consciousness (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:69, 74).⁵⁸ Thinking consists of the capacity to transcend that which is given to sense experience, through re-presentation or imagination of that which is absent in the first stage and then through the activity of remembering this image in the second stage, the after-thought (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:76ff.). This is the "standing now," the "enduring present," or "the Present of the thinking ego", which saves what was formerly appearance but now is absence, through memory (Arendt, 1978, p. II:12). In the final, and as I understand Arendt, always incomplete stage, thinking prepares itself for the activity of understanding that which has never appeared, such as the existence of God, the meaning of life, etc. (Arendt, 1978, p. I:77). Willing, the second activity of the mind, is "our mental organ for the future as memory is our mental organ for the past" and it deals with projects, or what can be termed envisioned possibilities, rather than absences (Arendt, 1978, pp. II:13f.). *Judgment*, the third part of the *Life of the Mind*, that Arendt died before writing, was supposed to discuss how "the general, always a mental construction, and the particular, always given to sense experience, are brought together" (Arendt, 1978, p. I:69) Drawing from Kant's third critique, Arendt claims that this activity is most clearly manifested in "reflective judgment" where the particularities of sense experience are decided upon as either right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, etc., based on no over-all rules but only "from and to itself" (Arendt, 1978, p. I:69). This activity deals with things that are no more and they are the counterpart to willing, which deals with things that are not yet (Arendt, 1978, p. I:76).

The striking aspect of the temporalities of the various activities of the mind is that none corresponds directly to a moving or changeable present: thinking brings the past and that which is absent into the present, but it is a still-standing present, willing wills in the present, but for the future, and judgment judges what has already happened in the particular past. The closest to speech-action, which is actualized in the present, are willing and judging, because, as I interpret it, both are active and restless, as well as concerned with change rather than stability.

⁵⁷ For Arendt, these activities share the characteristics of invisibility with the passions, but as opposed to the passions, they can be stopped (Arendt, 1978, p. I:72).

⁵⁸ For a discussion on Arendt's conception of meaning and its relation to language, see Ballaci who argues that meaning should be understood in relation to the rhetorical tradition and its view of *doxa* and *logos* (2014, p. 395).

I want to move away from the relations between thinking and speech-action that Arendt presents in *The Life of the Mind*, because firstly, Arendt claims that the faculty of thinking is able to transcend the condition given to any human in the world of appearances, and this assumption posits a metaphysical bias (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:70f.). Secondly, Arendt develops the relationship between thought and speech-action in the *Life of the Mind*, in which she advocates for the role of the spectator. The spectator can see the whole of an event, which the speaker-actor cannot do because she is part of the event. Because of this outside position, the spectator can sit judgment and determine the meaning and the morality of the event (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:92ff.). I do not find that to be a compelling contribution to the idea of political speech-action and its temporalities either, because Arendt posits the spectator as outside to speech-action and as not conditioned by the event. That seems contradictory to both her discussion of political speech-action as that which is actualized in the moment, to responsibility as something that comes forth in the particularities of the events in the world of appearances, as well as her critique of historical dialectics that posits a logic of development outside of the particularities of the world of human affairs.⁵⁹

Therefore, I will take another starting point, namely her reading of Socrates notion of thinking, that she develops most fully in *The Promise of Politics* and where she argues that Socrates' notion of thinking posits an engagement with human affairs.⁶⁰ *Responsibility and Judgment*, where Arendt is concerned more explicitly with the question of morality, also becomes relevant. In order to base the argument in Arendt's more in depth understanding of speech-action, I draw from *The Human Condition*. It seems to me that this political and moral aspect of Arendt's reading of Socrates is a more fruitful starting point in relation to my purpose of finding the worldly temporalities of political speech-action, but I will also draw from *The Life of the Mind* in which Arendt's understanding of Socrates is shortly summarized, but constantly alluded to throughout the book, where it is necessary for understanding the relation between thinking and speech-action.

⁵⁹ These will be discussed underway: the responsibility of the particularities in the present in this chapter, the historical dialectics in Chapter 4, and the actualization of the event in the moment in Chapter 5.

⁶⁰ Canovan also singles out this period as especially significant in Arendt's thought on politics, especially in relation to philosophy in general, but to the positions of Socrates and Marx in particular (Canovan, 1992, pp. 257ff.).

Socrates and an Integrated Temporality of Thinking and Acting

In Arendt's understanding of the pre-Socratic, the hierarchy between the political *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* is in favor of the political *vita activa* (Arendt, 1998, p. 25). As I understand Arendt's reading of Socrates, he tries to modify this relation, and make them more interrelated whereas Plato turns the hierarchy upside down in favor of the *vita contemplativa*, by misinterpreting Socrates (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 6f.).⁶¹ Here I read Socrates understanding of thinking, and how it is integrated in speech-action and the world of human affairs. But in order to do that, I need to first address Arendt's discussion of Socrates' notion of *doxa*.

Arendt claims that Socrates notion of *doxa* consists of the ways in which the world appears to each human, the ways it "opens itself" up to each person in particular ways (Arendt, 2005b, p. 14). Because the world opens itself up to the philosopher in particular ways too, the philosopher has no better standards of knowledge, as truth, than any of the other citizens. The philosopher's only out of ordinary skill, compared to other citizens, is that he can endure the wonder, the *thaumadzein*, of seeing the light of eternal truth. For Socrates, according to Arendt, there is a strict temporal limit to enduring the *pathos* that it creates because it is possible for no more than a moment (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 32f.). The silence that this wonder results in is the only positive description of silence in Arendt's scheme: it is the speechless wonder which unanswerable, ultimate questions give rise to. It is important to notice that in Arendt's reading of Socrates, this *pathos* stands in stark contrast to thinking and knowledge, because it is concerned with things that cannot be known or thought nor be lived in (Arendt, 2005b, p. 34). The philosopher must go into thinking only *after* having left this short momentous mode of wonder, and he

⁶¹ Arendt claims that before Socrates, the practice of speech-actions is simply embedded in the everyday experience of the *polis* and the practical judgments necessary there (*phronēsis*). This means that its most informative examples are secured in the kept records of practice, rather than the reflective, theoretical, writings of post-Socratic thinkers (Arendt, 1998, pp. 25f., 2005b, pp. 5f.). Therefore, Arendt claims that there is no 'theory' (as in contemplation and "looking upon something from the outside," Arendt, 1978, p. I:93) of speech-action before Plato, only kept records of speech-actions, such as Thucydides record of Pericles' funeral speech. According to Arendt, this is also telling of Socrates' position, because he left no writings to 'teach' his students how to speak, act, or think (no pedagogy to inform future speech-actions) based on pre-given theories.

never brings with him any knowledge of the eternal truths into the changeable world of *doxa*.

In Arendt's discussion, Socrates' notion of *doxa* is very different from the Platonic notion of *doxa* and also, as I interpret Arendt's discussion, from the pre-Socratic notion of *doxa*, where it means both opinion as well as fame through immortality. As I will discuss more fully in the next chapter, in the Greek understanding of immortality, the greatness of the gods could be mimicked by humankind in the doing of great deeds and the saying of great words. The pre-Socratic notion of *doxa* is tied to the temporality of immortality because immortality created a set of historical records in which the new speech-action could appear. With the introduction of Platonic (and to some extent Socratic) philosophy, the temporality of eternity is inserted in opposition to immortality: eternity is both birthless and deathless, and it merely is and cannot be otherwise (Arendt, 1978, p. I:134). Eternity replaces immortality as the highest temporality, and it becomes the task of the philosopher to move closer to this divine eternity, the true Being (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:134ff.). For Plato, the access to eternity becomes the hallmark of thinking and something that can be brought into the world *permanently* through laws. In the Platonic understanding, *doxa* comes to stand in opposition to these eternal laws given by the eternal ideas, and it can only present that which is probable, opinions, or even falsehood, lying, distortion, etc.

This is different from Socrates' position on *doxa*, in Arendt's understanding. When the philosopher thinks, according to Arendt's reading of Socrates, he is in a constant dialogue with himself. This can only be formulated in *logos*, which is speech and thought identified together, and there are, and should be according to Socrates, as many *logoi* as there are men (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 19, 23). *Logos* is thus within the realm of *doxa*, and when the philosopher thinks, he is also creating his own *doxa*, his own mode of opening up to the world.⁶²

In Arendt's reading of Socrates, the "chief criterion for the man who speaks truthfully his own *doxa* was 'that he be in agreement with himself'" (Arendt, 2005b, p. 19). For Socrates, the ethical imperative is not to speak the truth in any Platonic sense but to be consistent to yourself in dialogue with yourself on how the world

⁶² Ballacci also emphasizes this relationship between *doxa* and appearance as well as *doxa* and *logos* in Arendt's reading of Socrates (2014, p. 391).

appears to you and yourself (Arendt, 2005b, p. 19, see also 1978, pp. I:181–190). This thinking dialogue is founded in plurality and speech:

This is also the reason why the plurality of men can never entirely be abolished and why the escape of the philosopher from the realm of plurality always remains an illusion: even if I were to live entirely by myself I would, as long as I am alive, live in the condition of plurality. I have to put up with myself, and nowhere does this I-with-myself show more clearly than in pure thought, which is always a dialogue between the two-in-one (Arendt, 2005b, p. 20).

Even if thinking happens in solitude, thinking is a form of activity, and indeed, a speaking and plural activity rather than a silent and isolated.⁶³ As I read Arendt's claim, thinking in the Socratic sense becomes just as dependent on speech as political action, even if it is a form of soundless speech that goes on in the mind rather than with others, and it can be termed speech-thinking.⁶⁴

In *Responsibility and Judgment*, Arendt clarifies the moral dimension of this dialogue. She claims that it comes as a form of negative check, rather than as a positive imperative. Because each person engaged in this dialogue has to live with herself, and because nobody wishes to live with a murderer, this capacity to think I-am-I has the potential capacity to make humankind avoid the most horrible evils (Arendt, 2003, pp. 89ff.).⁶⁵ The moral task of the philosopher, in Arendt's reading of

⁶³ Arendt makes distinctions between different modes of being alone. In *The Life of the Mind*, she writes that solitude is where I-am-with-myself or the self is joined in this two-in-one of difference and sameness, whereas loneliness is where the I is not able to provide itself company (Arendt, 1978, p. I:185). In *Responsibility and Judgment*, Arendt claims that there are three modes of being alone: solitude, in the similar sense as above; loneliness, in which the dialogue with myself is interrupted by the presence of others and I-become-one, but fail to be in company with them; and isolation, in which I am so focused on things in the world, most notably in fabrication, that any company disturbs this relation of being with the earth (Arendt, 2003, pp. 98ff.). This latter distinction seems more fruitful to me, because it includes the fabricator's form of being alone, which Arendt uses in *Between Past and Future* as the form that modern sovereignty takes, and thus it explains the high status of this particular mode of being alone. Since the fabricator is also the model for the philosopher, this mode of being alone also seems closest to the one Plato advocates (even if Arendt never fully explains how a Platonic mode of being alone would look like). In *The Promise of Politics*, Arendt does not fully elaborate on these various modes of being alone, but I would argue that they all stand in stark contrast to the absolute singularity of the *thaumadzain* (Arendt, 2005b, p. 35).

⁶⁴ This term is to some extent similar to the term that Annabel Herzog coins in "Marginal Thinking or Communication: Hannah Arendt's Model of Political Thinker" order to name the function that Arendt gives to Socrates: the "thinker-citizen" (Herzog, 2001, p. 578). Herzog traces Arendt's critique of philosophy to her own experiences of being part of the circle of professional thinkers as well as becoming a political refugee and denied citizenship and being part of the public. Herzog claims that for Arendt, the typical cases of the philosopher who succumbed to the "taste" for tyranny is Heidegger and Plato, whereas Jaspers and Socrates remained both thinker and citizen, one who both recedes from public as well as appears in it (Herzog, 2001, pp. 577f.).

⁶⁵ This is why the goal of totalitarian regimes is to abolish the possibility for solitude; because it disables this ethical check in humankind, making it possible for humans to commit atrocities (Arendt, 2003, pp. 89ff.).

Socrates, is then not to speak of the eternal truth or compose laws based on them, but rather to use the *doxa* that he arrives at in this mode of talking to himself in dialogue with other citizens, in order to help in “delivering each of the citizens of their truths.” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 15) The midwifery of the philosopher becomes a political task: “To Socrates, maieutic was a political activity, a give-and-take, fundamentally on a basis of strict equality” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 15).

Arendt is never explicit on the temporality of this birth, but on a conceptual level, it is connected to her other birth metaphor of the second birth that the political speech-action entails (Arendt, 1998, pp. 176f.). If this conceptual parallel is plausible, then the midwifery of the philosopher is parallel to the newness generated by the political speech-actions. This doxic birth can therefore be understood as a birth of morality within the thought process itself. Thinking, in such an understanding, becomes a form of end-in-itself that cannot be reduced to what it achieves. And similar to the temporality of the speech-action’s end-in-itself, it can only be actualized in the moment of its actualization, and can also change with the changing circumstances that appears to it. The Socratic birth, through the citizens’ dialogue with themselves and the delivery of their own *doxa*, becomes a form of a thinking and knowledge that is within the world, conditioned by it and by simultaneity, and that is changeable and renewable.

That thinking and speech-action are connected is the reason, according to Arendt, that Socrates thinks that virtue can be taught. She claims that this is “the awareness that man is a thinking and an acting being in one—someone, namely, whose thoughts invariably and unavoidably accompany his acts—[and that this] is what improves men and citizens.” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 23) In this quote, it seems rather obvious that thought and speech-action accompany each other and that the one cannot do without the other. However, she immediately goes on to claim that “[t]he underlying assumption of this teaching is thought and not action, because only in thought can the dialogue of the two-in-one be realized.” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 23) This quote seems to suggest that morality is found in the thinking process, and that morality can be shown in speech-action only as a consequence of moral thinking.

This is, I think, a valid interpretation of Arendt’s thought, but I want to move outside of it for a moment in order to consider the other alternative, that thought and speech-action accompany each other in a simultaneous manner and that they cannot

be separated.⁶⁶ If we take the argument seriously that plurality is what conditions humankind and makes us human, it becomes a contradiction to say that morality is *first* and foremost actualized in the dialogue with me-and-myself and then put forth in deed and word. Then we would have to conclude that someone potentially could think morally but not act morally, and that the thinking itself would be moral nonetheless, regardless of its manifestation in the world. Because thinking is done with the help of speech, and speech is a part of the worldly and the plural, this seems contradictory.

I believe we could shed some light on this problem by going to Arendt's reading of Kant and of her concept of judging in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. The doxic delivery in Arendt's discussion of Socrates has many similarities to the position she puts forth on judgment in her reading of Kant. According to Arendt, practical reason is distinct from judgment, because it decides in the particular according to general rules (Arendt, 1992, p. 15). However, there are particulars for which there are no general rules and in which judgment must judge. For Kant the prime example is art, where the goal is not to form an individual but a common judgment, but where there is no general rule to apply. Arendt claims, in *Responsibility and Judgment*, that in modern times the prime example is morality, for which no general law any longer applies but where the goal extends beyond the individual (Arendt, 2003, p. 139). There is no such need for a morality of particularities in Kant's writing (for him, morality is exercised within practical reason), but for Arendt, with the backdrop of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, morality has no possibility of applying general rules any longer. She thus reformulates Kant's faculty of judgment into a moral faculty of judgment.

Because there are no general rules to judge according, the moral judgment's only solution is to take others into account and attempt to see the world as it appears to others. This can be done, according to Arendt's reading of Kant, in common sense, or the sixth sense that is the *sensus communis* (Arendt, 1992, pp. 66–72). This common sense is not “common” in the sense that it attempts to form a similar opinion on behalf of all or many, but it is common in the sense that it attempts to see and hear

⁶⁶ This is also the position that Herzog takes, in which she claims that, for Arendt, the thinking process erupts in the now of the present. Although I am sympathetic to this position, from it follows, for Herzog, that thinking “creates” meaning for politics and that it therefore can “transcend” politics (Herzog, 2001, p. 591). This choice of wording seems to me to fall back again in the trap of separating thinking and politics temporally, where thinking as creating suggests that thinking is a pre-condition for politics and where thinking as transcending politics suggests that its meaning is somewhere beyond or exceeding the moment.

the world as it appears to others. Or to put it in more abstract terms, it is not an attempt to eliminate differences, but a reflexive thought capacity to put the self in the position of the other and attempt impartiality. Arendt quotes Kant in saying: “We must so to speak renounce ourselves for the sake of others” (Arendt, 2003, p. 141).

Arendt argues that the *sensus communis* is created when imagination—the representation of things that are absent (compare with thinking)—and reflection—the possibility to enlarge the mind of the self to be reflective of what appearances might look like for others (compare with doxic delivery)—are both enacted in communication (Arendt, 1992, pp. 66–72). In one of the many formulations that emphasizes speech, persuasion and argument: “We consider the existence of others and we must try to win their agreement” (Arendt, 2003, p. 142). As I read this, in order to be moral, we must attempt to speak to the other from the position of the other. The reflexive capacity of judging becomes a form of in-between of speech-action and thinking, because it entails both the need to speak to others (speech-action) and to speak to the self (speech-thinking) in order to judge morally. This reading suggests, I think, that Arendt’s notion of acting and thinking morally must circle around itself, or that they both condition each other. I interpret this process of I-become-for-the-other as a similarly simultaneous activity as the I-become-for-myself of the Socratic dialogue, and as such, thought and speech-action become co-temporal.

To sum up so far: The task of the Socratic philosopher is not to deliver truths, but to help other citizens give birth to their individual *doxa* and become more in accordance with themselves. In Arendt’s reading of Socrates, there is no binary opposition between silent thinking and talkative action (because thinking is also talkative), between truth and opinion (because humans cannot ‘know’ the truth, only possess a *doxa* of the appearances of the world), between the good-for-nothing of the philosopher and the good-for-*polis* of the politician (because the philosopher has a task in the *polis* as well as the politician), and the eternal form of the ideas and the changing appearances of the world (because the eternal form of ideas can only be endured for short periods of speechless wonder, and as soon as the philosopher recedes to thinking, he is back with the changing appearances in his mind and thus dependent on speech-thinking). This is Arendt’s re-interpretation of Socrates, and regardless of its accuracy in relation to (Plato’s kept record of) Socrates, my point is that it seems to present an ideal of simultaneity combined with the possibility of newness to appear in both thinking and speech-action. This is also found in Arendt’s

reading of Kant's faculty of judgment, in which the capacity to judge between right and wrong in the moment is the political mode of thinking, in which the world appears both to me-and-others simultaneously.

