HANNAH ARENDT'S THEORY OF JUDGMENT IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL PUBLIC SPHERES

by

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To my beloved creatures, Chulo, Thehistocles, and Regulus:

male captus, bene detentus

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ABSTRACT

Hannah Arendt argues that the erosion of the arts and culture in the modern age is inextricably linked with the threat to democratic freedom in the political realm, and she concludes that one of the greatest hopes for preserving the arts, culture, and democracy is fostering the power of human judgment. In her early work—"The Crisis in Culture" and "Truth and Politics"—Arendt adopts Aristotle's notion of *phronēsis* to envision judgment as a faculty used by political actors who engage in agonistic debate in order to decide on a course of action. In her later works—*Thinking*, *Willing*, and *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*—Arendt appropriates Kant's theory of judgment, adapted from aesthetics, as a model for political action. My thesis demonstrates how, by making a shift to Kant in her later work, Arendt effectively combines aspects of Aristotelian rhetoric with notions of Kant's aesthetics into a political theory that accounts for the possibility of communicating innovative concepts. Innovations in judgment's concepts in turn make possible the evolution of a free and enlightened public sphere of debate. Pieced together from several of her works and developing across her lifetime, Hannah Arendt's theory of judgment first grapples with, and ultimately resolves, the problems associated with adapting Kant's reflective theory of aesthetic judgment for use in the political realm. Understanding Arendt's recognition of a kind of judgment in which rhetoric, *phronesis*, and aesthetics meet, helps us interpret politics conducted in digital public space. My project concludes by exploring of an application of Arendtian judgment in the era of social media.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE MODERN NEED FOR RENOVATED POLITICAL JUDGMENT TO PRESERVE THE WORLD: EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM. 1

Judgment and the Banality of Evil 9

CHAPTER 1

TRAVERSING INTERSECTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY AND RHETORIC: THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF ARENDT'S POLITICAL AESTHETIC 39

Aesthetics Neutering Political Theory: Answering the Critics, Part I . . . 39

The Invisible Totalitarianism of the *Sensus Communis*, or Trending toward Totalitarianism: Answering the Critics, Part II 49

CHAPTER 2

WHERE KANT ENDS AND ARENDT BEGINS: JUDGING THE BEAUTY OF POLITICAL APPEARANCES IN A WORLD OF HUMAN ARTIFICE 61

Kant and Rhetoric: The Roles of Affect and Rationality in Judgment . . .64

"The Crisis in Culture": The Overlapping of Aristotelian *Phronēsis* and Kantian Judgment 78

The Rhetoric of "Truth and Politics" 83

Communicability of Taste in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. . 86

CONCLUSION

ALTERATIONS OF JUDGMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE DIGITAL ERA 88

WORKS CITED 95

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF TERMS 99

INTRODUCTION

THE MODERN NEED FOR RENOVATED POLITICAL JUDGMENT TO PRESERVE THE WORLD: EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM

> It's curious . . . to read what people in the time of Our Ford used to write about scientific progress. They seemed to have imagined that it could be allowed to go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. Knowledge was the highest good, truth the supreme value; all the rest was secondary and subordinate. True, ideas were beginning to change even then. Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. And, of course, whenever the masses seized political power, then it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered. Still, in spite of everything, unrestricted scientific research was still permitted. People still went on talking about truth and beauty as though they were the sovereign goods. Right up to the time of the Nine Years' War. *That* made them change their tune all right. What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled—after the Nine Years' War. People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. You're paying for it, Mr. Watson—paying because you happen to be too much interested in beauty. I was too much interested in truth; I paid too.
>
> —Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)

Aldous Huxley is not the first author to write a dystopian novel about despotic government, yet his 1932 novel, *Brave New World*, continues to both entertain its readers and warn them about the dangerous potential of limitless scientific discovery and psychological manipulation. Today, his novel is still considered a classic and serves to entertain readers and warn them of the future if they ignore ethics in their pursuit of scientific progress and advancements in psychological manipulation. Counter to the expectation that dystopian literature predicts apocalyptic human suffering, Huxley presents a vision of happy citizens who enjoy their dehumanization.

The novel focuses on the plight of Western Europe, one of the ten zones of the global government, the World State. At the climax of the novel, The Resident World Controller of Western Europe, Mustapha Mond, argues that war lays the perfect ground to pave the way to censorship. In Huxley's dystopia, scientific and artistic censorship lead the way to begin controlling the masses with happiness: happiness is the benefit of scientific and artistic censorship. As the World Controller explains, the wisdom of past experience taught the lesson that the masses used political power, when they had it, to choose happiness over truth and beauty—it was happiness that "mattered" to them. The World State's decision to exile Mr. Watson for adding intellectual content to his job description of writing propaganda was considered a necessity. Mustapha Mond confesses to Mr. Watson during the interview in my epigraph his youthful dabbling in the forbidden sciences. The World Controller frankly acknowledges to Mr. Watson a shared interest in uncensored truth; however, he relinquishes his own inclinations and chooses comradeship with the masses for the benefit of the untroubled existence of the multitude. The rationalizations Mustapha Mond makes justifying his choice to abandon truth that the masses might be happy are all the more shocking because of their viability. Huxley's portrayal reveals that the outcome of despotic rule is the same whether brought about by physical force or through comfort and happiness—the public relinquish their basic human freedoms such as choosing what to do, think, like, whom to love, and of course, to whom to give power over their lives—that is the price they pay for the happiness they choose. To refuse to pay that price and pursue one's interests in truth and beauty in Huxley's dystopia necessitates removal to an island exile.

The position that truth and beauty lead to democratic freedom yet their pursuits are antithetical to happiness is almost incomprehensible to one raised in American society. Americans rarely consider whether the inalienable rights of the *Declaration of Independence*, "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness," are impossible to achieve simultaneously. Now, we are in a time where the line between politics and entertainment has been so blurred that a reality TV star has been elected as president and watching the news mimics the effects of watching a soap opera; and while *Brave New World* was written long before the present political turmoil, Huxley was able to predict a decline in democratic freedom, for the 1930s, like the present, saw American consumerism and its concomitant need for more amusement, more wealth, more entertainment, all in the pursuit of happiness. An American reader of *Brave New World* will often be perplexed by the idea that Mr. Watson prefers truth to happiness, just as he or she will be befuddled by the portrait of Bernard, who refuses to take soma because his misery is his only freedom. Still, Huxley's novel raises the important question of whether, if given the choice, one would choose a difficult, but free life, or a life hopped up on soma in a childish stupor, where no injustice would rouse any worry, pain, or care.

Hannah Arendt, like Huxley, came of age between the two world wars and also witnessed a range of threats to human rights and democratic freedom, the most notable to her being that she, as a German Jew, endured the Holocaust. After escaping Nazi persecution and fleeing to the United States, Arendt responded to the unprecedented horrors carried out by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in her 1951 publication *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* In her introduction to the first edition, the central impetus of Arendt's career as a theorist is already implicit:

> [t]his book has been written against a background of both reckless optimism and reckless despair. It holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal; that both are articles of superstition, not of faith. It was written out of the conviction that it should be possible to discover the hidden mechanics by which all traditional elements of our political and spiritual world were dissolved into a conglomeration where everything seems to have lost specific value, and has become unrecognizable for human comprehension, unusable for human purpose. To yield to the mere process of disintegration has become an irresistible temptation, not only because it has assumed the spurious grandeur of "historical necessity," but also because everything outside it has begun to appear lifeless, bloodless, meaningless, and unreal. (vii- viii)

In her introduction, Arendt demonstrates how the heedless pursuit of progress in the modern era inherently destroyed the traditional categories and rules, which to her, began when Western traditions of thought were no longer able to account for rapid changes during the industrial era.[1] The inadequacies of traditional Western philosophy, historicism, and politics to account for reality did not become obvious until no one could fully explain the devastations inflicted by totalitarian regimes. The destruction of traditional categories and rules is doubly harmful, for without the ability to rely upon the collective wisdom of the past, human beings can neither comprehend the consequences of their actions nor can they create solutions. By the Holocaust's very occurrence, the

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[1] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for definition of "categories."

likelihood of a more drastic, unprecedented event following in its wake increased exponentially. Nevertheless, Arendt's "conviction" that the "human mechanisms" leading to totalitarianism "are possible to discover" reveals hope in mankind's ability to think beyond corrupted values and will a new course of action into being. Arendt's optimistic belief in the innate human capacity for free will is tempered by her conviction that humans are doomed to experience freedom.[2] By the very nature of birth, human existence carries potential for new beginnings, both in the unfolding of events across one lifespan as new beings enter history and in the ever-present ability of people to do the unexpected. Arendt's position in her book on engendering totalitarian regimes implies the view that the Holocaust was not inevitable, but a series of freely chosen human actions.

Viewing the breakdown of communal concepts as one of the largest factors contributing to the success of authoritarian regimes implies that defending human freedom with military force alone is not enough to prevent totalitarianism in the West. If nothing else, Arendt's and Huxley's ideas foreshadow twenty-first-century technological developments expanding society to a global scale through the dissemination of mass "entertainment." If Arendt and Huxley are right, rampant progress may bring about even greater declines in the cultural, artistic, and democratic concepts that presently protect the existence of free and independent human communities. Huxley's choice to use fiction as a medium gives *Brave New World* the ability to entertain readers long enough for them to begin thinking critically about how their own indulgence in mass entertainment is similar to the dramatized experiences of his characters. Arendt's nonmimetic approach lacks the

[2] See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Conditio*n (Chicago UP, 1958) for her more developed discussion of human agency and political action.

appeal that would allow her ideas to reach the masses as a form of entertainment, yet her life's work develops a theoretical framework that still has the potential to preserve humanitarian ideals in practice.

At the time of its publication, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was widely read and served to bring Arendt into the spotlight as a notable cultural critic and political theorist. She went on to publish a number of essays, lectures, and other well-known book-length studies, namely *The Human Condition* (1958), *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), and *The Life of the Mind* (posthumously published in 1978). Throughout these, Arendt develops an innovative theoretical framework capable of subverting totalitarianism through the use of the innate cognitive faculties of thinking, willing, and judging. One of the most surprising aspects of her approach is her interpretation of political judgment through the traditional lens of aesthetics rather than practical philosophy. Arendt, unlike anyone before her, saw a revolutionary potential for the faculty of political judgment within Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790). It is unlikely that Kant himself would have viewed his conception of taste judgments as political, for he placed his own political theory within his practical philosophy. More than a century and a half later, however, Arendt uses his account of aesthetic judgment to explain how mankind can embrace this innate faculty to come to terms with the stark, unprecedented realities of the present.

Arendt's integration of Kant's theories into her work began as early as her school days, but it was not until the end of her life that she turned to Immanuel Kant's work for inspiration on the three faculties of the mind—thinking, willing, and judging. In an attempt to grapple with the realities of modernity and account for, as well as reconcile, political action with contemplation, Arendt completed two volumes on the first two

faculties, thinking and willing, which were posthumously published as *The Life of The Mind*.[3] Unfortunately, Arendt's life ended before she was able to complete her third volume on the third faculty, that of judgment.[4] Nevertheless, the fragments on judgment that Arendt left behind, along with her completed volumes, *Thinking* and *Willing*, explain how one can come to terms with the political devastations occurring in the twentieth century.

Arendt's choice to interpret political judgments through the Kantian lens of aesthetics does not make immediate sense until one reflects on the radical nature of Kant's account of taste judgments. In the Third Critique, Kant argues that aesthetic judgments are based upon a non-conceptual sensory experience of disinterested pleasure that causes such an intense, harmonious interaction among one's cognitive faculties that they are compelled to demand that others agree with their judgment. What is more, the subject's demand for universal agreement is valid, for Kant has just proven the subjective universal validity of taste judgments, although he is careful to explain that since aesthetic judgments lack concepts, the subject will be unable to prove their judgment's universal validity or establish any criteria within the object that account for its beauty. Arendt values Kant's insight into the powerful impact aesthetic experiences have on individuals and their communities. Arendt takes Kant's ideas one step further by arguing that the subjective experience of pleasure or displeasure resulting from witnessing a political event determines a community's values in the same way shared judgments of art objects do. What is more, Kant's account of the universality of non-cognitive, subjective

[3] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1978).
[4] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for definition of "judgment."

sensations provides Arendt with a model for how human beings can reinvent socially shared concepts and values in spite of their vulnerability to destruction in the modern era.

Since she passed away before completing her volume on judging, Arendt did not have the chance to fully develop her conception of political judgments, and therefore, problems and ambiguities within it are not fully addressed. Nevertheless, the purpose of this section is not to enter the more problematic and ambiguous aspects of Arendt's work on judgment, but to isolate the potential benefits an Arendtian approach to judgment has in the twenty-first century. Her adaptation of taste judgments to politics provides a compelling account for how people can reconcile themselves with the past and present without relying upon bankrupted concepts and categories unable to serve them. Moreover, viewing political judgments in terms of disinterested pleasure provides a much needed emphasis on the power that subjective sensations play in the formation of political beliefs.

The potential fruits of Arendtian judgment cannot be revealed without a more in-depth discussion of the fragments Arendt left behind on judgment, which I will address first. Afterward, I take into account leading scholars who either directly or indirectly criticize Arendt's approach, for her critics illuminate the opaque, impractical, and self-contradictory aspects of her work that she lacked time to address. Generally speaking, critics of Arendt's account of political judgment argue that her theory has no possible practical application, or even worse, a practical application of her theory of judgment would lead to a closed, totalitarian community. These criticisms reveal the nuances in Arendt's work have neither been fully addressed nor understood up to this point. The majority of her critics fail to account for Arendt's background in practical philosophy and

how Aristotle's discussion of rhetoric influences her concept of judgment. Adding the benefits of a rhetorical approach to Arendt's conception of judgment does not offer a complete resolution to the problems inherent in her work, yet the lack of a resolution is fitting since it reflects contemporary problems of disjuncture in culture and politics. I conclude by considering Arendt's conception of judgment as applied to twenty-first-century events in global digital communities. Her approach accounts for the struggle between online communities and the political realm, where individuals join groups in hopes that their expressed likes and dislikes will influence politics through an expression of pleasure and displeasure on social media platforms. Nevertheless, the power communities gain from freely accessible digital public space continues to be tempered by the intentional manipulation of reality and public perception.

Judgment and the Banality of Evil

The volumes, *Thinking* and *Willing*, address the phrase that Arendt, at least now, is most known for: "the banality of evil." Arendt uses this phrase to describe the mindset of Adolf Eichmann, who was tried, convicted, and hanged for his crimes against humanity, namely, his role in transporting Jewish peoples to concentration camps during the Nazi regime.[5] Her comprehensive report of the trial, published in her book *Eichmann*

[5] See Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* for the full definition of "crime against humanity" (244 – 279). Arendt explains Israelis' choice to expand their judgment of Eichmann's crimes against the Jewish peoples to crimes he aided against the non-Jewish peoples, including Gypsies, Poles and many more minorities, whom he also helped send to their deaths in concentration camps. Of importance is the recognition of these crimes against humanity as novel and unprecedented, for the Nazis did not only wish to expel Jewish citizens from Germany but also wished to remove all Jews from the Earth. In so doing, the Nazis went from committing the international crime of expulsion to a crime "against the human status," in which an attempt to destroy human diversity nullified concepts such as "mankind" and "humanity" (269). Arendt argues that in an ideal world an international tribunal would exist to try crimes against all of the people who share this Earth,

in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil (1963) covers Eichmann's trial, her theory on the mindsets of those who complied with totalitarian regimes, and concludes with a call for theories of thinking and judging that could counteract the phenomenon of thoughtlessness in modern society.