Arendt's anti-thesis to what I have read as her ideal of an integration of thought and speech-action comes forth in *Eichmann*. It is one of her most famous and controversial books because of the contested political situation within which it was written, where the historical record of the Holocaust, how to understand the Nazi evil, and the legitimation of the state of Israel as a judicially legitimate nation state, were all at stake. There is also the much debated moral argument that Arendt puts forth in the Epilogue about why she thinks it was right to judge and convict Eichmann to the death sentence.⁶⁷

Of course, *Eichmann* cannot be read as a theoretical contribution but it highlights the (acute) need to "think what we are doing"—the formulation of Arendt's purpose for writing *The Human Condition*—and Eichmann becomes the exact opposite of this. It is important to note that Arendt's formulation in *The Human Condition* is not that we should "think *about* what we are doing" but "think what we are doing." There is no distinct temporal or ontological delineation in Arendt's formulation between thinking and doing: neither seems to come first in the sense that we could first think through what we should do and then do it, or do something and then re-evaluate it afterwards. Rather, in this quote, thinking and doing are simultaneous and co-existent with each other.⁶⁸ In *Eichmann*, it becomes clear that Eichmann fails to think what he is doing: he only speaks but does not think and what he speaks has no relation to his thinking, and is merely caused by what the Nazi official propaganda machine told him to say. He is as close to a parrot as one could

⁶⁷ It says that Eichmann, and in extension everybody who supported the Nazi regime in its mass murder, thought that he and the other supporters had the "right to determine who should and who should not inhabit the world—[and therefore] we find that no one, that is, no member of the human race, can be expected to want to share the earth with you. This is the reason, and the only reason, you must hang." (Arendt, 2006b, p. 279) This justification of the death penalty is of course controversial in itself, and Arendt's phrasing also holds an implicit critique of both the Nurnberg trials and the Eichmann trial, because they both, according to her, neglected to put forth the Nazi "crime against humanity" as a crime against "mankind in its entirety," for the justification of the death penalty (Arendt, 2006b, pp. 275f.).

⁶⁸ A counter-argument to this interpretation is that Arendt begins *The Life of the Mind* by saying that her experiences at the Eichmann trial made her write a book on thinking (and not speech-action) (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:3f.). As such, it seems that thinking is the activity that needs to be discussed in relation to evil, but I would add that it is nonetheless evil *acts* that need to be thought. And again, these acts do not need to be thought *about*, but to be thought in themselves, in the moment of their appearance in speech-action.

be. Even if Arendt only mentions the phrase once in the book, Eichmann's lack of thought and speech is "the banality of evil" that gives rise to the title of the book. He is "the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying *banality of evil*." (Arendt, 2006b, p. 252) Worth noting is that the fearsome lesson to be learnt from Eichmann is not only that the banality of evil is thought-defying, but that it is also word-defying. As I understand this statement, it consists of Arendt's cautionary remark on what can happen when thought and speech are separated.

I have understood Arendt's ideal as a form of co-temporal thought and speech-action and that the beginning of each new thought-action holds a potential for a more moral mode of both thinking and speech-action than any rule-bound mode of thinking or speech-action can enable. This continuous possibility for change and newness (i.e. natality) in the realm of human affairs is therefore not only a political matter of fact for Arendt as she presents it in *The Human Condition*, *Between Past and Future*, and *On Revolution*, but it is something that can be integrated into (Socratic) philosophy as she presents it in *The Promise of Politics*, *Responsibility and Judgment*, and possibly also within *The Life of the Mind*. As such, it seems to me that her differentiation between philosophy and politics, her claim that thinking transcends speech-action and that the only possible integration between the two could be in the mode of a spectator, does not fully apply as long as philosophy remains in this world and as long as thinking appears simultaneously to speech-action in the world.

Plato, Ideal Rulership and the Fear of Politics

But let us move back to the tradition of political philosophy as Plato conceptualizes it, according to Arendt. When Socrates' arguments fails to be persuasive to the citizens of the *polis*, Arendt claims that Plato draws the fundamentally wrong conclusion that persuasion is an activity that can not counter the frailty of human affairs and that the frailty needs to be controlled by some other means. This "great temptation" to replace speech-action with something more stable is not only a temptation that Plato feels, according to Arendt, but it presents itself for all who see the "haphazardness" of speech-action:

Generally speaking, they [the alternatives to action] always amount to seeking shelter from action's calamities in an activity where one man, isolated from all others, remains master of his doings from beginning to end. [...] The most obvious salvation from the

dangers of plurality is mon-archy, or one-man-rule, in its many varieties, from outright tyranny of one against all to benevolent despotism and to those forms of democracy in which the many form a collective body so that the people “is many in one” and constitute themselves as a “monarch.” Plato’s solution of the philosopher-king, whose “wisdom” solves the perplexities of action as though they were solvable problems of cognition, is only one—and by no means the least tyrannical—variety of one-man rule (Arendt, 1998, pp. 220f.).

In this quote we see how the temptation to escape from the dangers of speech-action leads into rulership, i.e. a rule of one who remains master “from beginning to end.” Worth noting is that this one-man-rule can also be conceived in those forms of democracy in which the plurality of the public is reduced, as if it were one. This last form of reducing difference and enforce sameness is perhaps the most interesting to analyze in Western politics today because the unity under the banner of the nation is a repeated trope. My reason for staying with Arendt’s reading of the Platonic version of rulership in the philosopher-king is first that it corresponds as the other side of the coin to her reading of Socrates, which I find to be very important, and second that it is indicative of the functions of rulership in more general forms in Arendt’s writing.

In Arendt’s reading, when the *polis* condemns Socrates, Plato draws the conclusion that the *polis* is dangerous to the philosopher. The title of this chapter, “For Fear of the Future,” is chosen to illuminate how Arendt situates the origin of political philosophy in Plato’s fear of what the *polis* can do. The title is also a paraphrase of the title of Young-Bruehl’s biography of Arendt, *For Love of the World*, but whereas that title emphasizes the more hopeful side of Arendt’s political thinking, this chapter focuses on her less optimistic, indeed fearful (but this time fearful of the destruction of the world and humankind and not of her own person as for Plato), critique of this fear.

For Plato, in Arendt’s reading of him, the only safeguard for the philosopher against the lesser judgment on behalf of the *polis* is to denounce the *polis*’ capacity to decide on matters of human affairs. Instead, he introduces a separation between the two modes of acting in the Greek understanding: beginning, *archein*, and achieving, *prattein* (Arendt, 1998, p. 222). According to Arendt, these are interconnected in pre-Platonic Greece. The beginning of a new enterprise can only be of political importance if it is also achieved, and for this latter step, the beginner needs others to join the speech-action. This interdependency is a problem for Plato, and he wants to “make sure that the beginner would remain the complete master of what he had begun, not needing the help of others to carry it through.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 222) In

order to achieve this “isolated mastership” in the realm of human affairs, “others are no longer needed to join the enterprise of their own accord, with their own motives and aims, but are used to execute orders” (Arendt, 1998, p. 222). Therefore, the connection between *archein* and *prattein* becomes in the hands of Plato the capacity to rule and the capacity to follow orders, and “action as such is entirely eliminated” (Arendt, 1998, p. 223). This follows the division between the knower and the doer: “Plato was the first to introduce the division between those who know and do not act and those who act and do not know” and this means that “knowing what to do and doing it became two altogether different performances” (Arendt, 1998, p. 223).

According to Arendt, Plato’s solution is not a clear-cut tyranny, in which the one ruler attempts to “eliminate everybody but himself from the public realm” and it has a greater potential to establish a “permanent order” because each person would still have a function in the public, and “they would indeed ‘act’ like one man without even the possibility of internal dissension, let alone factional strife: through rule, ‘the many become one in every respect’ except bodily appearance.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 224) Rulership in the idealized Platonic version thus becomes a means of enacting sameness and eliminating differences, and as such, it safeguards the philosopher and the knower from the ones who acts.

Arendt credits Plato with being the only philosopher who dares to draw the full political conclusions from making philosophy rule politics (Arendt, 2005b, p. 27). As I read Arendt, that means that Plato’s political philosophy is the most crystalized form of rulership ever to have been envisioned. It is supposed to function according to a logic where each act is simply made because of a cause higher up in the chain of reaction, and at the very top of this chain of reaction the philosopher king resides. He would know absolute truth and could therefore foretell the future, and thus bear responsibility for all that happens. Or, as Canovan, phrases one of the possible ways of interpreting Arendt’s position on philosophy: “Is philosophy a search for absolute truth and iron consistency that gives the philosopher a natural sympathy with coercion and tyranny?” (Canovan, 1992, p. 257) In this Platonic organization of the human affairs, the rest of us who do not measure up the wisdom of the philosopher king have simply to execute orders, rather than act. To put it a little pointedly, we are only to become mini-Eichmanns and not think what we are doing.

How then, is this philosophic fear of the politics to be materialized in the world of human affairs? One of Arendt’s main points in her discussion of Platonic political

philosophy is that it takes the model of the sovereign master in the household in order to name examples, but she argues that it receives its “longevity” by introducing the *homo faber* as its prime model for how the *vita contemplativa* can rule the realm of human affairs (Arendt, 1998, pp. 223f.).

Arendt claims that the *homo faber* is the only master and the only one who is totally independent from other humans. For Arendt, both labor and work can be performed in isolation, even if labor in this manner would be reduced to a mere animal activity and is better performed in the family or herd (Arendt, 1998, pp. 22, 160). Fabrication, on the other hand, is the isolated activity per definition and this loneliness does not result in a reduction of the craftsman’s humanity:

Homo faber is indeed a lord and master, not only because he is the master or has set himself up as the master of all nature but because he is master of himself and his doings. This is true neither of the *animal laborans*, which is subject to the necessity of its own life, nor of the man of action, who remains in dependence upon his fellow men. Alone with his image of the future product, *homo faber* is free to produce, and again facing alone the work of his hands, he is free to destroy (Arendt, 1998, p. 144).

This might sound like a celebration of the activities of the *homo faber*—its mastery over nature, sovereignty of the self, and of being alone with a freedom to produce the image of the future—but in fact, it is rather the opposite. For Arendt, the activity of the *homo faber* does have its legitimate place in the human condition (see the next chapter for its historical function to record political deeds), but the *homo faber* becomes dominative if it moves into the realm of human affairs and receives the capacity to rule and destroy, with the image of the future product at its disposal.

It is indeed true—and Plato, who had taken the key word of his philosophy, the term “idea,” from experiences in the realm of fabrication, must have been the first to notice it—that the division between knowing and doing, so alien to the realm of action, whose validity and meaningfulness are destroyed the moment thought and action part company, is an everyday experience in fabrication, whose processes obviously fall into two parts: first, perceiving the image or shape (*eidōs*) of the product-to-be, and then organizing the means and starting the execution (Arendt, 1998, p. 225).

Plato took the model of the fabricator in order to construct his notion of the idea, and there are two consequences of this concept. It becomes “almost a matter of course” that this notion of the idea and fabrication also implies a utopia in which there is one master who “makes” the realm of human affairs as the “sculptor makes a statue” (Arendt, 1998, p. 227). However, Arendt claims that as utopia, the notion of the master fabricator has little bearing on the realm of human affairs simply because it

“broke down quickly under the weight of reality” (Arendt, 1998, p. 227). However, these utopias also make way for a conceptual tradition that has been preserved and continuously exert influence. This is the tradition of conceptualizing speech-action “in terms of making and fabrication.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 228) This substitution of speech-action for making reduces the role of politics and it “makes it almost impossible to discuss these matters without using the category of means and ends and thinking in terms of instrumentality.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 229) This has dangerous consequences for politics, and let me quote again the section in which Arendt makes a brief reference to the consequences of this mode of thinking in the 20th century: “We are perhaps the first generation which has become fully aware of the murderous consequences inherent in a line of thought that forces one to admit that all means, provided that they are efficient, are permissible and justified to pursue something defined as an end.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 229) A little further on, she summarizes this conceptual thinking: “As long as we believe that we deal with ends and means in the political realm, we shall not be able to prevent anybody’s using all means to pursue recognized ends.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 229)

The Platonic political philosophy is not dangerous for its utopic goal in rulership, but for its replacement of speech-action for fabrication and how such a conceptual changes opens for the justification of whatever means in order to achieve an end. Arendt claims that, with the rise of the modern age, the status of both thinking and contemplation falls, and fabrication becomes the highest activity of humankind. Then it also loses its guiding principle in a higher ideal and there is no longer an end for which the instrumentality is utilized, but instrumentality itself becomes the highest end. “In the place of the concept of Being we now find the concept of Process,” as Arendt expresses it (Arendt, 1998, p. 296). This focus in the modern age on processes is discussed more in the next chapter.

In my reading of Arendt’s critique of Plato there is a strong temporal reason for making the *homo faber* the model for politics: the *homo faber* rules over the future and can foresee it. The work of the fabricator is the isolated mastership with the power to make things (and destroy them) according to the idea in the mind of the future product, and the work activity is only an execution of this idea. The important thing about the idea is that it is already conceived before it is acted upon, and it forms a sort of static, or even a-temporal and eternal measure, of how to act. This is the reason, according to Arendt, that Plato chooses this activity for his political

philosophy, but of course, it is a form of mastership that, when applied to other humans, becomes rulership. Let us now turn to the temporal topographies that find their ways into this form of government.

Three Anachronisms of Platonic Political Philosophy

Let us turn to Platonic contemplation and its temporalities, as Arendt claims discusses them. Arendt makes a distinction between (Socratic) thinking and (Platonic) contemplation, where the former is the dialogue with me-and-myself and the latter is the endpoint of this dialogue in the sheer silence and sheer passivity of receiving eternal truth (Arendt, 1978, p. I:6). It is a “truth that is *arrhēton*, incapable of being communicated through words” (Arendt, 1998, p. 291). According to Arendt, this idea that silence is constitutive of contemplation, rather than thinking and dialogue, is picked up in Aristotle, for whom the *vita activa* becomes the “*askholia* (‘un-quiet’),” or simply the negation of the *vita contemplativa* (Arendt, 1998, p. 15).

The most telling characteristic, according to Arendt, of the political philosophy of Plato, as it is presented in the cave allegory, is that in the world of the cave, all men are chained so that they can neither move nor turn their heads and speak to each other. “Indeed, the two politically most significant words designating human activity, talk and action (*lexis* and *praxis*), are conspicuously absent from the whole story.” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 31) As such, Plato excludes *the political* dimension of the human condition in his *political* philosophy. Political philosophy begins with this negative definition of politics (that it *is not* what philosophy *is*) and according to Arendt, it continues throughout the tradition of political philosophy to not say anything about politics itself, but only what can be done in order to safeguard the philosopher from politics.⁶⁹ “Escape from the frailty of human affairs into the solidity of quiet and order has in fact so much to recommend it that the greater part of political philosophy since Plato could easily be interpreted as various attempts to find theoretical foundations and practical ways for an escape from politics altogether.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 222) So, the opposition can be summed up: the philosopher seeks access to the ideas, through the contemplation of eternity and truth, whereas the speaker-actor or the Socratic thinker seeks morality, through speech-action or dialogue within *doxa* and change.

⁶⁹ This negative definition also means that all distinctions within the *vita activa* are overlooked and confused into one (*vita activa* becomes everything that mankind does, both labor, fabrication, and speech-action) (Arendt, 1978, p. I:7; see also Canovan, 1992, pp. 255f.).

According to Arendt, Plato makes a logical mistake when he equates the *pathos* generated by the moment of wonder with knowledge of eternal truth.⁷⁰ Plato claims that, because common men refuse to endure the wonder of seeing the light of truth and instead recedes to *doxa*, *doxa* must be the counter-part of truth, but logically, Arendt claims, it only becomes the counter-part of wonder (Arendt, 2005b, p. 34). For Socrates, *doxa* only falls short in the realm of wonder because it cannot say anything about that which humans cannot know anything, but knowledge as such is within the realm of *doxa*. For Plato, *doxa* falls short in the realm of knowledge because knowledge is equated with the wonder of beholding eternity.

In the Socratic notion, the philosopher cannot stay in the realm of ideas forever but only for a *moment*, and must thereafter return to the world of appearances. In my reading of Arendt's discussion, this is the point where the Platonic political philosophy becomes imbricated in its first anachronism.

Plato proposed to prolong indefinitely the speechless wonder which is at the beginning and end of philosophy. He tried to develop into a way of life (the *bios theōrētikos*) what can be only a fleeting moment or, to take Plato's own metaphor, the flying spark of fire between two flint stones. In this attempt the philosopher establishes himself, bases his whole existence on that singularity which he experienced when he endured the *pathos* of *thaumadzein*. And by this he destroys the plurality of the human condition within himself (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 36f.).

What Plato tries to do, according to Arendt, is to prolong the moment of enduring eternity into a life-long span, into a *bios theōrētikos/vita contemplativa*. I interpret this as a form of anachronistic paradox because eternity, on the one hand, can only be experienced in the mode of the moment, but the moment must, on the other hand, be prolonged and forced into the world. Interestingly, neither eternity nor the moment moves or changes in the way that other modes of time do, and as such, they are the only two stable or unchanging temporalities. In temporal terms, it means the

⁷⁰ For Arendt, Kant and Socrates are similar in the sense that they both realized that humans are capable of asking questions with no answers. This is the "scandal of reason" in Arendt's reading of Kant. She argues that the distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand*, reason and intellect in Arendt's translation, is that the former consists in the question-asking capacity and the latter is the capacity that gives knowledge. These coincide with thinking and meaning for the former and knowledge and cognition for the latter (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:13f.). The problem with Kant, according to Arendt, was that he held fast to the limit of *Vernunft*, and argued that it could only be applied to the questions that could be proved to be unknowable, whereas for Arendt, all questions (also the once regarding cognition and knowledge) require this mode of thinking because cognition and knowing can always be utilized for evil purposes without thinking.

philosopher must force the two stable temporalities, eternity and the moment, into the world of natality and change.

This is, according to Arendt, impossible and if attempted destructive. In the above quote she only mentions the destruction of the human plurality within thinking, but I would argue that her phrasing—the destruction of “the plurality of the human condition within himself”—links her argument to the realm of human affairs. Then, this attempt at a temporal absolute in the realm of natality and the human affairs of politics would also be an attempt at the destruction of human plurality as such, as well as the destruction of change and the possibility of newness as such. She writes in the *Denktagebuch*, here quoting from the translation in *The Promise of Politics*: “Insofar as action is dependent on the plurality of men, the first catastrophe of Western philosophy, which in its last thinkers ultimately wants to take control of action, is the requirement of a unity that on principle proves impossible except under tyranny.”⁷¹ (Arendt, 2005b, p. 3)⁷² Arendt is never quite clear on how Plato argues that this forced entry of the stable eternity of the ideas should fit into the world of appearances and natality, which is probably due to the fact that such an anachronism would be hard to conceptualize because it gets imbricated in contradictions.

I want to consider a second anachronism that I think inserts itself in the separation between thinking and speech-action. The Platonic idea that speech-actions and politics are opposed to any form of reasoning activity opens up for the claim that the only possible check against the haphazardness of speech-actions is and should be thinking. Arendt writes:

Even more serious was the abyss which immediately opened between thought and action, and which never since has been closed. All thinking activity that is not simply the calculation of means to obtain an intended or willed end, but is concerned with meaning in the most general sense, came to play the role of an “afterthought,” that is, after action had decided and determined reality. Action, on the other hand, was relegated to the meaningless realm of the accidental and haphazard (Arendt, 2005b, p. 6).

When every thought becomes an “afterthought,” that is, charged with its ability to think about meaning only *after* the speech-action has been done, it becomes necessary

⁷¹ “Sofern Handeln auf die Pluralität der Menschen angewiesen ist, ist die erste Katastrophe der abendländischen Philosophie, die schliesslich in ihren letzten Denkern sich des Handelns bemächtigen will, dass Einigung prinzipiell unmöglich und Tyrannei prinzipiell notwendig wird.” (Arendt, 2002, p. 132, 12 Sep. 1951)

⁷² Arendt speculates that the first who coined this idea might have been Anaximander but claims that it became most clearly stated by Parmenides and later Plato (Arendt, 1978, p. I:134).

for Plato, as I understand Arendt's argument, to reverse this temporality. As I understand Arendt's reading, Plato wants political philosophy to enforce an order where it is possible to *first* think of thinking, *then* think of the possible deeds, and only *after* that is done, can the thoughts be permitted to be spoken or acted upon. It is a form of strict, and artificially created, rectilinearity of how politics should work, but as I will argue, it is combined with a circle of repetition. Speech-action is both deduced from absolute standards (ideas→thoughts→speech-action) in a rectilinear fashion and pre-emptive in a circular fashion because the end-point or telos of it is already known:

The point of the matter is that [before the tradition of political philosophy] only human deeds were supposed to possess and make apparent a specific greatness of their own, so that no "end," no ultimate telos, was needed or could even be used for their justification. Nothing could be more alien to the pre-polis experience of human deeds than the Aristotelian definition of *praxis* that became authoritative throughout the tradition: "with respect to the beautiful and the non-beautiful actions differ not so much in themselves as in the end for the sake of which they are undertaken" (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 45f.).

By imposing an end beyond the speech-action itself, the meaning of the speech-action is displaced before it has even begun. Indeed, the end can also be said to be known beforehand, because it is a mere deduction of the absolute standards. It is a conceptual topography in which the linearity of thought-then-action to some extent collapses because the endpoint is in the starting point, and thus the endpoint becomes the starting point, and vice versa. In my understanding, the means are reduced: the means to obtain an end does not play any role, but rather, the beginning point moves directly to the endpoint and thus conflates them without going through the means to achieve the end. Rather than means-to-end, it is a beginning-equals-end in a reproductive circle. This circle temporality is what I call the anachronism of a reproductive eternity, because the endpoint is produced from the beginning, making the beginning re-appear in the form of an end-point. I would understand this as an attempt to make foretelling in the realm of human affairs not only possible but the ideal. Another way of saying that is, again, that rulership and eternal ideas have taken the place of speech-action and morality.

This interpretation of Arendt's critique of Plato has similarities with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's critique of what they call demonstration, or the *vita*

contemplativa, as opposed to rhetoric or argumentation, or the *vita activa*.⁷³ They claim that the fundamental difference between demonstration and argumentation is that the former is a-temporal and the latter temporal:

The oppositions that we notice between classical demonstration, formal logic, and argumentation may, it seems, come back to an essential difference: time does not play any role in demonstration. Time is, however, essential in argumentation, so much so that we may wonder if it is not precisely the intervention of time that best allows us to distinguish argumentation from demonstration. / Of course, demonstration is, as we have said, a succession of structures and forms: but this succession may be presented at once, instantaneously. / Because nothing new is integrated on the way, nothing of what is given changes. Demonstration arises from contemplation; it is situated in the instant, or at least in empty time [temps vide] (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, p. 316).⁷⁴

They draw a distinction between the empty and stable temporality of demonstration in which the succession of structure and form is instantaneously present in the demonstration itself and without any introduction of the new. Demonstration is thus different from the successive and changing temporality of argumentation because the latter has the capacity to introduce new things. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca continue to discuss this temporality and how it functions:

Even when we reason about causes and effects, motives and reasons, time intervenes; time is only full time [temps plein] when the modifications it introduces are both inevitable and contingent, or at least unforeseen, and cannot be described completely by means of an existing vocabulary and contemporary knowledge (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, p. 325).

In this quote, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca make a distinction between full time as opposed to empty time, and similarly to Arendt's temporality of the world of appearances and of human speech-action, the full time is inevitable (compare with Arendt's notion that it is irreversible), contingent (compare with Arendt's notion of newness and change) or unforeseeable (indeed, the same term that Arendt uses). However, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca draws the conclusion that, because rhetoric (and here it is discussed as almost synonymous to argumentation) appears in time, it is oriented towards means-end and thus future-oriented.

⁷³ This similarity between Arendt's thought and the work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca is also noted by the translators (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, p. 308) as well as by Frank (2011) where *The Human Condition* and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric* is discussed.

⁷⁴ The similarity to Arendt's terminology becomes even more striking when Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca continues their argument and call this demonstrative logic a "totalitarianism," if it isolates itself from all context (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, p. 321).

Rhetoric, by making certain future events as present in the same way as contemporary events, confers upon them, said Bacon, a force such that they render our decisions more reasonable (1944, 179). In addition to giving future events presence, argumentation confers simultaneity on elements that normally would be distant in time, a simultaneity that derives from their integration in a system of ends and means, of projects and obstacles (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, p. 329).

This, I think, is a mistake because even if rhetoric, speech and argumentation make the future present, it also makes the past and the present present, and indeed many anachronisms in between these.⁷⁵ Therefore, I see no inherent need to emphasize the future as the primordial temporality of rhetoric.

And I find Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's contention that rhetoric can work in order to enable simultaneity, that is, of bringing distant times of whatever mode into the present, a very compelling thought and similar to my argument in favor of the anachronism. However, I see no necessity that drives their conclusion that because rhetoric has this capacity for simultaneity, it is governed by a system of "ends and means."⁷⁶ With the help of my reading of Arendt, I would rather argue that reducing the temporality of rhetoric to the topography of the future often falls in the trap of means-end and that this reduces rhetoric's capacity to create a plurality of temporalities.

The political implication of the Platonic beginning-equals-end is that it is operationalized as a form of non-chronological movement from premise to conclusion.⁷⁷ As I read Arendt's argument, Plato attempts to make eternal (empty, stable, orderly) time fit into the realm of shared, lived, worldly time (changing and intertwined with the world) and this can only be done by introducing a form of reproduction of the means and the ends. As I read Arendt, her fear is that reducing speech-action to means and ends always run the risk of collapsing the distinction between the two, and make both justifiable. This is what I call the reproductive means-end temporality of political philosophy.

⁷⁵ Even if I remain critical of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's bias for the future, I find their argument against what they call "quasi-logical" arguments, that is, arguments that presume that empty time is the governing time principle and thus can disavow circle arguments, tautologies, double-negation, and the like, well worth further engagement (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, pp. 330f.).

⁷⁶ They contradict themselves, though, when a little later in the text, they criticize this reduction of rhetoric to a means-end relation and claim that it falls in the trap of quasi-logic argumentation that presupposes empty time: "In the same way, when we evoke the importance of a means as a measure of the end pursued, we judge elements that are essentially successive but that, in an instantaneous design, are understood in a timeless manner." (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 2010, p. 330)

⁷⁷ Canovan also emphasizes the similarities between logical deduction and the Platonic mode of thinking, drawing from some of Arendt's earlier work on totalitarianism (Canovan, 1992, p. 261).

So, in order to sum up this far: There is a double temporal anachronism inherent in Platonic political philosophy where in the first, the eternity of the ideas is forced into the earthly natality, and in the second both means and ends justify each other and as such, they are reproduced endlessly in a reproductive circle. Neither of these gives Plato any conceptual way to explain how his political philosophy is to deal with change in the world of appearances. Therefore, I want to pick up on a thought that is not fully developed by Arendt, but that she briefly mentions in relation to the Platonic political organization: that Plato resorts to threat.

According to Arendt's reading of Plato, the rules can only be enforced in the world of appearances by means of a threat of future violence in the after-life. Arendt writes in *The Promise of Politics*:

The myths of a Hereafter, with which Plato concluded all his political dialogues with the exception of the *Laws*, are neither truth nor mere opinion; they are designed as stories which can frighten, that is, an attempt to use violence by words only. He can do without a concluding myth in the *Laws* because the detailed prescriptions and even more detailed catalogue of punishments make violence with mere words unnecessary (Arendt, 2005b, p. 13).

As I read this quote, Plato tries to solve the philosopher's self-interested fear of the *polis*, by instigating fear in the *polis*. He does this, not by anything that is consistent with his ideas, but only through the logic of the threat.⁷⁸ In *Responsibility and Judgment*, Arendt compares this Platonic notion of the ideas and the hereafter to the Christian notion of "hell, purgatory, and paradise," and she adds that Plato's version does not offer any place for forgiveness (Arendt, 2003, p. 89). We will return to forgiveness in Chapter 5, but for now it suffices to say that the lack of forgiveness in Plato's logic of threat makes it more tyrannical than the Christian teaching.

I understand the threat of the hereafter as a form of speech-action that works with a temporality where the future is known in advance. The logic of the threat is opposed Arendt's more positive notion of the future in politics, in which the acceptance of unpredictability is crucial. Koselleck also discusses expectations, and he mentions fear as one of his examples. He writes that expectations are the "future made present" within the "horizon of expectation" (Koselleck, 2004, p. 259). For

⁷⁸ Heidegger discusses the temporality of fear, and for him it is a way of inauthentic awaiting of the future that harms the potentiality-for-being because it comes back at it. This coming back at it becomes a threat for Dasein that makes it fall back in bewilderment and forget the authentic anticipation of the future. Forgetting becomes the prime temporality of threat and fear after this awaiting for the future has transformed itself into bewilderment (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 391f., no 341–342).

Koselleck, who speaks of expectations in more general terms, there is nothing inherently good or bad about bringing the future into the present, but in my reading of Arendt's notion of the threat, I would argue that there is.

Brian Massumi has written on the logics of threat and its influence on how politics can be conceptualized and managed. Massumi writes with regards to the war on terror since the 9/11 attacks, but I believe his discussion of the temporal function of the threat is illuminative.⁷⁹

Threat is from the future. It is what might come next. Its eventual location and ultimate extent are undefined. Its nature is open-ended. It is not just that it is not: it is not in a way that is never over. [...] There is always a remainder of uncertainty, an unconsummated surplus of danger. The present is shadowed by a remaindered surplus of indeterminate potential for a next event running forward back to the future, self-renewing. / Self-renewing menace potential is the future reality of threat. It could not be more real. Its run of futurity contains so much more, potentially, than anything that has already actually happened. Threat is not real in spite of its nonexistence. It is superlatively real, because of it. / Observation: The future of threat is forever (Massumi, 2010, p. 53).

The logic of the threat is that it depicts something that is not yet, but that might eventually be. It thus works with something that is not in the present, but still exists *as a threat* in the present, through the feeling of fear and the foreboding and foreshadowing that comes with fear. As anticipation, it is materialized in the present (Massumi, 2010, p. 54). Just as the image of the future perfect, for which we all must make sacrifices in the present in Edelman's discussion, this image of the future threat can also be incorporated in the present and deprive citizens of their rights. Arendt speaks of fear as the loss of the capacity to act:

For fear as a principle of public-political action has a close connection with the fundamental experience of powerlessness that we all know from situations in which, for whatever reasons, we are unable to act. The reason why this experience is fundamental—and in this sense tyranny belongs to the elementary form of government—is that all human actions, and by the same token all possibilities of human power, have limits. Politically speaking, fear (and I am not talking about anxiety) is despair over my impotence when I have reached the limits within which action is possible (Arendt, 2005b, p. 68).

⁷⁹ In *Risk and the War on Terror* (Amoore & Goede, 2008), there are numerous chapters that focus on the temporality of risk and threat management, mostly from a Foucaultian bio-political point of departure. For example, in "Taming the Future: The *Dispositif* of Risk in the War on Terror", the authors argue that the urge to precaution is a depoliticizing and de-democratizing because it dissolves social antagonism and displaces political decisions into the rule of the exception, and aims to control the uncertainty of the future (Aradau & Munster, 2008, pp. 25f.). Following from this, in "The state of preemption: Managing terrorism risk through counter law" Richard V. Ericson investigates how terrorism brings forth the logic of preemptive political action when dealing with risk management, and how the rationality of terrorism is often to strike so as to demonstrate the failure of these preemptive actions (Ericson, 2008, pp. 58ff.).

Fear is fundamentally something which disables the political speech-action, and the threat that Plato advocates is thus a disabling of politics. Following the argument of Massumi, threat, because it is always in the future and the future is always not-yet, is just as static as any temporality of the after-life or of eternity. Threat can never materialize and be done with, but remains in this dual position of being both future and present.

Threat also results in a particular form of reproduction, according to Massumi: it is self-causing, because it will always-have-been right to have acted in order avoid a threat, regardless of whether the threat materialized or not (Massumi, 2010, p. 54). The only speech-action necessary for the citizen is to act so as to avoid the threat, and for this, no politics is needed, but only the execution of the laws. It is preemptive of its own meaning before it begins:

Because it operates on an affective register and inhabits a nonlinear time operating recursively between the present and the future, preemptive logic is not subject to the same rules of noncontradiction as normative logic, which privileges a linear causality from the past to the present and is reluctant to attribute an effective reality to futurity (Massumi, 2010, pp. 56f.).

I agree with Massumi that deduction is rectilinear and that it denies futurity any presence, but I would add that it is also repetitive because the endpoint and the starting point are given beforehand and the one gives the other and vice versa in what is more of a cycle temporality than a linear succession in time. Regardless, I agree with Massumi that the logic of the threat is forced into the world by means of preemption.

I would therefore argue that the threat, as Arendt claims that Plato resorts to, holds another anachronism because it is layered with the future as constantly in the present *and* as the not-yet materialized with the potential to be reproduced indefinitely.

To conclude: This chapter introduces the forms of government and the activities of the *vita activa* and their temporalities. It discusses the relationship between thinking and speech-actions, both in relation to the Socratic dialogue with me-and-myself and in the Platonic rulership of the thinker over the doer. In the first, I found a plural morality in the simultaneity of thinking and speech-action, and in the latter I found a clear separation between thinking and speech-action. I argue that this separation entails three modes of anachronisms. First, it assumes that the realm of

eternity can be forced itself into the world of natality, second, the presumed rectilinearity between the means and ends is rather a collapse of the two where one reproduces the other and vice versa, and third, this eternally reproductive, means-end temporality must be enforced by a time-regime that reproduces threat visions of the future in order to rule the particularities of political speech-action in the present.

4. *From Past to Future: Authority and Political Speech-Action*

Men who act, to the extent that they feel themselves to be the masters of their own futures, will forever be tempted to make themselves masters of the past, too.

(Arendt, 1972, pp. 11f.)

Arendt's comment is made in relation to the public release of the Pentagon papers that revealed extensive lying on behalf of American politicians on the war in Vietnam. Just before making this remark, Arendt summarizes her critique of the American politicians who have lied, a critique not aiming at their lies, but at the fact that they thought of themselves in a similar fashion as Plato's political philosopher: one who can know the future of human affairs based on theory and absolute models (Arendt, 1972, p. 11). But if Platonic political philosophy took the model of eternity and ruled the present, the American politicians took models extracted from statistics from the past, and used them to rule the realm of human affairs in the present. In both cases, the using of models leads to a sense of dominance in relation to both the past and the future, but for the lying American politicians, the source of this model is distinctly within the world.

In this chapter I discuss forms of authoritarian rulership, as opposed to ideal rulership. Authoritarian rulership, as I understand it, take its bearing in actual political practice within the world. It bases its authoritative statements on the past or on the future rather than any external mode of time. So, parallel to Arendt's critique of political philosophy and its concern with metaphysical temporalities, there is a parallel story and critique in Arendt's writing in which she also discusses actual historical practices and their underlying temporal topographies.⁸⁰

Roughly, Arendt's reading can be divided into authoritative rulership based on what has happened in the past, and authoritative rulership based on what should happen in the future. In order to outline such a critique, she goes into dialogue with mainly three time periods in Western history: first, she discusses the pre-philosophical Greek version of history as storytelling, where past speech-actions can inform later

⁸⁰ The critique of Platonic political philosophy is more phenomenological than it is historical in its character. It is true that Arendt draws from past writing to argue for her claim that *vita contemplativa* and *homo faber* takes the position properly occupied by the political *vita activa*, but the *function* of these activities remain the same, even if their dominance throughout historical time periods change.

speech-actions in a circular recurrence. This model of historical retelling vanishes with the Platonic critique of political practice, but, in Arendt's reading, a version of political speech-action is reinstated in Rome, and there its generating temporality is tradition and a sense of origin in which the foundation of Rome serves as the informing example of later speech-actions. Thirdly, in the modern era, this sense of origin and traditional modes of speech-action is dismantled for a sense of historical development and progression in which the future forms the authoritative temporality.

I argue in this chapter that Arendt presents a two-fold critique of the force that authoritative rulership exerts over political speech-action. The first is a critique of the past as dominating the present and where traditional moral standards rule the speech-action in the present, as well as a critique of the present's capacity to force the past to conform to the image of the present. This is, roughly, Arendt's characterization of the Roman way of conceptualizing of political speech-action and morality: as authority, tradition and foundation. The second, as I understand it, is a critique of the future as dominating the present where the image of the future rule the speech-action in the present, but also a critique of how the present has the capacity to make the future in its own image. This is, roughly, Arendt's characterization of how modern thinkers conceptualized political speech-action: historical development, the future, and progression. However, Arendt also discusses political practice in Greece, mainly pre-Socratic practice, and we start there in order to see how the problem of newness, circularity and rectilinearity was negotiated in political practice.