Arendt argues evil is banal because men do not commit evil acts out of intentional malignancy, but from a form of thoughtlessness. This is not to deny that some people intend to harm others, but the common conception that men who desire to be good are good, whereas men who desire to be evil are evil (an assumption of moral essentialism), does not, according to Arendt, account for the phenomenon of the masses conforming to evil actions implemented and legislated by their government. As Arendt explains in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, men who appeared to be "tough" sociopathic supporters of the Nazi regime, happy to comply with their orders to mass exterminate, actually had no personal beliefs supporting the regime:

> that the ideal of 'toughness,' except, perhaps, for a few half-demented brutes, was nothing but a myth of self-deception, concealing a ruthless desire for conformity at any price, was clearly revealed at the Nuremberg

as one nation alone not only lacks jurisdiction for international crimes but also cannot feasibly bring justice to criminals whose acts surpass national borders and ethnicities. In addition, Arendt viewed the Israeli court's lack of distinction between international crimes such as expulsion, discrimination, and genocide, as a failure resulting from their belief that the Holocaust was caused by centuries of anti-Semitism. If the Israeli Court had been able to make these distinctions, "it would immediately have become clear that the supreme crime it was confronted with, the physical extermination of the Jewish people, was a crime against humanity, perpetrated upon the body of the Jewish people, and that only the choice of the victims, not the nature of the crime, could be derived from the long history of Jew-hatred and anti-Semitism" (269). In short, seeing the Holocaust as purely anti-Semitic ignores the potential for a similar crime to happen again to a different group of people.

> Trials, where the defendants accused and betrayed each other and assured the world that they 'had always been against it' or claimed, as Eichmann was to do, that their best qualities had been 'abused' by their superiors. (In Jerusalem, he accused 'those in power' of having abused his 'obedience.' 'The subject of a good government is lucky, the subject of a bad government is unlucky. I had no luck.') (175)[6]

Arendt observes that those who engage in the most dehumanizing acts are oftentimes in compliance with a political machine that decides to commit genocide or unjustly punish large groups through the ideological manipulation of their race and ethnicity. Yet, in absence of thought, many following the Nazis deceived themselves into thinking that they agreed with the regime, when in fact their actions merely reflected a "ruthless desire for conformity at any price." To Arendt, the men who comply with these evil acts have never considered whether they want to do good or evil in the first place. When questioned on why those complicit with the Holocaust aided the Nazis, the complicit often provided the argument that they were not morally responsible for their actions, but rather, "unlucky subjects" of truly evil men.

Arendt's concept of the banality of evil agrees with the statement that others would be capable of the same level of evil as Eichmann displayed through his management of mass transportation of Jewish peoples to concentration camps if they were to fall under the command of a "bad government." Nevertheless, this is not to say that thoughtless compliance with evil excuses one from moral responsibility or even that

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[6] The Eichmann Trial footage is available for free online. Links can be found here: https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/eichmann-trial.html.

thoughtlessness is normal. Supposing Eichmann's only role in the Holocaust was being a "willing instrument in the organization of mass murder," his acts of political obedience were nevertheless a political support of the regime he found himself under (279). The primary purpose of Eichmann's trial was to judge him, and the act of judging alongside the existence of judiciary institutions imply the anti-deterministic view that human beings are not cogs in a machine, and therefore, are morally responsible for their actions.

Arendt distinguishes the cause of Eichmann's evil, his "thoughtlessness," from both moral failings and lack of intelligence. To her, the banality of evil is not so much a theory but a thought-defying fact that stared her in the face upon observing the trial. Eichmann was unique in that he had no motive for his compliance with the Nazis except to advance his career, which in itself was not criminal. To him, he was a law-abiding citizen merely following his job description and fulfilling his job responsibilities—he was uneventfully simply doing his duty. Even more shocking, during his examination by the Israeli police, Eichmann declared that he had always lived his life in accordance with Kant's moral precepts—the categorical imperative—and that he had read the *Critique of Practical Reason*.[7] Eichmann proved capable of providing Judge Raveh with the correct definition of the categorical imperative, yet when pressed, Eichmann admitted that he had ceased living his life by Kantian principles during his role in the Final Solution. To ease his conscience, Eichmann altered his conception of reality by convincing himself "that he

[7]Arendt quotes Eichmann directly: "I meant by my remark about Kant that the principle of my will must always be such that it can become principle of general laws" (qtd. in 136). Compare to Paul Guyer's English translation of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, where Kant formulates the categorical imperative in the statement that you must act "only in accordance with the maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become universal law" (G 4:421). Here, one can see that Eichmann summarizes Kant accurately in laymen's terms.

no longer 'was master of his own deeds,' that he was unable 'to change anything' " (qtd. in Arendt 136). Arendt, disturbed by Eichmann's conviction that he was a follower of Kantian morality, notes how Eichmann unconsciously perverted the imperative from a theory of freely aligning one's moral agency to fit what ought to be universal law to what Hans Frank would later formulate as "the categorical imperative in the Third Reich: . . . Act in such a way that the Führer, if he knew your action, would approve it" (qtd. in Arendt 136).[8] Eichmann's thoughtlessness was such that, during his tenure under the Nazi regime, he was unable to admit to himself what moral laws his chosen actions were perverting. In all matters, "he *merely*, to put the matter colloquially, *never realized what he was doing*" (Arendt 287). Without the ability to think about the principles behind his actions or their effects, Eichmann was predisposed both to be one of the greatest criminals in the modern era and also to stand in for the emerging type (or antitype) of untroubled adherence to conformity. Arendt wraps up *Eichmann in Jerusalem* by noting that the lesson of his trial was the thoughtlessness of evil, a phenomenon not limited to Eichmann alone.

Arendt's report on Eichmann did not give her enough space to unpack the revelatory nature of Eichmann's unprecedented evil (unprecedented because of the scale, itself due to the efficiency enabled by technology and science). In *The Life of Mind*, Arendt discusses evil in further depth while laying the theoretical groundwork for thinking, willing, and judging as faculties capable of preventing evil as well as joining

[8] Arendt notes that even in the household use of Kant, following the Kantian spirit is to "go beyond the mere call of obedience and identify his own will with the principle behind the law—the source from which the law sprang. In Kant's philosophy, that source was practical reason; in Eichmann's household use of him, it was the will of the Führer" (136-137).

politics, morality, and the realms of action.[9] Arendt does not see herself as a philosopher, but she remarks how her new focus on subjects of the *vita contemplativa*—thinking, willing, and judging—transitions her from the discipline of political science and its primary concern with the *vita activa* to the discipline of philosophy (3).[10] This transition is unavoidable, for an inquiry into thinking, willing, and judging originates both in the problem of the banality of evil and the problem of thought. In more detail, Arendt's judgment of Eichmann and "the banality of evil" causes a need to explore the link between thinking and its connection to man's ability to abstain from evil. In turn, the inquiry into thinking leads Arendt to reconceive the answer to the famous epistemological question—"what is thinking?"

The concept of the banality of evil—wherein evil does not come from malicious motive or evil character per se but from a refusal to think and a choice not to—deviates from traditional philosophical, theological, and literary conceptions that perceive evil doers as deliberately and intentionally malicious. Arendt pinpoints the tradition of the western conception of evil as starting with Plato, who views evil as common, arising from stupidity and a lack of virtue, whereas goodness and virtue are inherent only in the

[9] See Jerome Kahn's "Introduction" to Hannah Arendt's *Responsibility and Judgment*, especially his summary of Arendt's theoretical unity of action, thinking, willing, and judging, as well as a summary for Arendt's hopes for the preserving powers judgment can have on the world (xxviii – xxix).