Circularity and Rectilinearity: Arendt on Ancient Greece and Historical Modes of Speech-Action

As I argue in this section, the task of the Greek historiographer, in Arendt's discussions, is to record past speech-action so that humans can overcome their mortality through fame and that this creates a form of rectilinear duration. However, this retelling capacity is coupled with a circular notion of time in which the great speech-actions will reappear, and where the past example can inform future speech-actions. This Greek understanding of history as both rectilinear and circular, I argue, form an anachronistic relationship in which newness becomes impossible.

When Arendt discusses the Greek mode of being with the past in relation to speech-action and human affairs, she does not follow the Aristotelian distinction in the *Rhetoric* of the different purposes of the genres of public speech/rhetoric and their respective temporality.⁸¹ Rather, Arendt makes a distinction between the eternity of nature and cosmos, the immortality of gods, and the mortality of humans.

Arendt claims that in the Greek understanding of time, nature and life is eternal in the sense that the life cycle is recurrent and circular, in the same way that cosmos is eternal and circular. This also includes animal life, as well as human animal life insofar as it is concerned with the survival of the species in the form of *animal laborans*. The Greek gods, on the other hand, are immortal in the sense that they have been born, but they do not age or die (Arendt, 1978, p. I:134, 1998, pp. 17–21, 2006a, pp. 42f.).⁸² Both eternity and immortality are different from the temporality of mortality, and the latter creates a rectilinear life path from birth to death. Arendt writes: “mortality became the hallmark of human existence. [...] This individual life is distinguished from all other things by the rectilinear course of its movement, which, so to speak, cuts through the circular movement of biological life.” (Arendt, 1998, pp. 18f.) Here, mortality cuts through an otherwise circular cosmos and nature and creates a rectilinear movement.

According to Arendt’s reading of ancient Greece, human mortality can to some extent be overcome by the extraordinary deed and word that can “leave non-perishable traces behind” through which humans can “attain an immortality of their own and prove themselves to be of a ‘divine’ nature.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 19) I would argue that there is an anachronism in this notion of immortality, not fully developed or explicitly discussed by Arendt but nonetheless extractable from her discussion, as in this quote:

What is difficult for us to realize is that the great deeds and works of which mortals are capable, and which become the topic of historical narrative, are not seen as parts of either

⁸¹ Aristotle claims in *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* that the different audiences for the three rhetorical genres determine each genre’s temporality: the judicial genre is concerned with the past, the epideictic or demonstrative genre with the present, and the deliberative genre with the future (Aristotle, Book I:III).

⁸² A cautionary remark concerning these distinctions; there is a conceptual glide in Arendt’s various writings on nature, cosmos and the gods. In *Between Past and Future* and *The Promise of Politics*, most often, all three of these are called “immortal” or “being-forever,” whereas in *The Human Condition* and *The Life of the Mind* cosmos and nature are most often termed “eternal” and the gods “immortal.” I have chosen to refer to nature and cosmos as “eternal” and the gods as “immortal” for sake of clarity.

an encompassing whole or process; on the contrary, the stress is always on single instances and single gestures. These single instances, deeds or events, interrupt the circular movement of daily life in the same sense that the rectilinear *bios* of the mortals interrupts the circular movement of biological life (Arendt, 2006a, p. 42).

Here, we see that the extraordinary deed has the capacity to break the circular repetitiveness of daily life and Arendt likens it to the rectilinear interruption of mortality into the circular eternity of nature. That suggests that the singular deed can be turned into something rectilinear, but rectilinearity presupposes a succession of at least two events and can therefore not be singular. As such, the extraordinary deed is both rectilinear and momentous in its singularity. This double temporal capacity of the speech-action also comes in another form.

According to Arendt, one of the temporal paradoxes of greatness is that the great is that which manifests itself in permanence (the gods, nature, cosmos) whereas for humankind, greatness is expressed in speech-actions, the most fleeting of all activities.

The paradox is that, on the one hand, everything was seen and measured against the background of the things that are forever, while, on the other, true human greatness was understood, at least by the pre-Platonic Greeks, to reside in deeds and words, and was rather represented by Achilles, “the doer of great deeds and the speaker of great words,” than by the maker and fabricator, even the poet and writer. This paradox, that greatness was understood in terms of permanence while human greatness was seen in precisely the most futile and least lasting activities of men, has haunted Greek poetry and historiography (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 45f.).

Arendt here speaks of a paradox, but because she is discussing temporal concepts, I would like to call it an anachronism. The anachronism of greatness is that the least permanent activity was also the greatest in the human condition, whereas greatness was measured against permanence. Arendt goes on to claim that the solution to this paradox, or anachronism, in pre-Socratic Greece was through fame: the immortal re-telling of the great deed and word by either poets or historiographers (Arendt, 2006a, p. 46).⁸³ One way of understanding this focus on fame is that Arendt stresses the importance of the single actor’s outstanding achievement. This is an interpretation that is in accordance with the above quote’s focus on the extraordinary. However, I argue that implicit in the concept of fame is the possibility of the new speech-action to

⁸³ These speech-actions generated fame, and Arendt often exemplifies with Ulysses, Achilles, and Hector (Arendt, 1998, p. 25, 2006a, pp. 45, 51). Pericles’ funeral speech becomes Arendt’s prime example of the question of whether the speech-action itself is enough to make it immortal, or whether it is in need of the re-telling of it. For Pericles, the greatness of Athens was enough to make it immortal and it did not need “a Homer... or other of his craft” to secure its immortality (Arendt, 1978, p. I:133).

also gain fame and immortality. As such, the new speech-action can enter into a relationship with the past speech-action and compete with it on equal terms. This is very different from the Roman notion, as we shall see, where the past speech-action's position as authoritative is unquestioned. This reading of Arendt's discussion of the Greek notion of fame would constitute a plural possibility—because the immortal stories are plural—in the engagement with the past. It could even be likened to a persuasive relation with the past, in which the best speech-actions persuade of their fame and status as immortal.

In order to receive fame, the speech-action needs a storyteller or historiographer. Let me expand Arendt's notion of the historiographer, before returning to the anachronism. Arendt draws a line of conceptual linkages between the *homo faber*, the historiographer, and the poet, as was seen in the quote above, but perhaps best summarized in the very first pages of *The Human Condition* where the *homo faber* and its products “bestow a measure of permanence and durability upon the futility of mortal life and the fleeting character of human time.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 8) The *homo faber* activity makes something durable and fit for humans to live in; it creates worldliness and the human artifact (Arendt, 1998, pp. 8, 139). This capacity derives its meaning from the fact that speech-actions cannot actualize their meaning in themselves, but must be “‘reified’ only through a kind of repetition, the imitation or *mimēsis*” (Arendt, 1998, p. 187). Or, in an alternative formulation: “the transformation of single events and occurrences into history was essentially the same ‘imitation of action’ in words which was later employed in Greek tragedy” (Arendt, 2006a, p. 45).⁸⁴ The meaning of a speech-action can thus only appear after it has been completed, in the reified imitation, and this mimetic capacity links the activity of the *homo faber* to art.

⁸⁴ Arendt claims in *The Human Condition* that drama and theater, because it imitates speech and politics and records it for future generations, is the most political art form (Arendt, 1998, pp. 187f.). Of course, it seems more close at hand that rhetoric would be the most political art form. This omission, I believe, is due to the ambiguous status of rhetoric in Arendt's thinking. In *The Human Condition* she calls it an art form (“the art of persuasion”), and whenever political speech-action is reduced to an art form, it functions according to the logic of the *homo faber* and works with pre-established models and set standards to determine future speech-action, which is contrary to how political speech-action should work according to Arendt (Arendt, 1998, pp. 25, 207). In *The Promise of Politics*, Arendt also calls rhetoric the art of persuasion, but she also states that Socrates' apology is “one of its great examples” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 7). Given that this speech is as close to an ideal form of political speech-action, as it possibly gets in Arendt's understanding, it seems that here, rhetoric simply *is* political speech-action without models or set standards. If we compare this to drama, which imitates speech-action, it seems that the dividing line between rhetoric and drama is between actual speech-action and imitation of speech-action, in Arendt's understanding.

According to Arendt, the highest achievement of the *homo faber* are works of art, because they create a form of immortality that mortals (as individuals) would otherwise lack (Arendt, 1998, pp. 167f.). As Cecilia Sjöholm argues in *Doing Aesthetics with Arendt: How to See Things* (forthcoming) this capacity for permanence is one of the main characteristics of art in Arendt's scattered writings on art. Sjöholm argues that it has the potential to resist commodification because it creates a sense of permanence outside of its use value or its instrumentality (Sjöholm, forthcoming, pp. 32f.). As such, art works are the products that are made when the *homo faber* transcends its own means-end logic and create permanence outside of utility.

The historiographer's capacity to create endurance in time turns the historiographer partly into an actor, because Arendt writes that history in the sense of an end product can also have consequences—it can start new stories of history which it cannot control or foresee—and thus it too begins to create new consequences (Arendt, 2006a, p. 60). Therefore, there can be many different histories in the Greek understanding, according to Arendt, that co-exist and are retold again and again in parallel to each other. As I interpret Arendt's discussion of the ancient Greek conception of history and of political practice, there is no singular History, but many histories of various deeds and words that co-exist next to each other and intersect with each other (Arendt, 2005b, p. 43).

The historiographer is a form of intermediary between the *homo faber* and the political *vita activa*, because it is both a producer of endurance in retelling, but these retold stories are also part of future speech-action. I believe this double position can be understood in relation to Arendt's discussion of the Greek notion of circularity:

When Aristotle holds that “coming-into-being necessarily implies the pre-existence of something which is potentially but is not actually,” he is applying the cyclical movement in which everything that is alive swings—where indeed every end is a beginning and every beginning an end, so that “coming-to-be continues though things are constantly being destroyed”—to the realm of human affairs, and this to the point that he can say that not only events but even opinions (*doxai*) “as they occur among men, revolve not only once or a few times but infinitely often.” This strange view of human affairs was not peculiar to philosophic speculation. Thucydides' claim to leave to posterity a *ktēma es aei*—a sempiternally useful paradigm of how to inquire into the future by virtue of a clear knowledge of the greatest event yet known in history—rested implicitly on the same conviction of a recurrent movement of human affairs (Arendt, 1978, pp. II:16f.).

Here, we see that the circular notion of time is not only applied to nature but also to human affairs, so that “every end is a beginning and every beginning an end” and that

this means that both *doxa* (for Aristotle) and great events (for Thucydides) will recur again and again. Koselleck also quotes this expression from Thucydides, and claims that Thucydides thought of his history as “a permanent possession for knowledge of similarly constituted cases in the future.” (Koselleck, 2004, p. 28) As such, the singular and extraordinary event becomes the “sempiternally useful paradigm of how to inquire into the future by virtue of a clear knowledge of the greatest event yet known in history” as Arendt phrases it.

It seems to me that this is the point where the telling of the historiographer becomes a means to reach an end. The extraordinary becomes a form of pedagogical tool that can inform on how to speak and act in the future based on the historical example. Arendt claims that this is not a problem or a paradox in pre-philosophical Greece political practice because there is no eternal being of the philosopher, and therefore the cyclical time can function as a background to the rectilinear time of the extraordinary deed (Arendt, 1978, p. II:17). The extraordinary deed can, in this understanding, inform speech-action again in the future because the past and the present will recur in the future.

This is clearly contradictory to the notion of the speech-action as singular and extraordinary, as well as the speech-action in its rectilinearity. In order to sum up this anachronism: the speech-action is unique and extraordinary—that which cannot recur—and that which is retold and thus creates endurance, meaning and rectilinearity—and thus recurs in reified form. This double-temporality of the speech-action then also becomes part of the Greek circular time concept in which past speech-actions and past *doxa* will recur. I would say that the temporality of the Greek notion of history, in Arendt’s discussion, holds anachronisms in which both momentous, successive, and circular time is encompassed.

Another way of saying that is that the concept of newness was not part of the ancient Greek understanding of history, nature, cosmos, or indeed, the political speech-action, even if its inherent quality is that it introduces newness into the world. This anachronism of a simultaneous circularity and newness is not solved in Arendt’s writing on ancient Greece, but rather she claims that newness as a concept is introduced in ancient Rome and with Christianity (Arendt, 1978, pp. II:28–34), which I will discuss in the next section.

Authority, Foundation and the Lost Possibility for Newness: Arendt on Roman and Christian Tradition

History and tradition are not the same. History has many ends and many beginnings, each of its ends being a new beginning, each of its beginnings putting an end to what was there before.

(Arendt, 2005b, p. 43)

Arendt makes a distinction between the Greek idea of history as a mode of acting politically with the past and the Roman idea of tradition as a mode of acting politically with the past. In short, Arendt claims that the main difference is that circularity and immortality ceases to be the most fundamental aspect of politics and instead the notion of origin and foundation comes in place. As I argue in this part of the chapter, with the Roman and Christian notion of foundation comes the (as I read it) optimistic promise of a possibility of newness: something which has never been seen or heard before can enter the world of appearances, and begin something. However, this faculty of newness that comes with an established origin also displaces the Greek cyclical notion of time in which past events can shed light on the future because events in the world will reappear. In the Roman notion of tradition the past event can also shed light on the future, but only because each event is caused by the most prior event.

This part of the chapter is divided in two parts: first, I discuss the capacity for newness in both the Roman and the Christian sense, and how both of these establish authority and thus reduce the importance of political speech-action. In Arendt's reading of the Roman notion of tradition, speech-action takes its starting point in the authority of the past, and in her discussion of the Christian notion of tradition, morality is displaced onto a Godly judge who judges for eternity. Second, I discuss the authoritarian tradition in the Roman sense, focusing on a temporal double standard in the present's relation to the past.

But before we move on, a cautionary remark on the risk of confusion in Arendt's terminology: what she calls "tradition" is sometimes the Roman tradition of foundation, based in political practice, and sometimes it is the tradition of political philosophy. She even calls the latter anti-traditional by nature, because it does not take its source of authority from previous political practice, but from the Platonic wonder at the ideas, truth and things as they are (Arendt, 2005b, p. 54). However, she

does call it a tradition of political philosophy to disregard the tradition of political practice, and these two merge in her discussions of Rome and the Christian Middle Ages.

So, we have three versions of ‘tradition’ in Arendt’s writing: the pre-philosophical tradition of political practice of Greece in which there was no rulership, and when this tradition of political practice began to decline, the Greeks developed the tradition of political philosophy where eternal truth was the ideal that ruled the whole realm of human affairs. These two forms of tradition merge in Rome, where the foundation of Rome serves as the authoritative starting point that rules the modes of speaking and acting (as such it is similar to the realm of ideas) but in which this tradition is based and expressed in political practice rather than in reflexive writing (as such, it is similar to the tradition of political practice in pre-philosophical Greece).⁸⁵

Foundation and Authority in Roman and Christian Tradition

According to Arendt, the Greek political organization could reenact its own founding again and again, which repeatedly happened in the establishment of the *polis* in the Greek colonies (Arendt, 2005b, p. 48) The most striking aspect of the Roman political organization, according to Arendt, is that the foundation of Rome is singular and unrepeatable, and that it marks the “beginning for eternity” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 49). The Roman notion of tradition can therefore be dated to a particular event, from which all other events are caused into eternity.

In Arendt’s reading of the foundation of Rome, she claims that they are the first to introduce the idea of tradition as a force from the past that influences the political speech-action of the present in a rectilinear fashion. This should be read in contrast to the Greek political practice in which history, i.e. a series of partial stories, can return and thus be recreated in the present and future, and as opposed to the Greek philosophical tradition that denies the worldly past any influence in the realm of human affairs. In Rome, the notion of tradition becomes “the guiding thread through the past and the chain to which each new generation knowingly or unknowingly was

⁸⁵ In Arendt’s reading of Roman sources, she claims that the Romans never develop a philosophy of their own, because they take the philosophy of the Greeks to be the original starting point of philosophy, and as such, it is authoritative and even settling, even if they might disagree with its teaching (Arendt, 2005b, p. 53).

bound in its understanding of the world and its own experience.” (Arendt, 2006a, p. 25) As such, this original point forms the foundation for present and future customs, habits, and morality.⁸⁶

The basic characteristic of this Roman mode of foundation in the political governing and public morality is threefold: religion, authority and tradition, and according to Arendt, the one cannot survive without both of the others. Roman religion secures a dwelling place for gods among men, and thus the Roman foundation finds its religious and immortal basis. Authority becomes the testimony of the foundation that is handed down through the generations. Tradition marks the binding relation between the authoritative starting point and its continuation (*autores* and *tradere* in combination) (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 49ff.). It is a form of political governing that is authority-based, or what Arendt calls authoritarian.

Arendt discusses authority in more general terms in “What is authority?” and she claims that it is peculiarly opposite to both persuasion and violence. On the one hand, it rests on a strict inequality where both the ruler who makes the authoritative statement in the form of command and the ruled who obeys the command, accept the statement without question of its value or moral force. This is opposed to persuasion that presumes equality and the difference of opinion. On the other hand, it is also opposed to violence because the command must be met with acceptance because otherwise it is no longer authoritative (Arendt, 2006a, p. 92).

As I understand Arendt’s claim, authority replaces persuasion and its power dynamics in the Greek political practice, where the persuasive relation could also be extended to the past. Instead, authoritarian rulership introduces command as the main form of expression, already envisioned by the Greek philosophers, but here based in a tradition handed down from the past. To some extent, this is similar to how the Greek understood history as informative for future speech-action, but with one difference: in the Roman notion, tradition cannot be outcompeted or challenged in the present on equal terms. In the authoritarian relationship to the past, there is no persuasive relation to being political with the past, but only a form of rulership in which the past speech-action commands the later speech-action in something that resembles obedience.

⁸⁶ This discussion is similar to Koselleck’s discussion of how Cicero and then later Christian ideas about *topos* (Gr. commonplaces) and *exempla* formed a didactic canon of stories (*historie*) from which the orator could draw in order to compose his or her own speeches, but for Koselleck the main difference is not between history (canon) and tradition (origin), but in how *historie* became a progressive narrative with a modernist *telos* (Koselleck, 2004, pp. 28, 33).

With the breakdown of the Roman Empire and the introduction of Christianity, the Roman notion of tradition in the political sense gave way to the Christian tradition where the founding principle was not political but religious.⁸⁷ Drawing from Augustine, Arendt claims that there are two events in which the circularity of earthly time is broken in the Christian tradition: the birth of humankind with Adam and Eve, that marks the beginning of the Christian idea of humanity, and the birth and death of Jesus, that marks the end of this tradition (Arendt, 1978, pp. II:18, 29, 2005b, p. 59).