[10] In *Life of the Mind*, Arendt defines the *vita contemplativa* in distinction to the *vita activa*: "the active way of life is 'laborious,' the contemplative way is sheer quietness; the active one goes on in public, the contemplative one in the 'desert'; the active one is devoted to 'the necessity of one's neighbor,' the contemplative one to the 'vision of God'" (6). Arendt's change from a focus on the *vita activa* to an investigation of the *vita contemplativa* accompanies her genre change from political theory in her earlier publication, *The Human Condition*, to the genre of philosophy in *Life of the Mind*. Ironically, Arendt remarks that the topic of the *vita activa* has been (and possibly can only be) tackled by those political theorists who spend their time in contemplation.

few. Plato interlinks virtue and philosophy, arguing that a man who practices philosophy does so out of love, and not the selfless love of Christian *Agapē*, but love as *Eros*. Arendt notes that "love as *Eros* is primarily a need; it desires what it has not" (178). Just as a lover, who cannot fully merge with his beloved, fills this lack by thinking and speaking of the beloved, so does the philosopher, inherently lacking wisdom, begin to contemplate and speak of wisdom. Plato's unique conception of *Eros* as the root of philosophy leads him to argue that philosophical topics can logically consist only of lovable things—such as beauty, wisdom, and justice. Ugliness and evil cannot be thought objects, for they are deficiencies—"ugliness consisting in *lack* of beauty, evil, *kakia*, in *lack* of good" (179; my emphasis).

Arendt concludes that Plato would have conceived of the interconnectedness of evil and thoughtlessness. She bases her understanding on Plato's implicit claim that a man who thinks, otherwise known as a philosopher, cannot do evil voluntarily, due to evil's ontological status (or non-status) as a deficiency. In her further explanation of Plato, the thinking activity, with its inherent destructiveness (analysis), grasps positive concepts to distill their original meaning, whereas when the thinking ego attempts to grasp an evil concept, the converse (negative) concept will yield meaninglessness. Plato, following this argument, maintains that it is impossible for a man to be, and thus do, evil *if he loves wisdom*, because his thinking activities that result from his love of wisdom, beauty, and justice *logically* prevent him from knowingly partaking in evil acts (my emphasis).

To Arendt, Plato's conception of evil as a lack of love for philosophy (the steward of wisdom/judgment/reason) not only denies the common man's ability to think but also

cannot account for why men of intellect complied with totalitarian regimes. If Plato is right, all philosophers would have noble natures, yet only philosophers would be capable of morality. One ought to note that Arendt approaches Plato with the preconception that Socrates was real, and thus, his arguments in Plato's dialogues ought to be viewed as independent from Plato's overarching ideas. In light of this, Arendt uses Socrates' dialogue as a model for how one ought to go about teaching the activity of thinking to the citizens.[11] In *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt bases her conception of evil—wherein evil results from avoiding self-reflection—upon Socrates' ideas in the *Gorgias*.

> The soundless solitary dialogue we call 'thinking'. . . . This is not a matter of wickedness or goodness, as it is not a matter of intelligence or stupidity. A person who does not know that silent intercourse (in which we examine what we say and what we do) will not mind contradicting himself, and this means he will never be either able or willing to account for what he says or does; nor will he mind committing any crime, since he can count on its being forgotten the next moment. Bad people—Aristotle to the contrary notwithstanding—are not 'full of regrets.' (191)

To Arendt, all people, no matter what they love, are capable of thinking, yet those who evade thoughtful self-reflection and their conscience—the "afterthought" of thinking—do

[11] See *The Life of the Mind* for Socratic similes on thinking exercises that can be taught to the public (172 –173). Here, Arendt illustrates thinking through the activities of the gadfly, midwife, and the electric ray. See also Dana Villa's useful article, "Arendt and Socrates," where Villa labels Arendt's exposition of these thought activities as uniquely Arendtian rather than purely Socratic.

not take issue with engaging in evil acts in the same way as those who think about their crimes would.

The "soundless solitary dialogue" Arendt refers to arises from the plurality inherent in all human beings. To make this point, Arendt borrows the two positive assertions Socrates makes in Plato's *Gorgias*: "it is better to be wronged than to do wrong" and "it would be better for me that my lyre or a chorus I directed should be out of tune and loud with discord, and that the multitudes of men should disagree with me rather than that I, *being one*, should be out of harmony with myself and contradict me" (qtd. in Arendt 181). Arendt emphasizes "being one" by putting the phrase in italics in order to highlight the paradoxical nature of the statement: if a person is one, that is, if A = A, then it is impossible for him to be out of harmony with himself, since harmony connotes two sounds. The paradox, however, is not problematic if we consider the real nature of what we call "identity." One exists as one when in the presence of others; otherwise, the "one" would be unrecognizable; yet when alone, one has *consciousness* of oneself. Arendt defines consciousness as the literal "to know with myself," where one is alone with oneself, "for oneself," and appears *to* oneself (183). The ability to be *for* oneself and to appear *to* oneself implies a synthetic unity of the notion of difference within identity. Identity cannot be defined as one object by itself without the acknowledgement of its difference to other objects/subjects, yet thinking can only occur in solitude, where one has themselves from their fellows. Thus, thinking implies the development of a consciousness in which one engages with the Socratic "two-in-one"—that is, man's inherent duality of me and myself.

Returning to Socrates' concept of being in harmony with oneself, the point of thinking is that it is better to maintain harmony within the "two-in-one" interaction with oneself than it is to be in harmony with the multitudes yet in disharmony with oneself. This harmony, which Arendt labels as "agreement," is the one criterion of Socratic dialectic that Arendt adopts in her unique conception of the faculty of thinking, by making thinking intra-subjective.[12] One must maintain friendship and agreement within oneself, and thinking serves to maintain this agreement through the destructive (analytic) process in which ideas that create contradiction must be ruled out until harmony can return.

The choice to *not think*, that is, the deliberate avoidance of the solitary dialogue one can only have if they withdraw from others and reflect with themselves, is accompanied by *an inability to judge* and *an inability to will* novel actions into being. Those "who are not full of regrets" (in Socrates' words in the *Gorgias*)—that is, those who did not think about the consequences of their actions—followed authoritarian figures and rules (in Arendt's context), even when these political agencies became responsible for the violation of human rights in the extreme; whereas those who did think and made judgments on the atrocities they witnessed, and were perhaps asked to comply with, did not participate—creating discord with the conforming "multitude" in order to maintain their inner-harmony (intra-subjective concordance in self-dialogue/conscience).

[12] I find it helpful to define Arendt's view on thought as intra-subjective communication—occurring subjectively as harmonious interaction between an individual's cognitive functions—versus inter-subjective communication—communication uniting two separate individuals. I have taken this definition from Christian H. Wenzel's *An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems* (82).

Grouping thinking and judging, Arendt diagnoses them as the chief causes for modern man's choice to comply with totalitarian devastations. Both of these faculties—thinking and judging—are indispensable in a political sense, as cultivating them is essential for men to critically come to terms with the horrors of the past century and practice discrete intentional actions to avoid repeating them. Thinking, as an innate faculty shared (but not used) by all, works in conjunction with judging. Thinking acts as an invisible, destructive (analytical/anatomizing) force that becomes political (and moral) during emergencies when one, like "Socrates' midwifery," investigates "unexamined opinions and thereby destroys them—values doctrines, theories, and even convictions" (192). In this way, thinking loosens the standards and rules one is bound by, and as Arendt puts it, "this destruction has a liberating effect . . . [on judgment] which one may call with some reason the most political of man's mental abilities" (192). The destructive (analytical/anatomizing) power of thought prepares the ground for one to judge particulars without subsuming them under general standards and rules, and thus enables morality.

In *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt draws two distinctions between thinking and judging. First, the faculty of judgment is visible and deals only with particular events that are close at hand; thinking, on the other hand, is silent and deals with invisibles—that is, with representations of the world from which the subject has withdrawn.[13] Significantly, thinking occurs in the invisible space of one's intra-subjective experience, whereas judgment must occur inter-subjectively:

[13] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for definition of "representation."

> if thinking—the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue—actualizes the difference within our identity as given in consciousness, and thereby results in conscience as its by product, then judging, the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking, realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances, where I am never alone and always too busy to think. The manifestation of the wind of thought is not knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly [the moral compass]. And this, at the rare moments when the stakes are on the table, may indeed prevent catastrophes, at least for the self. (193)

Arendt takes great pains in *The Life of the Mind* to distinguish the internality of thought and the externality of judgment within her exposition of the Socratic "two-in-one." The Socratic dialogues occur in the communication between two or more participants, whereas thought occurs as "the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue" within oneself. Thought is a transcendental activity and cannot take place in the phenomenal realm as a vocalized or written conversation.[14] In this way, Arendt's concept of thought would be solipsistic were it not for the faculty of judgment, "the manifestation of the wind of

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[14] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for a definition of "transcendental." Also note that Arendt uses "transcendental" in the Kantian sense. Kant offers the most descriptive definition of "transcendental" in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, where he writes that transcendental "does not signify something passing beyond all experience [transcendent] but something that indeed precedes it *a priori,* but that is intended simply to make cognition of experience possible" (373n48). Significantly, Kant restricts transcendental knowledge to a person's cognitive capacities—not the knowledge of objects but the knowledge a subject can have about objects *a priori*. The definition of transcendental takes on more meaning in juxtaposition to its opposite, transcendent knowledge. Transcendent literally means knowledge beyond what man can know *a priori* or *a posteriori*, such as definitive knowledge of God, and the origin of the universe.

thought," the phenomenal evidence of a transcendental activity that drives thinking into "the world of appearances," another term for consciousness' complex creation that colloquially is referred to as "the present" and/or "reality."

In *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt, perhaps counterintuitively, separates thought from knowing, the cognitive process that uses truth as criteria. Truth (collapsed into knowledge), on the one the hand, can only be true or false, and thus, according to Arendt at least, contains a coercive power that quells thought per se (in her Socratic adaptation). Thinking on the other hand is a dialectical activity that deals with subject matter that can and may be neither true nor false. This is much like her presentation of the Socratic dialogues—Arendt conceives of thinking as an activity that questions assumptions and ideas one gathers from his or her experience in community with others (interlocutors for Socrates). Logically, then, judgment, rather than knowledge, will be the product of thought, as judgment is needed where the criteria of truth are again and again practically too limited to make sense of the complexity of "the world of appearances."

Arendt's argument that judgment requires, and is conditioned by, plurality, that is, the intersubjective interaction between multiple human beings, is significant, because it distinguishes her conception of judgment as egalitarian and communicative, rather than elitist and solipsistic. As judgments regard matters occurring within the world of appearances, the world of appearances presupposes the plurality of men because nothing would appear were it not for other sentient beings to observe it. As Arendt puts it, "nothing and nobody exists in this world whose very being does not presuppose a *spectator*. In other words, nothing that is, insofar as it appears, exists in the singular; everything that is is meant to be perceived by somebody. Not Man but men inhabit the

planet. Plurality is the law of the earth" (19). As we have seen, thinking and consciousness require a plurality within and without—an awareness of the self as both a subject and object, as a perceiver and as perceived, and as one who appears into the world upon birth and will disappear upon death, comingling with other new beings and sustaining departures of them—for one cannot think and be conscious of himself/herself solely as an objective being.

Just as it is the exterior manifestation of thinking, judgment is derived from the need to judge the world of appearances and make this judgment known to others. The faculty of judgment is communicative, then, but is not a faculty of action per se. Arendt painstakingly establishes the separateness of spheres of spectators and actors, and maintains that those who judge exist as a plurality of spectators who, in times of contemplation, reflect upon the actions of others and the appearance of physical reality.

As Arendt hints in *The Life of the Mind*, the world of appearances consists of objects that are perceived—they "appear and hence are meant to be seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled" (19). Following this logic, Arendt reasonably bases her theory on the faculty of judgment in the political realm (as opposed to thinking and willing) on Kant's work in the *Critique of Judgment*, which deals with matters of aesthetics and taste. According to a popular dictum of uncertain origin—*de gustibus non disputandem est* (on matters of taste there can be no dispute—or, taste does not sanction debate), taste sensations have been argued as being entirely subjective sensations that have no reasonable claim to objectivity or reality. To them, there can be applied no logical concepts, no standard nor rules, leaving one to conclude that taste judgments are entirely and absolutely subjective; they are entirely free. Kant argues against this idea of utter

autonomy in taste, asserting there is validity to our desire to have others agree with our judgments of taste. In judgments of taste, we argue with others without the ability to reach a consensus or solution, yet the argument continues, because the experience of these judgments that tells us we are correct and have the right to expect the agreement of others to concur and validate the truth of a singular experience.

Arendt appropriates Kant's theory of judgment as a way to explain how a particular judgment in regard to non-cognitive matters (perception/taste) can achieve inter-subjective validity for a community of individuals without turning to pre-established universal truths. In *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Arendt specifically bases her work on Kant's discussion of aesthetic (taste) judgments in order to bridge the gap between her theory on thinking and judgment (in a practical application in the political realm), and thus, she uses Kant to cross the gap between the subjective self and the objective world.

Judgment explains the ability to anticipate the subjective, yet non-cognitive experiences, of others. In effect, the faculty also accounts for how some particular sensations are not merely idiosyncratic, but have a legitimate claim to the agreement of others who are in a similar position to judge. Without an account of judgment, theory only could account for the validity (or nonvalidity) of cognitive truth claims, which gain assent through the operation of subsuming the particular under a general rule; in these cases, the process of subsumption compels agreement logically. Kant's account of judgment in *The Critique of Judgment* is monumental for this very reason: Kant recognizes the chasm between theory and practice and proceeds to provide a missing account for how the faculty of judgment—through the lens of aesthetics—mediates

between theoretical knowledge—cognitive truth claims—and practical knowledge—particular and subjective experiences.

To Arendt, following Kant, reflective (conditioned) judgments are significant in two aspects. First, a reflective judgment is made on the grounds of a given particular and an uncertain universal principle. This function differs from a determinant judgment, in which the validity is accounted for by the verification that a given particular can be subsumed under an already known universal principle, law, or rule. Second, a reflective aesthetic judgment must be understood as a subjective sensation of feeling within the subject's reaction to the appearance of a beautiful object in nature. This differs from a determinant judgment, in which a subject reacts to empirically observable traits in an object. Thus, a reflective judgment differs in its radical subjectivity, for "what is understood in the judgment is not the determination of the object but of the subject and its feeling" (Kant 20:223).[15] The pure subjectivity of aesthetic judgments initially causes one to assume that these judgments cannot be valid among more than one person. Nevertheless, Kant and Arendt both argue a subject is correct to assume that others should agree with his reflective judgment, even though both differ in terms of how widely valid the judgment is or whether a subject actually communicates his judgment.

For a reflective judgment to be worthy of validity outside of the subject, it must be impartial. Thus, in a reflective judgment, the operations of imagination and reflection allow us to impartially judge the particular *qua* the particular, that is, without the subsumption of particulars under general rules. The qualification of impartiality,

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[15] Throughout I will be using Paul Guyer's translation of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.

otherwise labeled as disinterestedness, is one Kant originally grants to matters of taste. Disinterestedness is a state of mind where the subject does not attach utility to his experience of a beautiful object.[16] Disinterestedness functions alongside purposiveness—a unique teleological status that Kant assigns to beautiful objects. As Kant argues, "by beauty, as a formal subjective purposiveness, there is not conceived any perfection of the object as a supposedly formal but yet also objective purposiveness" (§15 5:228). On the one hand, purposiveness, otherwise understood as purposefulness without purpose, opposes the experience of non-beautiful objects, in which a subject assigns his idea of an end—a purpose or function—to his perception of the object. When one judges an object as beautiful, on the other hand, he does not presuppose a formal end for the object or attach a concept of what a perfect image of the object should be. Furthermore, he does not have a self-satiating desire for the object, but merely derives pleasure from reflecting on the representation of the finality of the object's form.