Arendt writes in *On Revolution* that this stress on novelty is only possible within a rectilinear notion of time:

It is obvious that only under the conditions of a rectilinear time concept are such phenomena as novelty, uniqueness of events, and the like conceivable at all. Christian philosophy, it is true, broke with the time concept of antiquity because the birth of Christ, occurring in human secular time, constituted a new beginning as well as a unique, unrepeatable event. Let the Christian concept of history, as it was formulated by Augustine, could conceive of a new beginning only in terms of a transmundane event breaking into and interrupting the normal course of secular history. Such an event, as Augustine emphasized, had occurred once but would never occur again until the end of time (Arendt, 2006c, p. 17).

This possibility for newness within the rectilinear time concept is conditioned in the Christian tradition by the fact that the two events that had enabled newness were caused by God. And as humans can imitate neither of them, the possibility to enact newness or to end something in speech-action is near impossible: “Secular history in the Christian view remained bound within the cycles of antiquity—empires would rise and fall as in the past—except that Christians, in the possession of an everlasting life, could break through this cycle of everlasting change and must look with indifference upon the spectacles it offered.” (Arendt, 2006c, pp. 17, see also 2006a, pp. 65ff.) Humans are bound, as long as they remain on earth, with the cyclical motion of events in the world, but they have the possibility to break out of this circularity with the eternity granted to them by God. So, for Arendt, the Christian tradition kept the cyclical notion of earthly time, but without the possibility of the extraordinary speech-action that could cut through this circularity.

This reduction of the temporality of the world to ‘mere’ circularity as opposed to the higher eternity in the after-life and the possibility for novelty in the hands of God, also reduced the importance of politics:

⁸⁷ Arendt claims that the sense of foundation and tradition survived in the legal system and in the religious system up until the 18th century, but was lost in the realm of politics (Arendt, 2005b, p. 53).

Christian morality, as distinguished from its fundamental religious precepts, has always insisted that everybody should mind his own business and that political responsibility constituted first of all a burden, undertaken exclusively for the sake of the well-being and salvation of those it freed from worry about public affairs (Arendt, 1998, p. 60).

The focus on the care of the soul as opposed to the potential immortality in fame simply decreases the need to do great deeds and words and increases the need to care for the soul in introspection and by doing good. Arendt is critical of the Christian idea of goodness, because it is the silent and invisible humility in doing good without anybody seeing or hearing it except the all-seeing and all-judging God (Arendt, 1998, p. 74). Arendt claims that this doing of good should also be hidden from the self, and only God should know if it (Arendt, 1998, pp. 74ff.).

Interestingly, Arendt draws up a contrast between the function that God has in relation to goodness and the solitary dialogue between me-and-myself in thinking (Arendt, 1998, p. 76). Even if she does not mention Socrates, I believe she wants to contrast the Christian morality with the solitary thinking morality. In the previous chapter, I discussed how this dialogue with the self functions as a morality check—that I do not wish to be with a murderer, and because I am engaged with a silent dialogue with myself, I cannot commit murder. This function is different from the Christian God who judges the self from an external point of reference, and it leaves the self “not solitary, but lonely,” that is, totally isolated and without a dialogue partner in the self (Arendt, 1998, p. 76). Christian goodness is therefore, as I understand Arendt’s discussion, a morality that does not stem from within the plurality of the self, or from the political world of plurality where humans are seen and heard by others, but from something external. The “experience of loneliness is so contradictory to the human condition of plurality that it is simply unbearable for any length of time and needs the company of God, the only imaginable witness of good works, if it is not to annihilate human existence altogether.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 76) The Christian God can judge what is the goodness without any speech-action to appear and for the eternal afterlife that is outside of the time of the earth. Goodness therefore destroys the public realm, not only because of its humility as opposed to the strive for fame, but also because it excludes the condition of plurality.

The Anachronisms of Tradition: Authority in a Double-Bind

As I read Arendt's discussion on the Roman notion of time, there is an inherent possibility for newness through the emphasis on foundation, because it marks the breaking of the circularity of nature and cosmos and it introduces something fundamentally new into the world of appearances. However, this possibility is lost because it is combined with a notion of the authoritative status of this foundation in which it rules all further speech-action, making any continuous possibility for new beginnings impossible. I would like to discuss how this authoritarian rulership establishes a double standard with regards to the past in the Roman notion of tradition, and how this binds speech-actions.

Even if Arendt expresses great admiration for the Roman republicanism, its force of tradition and authority is not harmless, in Arendt's writing, and it "developed into a great power of exclusion" (Arendt, 2005b, p. 47). Arendt discusses how tradition works to exclude events in the past that do not fit into the image of the past handed down through tradition. Arendt modifies this statement by claiming that this force works in two different ways with regards to the tradition of Platonic political philosophy and the Roman authoritative tradition. Arendt claims that the Platonic philosophical tradition hands down its concepts with the force of "oblivion" of everything that cannot be remembered within it. As such, Platonic philosophy has no need for memory, at least not of anything that is outside of its own conceptual sphere. Poetry and religion in Rome, on the other hand, has the power to save some of these things, but they remain "inarticulate [...], without that formative and direct influence which only tradition [...] can carry and hand down through the centuries." (Arendt, 2005b, p. 44) Whatever is saved of the past within arts and religion is rendered inarticulate, and as such it loses its formative influence on the present. In both cases, though, tradition becomes a form of forgetting that excludes the past's otherness in relation to the present. I have chosen to call this exclusionary force the tradition's authoritarian rulership over the past political speech-action.

However, there is a double temporal movement here, even if Arendt only makes brief references to it, in which this exclusion works the other way around. Arendt claims that "it lies in the nature of a tradition to be accepted and absorbed, as it were, by common sense" (Arendt, 2005b, p. 41). In common sense, things from the past are both remembered as well as utilized in the present: "The tradition-bound judgments of

common sense extracted and saved from the past whatever was conceptualized by tradition *and* was still applicable to present conditions.” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 42) In this quote, tradition is utilized in order to create common sense according to the established rules of conduct in the present. As such, tradition becomes an exclusionary force that can re-create the tradition in order to rule the present condition. I would like to call this force the tradition’s authoritarian rulership over the present speech-action.

I would therefore like to argue that the traditional mode of being with the past expresses a temporal double standard that exposes its capacity for rulership. It not only excludes the possibility of newness, or natality, because it deduces the possibilities to act from a particular starting point, but it does so according to an anachronistic mode of justifying the use of the past through the present. Origin and foundation becomes repetition of the past, but not in its distinctness, but only in its sameness to the present. Indeed, authoritarian rulership can be seen as a mirror opposite to reproductive futurism. In reproductive futurism, the present is reproduced in the image of the future, but this imagination of the future is based on how the present sees the future, and thus this image of the future perfect only reproduces the power structures in the present. In a similar, but temporally opposite way, tradition reproduces the past, but it is only an imagination of the past based on how it is imagined in the present, and thus it ends up reproducing the power structures of the present. Tradition becomes an authoritarian ruler of both the present and the past, so to speak.

Tradition’s temporal double standard in relation to the past becomes important for Arendt’s discussion of morality in its modern manifestation. In modern secularized times, tradition has become much more dangerous:

The past, to the extent that it is passed on as tradition, has authority; authority, to the extent that it presents itself as history, becomes tradition; and if authority does not proclaim, in the spirit of Plato, that “God [and not man] is the measure of all things,” it is arbitrary tyranny rather than authority (Arendt, 2005b, p. 73).

Without a formulation of authority based in religious command, tradition loses its coherency and continuity and becomes tyrannical. This loss of tradition is characteristic of ‘our time’ in Arendt’s writing. Arendt writes in *Responsibility and Judgment*:

Among the many things which were still thought to be “permanent and vital” at the beginning of the [20th] century and yet have not lasted, I chose to turn our attention to the moral issues, those which concern individual conduct and behavior, the few rules and standards according to which men used to tell right from wrong, and which were invoked to judge or justify others and themselves, and whose validity were supposed to be self-evident to every sane person either as part of divine or of natural law. Until, that is, without much notice, all this collapsed almost overnight, and then it was as though morality suddenly stood revealed in the original meaning of the word, as a set of *mores*, customs and manners, which could be exchanged for another set with hardly more trouble than it would take to change the table manners of an individual or a people (Arendt, 2003, p. 50).

Here, Arendt writes that the weakness of a morality based in traditional values was exposed in the 20th century. Arendt mentions that a change of moral standards could happen “almost overnight,” and the reference is to the Nazi takeover of Germany in which all moral conducts and manners were turned upside down, turning the moral command “thou shalt not kill” into the equally ‘moral,’ or customary, command “thou shalt kill” without much trouble. Indeed, Arendt claims that it was just as easy to turn it back again, once the defeat of Nazi Germany was a fact (Arendt, 2003, p. 54).

Even if Arendt here discusses judgment, that is, the capacity to judge the present based on particularities, I believe it can also be extended to the capacity of political speech-action. Judgment is the activity of the mind that has the closest affinity with speech-action, because it judges what has happened in the nearest past and in its particularities whereas political speech-action concerns what to do in the nearest present in its particularities. In either case, the capacity to tell right from wrong based on moral standards received from tradition turned out, in Arendt’s own experience, to be fragile. I would like to add that this is partly because their temporal double standard makes them fit to use the past reproductively, that is, tradition can be reshaped according to the power structure in the present.

The End of Tradition: Arendt on Modern Progression

According to Arendt, the Platonic tradition with its philosopher “turning away from politics and then returning in order to impose his standards on human affairs” came to a definite end when “a philosopher turned away from philosophy so as to ‘realize’ it in politics.” (Arendt, 2006a, p. 17)⁸⁸ She is referring to Marx in the quote, but the

⁸⁸ I have here chosen to focus on the end of the tradition of political philosophy but Arendt makes references to the end of tradition in various ways. Sometimes it is the tradition of political philosophy

turning away from the tradition of political philosophy was made, according to her, by three interrelated thinkers: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Marx, and they were preceded by Hegel (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 26–40).⁸⁹ In this section, I go into dialogue with this end of the tradition of political philosophy, and its temporality.

Arendt is sympathetic to the attempt on behalf of these authors to break out of the conceptual hierarchies set forth by philosophy but critiques them for, at the outset of their attempts, accepting the conceptual oppositional pairs given to them by this tradition. According to Arendt, Kierkegaard tried to turn Christian and classical hierarchies on their heads because he favored belief over reason, Marx because he favored the laboring man over the contemplating man, and Nietzsche because he favored sensuous life over idealistic transcendence (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 28–36).⁹⁰ As such, she claims, they only turn these conceptual pairs on their heads but end up staying within them (Arendt, 2003, p. 177, 2006a, pp. 27, 35).⁹¹

All of these conceptual turns had implications for the temporality of political speech-action, and in this section I discuss Arendt’s critique of Hegel and her claim that he turns the multiplicity of past events into overarching processes, and that Marx

comes to an end in the aftermath of Hegel, with the writings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Marx (Arendt, 2005b, p. 87, 2006a, p. 17). Sometimes it is the end that comes with the age of revolutions in the 18th century, in which traditional authority breaks down (Arendt, 2005b, p. 40, 2006c, pp. 25–31). Sometimes the end of tradition is related to the moral collapse of Nazi Germany, in which traditional morality had shown itself to be only customs and habits rather than a capacity to judge right from wrong (Arendt, 2003, p. 43).

⁸⁹ That the academic end of tradition precedes the totalitarian end of tradition does not mean that the academic debate causes the latter in a chain of necessity. According to Arendt, the totalitarian movements springs from a combination of the last authority that traditional values expressed and the political chaos of mass-society (Arendt, 1978, p. I:177, 2005b, p. 51, 2006a, p. 26). Arendt argues that traditional morality is corrupted, not because Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard dares to challenge it, but rather that it, in a last horrific death twitch, turned traditional morality on its head and attempted to extend its force into total domination. Following Kohn’s argument in the introduction to *The Promise of Politics*, but also the argument that Williams puts forth, it becomes clear that Arendt does not equate the evils done in the name of Marxism with the evils done in the name of Nazism or racism. The latter are “subterranean” or “gutter-born” parts of the Western tradition whereas the former has “a respectable tradition” behind it (first and third quote from Kohn, 2005, p. xi; and second quote from Williams, 2006, p. 8).

⁹⁰ Speaking of Marx and Nietzsche, Arendt says that in their work, there “is the adoption of the framework of tradition with a concurrent rejection of its authority.” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 73) As I discussed at the end of the last section, this mode of using tradition without establishing its authority runs the risk of becoming tyrannical because of its arbitrariness. Arendt nonetheless labels the academic challenge to tradition as “greatness” because it consisted in the daring task of asking “not ‘What are we fighting *against*’ but ‘What are we fighting *for*?’” (Arendt, 2006a, p. 27)

⁹¹ Arendt claims that this practice of turning concepts on their heads was first initiated when Plato turns the tale of Hades in the Greek religion on its head: instead of the bodiless souls living in shadows, it is the bodies that live in the shadows of the cave and the souls that can potentially dwell in light of the skies and the ideas (Arendt, 2006a, p. 36).

followed this line of conceptual thinking, but made these processes future-oriented.⁹² As I see it, there is a two-step movement in Arendt's writing on Hegel, Marx and the modern conditions for politics. First, in Hegel's thought, Arendt finds the first seed of thinking of politics and the realm of human affairs as a process with a logic of necessity, but this is only applied to the past. Secondly, Marx tries to bring the Hegelian logic the other way around so that it works in a similar fashion with regards to the future. In both of these, there is a reduction of the particular and of political speech-action.

Hegel: From Past to Present

Arendt claims in *On Revolution* that Hegel's "truly revolutionary idea" was to argue that the philosophical absolute standard, or truth, revealed itself not in contemplation away from the world, but in the realm of human affairs (Arendt, 2006c, p. 42). The fallacy of Hegel, according to Arendt, is that he attempts to find an absolute in the first place, and as such he remains within the Platonic tradition.⁹³

In *Between Past and Future*, Arendt claims that Hegel was the first to see all of human history as "one continuous development" and that this implied that Hegel himself (but maybe rather historical continuity itself) stood outside of "authority-claiming systems and beliefs" (Arendt, 2006a, p. 27) Given the previous discussion on Roman notion of tradition, in which the authority of the past binds speech-actions, this means, as I read it, that the authority that binds speech-action in Hegel's system is no longer tradition, but historical development. But this new thread has a set of other characteristics than the traditional-authoritative thread. Arendt writes:

The thread of historical continuity was the first substitute for tradition; by means of it, the overwhelming mass of the most divergent values, the most contradictory thoughts and conflicting authorities, all of which had somehow been able to function together, were reduced to a unilinear, dialectically consistent development actually designed to repudiate not tradition as such, but the authority of all traditions (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 27f.).

⁹² In this section, I focus primarily on Arendt's critique of the historicism of Hegel and Marx, but for a reading that sees commonalities in their respective thinking, see Robert Fine's *Political Investigations: Hegel, Marx, Arendt* (2001), in which he draws from *The Origins of Totalitarianism* to show that Arendt follows some of the methodological presumptions that can be found in Hegel's and Marx' writings.

⁹³ Arendt claims that this is partly understandable, because an act can only find meaning after it has reached its end, and this is done with help of the spectator (elsewhere, the historiographer and artist). This is a confusion between the spectator's role in bestowing meaning upon the past event and with bestowing upon it a historical necessity (Arendt, 2006c, p. 43).

Arendt's use of the terms "historical continuity" and "unilinear, dialectically consistent development" (and "process" elsewhere) are meant to highlight Hegel's notion of history as something that proceeds with a temporal logic of its own, outside of the particularities of actual human affairs. As indicated in the quote, the historical movement does this by incorporating the most divergent values, conflicting thoughts and contradictory authorities, into one coherent structure. As such, it reduces the particularities of the past. The absolute standard of historical dialectics is not found *in* speech-action, in "acts, and words, and events," but in the "backward-directed glance of thought" (Arendt, 2006c, p. 42). This could be called an authoritarian reduction of the past for the sake of the present.

In *The Life of the Mind* Arendt claims that Hegel wants to reconcile the Mind and the World and that his solution is History, or rather the Law of History.⁹⁴ In this Law of History, recollection and remembering is the activity of the thinking ego and they work through the "'the effort of the concept' ('*die Anstrengung des Begriffs*')" to achieve this reconciliation between the World and the Mind (Arendt, 1978, p. II:40). As I read this, language (the concept) plays the role of bringing the past into the present in the thinking activity, and this gives the mind an extraordinary strength:

[B]y sheer force of reflection, [the thinking ego] can assimilate to itself—suck into itself, as it were—not, to be sure, all the appearances but whatever has been meaningful in them, leaving aside everything not assimilable as irrelevant accident, without consequence for either the course of History or the train of discursive thought (Arendt, 1978, p. II:40).

Here, the thinking ego can suck out the meaningful in the world of appearances and create out of these a course of history, and disregard everything that does not fit into this movement. According to Arendt, this is a "scenario" of the great "triumph of the thinking ego," and the wording indicates that Arendt believes this position to be, to state it mildly, misguided (Arendt, 1978, p. II:40). The thinking ego can never, as I understand Arendt's implicit claim, reduce the particularities of the world to whatever seems meaningful in the present. They are always larger than any mind, and of any historical continuity.

The historical dialectic works in order to, so to speak, justify everything that has happened in the past for the sake of, or in the image of, the present. This becomes

⁹⁴ In *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt makes a distinction between Hegel's conception of history and his conception of time, and it is only the former that I discuss here (Arendt, 1978, pp. II:40–45).

most clear when Arendt discusses Hegel's notion of evil, in which it becomes a function and a justification for the present. For Hegel, "evil as the negative is the powerful force that drives on the dialectic of becoming, and in whose philosophy the evildoers, far from being the tares among the wheat, will even appear as the fertilizers of the field." (Arendt, 2003, p. 126) In this quote, evil cannot be judged for its own sake, but it becomes a means that drives history to reach an end.

Historical dialect, then, reduces everything in the past to a means to reach an end, and the end is always whatever is at the moment, the "real world is as it ought to be" as she sums up Hegel's position by quoting from *The Philosophy of History*. As the introductory quote in *The Promise of Politics*, gathered from her *Denktagebuch*, states: "by applying the absolute—justice, for example, or the 'ideal' in general (as in Nietzsche)—to an *end*, one first makes unjust, bestial actions possible, because the 'ideal,' justice itself, no longer exists as a yardstick, but has become an achievable, producible end within the world." (Arendt, 2005b, p. 3) So, if an absolute is applied to the realm of human affairs, speech-action can actually be the negation of that ideal, as long as they work towards that absolute. The unjust speech-action can then be justified for the sake of justice, the limit of freedom for the sake of freedom, and so on.

This critique of Hegel might seem a little too clear-cut or simplified for the diversity of Hegel's arguments, but the point, as I read it, is that Arendt argues that the thread of continuity—the dialectical historical development—is supposed to enable what prior was enabled by tradition in the Roman/Christian sense or by the Platonic ideas/Christian Godly judge, that is, a moral standard for political speech-actions.

I would argue, even if it is not a thought that is explicitly present in Arendt's writing, that the historical dialectical movement, in which supposedly what came before causes what comes after, functions according to that same reversal of means-end as discussed previously both in relation to the ideas of Plato and the origin within tradition. Within these, every end retroactively justifies its means, and thus re-creates the means into a version for the sake of the present. Only, in Plato, the particular perspective that justifies rulership is based on eternity as beheld by the philosopher, and in tradition, it is based on a singular founding origin. However tyrannical these may be, they are at least to some extent durable and consistent: "if authority does not proclaim, in the spirit of Plato, that 'God [and not man] is the measure of all things,' it

is arbitrary tyranny rather than authority.” (brackets in the original Arendt, 2005b, p. 73) This is different from Hegel, where it is the present’s perspective on what was meaningful in the past that rules the past. As such, it becomes more arbitrary than the others.

However, there is one forgiving aspect of the historical dialectics in Arendt’s understanding, and that is that it does not attempt to force its logic onto the present. Rather, the cunning of reason “fade[s] away in the present” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 70). As such, the Hegelian historical logic is only a ruler of the past of human affairs through the position of the present, but it does not rule the particularities of the present.

Marx: From Present to Future

In this section, I discuss Arendt’s reading of Marx and her claim that his celebration of labor turns the particularities of the present into repetition in accordance with the cyclical life concept. I then discuss how this aspect of labor—its repeatability and cyclical time notion—becomes part of prediction and foretelling in the historical process.

For Arendt, Marx turning of tradition on its head consists of first, to reverse the hierarchy between *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa* set out by Plato, and second, to reverse the hierarchies within the *vita activa* and make labor the highest source of meaning for humans (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 21, 31f.). According to Arendt, Marx takes the force of poverty to prove that politics functions foremost according to necessity (its foremost goal is to abolish poverty rather than to establish freedom) (Arendt, 2006c, p. 53). For Arendt, Marx’ introduction of “labor power” is formulated according to this notion of necessity. Labor power functions according to “inexhaustibility” because it concerns the life process of humankind, rather than any one individual (Arendt, 1998, p. 124). Arendt picks up this concept with a level of sarcasm because, for her, power can only be created by speech-action in shared freedom, whereas labor is only purported out of necessity, and necessity is the opposite of freedom. So, a notion of “labor power” combines two terms that in her theoretical scheme are opposite each other.

In Arendt’s discussion of Marx, she claims that he thinks that this power of necessity propels humankind forward: “[Marx] wished to see the process of growing

wealth as a natural process, automatically following its own laws and beyond willful decisions and purposes.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 111) Arendt draws the parallel between evolutionary theories and Marx theories, and notes that Engels calls Marx “the Darwin of history” (Arendt, 1998, p. 116). As such, her discussion of Marx is similar to her discussion of Hegel, in which the historical process is external to any speech-action. However, there is a difference in Arendt’s reading of Marx, because for Marx, the force of historical development moves in a faster and faster development.

Although machines have forced us into an infinitely quicker rhythm of repetition than the cycle of natural processes prescribed—and this specifically modern acceleration is only too apt to make us disregard the repetitive character of all laboring—the repetition and the endlessness of the process itself put the unmistakable mark of laboring upon it (Arendt, 1998, p. 125).

In Arendt’s writing on Marx, she argues that he focuses on life and labor, and that these give a cyclical and repetitive character to these activities, only that this happens at an ever-increasing speed.

Arendt claims that the real danger of Marx’ historical materialism is that it turns the Hegelian dialectic and propels it to the future. She writes:

Marx formalizes Hegel’s dialectic of the absolute in history as a *development*, as a self-propelled process [...]. In fact there is only one step left for the Marxist concept of development to become ideological process-thinking—the step that ultimately leads to totalitarian coercive deduction based on a single premise (Arendt, 2005b, p. 75).

This is obviously a dangerous path, and its temporal mechanism is that it reduces the particularities of the present: “Marx ‘prophetically’ projected it [the Hegelian world-historical view] the other way around onto the future and understood the present only as a springboard.” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 70) In this quote, Arendt claims that Marx reduces time into a means-end relationship, where the present is only a means to reach the future. As such, it is the future that justifies the present and gives meaning to it retroactively. The Hegelian Law of History becomes in the hands of Marx the Law of the Future. As such, the future functions as a trope that reaches back into the present and rules it.

I conclude that in Arendt’s reading of Hegel, the present becomes a dominative force—dominative because it eliminates temporal difference—and thus come to rule the past. A similar position is held by the future for Marx, in which the future reaches back and rules the present. In short, the possibility for political speech-action to

appear in the present becomes dependent on either a dialectical reduction of the past or a utopic closing of the future.

Pearl-Fishing in the Past: An Arendtian Alternative?

Arendt's rather idealized portrayal of history and greatness has often been read as Arendt's nostalgic longing for Greek antiquity. Even if I agree that there is something in the tone of Arendt's writing that opens up for this interpretation, she repeatedly states that the line of tradition is broken in our time and cannot be mended. Therefore, she is looking, not to restore a glorious Greek golden age of speech-action, but for past artifacts that can illuminate the present through their distinctness and open up for new paths of thinking what we are doing. Therefore, there is a distinct un-critical tone in many of her readings, but rather than reading this as idealized nostalgia, I would argue that the underlying purpose of her engagement with the Greek notion of history is to put it in contrast to the Roman and later Christian notion of tradition, and again, put this traditional mode of being with the past in relation to thinking of history as a process in modernity, which in turns open up for progression.

I have discussed the dangerous consequences of tying political speech-action to the past or the future in a relationship of authoritarian rulership. However, there are also more, I would not say optimistic, but perhaps enabling ways of acting politically with the past in Arendt's writing. Arendt begins *The Human Condition* by defining speech-action in relation to memory and history: "Action, in so far as it engages in founding and preserving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance, that is for history." (Arendt, 1998, pp. 8f.) As such, there is an affinity between speech-action, history and remembrance that can be enabling rather than authoritarian. Here, I wish to suggest that this can be found in Arendt's various writings on refusing to create a comprehensive narrative of the past, of refusing to let go of the past, and instead form a plural relationship with the past.

As Jeffery Andrew Barash argues in "Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Remembrance" (2002) Arendt's conception of memory is one of the key components that distinguish her work from Heidegger's. According to Barash, Heidegger sees memory as a consequence of forgetfulness and forgetfulness as part of the inauthentic mode of being (Barash, 2002, p. 174). I will return to Heidegger and the futurity of being-towards-death in the next chapter. Here, I just want to note, with

Barash, that Heidegger's attempt to destruct the metaphysical tradition (in which being is equated with ever-lasting presence) led him on the search for absence and he found it in the temporal finitude in the being-towards-death (Barash, 2002, p. 175).

Arendt also wants to dismantle the metaphysical tradition, but as opposed to Heidegger's exclusive focus on mortality and futurity, she attempts to find a place for permanence without resorting to eternal presence. In Barash understanding, this permanence can be found in the capacity to immortalize the speech-action through remembrance (Arendt, 1998, pp. 177f.). As such, remembrance is a worldly activity that brings the past speech-action into the present and creates a form of stability and permanence. I think Barash interpretation is valid, but I would like to add that the place Arendt accords to memory and history is one that also recognizes absence, and not only permanence, as a constitutive aspect of speech-action.

In the *The Life of the Mind*, the capacity for remembrance and making present that which is absent is the hallmark of thinking rather than of historiography and storytelling. Here, the thinking ego is the creation of meaning in relation to that which is absent, and this becomes distinctly linked to memory:

Memory, the mind's power of having present what is irrevocably past and thus absent from the senses, has always been the most plausible paradigmatic example of the mind's power to make invisibles present. By virtue of this power, the mind seems to be even stronger than reality; it pits its strength against the inherent futility of everything that is subject to change; it collects and re-collects what otherwise would be doomed to ruin and oblivion (Arendt, 1978, pp. II:11f.).

Here, the function of memory is "even stronger than reality," and it makes that which is absent, the past, present by means of re-collecting it back into the present. Memory saves the past from oblivion, without attempting to form a narrative or to make it comprehensible in the present. Memory, in my reading of this quote, does not deny the past its otherness or its absence, but brings it into the present by means of memory.

There is an ethical undertone in the capacity to remember, and Victoria Fareld writes in "Temporal Responsibility Between Memory and Forgetfulness: Forgiveness and Guilt in Arendt" (2011),⁹⁵ that memory is tied up with responsibility in Arendt's thinking. As discussed in the previous chapter, Eichmann displays an incapacity to think and to connect his thinking with words, and Fareld connects this to Eichmann's

⁹⁵ "Temporalt ansvar mellan minne och glömska: Förlåtelse och skuld hos Arendt," my translation.

lack of memory. Eichmann's incapacity to remember also makes it impossible for him to enter into a relationship with the past and there constitute himself as a responsible person (Fareld, 2011, pp. 152f.). As I understand Fareld's argument, the capacity to remember enables one to enter a relationship with the past; it places the self not in the *doxa*, the world as it appears, of another person, but in the other temporality. Memory creates a form of dialogue, not between me-and-myself but between me-and-the-past, and as such, memory constructs a condition of plurality in-between times. History and memory in such an understanding of Arendt's work become tied to the ethical dimension of plurality, only that it is a temporal plurality.

I want to connect this discussion of memory to Arendt's portrayal of Benjamin's method of collecting citations in *Men in Dark Times*. In this method, I believe that Arendt finds, maybe not her ideal, but a mode of being with the past fit for modern times in which tradition has lost its authoritative function:

Insofar as the past has been transmitted as tradition, it possesses authority; insofar as authority presents itself historically, it becomes tradition. Walter Benjamin knew that the break in tradition and the loss of authority which occurred in his lifetime, were irreparable, and he concluded that he had to discover new ways of dealing with the past (Arendt, 2014, p. 193).

This new way of dealing with the past is in Arendt's writing on Benjamin one of haphazard collections and citations of past writings. These collections are different from tradition, because tradition "puts the past in order, not just chronologically but first of all systematically in that it separates the positive from the negative" (Arendt, 2014, pp. 198f.). No such system is constructed in Benjamin's collections, because it collects without distinction, without rendering to an articulate order.

Arendt writes that it is a method in a time when "the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future"—an often quoted line from Tocqueville in Arendt's writing, here quoted from *Between Past and Future*, but also found in abbreviated form in *Men in Dark Times* (Arendt, 2006a, p. 6, 2014, p. 193). It is a method for Benjamin and Arendt's contemporary moment when the past can no longer be useful, in a means-end relationship to the present and the future (Arendt, 2014, p. 193). It is a method of "despair" (Arendt, 2014, p. 193), and, to paraphrase the title of the book, a method for "dark times."

Drawing from a few lines from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Arendt describes it as a method that dives down into the depths of the past. There, sometimes, it finds

things that have suffered a “‘sea-change’ from living eyes to pearls, from living bones to corals,” and that can “survive in new crystalized forms and shapes.” That the past has changed form when it meets the pearl-fisher or collector, that it has suffered the sea-change, I read as Arendt’s way of saying that there is no direct link to the past—it is lost and absent—but in the mode it encounters the collector, it has changed and become crystalized.

These pearls and corals can be brought up to the surface, writes Arendt, again drawing from *The Tempest*, as something “rich and strange” (Arendt, 2014, pp. 203, 205f.). That she chooses this description as a mode of being with the past, in which the past remains “rich and strange” rather than useful is an attempt, I believe, to capture a relation where the past remains other—a stranger—to the collector. Arendt also ends *Thinking* with these lines, and there she claims that the mode it encounters the collector is as a “*fragmented past*” and that the collecting is a “dismantling process” (Arendt, 1978, p. I:212). She ends *Thinking* with an appeal: “If some of my listeners or readers should be tempted to try their luck at the technique of dismantling, let them be careful not to destroy the ‘rich and strange,’ the ‘coral’ and the ‘pearls,’ which can probably be saved only as fragments.” (Arendt, 1978, p. I:212) I understand this mode of pearl fishing in the past, in which the past remains rich and strange, as something that not deny the past its otherness, but where it can brought to the surface of the present in fragmented but crystalized forms. This, I believe is a way of being with the past in a more positive sense for Arendt, and maybe, it could also be a mode of being political with the past in dark times.

5. Present-Politics: Anachronisms of the Nows

Then, how do those two periods of time, the past and the future, exist, when the past is already not existing, and the future does not yet exist? And again, the present would not pass away into the past, if it were always present; indeed, it would not be time but eternity. So, if the present, in order to be time, must be such that it passes over into the past, then how can we say that it is; for, the sole reason for its existence is the fact that it will stop being, that is to say, can we not truly say that time is, only because it inclines not to be?

(Augustine, 1991, p. 344)

In this quote from Augustine's *Confessions*, he circles around the enigma of what the present *is*. He starts by posing the present in opposition to the past and the future—the past is that which already is not existing, it is no-longer, and the future is that which does not yet exist. But if the present is given this position in between two non-existing entities, it would mean that the present is the only presence in the world; it becomes eternity. But if it is not an eternity because the present moves into the past, then its only base for existence is that it will soon not be; it becomes a nothing. As I read the quote, Augustine moves in a curious way from one extreme to the other: the present is either an eternity because it becomes the only thing that can claim an ontology of being, or it is inclined “not to be” because it is fully conditioned by the fact that it will stop being. Time in this quote is either the only positive: it is the only thing that is, or a negative: it can only be defined by its coming non-existence.

Arendt also poses the question of the being or the non-being of the present in a similar fashion as Augustine.⁹⁶ She gives no one answer but discusses various alternatives. In *The Life of the Mind* she claims that all human notions of time use as their “prototype” the individual events of being born and of dying, and that they are determined by this condition (Arendt, 1978, p. I:21). However, Arendt also speaks of the mind experience of time as the “no more” and the “not yet,” or of being able to envision that which is past and future, beyond the present (Arendt, 1978, p. II:13). These temporalities of the mind stand in contrast to what Arendt calls “objective’

⁹⁶ This is no coincidence, of course, because Arendt knew Augustine's time concept well. Another aspect of this connection is, as Ruin shows, that Husserl, and by effect Heidegger, uses Augustine's puzzle as a means to begin the discussion of the phenomenology of time (Ruin, 2011, pp. 54–59). Ruin discusses Derrida's critique of Heidegger, and even if Ruin does not mention Arendt in this context, I believe that Derrida's critique of time as order and system is also a way to understand the time concept that Arendt wants to move away from.

time,” which is the time of the world and where the assumption always is that it has no beginning or end, “an assumption that seems only natural for beings who always come into a world that preceded them and will survive them.” (Arendt, 1978, p. I:21)

It is this latter, worldly time that this chapter attempts to discuss and especially the present of this time. There is a risk in doing that type of reading of Arendt, though, because, as we shall see, there are elements of this worldly time that rely on an unreserved presentism. In Arendt’s notion of the beginning as fundamental to worldly, political time, the present becomes almost all-decisive: it is in the present that speech-action erupts, of its own and fundamentally unexpected. In order to explain this eruption of the speech-action in the present, Arendt claims that it can be found in the individual actor’s capacity to break out of the time continuum. As such, the present becomes the all-decisive temporality, untied to the past and the future. I wish to complicate this reading of Arendt’s presentism with the help of two other aspects of time in Arendt. By connecting the temporality of speech-action to Arendt’s discussion of the mind’s struggle in the present with the forces of the past and the future, as well as with the struggle of the speech-action to overcome the burden of irreversibility (that the past cannot be undone) and unpredictability (that the future cannot be foreseen), I will argue that Arendt’s conception of the present of speech-action is tied to the past and the future, but in a dynamic way.

In order to lay out this argument, I first discuss the differences between Heidegger’s individual mortality, in which the mind is conditioned by the futurity of non-being, and Arendt’s plural natality, in which the plural humankind is conditioned by birth. I show that Arendt’s conception of plurality fundamentally questions Heidegger’s ontology, but that her focus on beginnings runs the risk of affording too much power to the present. Second, I read Arendt’s discussion of a parable of Kafka in which the mind is caught in between the forces of past and future, and where the present is constituted by this struggle, attached to it and unable to do away with the past and the future. This latter discussion leads me to Arendt’s notion of a worldly, political time where the burden of time also comes forth, but this time by its irreversibility and its unpredictability. I discuss how, in *The Human Condition*, the faculty of promising can partially bind the future and the faculty of forgiving can partially release the burden of the past. Because promising and forgiving are constituted by plurality, I argue that the possibility to unburden time depends on plurality. I claim that these two activities show anachronistic capacities to break out

of the chronology of time, because they have the power to constitute the present by bringing the past and the future respectively into the present. As such, if the first discussion presents a puzzle of futurity for the single mind, and the second presents a struggle that attempts to break out of this puzzle, then the third presents a partial answer to this puzzle, as it manifests itself in the world of appearances.

Heidegger and Being Caught in the Not-Yet: The Futurity of Mortality

Here, I discuss Arendt's differences to Heidegger when it comes to futurity and mortality. Even if Arendt only engages with the thought of Heidegger for brief sections in this *The Life of the Mind*, it is clear that she breaks with some of his most fundamental categories, and that this break was already established in *The Human Condition*.

Heidegger influenced Arendt's writing on many crucial points, but there is a fundamental difference in what form of being they ask of what it is, and thus their answers to what its temporality is, are also different from each other's. For Heidegger, the question of being comes down to the question of the human mind and its ontological relation to the world, or the question that being-in-the-world, *Dasein*, frames. The *Dasein* is first and foremost founded in time, but as Karin Fry argues in "Nativity" (2014), it is the temporality of mortality that Heidegger argues is the most authentic in the actualization of being (Fry, 2014, p. 24). Heidegger writes in *Being and Time* (1962) that because (the human) mind is aware of its own death, its own future finitude, it also becomes aware of the passing or movement of time. For the individual human mind, being moves undeniable towards non-being, and therefore, being in the world is always-already endowed with the not-yet of the future non-being. With the realization of this temporality, being can actualize its authentic potentiality for being. This, with a characteristic formulation, is being-thrown-into-the-world as being-towards-death. This focus on mortality makes the human mind anticipate the future (of its own future non-being), and the futurity inherent in Being's constant dying becomes the dominant trope in the temporality of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 299–311, no 255–267 esp. 303, no 259 and p. 311, no 266).