In addition to disinterestedness and purposiveness, Kant goes to great lengths to account for how a reflective judgment can achieve validity without the use of concepts. Kant labels the ability of the mind to engage with an object of beauty without attaching any concepts to it as the free play of the imagination; and he argues that this free play coincides with the faculty of understanding an object without being constrained by the laws of understanding.[17] As Kant states, the connection of free play of imagination to the laws of understanding is "only a lawfulness without law and a subjective correspondence

[16] I use "he" and "man" to refer to a person and people generally and not a sex- nor a gender-specific category person.
[17] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for definition of "understanding."

of the imagination to the understanding without an objective one." Kant's insight, in other words, is that the subject's judgment of a beautiful object, through governance of the laws of understanding, freely engages with the manifold concepts of an object without being entangled with any particular one concept (5:241). This process mirrors the cognitive process in *determinant* judgments, where one uses lawful understanding to subsume objective properties under concepts; yet *reflective* judgments are different, because they result in the disinterested state that yields pleasure in a pure judgment of beauty of a particular object. On the contrary, in a determinant judgment such as "the cat is black," the laws of understanding allow a subject to understand that objects contain empirically verifiable properties that can be categorized under concepts; hence, the empirical property of "black" provides the grounds to subsume observed blackness to the universal concept of "black." Similarly, in pure aesthetic judgments, the resulting pleasure from the subjective free play of the imagination, as it operates in conjunction with the unconstrained interaction with the laws of understanding, mimics the interaction of lawful application of concepts under general rules. Thus, aesthetic judgments are both subjective and universal; and one can expect that others ought to share the same pleasure in viewing a beautiful object because he can make the judgment by reasoning alone (*a priori*).

Kant adds that impartiality in addition to the interaction of the faculty of understanding and free play of the imagination do not fully account for how a subjective aesthetic judgment can achieve validity outside of the subject. Another factor must be addressed—the *sensus communis.* Kant defines the *sensus communis* as an internal sense

that results from the "free play of our cognitive powers" (§20 5:238). In §40, Kant further elaborates that that the *sensus communis* is an intercommunion of subjectivities—

> a communal sense, i.e., a faculty for judging that in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of everyone else's way of representing in thought, in order as it were to hold its judgments up to human reason as a whole and thereby avoid the illusion which, from subjective private conditions, that could easily be held to be objective, would have a detrimental influence on judgment. (5:29)

The sense of *sensus communis* is unique to reflective taste judgments, then, because it results from the universal yet subjective disposition to feel disinterested pleasure. Nevertheless, how does one know that his taste judgment accurately draws upon a shared sense rather than a private sense, especially since when one makes an aesthetic judgment, the subjective universal validity of his judgment does not derive from objective communication of universal concepts but the universal ability to feel?

To Kant, the *sensus communis* is an intra-subjective feeling resulting from the synthetic unity of the faculties of the imagination and the understanding, and since all men share these faculties and the resulting feeling of *sensus communis*, reflective aesthetic judgments maintain subjective universal validity.[18] When one makes a pure judgment of taste, he feels that his judgment has exemplary validity, that is, the right to demand that others should agree with his judgment that the object is beautiful. Exemplary validity is "a merely ideal norm" in which the subjective experience of beauty is

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[18] See *Critique of Judgment* §20 – 22.

"assumed to be subjectively universal" (§ 22 5:239). One should note, with emphasis, that the universal agreement of a valid taste judgment is ideal rather than actual. The exemplary necessity of one pure taste judgment contains the impulse for one to share his taste judgment with others and feel they ought to agree with him. In fact, the paradoxical nature of subjective universality entails that a singular experience of aesthetic pleasure gives one the desire to communicate to others, hence the universal communicability of taste judgments.

Kant further declares in a footnote of §40 that "one could designate taste as *sensus communis aestheticus*" for it contains a ground for common agreement and universal communicability of our experience of pleasurable reflection (§40 5:295). Nevertheless, the communicability of the *sensus communis aestheticus* still contains certain limitations. As Kant declares, one can make a judgment but he cannot compare it to the "actual" judgment of others but merely their "possible judgment" (5:294). Whether or not the subject chooses to communicate this judgment to others is another matter entirely, for in the ideal realm of judgments, as Kant specifies, all people have taste, and as long as one person makes a judgment with the proper subjective purposiveness (that the object compels pleasurable reflection through the free play of the imagination and the understanding), he can assume his judgment of pleasure is "universally communicable, even without the mediation of concepts" (§39 5:293).

Does one need to communicate a taste judgment to ensure its validity, or is the validity inherent within the taste judgment itself? According to Kant, who emphasizes that taste judgments are *a priori*, the subjective universal validity of a taste judgment must come from within the transcendental subject. Thus, universal communicability is a

trait of an accurate judgment rather than a trait that makes a judgment accurate after others agree. What one is to make of the *sensus communis*, then, much less the desire to communicate a judgment of taste and assert its necessary validity, is another matter entirely. A common reading is that taste judgments, lacking concepts, cannot be articulated.[19] Rather, the *sensus communis* beckons to the supersensible limits of communication. While a supersensible Idea of feeling signifies that the pleasurable experience of cognition is universal, we are too limited to account for a concrete and universal articulation of this feeling in words between men, especially because judgments lack concepts (they are indeterminant rather than determinant). We intuit that the *sensus communis* is there—that the harmonious accord of our cognitive faculties beckons a possible universal aesthetic experience. Yet, an articulation of a homogenous judgment, which would create a sensible community of taste, stands in contradiction to Kant's transcendental theory.[20] The *sensus communis* is an ideal norm, not a rule or an imperative one can follow as with moral judgments. Thus, Kant does not write the Third Critique as a sociological or cultural account for the anthropology of taste. Rather, the Third Critique is an account for the theoretical subjective universality of aesthetic and sublime feeling.

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[19] See Jean François Lyotard "*Sensus Communis*" and "The Communication of Taste" for the most persuasive and in-depth account of this reading of Kant. Other detailed critiques emphasizing the ideal nature of communication in Kant's theory of judgment appear in David Carroll's "Community After Devastation: Culture, Politics, and the Public Space" and Ronald Beiner's "Hannah Arendt on Judging."

[20] My interpretation of Kant on the supersensible Idea and the harmonious accord of our cognitive faculties is directly influenced by Lyotard's "The Communication of Taste" (210-223).

Arendt's politicization of Kant's theory of judgment pulls Kant's work back to the empirical realm. In "The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Its Political Existence" Arendt connects the arts and politics through their mutual dependence on public space to exist and, in turn, their existence preserves culture and the world. Here, Arendt envisions Kantian judgment as "a political rather than a merely theoretical activity," for judgment points men outward, toward their follows, rather than inward, as the activity of thinking is ought to do (219). By engaging with the innate faculty of judgment, men access an enlarged mentality, in which they can 'think in the place of everybody else' (qtd. in Arendt 220). Like Kant, Arendt sees judgment as resting in the "potential agreement of others," but unlike Kant, this agreement generates "specific validity" rather than universal validity (220). Specific validity occurs through one's anticipated communication with others, yet these others are limited to those with whom the judging person can imagine, and furthermore, these others must also be capable of judgment and present in the public realm.

Arendt frames judgment in terms of criteria, and she asserts that the two criteria to measure judgment by are impartiality and communicability. Thus, reflective judgments apply to all particular objects and events in which there are no universal rules to guide judgment. Reflective judgments can address topics ranging from morality, politics, culture, and history, and they operate by finding a universal for the particular in cases where blank spots in thought do not allow us to comprehend the phenomena at hand. At first, especially during Arendt's early years when she was writing *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) and "Understanding and Politics" (1953), she conceived of judgment as necessary for comprehending political events. With the rise of totalitarianism

in the twentieth century, the latent inadequacies of Western traditional thought became increasingly evident as historians and political analysts struggled to confront historical facts. The problems of understanding the present and judging the present stem from the same source—as both faculties, at least to Arendt, are inherently interlinked. Thus, reflective judgments became necessary to comprehend the present experiences of modernity without the aid of pre-established standards, rules, and categories.

Arendt's thoughts on judgment burgeoned, beginning in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and further developed in *The Life of the Mind*, to the inter-subjective faculty linked to the intra-subjective faculty of thought.[21] Arendt further developed her conception of a need for judgment after studying Eichmann—where she ascribed his phenomena of thoughtlessness as the cause of his compliance with the Nazis agenda of genocide. Thinking is noumenal and occurs in the invisible direction of one's consciousness towards oneself, whereas judgment is the outward manifestation of critical thought and is directed at the world. As judgment is directed at the world of appearances, Arendt labels it as a primarily political ability; in this way, Arendt argues that the invisible faculty of thought loosens the grip on the ossified standards and rules on judgment. What these have in common is that reflective judgments, then, are necessary for judging what is close at hand in the world of appearances without turning to pre-established categories and rules. Arendt's turn to Kant's interpretation of reflective judgments for her final political

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[21] See Christian H. Wenzel's *An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems*. Wenzel discusses Cicero's use of an inter-subjective definition of *sensus communis* for a political and rhetorical concept that must be taken into consideration when making a political speech. Arendt's inter-subjective interpretation of Kant's *sensus communis* suggests links between her interpretation of Kant's faculty of judgment and the rhetorical tradition.

philosophy, then, should not be surprising, even though up to Arendt's point in time, *The Critique of Judgment* was viewed as an innocuous work about aesthetics.

While Arendt does not write an anthropological account of reflective judgments, especially in the case of political matters, she certainly opens the possibility that the *sensus communis* is a real, rather than an ideal norm. Whereas Kant's interpretation of the *sensus communis* occurs intra-subjectively, Arendt conceives of the faculty of thought as intra-subjectively bound to the inter-subjective faculty of judgment.[22] In this way, Arendt argues that the invisible faculty of thought loosens the grip on the ossified standards and rules on judgment. Thinking directs one's consciousness towards oneself, whereas judgment is the outward manifestation of critical thought and is directed at the world. Yet, judgment remains without concepts, and Arendt's adaptation of Kant's theory reveals that she continues to place emphasis on the abilities of impartiality and the imagination to allow us to judge without the guides of bankrupt historical categories or a historical doctrine of necessity.

In *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Arendt argues that it is the faculty of imagination that allows "the mind to go visiting" while impartiality guarantees that the subjective judgment is capable of conditional validity. Arendt bases her translation of Kant's *sensus communis* as "community sense," and grounds it in the consensus of a community of individuals who are present and choose to judge.[23] Arendt's choice to

[22] See Christian H. Wenzel's *An Introduction to Kant's Aesthetics: Core Concepts and Problems*. Wenzel discusses Cicero's use of an inter-subjective definition of *sensus communis* for a political and rhetorical concept that must be taken into consideration when making a political speech. Arendt's inter-subjective interpretation of Kant's *sensus communis* suggests links between her interpretation of Kant's faculty of judgment and the rhetorical tradition.
[23] See "Crisis in Culture" (221).

conceive of the core of judgment—the *sensus communis*—as grounded in a real, as opposed to an ideal, community immediately sets her conception of judgment apart from Kant. In line with Arendt's reading of the *sensus communis* as inter-subjective, Arendt provides an anthropological interpretation of Kantian disinterestedness, which she interprets as the "enlarged mentality"—the ability to think from the standpoint of others. While Kant and Arendt both anticipate an enlarged mentality as estimating the possible judgments of others subjectively, Arendt takes her conception much further in her choices to understand judgment as a discussion between two people—this is evinced even in her argument that the standard to measure judgment by is not validity, but communicability. In Arendt, communication is key. In fact, the keys to the seemingly incommunicability of taste, or the antimony, *de gustibus non disputandem est*, are *sensus communis* and the faculty of imagination—the subject's ability to reflect on the double operation of perception coupled with the subject's ability to anticipate the possible viewpoints of others.

The *sensus communis* ensures that pure aesthetic judgments are universally communicable. To Arendt, *sensus communis,* a term she translates as "community sense" to maintain the separation of the term from "common sense," makes the communication of judgments possible by allowing us to anticipate how others will judge an object. After reflecting upon our immediate sensation of an object using the criterion of communicability and the standard of *sensus communis*, we decide whether or not we should make our judgment public. *Sensus communis* stands in direct contrast to *sensus privatus*, "the faculty that enables us to draw conclusions from premises" (Arendt 64). Alone, *sensus privatus* allows one to understand premises and draw conclusions from

them, yet if one loses their ability to communicate, and thus, loses touch with their faculty for *sensus communis*, his thinking and judging will soon become insane as a result of his inability to validate his experience by interacting with others. Due to this, for one to be capable of making valid judgments, one must poses an innate ability to estimate the opinions of others and to communicate with them as well. Combining these occurrences with the faculty of imagination, which allows one to anticipate an other's point of view, and men's innate faculty of *sensus communi*s, one can know others are capable of sharing his judgment of a sensation. These operations give men access to their enlarged mentality—the ability to think from the standpoint of others.

Arendt steps outside of Kant's prerogative for judgment in the "Crisis in Culture" when she extends judgment beyond the realm of aesthetics and translates Kant to the argument that when we judge, we "woo the consent of everyone else " (qtd. in Kant 222). Within this contested translation of Kant's words, Arendt detranscendentalizes Kant's theory of judgment by interpreting the ideal community of judges as physical human beings. Moreover, Arendt's choice to link the experience of aesthetic objects and culture to politics causes her to extend the occurrence of judgment as to all subjective sensations that can be shared, rather than just aesthetics. Taste judgments are political for the very reason that like political opinions, they initially appear arbitrary because they do not gain agreement through a presentation of facts or truths, but through persuasion. Arendt's interpretation veers away from Kant, who not only thinks that persuasion is not ideal for presenting information but also argues persuasion, along with rhetoric, is deceptive and morally harmful for the speaker and his audience. Thus, Kant views the community of judges in his third *Critique* as an ideal community rather than an actual one. The ideal

community allows Kant to argue judgment can claim universal validity because these judgments do not happen on the physical plain; it is only with the faculty of *sensus communis* that one can expect that others *ought* to agree with his judgment. With universal agreement, however conditional, there is no need for persuasive speech in judgment whatsoever. Kant, arguably, is content with the logical proof that judgments can achieve universal validity on paper rather than within an occurrence in the physical space/time continuum. Arendt, on the other hand, understands the validity of judgment as conditional and based upon time, place, and the community of judges who choose to judge. To Arendt, judging is not automatic nor can it be assumed that all human beings choose to partake in this activity. We make ourselves more human by choosing to judge rather than to follow the solidified standards and rules passed down by society. In exercising the faculty of judgment, human beings strengthen their capacity for free agency and thought, in addition to contributing to the democratic growth of their community.

Arendt's choice to interpret judgments as valid relative to the community of judging individuals reveals that Arendt's theory of judgment mediates two opposing camps of thought: the philosophical and the rhetorical. On one hand, Arendt's work with judgment adheres to the philosophical tradition, in which judgment is a faculty of quiet and removed contemplation. Especially in her later work, as presented in *The Life of the Mind* and her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (1970), Arendt focuses on judgment as a faculty that explains how subjective thought, in spite of its invisibility, can become visible to the world. Visibility, of course, translates to the communication of thought from one individual to another. Thus Arendt's later turn to Kant—in which

scholars such as Ronald Beiner and Dana Vila argue that she turns from judgment as a faculty of political action, as in her earlier works, namely *The Human Condition* and "The Crisis in Culture," to the life of contemplation. This development is often reduced to a turn from action to contemplation. Thus, *vita activa* is understood as the active life, and in regard to Arendt's discussion of the faculty of judgment, if successfully collected from her fragments, further reflects her struggles and victories as a philosopher and a political theorist.