In *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker: Arendt and Heidegger* (1997) Jacques Taminiaux discusses Arendt's theoretical contribution in relation to

Heidegger. The title likens Arendt and Heidegger to two figures in Plato's *Theaetetus*, in which a maid from Thrace laughs at the philosopher who, walking with his gaze on the skies, falls into a well. Needless to say, Arendt is the Thracian maid who remain attentive to the world and its pitfalls, whereas Heidegger, in Taminiaux' reading, is the professional thinker who has no capacity to handle the world of human affairs. Discussing the individuality of Heidegger versus the plurality of Arendt, Taminiaux claims that the Heideggerian world could not be a "common one because it is being revealed only by the encounter of the nothingness experienced through anxiety by a radically isolated existing being" and, "since one cannot discharge oneself of one's death upon somebody else," this individuation happens in isolation (Taminiaux, 1997, p. 34). According to Taminiaux, the futurity of death results in individuation, rather than plurality.

The individuality of Heidegger's way of posing the question of being is pointed out by many of Arendt's interpreters (Barash, 2002, p. 176; Canovan, 1992, p. 254; Fry, 2014; Taminiaux, 1997, p. 34; Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 75f.). Seyla Benhabib argues in *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (1996) that Heidegger's way of posing the question of being-in-the-world is first and foremost developed as the individual being's relation to the world, of the being-ready-to-hand of the world, and only second as a relation of care to other beings-unto-death. The *Mitsein*, the being-with-others, is to Heidegger a less authentic form of being because it disrupts the temporality of being-towards-death of the authentic being. According to Benhabib, Heidegger's ontology of being, first and foremost, assumes a temporality of (individual) finitude rather than a temporality of being with others (Benhabib, 1996, pp. 104ff., see also pp. 51ff.).

As mentioned, Arendt does not go into dialogue to any great extent with this position of Heidegger, but the argument for plurality that underlines all of *The Human Condition*, can be read as a response to Heidegger's individual being. However, before we go into a discussion of this plurality and its temporality, we should first outline briefly what Arendt *does* say in relation to Heidegger. Arendt makes a distinction between the early Heidegger and the later Heidegger, and concerning the early, she makes this brief remark in *The Life of the Mind*:

Heidegger in his early work had shared the modern age's emphasis on the future as the decisive temporal entity—"the future is the primary phenomenon of an original and authentic temporality"—and had introduced *Sorge* (a German word that appeared for the

first time as a philosophical term in *Being and Time* and that means “a caring for,” as well as “worry about the future”) as the key existential fact of human existence (Arendt, 1978, p. II:22).

It becomes clear, not only from the tone that is somewhat reducing, that Arendt does not think too much of this early Heideggerian answer to the question of being. However, Arendt finds a reversal in Heidegger’s thought, and she reads his later writings as various attempts to reformulate three key terms in *Being and Time*: “Care, Death, and Self” (Arendt, 1978, p. II:181). I will not go into Arendt’s reading of Heidegger’s reversal,⁹⁷ except to say that she comes to the conclusion that Heidegger attempts to break out of his own theoretical scheme, but in the end, he returns to some of his basic philosophical convictions.

With regards to temporality, it means that Heidegger comes back to the temporality of non-being as ontological to being, according to Arendt. Speaking of Heidegger’s idea of historical time in the world of appearances as “erring,” she writes, partly quoting Heidegger: “For the source of this ‘erring’ [...] is the fact that a being that ‘lingers a while in presence’ between two absences and has the ability to transcend its own presence can be said to be actually ‘present [only] insofar as it lets itself belong to the non-present.’” (brackets in the original Arendt, 1978, p. II:193) Here, the present lingers between two absences, the past and the future, and it can only transcend this presence by (passively) letting itself belong to non-presence. For Arendt, Heidegger comes back to an ontology of being that is determined through non-being or non-presence. This is the present’s paradox if understood only in relation to self, death and being: that it is caught in its own individuation that only happens in relation to the no-longer and the not-yet.

Natality: The Beginning in Plural Times

I have discussed the attempt to bind time, in relation Arendt’s discussion of Plato’s attempt to introduce eternity into the world, and her claim that when this fails, he resorts to reproduce images of the future threat and project an image of the future that

⁹⁷ In short, Arendt argues that the concept of Care changes so that Care-of-Self becomes a Care-of-Being, and the concept of Death changes so that Death as the actualization of the potentiality of Being becomes Being’s essence, and the concept of the Self, that is opposed to the “They” in the early writing becomes in the later writings a Self that is opposed to “being oneself” and as such displays a “‘existential solipsism’” (Arendt, 1978, pp. II:181ff., quote on p. II:183).

binds the world of appearances to his ideal. In Arendt's reading of Hegel, the self-propelled logic of world history can be revealed through the backward glance from the present and thus reduce the past's otherness, whereas in Arendt's understanding of Heidegger, the mortality of being reduces the present into a not-yet for the future. Arendt wants to find alternatives to this form of temporal binding that is neither external to humankind (Plato and Hegel) nor individualistically internal to its mind (Heidegger). She finds this alternative in the temporality of natality and the way it is enacted in speech-action. As I wish to show in this section, the notion of natality and beginnings is a problematic concept in Arendt, for on the one hand, it posits the possibility of beginning as a way for the individual human speaker-actor to initiate speech-action and thus new beginnings. On the other hand, this beginning is always constituted by the presence of others, and cannot be understood outside of their presence. Reading this tension in her notion of beginning leads to the tentative conclusion that the present of the beginning is also constituted through other temporalities than itself.

But in order to show that Arendt's concept of natality and beginning is key to understanding her more optimistic notions of political speech-action, let me quote the comment that Arendt makes at the end of the chapter called "Action" in *The Human Condition*, where she claims that natality is the miracle that can save the world:

The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, "natural" ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted. It is, in other words, the birth of new men and the new beginning, the action they are capable of by virtue of being born. Only the full experience of this capacity can bestow upon human affairs faith and hope, those two essential characteristics of human existence which Greek antiquity ignored altogether [...]. It is this faith in and hope for the world that found perhaps its most glorious and most succinct expression in the few words with which the Gospels announced their "glad tidings": "A child has been born unto us." (Arendt, 1998, p. 247)

In this quote, natality becomes an ontological fact of humankind as a whole. This also means, for Arendt, that humankind has an ontological capacity for beginnings. These beginnings are the source of hope and faith because they can save the realm of human affairs from its "natural" ruin. Even if Arendt does not elaborate on what she means

by hope and faith, it is clear that the tone is optimistic: natality is a miracle and the announcement of it is “glad.”⁹⁸

The reference to the Gospels and the birth of Jesus prompts a comment on the political implication of the concept of birth. As I read her, the concept of newness that she wants to develop is different from the Greek notion of history in which past deeds and the moving of the cosmos were circular, and provided a temporal scene for speech-action in the form of eternal recurrence. It is also different from the Roman notion of tradition, because in Arendt’s reading it supposes that the original foundation is a feat that would last *forever*. The city founded for eternity could therefore provide the temporal arena from which great speech-actions could arise, but only to the extent that they continued this first feat. In the Christian notion, the introduction of something fundamentally new—a child—also opens up for the possibility of newness to appear. But in the Christian notion, the source of this creation is beyond humankind in the Godly creator, so it provides no arena on earth in which speech-action or newness can appear.⁹⁹ Arendt could perhaps be said to perform a little bit of historical cherry picking in her conception of natality and speech-action. From Greek and Roman sources, she draws the celebration of speech-action, but she disregards its repetitive circularity or the foundational tradition, and in Christianity, she takes the concept of birth and newness, but she disregards the limitation to speech-action that God as principal creator purports.

Just before making this remark on natality, Arendt makes a comment that can be read as a direct response to Heidegger’s claim that mortality is the most fundamental temporality of being.

If left to themselves, human affairs can only follow the law of mortality [...]. The life span of man running toward death would inevitably carry everything human to ruin and destruction if it were not for the faculty of interrupting it and beginning something new, a faculty which is inherent in action like an ever-present reminder that men, though they must die, are not born in order to die but in order to begin (Arendt, 1998, p. 246).

In secular terms, even if the endpoints of individual humans are known (i.e. death, and thus mortality as the temporal condition for the individual life), the endpoint of

⁹⁸ Young-Bruehl relates this brief mention of hope and faith in *The Human Condition* to Arendt’s discussion of the American revolution in *Between Past and Future*, where it is expressed as the “public happiness” inherent in doing politics (Young-Bruehl, 2006, pp. 123f.)

⁹⁹ Fry traces Arendt’s focus on natality back to Augustine and shows how the concept of *principium*, the beginning of the universe, and *initium*, the beginning of action, follow as a read thread through Arendt’s work (Fry, 2014, pp. 26ff.).

humankind cannot be known. Rather, what can be known is that for as long as humankind exists (which is potentially forever, but this we cannot know), new beginnings will appear and become-into-the-world.

Arendt continues to describe these new beginnings as “something which could not be expected,” something “infinitely improbable,” something which is seen as a “miracle” from the perspective of historical processes, something that “transcends in principle all anticipation.” (Arendt, 2006a, p. 168) As such, it seems that Arendt almost presents a notion of natality in which it is unconditioned by other factors than the individual’s capacity to initiate a new beginning. This is indeed a possible way of understanding her, as in this quote:

With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. [...] It may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join, but it is never conditioned by them; its impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative (Arendt, 1998, pp. 176f.).

Read as a direct response to Heidegger, for whom mortality resulted in a passive actualization of being’s future non-being, this focus on initiative and birth offers a way out of the paradox of non-being. However, it also posits this capacity to begin in the singular initiative, in which the speaker-agent has an inherent impulse to begin a speech-action. As such, it seems that Arendt presents us with nothing more than a neo-liberal notion of the human agent who decides to begin on her or his own accord. If we take this path, I believe we will end up with an impossibility to account for this initiative’s temporality, because it simply springs up in the present, with no other inference, either from other temporalities or from other humans. Reading beginning in this ways means that the temporality of the present receives a similar position as Plato’s eternity, the Roman authoritative tradition, Hegel’s progression of the historical spirit: presentism becomes the ruling temporality which commands speech-action.

However, such a reading is contrary to the whole point of Arendt’s notion of politics, as I understand it. And indeed, Arendt offers the possibility to interpret birth and by consequence, speech-action, in another way. She writes in the very beginning of *The Human Condition* that all children “are born into the world as strangers.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 9). Arendt can be read as saying that the newcomers do not know

the morality (in terms of habits and customs) of the world, and that this means that they possess a potential to break out of the domination of the past.

However, this is not ubiquitous, because each birth is being born *into* the world and not into a vacuum. As such, what they encounter is already a condition of their becoming. That Arendt calls them strangers also refers to the later discussion in *The Human Condition*, where humans are revealed for who they are by the presence of others. “Action and speech” are closely related, writes Arendt, because every act must contain the answer to “the question asked of every newcomer: ‘Who are you?’” (Arendt, 1998, p. 178) The answer to this question does not lie in the human actor herself, but in speech, in its revelatory capacity to disclose the “who” of a person. As such, action and speech belong together, and they constitute the capacity both of beginnings and of revelation of the self to the other: “This revelatory quality of speech and action comes to the fore where people are *with* others and neither for nor against them—that is, in sheer human togetherness.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 180) With this discussion in mind, I would argue that Arendt’s notion of beginning is conditioned by others, that it even takes its starting point from the point of these others, because it is only through their presence that the speech-action attains its capacity for both beginning and for revelation. Read in this way, beginning is conditioned by plurality.

But what does this plurality imply for the temporality of beginning? When discussing the American Revolution, Arendt emphasizes the temporal singularity of the beginning: “For a moment, the moment of beginning, it is as though the beginner had abolished the sequence of temporality itself, or as though the actors were thrown out of the temporal order and its continuity.” (Arendt, 2006c, p. 198) Here, it seems that beginning becomes totally unconnected to temporal continuity, and that the beginner stands outside of time with the power to abolish it. Arendt goes on to say that this presents itself as a problem or perplexity for beginning. One solution, she claims, is to resort to a temporal absolute beginning from which all other beginnings stem, and she exemplifies with the Creator God (Arendt, 2006c, p. 198). Another solution is to say that the beginning is a re-construction of something in the past, and she exemplifies with the Roman beginning anew of the Greek tradition (Arendt, 2006c, pp. 199ff.). For Arendt, neither of these are compelling solutions in order to explain the ontology of beginning, but what answer to this perplexity does she offer instead?

I would argue that she presents a solution in which the beginning is tied to both the past and the future. Fareld also discusses this tension in the concept of beginning in Arendt's work, and she argues that, on the one hand, Arendt's notion of beginning can be read as the ontological capacity on behalf of humans to begin something new that has never happened before. As such, beginnings are tied to the eruption of the new in the present (Fareld, 2011, pp. 146f.). On the other hand, writes Fareld, to begin also presumes a past. The past is that into which the beginning appears in the world *as* beginning (Fareld, 2011, p. 148). Beginning can therefore not tie itself loose from the past: "Because the capacity to begin also has to do with the beginning of each single human, with her factual entrance into the world in a particular place, in a particular time, in a world that she always shares with others, then the beginning also composes her past." (Fareld, 2011, p. 148)¹⁰⁰ This position, in which beginning begins *into* something, is a position I think is more fruitful because the past comes to function as the other that recognizes the present. As such, the present enters a plural relationship with the past and, without personifying them, they are constituted—they answer the question "who are you?"—with regards to each other.

Even if it seems self-evident that beginnings begin forwards, that they are beginnings towards the future and as such belong to the future, I believe such an understanding jumps to conclusions too fast. If beginnings were fully constituted by the future, they would resemble the Heideggerian futurity: they would not be present in themselves, but would only begin towards something that they are not. Their being would therefore be the non-being of their coming conclusion. This is contrary to what Arendt wants to capture by the concept of beginning, I think, but on the other hand, I do not think that beginnings are fully released from the future either.

Let me return to the discussion in *On Revolution*, in which Arendt presents the perplexities of beginning, and where she claims that the beginning is part of a principle.

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

¹⁰⁰ "Eftersom förmågan att börja också har att göra med varje enskild människas början, med hennes faktiska inträde i världen på en bestämd plats, i en bestämd tid, i en värld som hon alltid delar med andra, så utgör början också hennes förflutna." My translation.

that are to follow and remains apparent as long as the action lasts (Arendt, 2006c, p. 205).

Here, she makes implicit reference to the difference between *archein*, to begin, and *prattein*, to finish. I have already discussed them in relation to Plato's separation of the two, but here it might be worth remembering that Arendt claims that in pre-Platonic thought, they are interconnected. In short, a speech-action must contain both of them, and this can only be done with the help of others (Arendt, 1998, p. 189).

In the quote, Arendt claims that the principle that comes with the beginning follows from the beginning and continues for as long as the consequences of that beginning lives on. As I read this, the principle inserts the beginning into a temporal relationship with the future. This works in a double bind: the beginning remains tied to its eventual outcome, and the outcome is equally tied to the beginning. As such, the principle functions as a way of inserting the beginning into a continuation of speech-actions to come, and they constitute each other. Again, without personifying them, the future provides the answer to the question "who are you?" posed to the present.

Humans as beginnings are found in a worldly time, and as such, they are born "into a world that preceded them and [that] will survive them." (Arendt, 1978, p. I:21) With this discussion in mind, I would say that Arendt's notion of beginning cannot be understood as outside of past and future; that it is tied both to the plurality of others, and the plurality of times. However, if it is not clear at this point that Arendt does not offer a form of ruling presentism, let me turn to her reading of Kafka's parable in which the present is depicted as a constant struggle with the past and the future.

Kafka's Parable: The Struggle of the Present

As mentioned before, Arendt often quotes Tocqueville in saying that "[s]ince the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future, the mind of man wanders in obscurity." (Tocqueville, in Arendt, 2006a, p. 6) This quote often functions as a way for Arendt to diagnose the modern human condition in time as one in which the traditions and customs of the past have ceased to be formative of the present and where they no longer present any moral guidance. Both in *Between Past and Future* and in *The Life of the Mind*, she lays out an alternative to this tradition-bound way of being with the past by a parable of Kafka. In *Between Past and Future* she claims that Kafka's

parable is the most exact description of this modern predicament where tradition is lost.

It must be noted that the context in which Arendt uses this parable is very different in the two books: in *Between Past and Future*, Arendt begins by telling of the experiences, in the French revolution in its initial stages, of political speech-action and of freedom, felt by the men of the revolution (Arendt, 2006a, pp. 3ff.). Arendt writes that these men lacked the capacity for remembrance, and as such, thought and action parted company (Arendt, 2006a, p. 6). It is this predicament of having lost remembrance as a connection between thought and action that Kafka's parable describes. In *Life of the Mind*, Kafka's parable follows a discussion of the whereabouts of thinking: where is the mind when we think? (Arendt, 1978, pp. I:197–202) Arendt's answer is that we are nowhere—that thinking does not offer a place—but that it transcends that which is given to appearances. However, thinking is nonetheless *in* time; the representations of thinking are forced into a succession (Arendt, 1978, p. I:201). Here, this location of thinking in time is what Kafka's parable describes. Regardless of this difference, it is clear in both cases that the parable is meant to describe the temporality of thinking.

However, as I hope to have shown in chapter 3, Arendt often sees thinking and speech-action as interrelated, and she ends the discussion of this parable in *Between Past and Future* with a statement of this parable's political importance. Arendt writes that this mode of thinking becomes necessary only in times when there is no tradition that bridges the gap in between past and future, and that the contemporary moment is such a moment because the concepts handed down to us by Roman tradition have lost their value and meaning (Arendt, 2006a, p. 13). Arendt claims that in such moments, the gap in time “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.” (Arendt, 2006a, p. 13) Here, the temporality of thinking gains a political relevance, because we must find means of fighting the forces of past and future without resorting to tradition.

Arendt presents this temporality by help of Kafka's parable, from which I quote the initial part:

He has two antagonists: the first presses him from behind, from the origin. The second blocks the road ahead. He gives battle to both. To be sure, the first supports him in his fight with the second, for he wants to push him forward, and in the same way the second supports him in his fight with the first, since he drives him back (Kafka, in Arendt, 2006a, p. 7).

These two struggles only come into being, Arendt claims, because of the presence of the 'he' and without him, they "would hardly fight with each other" or even if they would, they "would have long ago neutralized and destroyed each other, since as forces they clearly are equally powerful." (Arendt, 1978, p. I:203) So, the forces of past and future are equally strong, and they would have destroyed each other if it were not for the presence of the thinking human.

However, are not the two antagonists too strong so that they neutralize the present, making it impossible to think outside of these? Arendt writes:

Man lives in this in-between, and what he calls the present is a life-long fight against the dead weight of the past, driving him forward with hope, and the fear of a future (whose only certainty is death), driving him backward toward "the quiet of the past" with nostalgia for and remembrance of the only reality he can be sure of (Arendt, 1978, p. I:205).

Here, the image of the possibilities for the present is less than optimistic: all that thinking can achieve in the fight is either hope with the help of the past or fear with the help of the future. This seems to me to be the same paradox as the quote from Augustine with which I started this chapter: what is the present if it is not the no-longer of the past, nor the not-yet of the future? Arendt's answer in this quote is that the present is an in-between that is through and through caught the forces of past and future, and the only rescue from the one means resorting to the other.

Arendt writes, referencing the continuation of the parable, that it is tempting to imagine a jump out of these two forces and look upon them from the outside. But such a timeless outside perspective for thinking is not a solution that Arendt argues for.

Arendt goes on to claim that, because the forces are broken up by the presence of the man, they are given an aim, namely the man himself. They do not hit a passive entity, and in this fight with the past and the future, there is a deflection (Arendt, 1978, p. I:207). If the man uses the forces of the past in order to fight the future, and the forces of the future in order to fight the past, there is an angle at which they meet. At this junction, a third, dialogical force is created. This is the time-track of thought

and as I read this time-track, it offers the possibility to think of the present as something other than neutralized by the forces.

Arendt defines it in the negative: it is “timeless,” a “gap,” a “non-time,” or as a paradox in the “standing now.” (Arendt, 1978, p. I:210) All of these metaphors seems to suggest that the present is but a negative, or a paradox. However, Arendt ends the discussion by claiming that this time of thinking should not be understood as the same as eternity, because it “gathers the absent tenses, the not-yet and the no-more, together into its own presence.” (Arendt, 1978, p. I:211) Here, I believe, Arendt finds a way for the present to exist: it exists in a gap between past and future, and it can only avoid be annihilated by the one with the help of the other, and as such, it gathers the temporalities of the past and the future to itself.

If this parable presents a puzzle for the present of thinking—how can it think in the present without being annihilated by the forces of past and future?—and an answer to this puzzle—by using the one against the other and by gathering past and future to itself—then I would like to explore the possibility of a parallel puzzle for speech-action. In the temporalities of speech-action there is the burden of irreversibility—that whatever was done cannot be undone, and the burden of unpredictability—that whatever is done has unforeseeable consequences. Again, the present is tied down into a temporality that seems to offer no escape.

Irreversible and Unpredictable: The Burden of Speech-Action

Arendt presents many different discussions on the temporalities of speech-action in theoretical reflections on politics as well as in political practice, out of which I have discussed a few, but at the very end of *The Human Condition* she gives a more general and suggestive account of how they can be understood.

As we have seen, the temporality of the *animal laborans* is conditioned by repetition and the temporality of the *homo faber* by the means-end. The speech-action and its power to begin, on the other hand, is conditioned by a two-fold temporality: it is irreversible—a speech-action can never be undone once it has been done, and it is unpredictable—the consequences of a speech-action can never be known beforehand (Arendt, 1998, p. 233). Arendt writes with regards to irreversibility:

M[en never have been and never will be able to undo or even to control reliably any of the processes they start through action. Not even oblivion and confusion, which can cover up so efficiently the origin and the responsibility for every single deed, are able to undo a deed or prevent its consequences (Arendt, 1998, pp. 232f.).

Here, we are presented with one side of the burden of time in speech-action. Whatever has been done can never be undone, and the consequences will live on, even if the original speech-action is rendered into oblivion by tradition and its force of forgetfulness and exclusion. This is similar to the above discussion of the principle that follows a speech-action throughout the future consequences of it.

This is one side of the temporal burden speech-action, but it is coupled with another characteristics, equally burdensome:

And this incapacity to undo what has been done is matched by an almost equally complete incapacity to foretell the consequences of any deed or even to have reliable knowledge of its motives (Arendt, 1998, p. 233).

Within the realm of human affairs, no prediction of the future outcomes of speech-action can be made, and this unpredictability also has potentially unlimited consequences. Because the consequences of speech-actions are impossible to foretell, they hold the inherent danger of doing evil, but also, the inherent hope of doing good. An actor “may intend good and achieve evil, and vice versa” (Arendt, 2005b, p. 58).

Arendt speaks of this as the durability of speech-action: it can “quite literally endure throughout time until mankind itself has come to an end.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 233) That speech-actions are the most durable of the human activities might seem contrary to Arendt’s claim, discussed earlier, that it is the *homo faber* that creates durability, because these are the activities that build the human artifact. However, the durability of speech-action is quite different because whereas the consequences of *homo faber* are fulfilled with the end product, in speech-action, there is no such end product. Politics is the “end in itself” and as such, its consequences are boundless: “the strength of the action process is never exhausted in a single deed but, on the contrary, can grow while its consequences multiply” (Arendt, 1998, p. 233).

The capacity to create endurance beyond any “man-made product” could be a “source of pride” if it were not for the near impossibility to bear the burden: “All this is reason enough to turn away with despair from the realm of human affairs and to hold in contempt the human capacity for freedom, which, by producing the web of human relationships, seems to entangle its producer to such an extent that he appears

much more the victim and the sufferer than the author and doer of what he has done.” (Arendt, 1998, pp. 233f.) In another section, Arendt claims that this burden “possesses the self-defeating quality of causing the formation of a chain of unpredictable consequences that tend to bind the actor forever. Each one of us knows that he is both actor and victim in this chain of consequences” (Arendt, 2005b, pp. 58f.). The speech-action, because if it undoable and because it is unforeseeable, binds the actor forever, and this becomes a burden that could potentially be self-defeating if it is not coupled with some form of redemption.

Arendt writes that for the *animal laborans*, the redemption comes in the form of *homo faber*, who makes tools that release the *animal laborans* from the burden of the repetitive labor process. For the *homo faber*, who is trapped in the means-end relation and thus cannot find any value in the world because each end reduces the value of the means, the redemption comes in the form of the political *vita activa*, who gives stories from which to create meaningful stories (Arendt, 1998, p. 236). For the political *vita activa*, on the other hand, no such redemption can be found outside of its own sphere of actuality (Arendt, 1998, pp. 236f.). However, redemption can be found within itself, in its condition of plurality, in the capacity to forgive and to make promises.

Forgiving and Promising: Sharing the Burden of Time

For Arendt, the burden of irreversibility and potential eternal consequences would be too much of a burden to bear, if it were not for the power to forgive and the power to make promises. They correspond to the two burdens of irreversibility and unpredictability:

The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility—of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not, and could not, have known what he was doing—is the faculty of forgiving. The remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and to keep promises (Arendt, 1998, p. 237).

These capacities have political importance because they enable the coming of new speech-action as well as durability. Forgiving has the power to release the actor of what she has done—to release the burden of the past. Promising has the power to bind the uncertainty of human affairs—to release the burden of the future.

For Arendt, the opposite of forgiveness is not punishment (because punishment also acts so as to redeem the past act),¹⁰¹ but vengeance, because vengeance reenacts the past deed again. As such, vengeance is similar to repetition. Forgiveness on the other hand is the true newness in the world: “Forgiving, in other words, is the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly, unconditioned by the act which provoked it and therefore freeing from its consequences both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 241)

Marguerite La Caze argues in “Promising and Forgiveness” (2014) that the position that Arendt takes with regards to the individuality of punishment, that only individuals can be punished, should also be extended to forgiveness (La Caze, 2014, p. 220). I believe that interpretation to be valid, because the speech-action of forgiveness can only be extended to the self and not to the deed of the self—one does not forgive a deed but a person, and only a singular person, never a group. However, that means that the speech-action of forgiving depends on the other and the self forming a relationship. Young-Bruehl emphasizes this aspect of forgiving in *Why Arendt Matters*, when she claims that forgiveness “as an action, is a type of relationship, an expression of the human condition of plurality.” (Young-Bruehl, 2006, p. 97)

Second, I would argue that, because Arendt sees it as a political capacity, she is mostly concerned with the *consequences* of this capacity. As such, I would claim that the political implication of forgiveness is the *possibility* it offers to the realm of human affairs, and that this possibility is that it releases the capacity for speech-action. In the forgiving speech-action, we release the power to begin something new, both for ourselves and for the other. As Young-Bruehl argues, the wording of “releasing” the burden is better than “undoing” or “reversing” it, because releasing does not imply that the deed or its consequences are forgotten or erased, but only that it becomes possible to move on from the past, if it is mutually agreed upon (Young-Bruehl, 2006, p. 100). This is also in line with Fareld’s argument that forgiving is a kind of memory: “Forgiveness appears as a form of memory that returns to a

¹⁰¹ Arendt does not elaborate on this position, except to say that there are offenses which cannot be punished nor forgiven, and whose “radical evil” cannot be explained, “even to us who have been exposed to one of their rare outbursts on the public scene” (Arendt, 1998, p. 241). She claims, with the help of a quotation from Jesus, that it is better for the perpetrator “that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea” (Arendt, 1998, p. 241). This is a similar argument that she would later put forth in relation to Eichmann, see p. 87, n. 67.

beginning in the past, and that makes it possible for us to begin anew in the future. It leads us, differently put, *back* to a beginning (understood as a decisive event in the past that cannot be forgotten) so that we can reach *forth* to the beginning (as the beginning point for something new).” (Fareld, 2011, pp. 150f.)¹⁰² As such, forgiveness reaches back into memory to begin anew.

I would say that this double temporal movement of forgiveness, that it acts both backwards and forwards, is the anachronistic possibility inherent in forgiveness. It is a possibility for the speech-action to act *against* chronology, and *with* the anachronism, in order to find plural ways of engaging with the past, for the sake of the present.

The second capacity, that of promising, has the power to redeem the other temporality of speech-action: the unpredictability of the future. The force of promising can stabilize the frailty of human affairs without being tyrannical or excluding differences, because it is a shared undertaking that binds both speaker-actors equally. The power of promises is, Arendt claims, a superior power to any power where humans are either tied together by an identical will, or are completely unbound by any purposes. Its superiority, in Arendt’s words, “derives from the capacity to dispose of the future as though it were the present, that is, the enormous and truly miraculous enlargement of the very dimension in which power can be effective.” (Arendt, 1998, p. 245) As such, the power of promising, similar to forgiveness, has a dual temporality. The speech-action of promising reaches forward, to an event in the future, and it brings it back into the present, in order for some permanence to appear in the shared present of the promise. This is the anachronistic possibility inherent in promises: it is a speech-action that acts *against* chronology, and *with* the anachronism, in order to find plural ways of engaging with the future, for the sake of the present.

In closing, let me quote a longer passage from *The Human Condition*, because the style captures something of its hopeful tone.

The unpredictability which the act of making promises at least partially dispels is of a two-fold nature: it arises simultaneously out of the “darkness of the human heart,” that is, the basic unreliability of men who never can guarantee today who they will be tomorrow, and out of the impossibility of foretelling the consequences of an act within a community

¹⁰² “Förlåtelsen framträder som en form av minne som återvänder till en början i det förflutna som gör det möjligt för oss att börja om i framtiden. Den leder oss, annorlunda uttryckt, *tillbaka* till början (förstådd som en avgörande händelse i det förflutna som inte får glömmas) för att vi ska kunna nå *fram* till början (såsom startpunkten för något nytt).” My translation.

of equals where everybody has the same capacity to act. Man's inability to rely upon himself or to have complete faith in himself (which is the same thing) is the price human beings pay for freedom; and the impossibility of remaining unique masters of what they do, of knowing its consequences and relying upon the future, is the price they pay for plurality and reality, for the joy of inhabiting together with others a world whose reality is guaranteed for each by the presence of all (Arendt, 1998, p. 244).

The capacity to make promises thus offers a partial dispelling of a two-fold unreliability: the unreliability inherent in human beings ability to change, and the unreliability inherent in the consequences of a speech-action in a world where others also speak and act. Making promises releases some of the burden of that unreliability of the future and it creates a partial permanence in the world of human affairs. Forgiving releases some of the burden of the irreversibility of time and it creates a possibility for new speech-actions to appear. These enable the political joy of sharing a world.

6. Concluding Remarks on Speaking the Anachronisms

The aim with this thesis is to map and discuss the temporal topographies of the political speech-action, as they are at play in Arendt's writing and, with the help of Arendt, construct alternative temporal topographies of politics. I trace the ways in which anachronisms insert themselves into the conceptualizations of politics in Arendt's work and what consequences the broken chronologies have for the various power dynamics that come in play, both the enabling and the dominating.

Chapter 2, "Setting the Scene: Framing the Problem," explores various intellectual discussions on time, and it presents an overview of questions that concerns the ontology of time, both in its scientific form and as part social structures.

In the third chapter, "For Fear of the Future: Reproductive Eternity in Political Philosophy," the relation between Platonic political philosophy and Arendt's reading of Socrates is explored. The chapter begins with a summary of the forms of government that are discussed in the thesis, and it presents the activities of the *vita activa*: labor, work, and action, and their respective temporalities. Then, the chapter discusses Arendt's reading of Socrates which is compared to the Platonic tradition of political philosophy.

In the discussion of Arendt's reading of Socrates I argue that it can be read as an argument for a temporal simultaneity between thought and speech-action. I explore the temporal connections between thinking, speech-action and morality. In the next section, I examine how the Platonic tradition of political philosophy, as Arendt sees it, misunderstands some key features of Socrates thought, and thus separates thought and speech-action. I argue that, with this separation, thinking comes to exert rulership over speech-action in the realm of human affairs, by means of three anachronistic temporalities. First, in order to control the haphazardness of speech-action, thought finds a foundation in the eternally true ideas, which is in contradiction to the world of appearances and its inherent change, and I call this an anachronism of reproductive eternity. Second, when this forced entry of the concept of eternity meets change and natality in the world, Arendt's Platonic philosopher claims a rectilinear deduction of the ideas into laws or absolute standards of politics, where the future endpoint is already known and foretold because it stems from the ideas, and simultaneously, because the ideas are eternal, they also moves back into the past and judge the starting point. The beginning point and endpoint are therefore conflated, and I call this the

anachronism of reproductive means-ends. Third, in Arendt's discussion of Plato she claims that this forced entry of eternity has to be installed in the world of appearances with a logic of the future threat. In my interpretation this future threat acts back into the present in order to rule over the realm of human affairs. This means that the fear of the future is implemented in order to relieve the philosopher's fear of the *polis*, but as such, it becomes a reproductive futurism that empties the possibilities for speech-action in the present.

Chapter 4, "From Past to Future: Authority and Political Speech-Action" engages with Arendt's discussion of political practice in relation to history, tradition and progression, in ancient Greece, Rome and modernity respectively. The discussion in the fourth chapter can be expressed as a set of topographies, in which various concepts become interrelated but nonetheless form distinct categories in Arendt's writing on past time and how it influences speech-actions: history, eternal recurrence, immortality, and speech-action in the Greek sense, and tradition, origin, authority, and rulership, in the Roman sense, and finally the future, the law of history, progress, and administration/the rule of nobody, in the modern sense.

I argue that Arendt's discussion of ancient Greek political practice focuses on history and immortality. This notion has the double temporality of both circularity, in the form of retold histories of great deeds in the past, and of rectilinearity, in the form of the great deed. This temporal paradox, or anachronism, is not quite solved, Arendt claims, and as such it enables the present speech-action to enter into a relationship with the past and both try to outcompete it, as well as to use it in order to inform the present. I conclude that the Greek notion of history in Arendt's understanding much resembles a persuasive relationship to the past, in which the difference of the past is recognized but in a competitive fashion.

Second, with the foundation of Rome and of tradition, Arendt discusses a notion of time and political speech-action in which the past, in the form of retold stories of tradition, informs and enables new speech-actions to appear in the world. The difference from the Greek notion, as I read it, is that, rather than circularity, the Roman emphasizes foundations and thus the speech-action is informed by origin. This is channeled into the Christian tradition where the foundation of the Christian faith is the informative beginning point. I argue that this form of foundation opens up for the possibility of beginning as an aspect of political speech-action, but that this possibility is immediately foreclosed because of the authoritarian tradition. In this authoritative

tradition, the relation between speech-action and tradition functions in an exclusionary way: the original foundation excludes everything that happens in the past that cannot fit into the narrative of the tradition, but the tradition must also be useful in the present, so it also works to exclude practices in the present. This functions as a form of dual anachronism: The past speech-action explains the present speech-action and forms the frame in which the present speech-action can make sense, but the present re-produces the past speech-action in its own image. It becomes a reproductive authoritarian past.

With the loss of tradition in modernity, Arendt claims that external processes replace the force of tradition. In her reading of Hegel, she claims that he turns history into one continuous process towards the present. I argue that this reduces the past and its otherness so that it only becomes a means for whatever power dynamics are at play in the present. In relation to this reading of Hegel, I also discuss Arendt's understanding of Marx and how he turns the logic of Hegel into a process that can also be used in order to understand the realm of human affairs in the future. Marx historical dialectics provides a means to predict the future, and I connect this to the risk of reducing present-politics to the rule of nobody in administrative processes. In Arendt's reading of the modern thinkers, she critiques the notion that either the past or the future can be known through historical processes, and I claim that such a conception always risk ruling the past or the future from the position of the present.

In the fifth and final chapter, "Present-Politics: Anachronisms of the Nows," it becomes apparent that the status of the present is the most fleeting temporality in Arendt's thinking. I begin with a puzzle of the present, where it is either the only presence or it is a non-presence. With this puzzle, I discuss Arendt's answer to it, by means of first contrasting her views with those of Heidegger's. Here, I discuss Arendt's emphasis on plurality and beginnings, and how her notion of beginnings can be more fruitfully understood if they are seen as entangled with the past and the future. I then move on to discuss her reading of a parable from Kafka, in which the thinking activity of the mind is caught in a struggle between the dominative force of the future and the past. I argue that the place for the present in such a struggle can only be viable if it gathers the past and the future to itself and use the one against the other. I then relate this discussion of the temporal struggle of the mind to the temporal burden of the political speech-action. Because the present of speech-action is both irreversible (it cannot be undone once it is been done) and unpredictable (it cannot be

foreseen), Arendt claims that the burden of speech-action would be too much to bear if it were not for humankind's capacity for forgiving and promising. I conclude that these speech-actions can act in a two-fold temporal manner where they can both release the burden of the past by means of bringing it into the present, and of the burden of the future by bringing it into the present. These anachronistic capacities to act against chronology in a double sense, also enables the coming of the new as well as a partial permanence in the realm of human affairs.

These discussions indicate the need for a re-consideration of political speech-action, where it is neither seen as the handmaiden of visionary future-politics, nor as realized in the momentous beginning. With the help of Arendt, we could suggest that the conditions of possibility for political speech-actions to appear are dependent on forming anachronistic relations to a plurality of temporalities.

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