Arendt's task of mediating the contemplative life of the philosopher with the life of the political actor spans her life's work. Her work on judgment was intended to be the final bridge between the capacities for action and contemplation within the individual. On the one hand, these statements risk an over-generalization, for here I present the life of philosophical contemplation as opposed to political action. On the other hand, action and contemplation carry a germane exigency in the body of her work. Arguably, Arendt's merging of action and contemplation mirrors Kant's goal in the *Critique of Judgment* of providing a logical account of the compatibility of theory and practice by explaining how judgment mediates the *noumenal* and *phenomenal* experiences. If successfully collected into coherence, Arendt's fragments on judgment may provide a framework for applying her theory to practice and using it as a lens to interpret twenty-first-century political events. If she is right (in a collective assembly of her thought on judgment from her fragments) about the benefits of exercising judgment, then its application will provide an account for how the philosophical pursuits of thinking and disseminating truth can work in conjunction with the abilities to speak persuasively and move a community to act in a way that improves civilization and the world.

The occupation of the philosopher is one of finding universal truths that are oftentimes invisible to the human eye and separate from the concerns of the public. What is more, philosophy is typically presented in abstract theoretical texts or one-on-one discussion between a few. Either way, philosophy is the deliverance of unworldly truths to a specialized audience; truth holds coercive force by the very fact that one is forced to accept a true statement lest logic can refute it, yet truth, especially versions separate from information delivered by means of common sense and public opinion, is not persuasive to the public. Rhetoric, however, is understood as the delivery of subjective opinion to a large audience. The audience's assent to the speaker's message is not based on truth content, but on the persuasiveness of the delivery of opinion. Arendt turns to Kant's work, yet instead of interpreting judgment as a communicable *a priori* universally valid feeling, she interprets judgment as dealing with matters of opinion. Rhetoric, too, delegates to the realm of opinion, where it is not so much that a speaker dupes the audience into believing falsehoods, but the speaker deals with particular instances where opinion suffices as the best sort of knowledge available. Arendt's adoption of Kant's theory of judgment, then, for a theory of communicating judgments to the public, is particularly troubling to her critics, especially since Arendt does not rule out that this type of communication may be the rhetorical art of persuading the many. It follows that Arendt's choice to adopt a philosophy of theoretical abstraction and blend it with particular instances of presentation—offering the persuasion of a speaker and a physical audience—is problematic to her critics, as she is using philosophy to stand in for the rhetorical. It is to her critical reception that I now turn in order to address more precisely

the problems of a political judgment, such as Arendt's, in which aesthetics and rhetoric meet up.

CHAPTER 1

TRAVERSING INTERSECTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY AND RHETORIC: THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF ARENDT'S POLITICAL AESTHETIC

Criticism of Arendt's theory of political judgment is easily muddled with criticism of Kant's original theory of aesthetic judgment. This chapter reviews current criticism of Arendt's political interpretation of Kantian aesthetics. These critics reveals that Arendt's fragments of judgment, at least at face value, do not provide a valid theoretical account for the communicability of taste judgments or an ideal framework for applying a theory of political judgment to practice. Even worse, many critics fear that Arendt's sourcing of the *sensus communis* from Kant's ideal community of taste is inherently elitist and totalitarian, which would be unfortunate, given that Arendt's goals for a fully developed theory of judgment were to expose judgment as an egalitarian faculty that anyone could use to fight totalitarianism. Still, both of these groups fail to consider the position of rhetorical scholars, who argue that a more accurate interpretation of Arendt's fragments on political judgments takes her rhetorical influences into account. The goal of this chapter is to survey of the differing interpretations of Arendt's theory of judgment to see whether an attempt of applying her theory to twenty-first-century political practice is feasible.

Aesthetics Neutering Political Theory: Answering the Critics, Part I

Criticism of Arendt's adaptation of Kant's aesthetic theory to political judgment typically takes one of two directions. The first line of criticism alleges that Arendt's fragments on judgment fail to transform Kantian aesthetics into a political theory of judgment, and as a result, she has created an unwarranted aestheticization of the political

that is useless to "real politics." Ronald Biener, who edits and writes the introduction to *Arendt's Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, provides one of the most comprehensive critiques of Arendt's aestheticization of the political. As Biener claims, Arendt's theory "attempt[s] to transpose a theory of judging as formal as Kant's into a theory of political judgment . . . [with] the risk of turning from a genuine appreciation of political appearances *qua* appearances into an unwarranted aestheticization of politics" (138). More specifically, Beiner takes issue with Arendt's use of Kant's notion that all men are equally suited for judgment, regardless of their educational background and political experience. According to him, there must be more qualifications for a political spectator to judge besides Kant's formal condition of disinterested removal from action. Furthermore, there must be more "substantive conditions" that allow the public to know whether or not a judgment is correct, such as the spectator's ability to correlate his judgment with the political event, the spectator's amount of wisdom, and the spectator's experience in political matters. To Beiner, there are other, and perhaps better, theories of political judgment in existence, and it is entirely possible that even aesthetic judgments are not really as autonomous and abstract as Kant makes them out to be. Perhaps Beiner would side with the use of David Hume's "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757) for a renovated political theory, as based on the objections he raises, Hume's recourse to a more traditional, criterion-based theory for evaluating judgments of taste works better for Arendt's purposes than Kant. One of the main criteria Hume stipulates is a set of special qualifications that make one man a better judge than another, which is the primary issue that Beiner raises.

Beiner's second objection to Arendt's theory revolves around his association of Arendt with a strict Kantian philosophy, which must clearly separate itself from Aristotle's notion of *phronēsis* as distinct from political judgments. Kant rejects *phronēsis*, a Greek word commonly translated into the Latin term "prudence," as a mode for judgment, because "prudence" is a *technê* (skill or art).[24] If Kant allows *technê* into his theory of judgment, then judgment would have to employ what Kant terms a "hypothetical imperative." A hypothetical imperative occurs when, for example, "it is given that I want a certain end, [and] prudence determines the instrumental means by which I can achieve this end" (Beiner 134). As a result, judges will exercise prudence by employing rhetorical crafts that allow them to persuade men into following their will. For this reason, Kant does not believe aesthetic judgments have the power to generate hypothetical imperatives. Moreover, Kant views rhetoric and persuasion as inherently untrustworthy because they rob the spectator of his freedom to judge. To Beiner, however, the very aspects of rhetoric that Kant mistrusts are essential to understanding the communication techniques people can and do employ to make their ideas more persuasive. Any theory of political judgments that has real-world, practical applicability, then, must at the very least account for the persuasive power rhetorical techniques have over political judgments.

The problem of reconciling theory and practice stems from her lack of clarity around the roles of the judging spectator and the judging actor. Charlton Payne echoes Beiner's criticism in "Kant's Parergonal Politics: The *Sensus Communis* and the Problem

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[24] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for definition of "*phronēsis*."

of Political Action"; yet Payne makes the argument that Arendt's account of *sensus communis* in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* reduces the agent to the role of the spectator because her theory does not account for the agent's creativity. To Payne, to realize the full implications of Arendt's political theory, we must sharpen the definition of the creative genius within the process judging beautiful objects. Arendt conceives of the role of the genius as parergonal to Kant's theory of taste because the genius is necessary for objects of taste to exist but must be kept at bay in order to preserve the integrity of taste by preventing "too radically innovative activity" (Payne 245). Thus, Payne's primary issue is with Arendt's acceptance of the roles of the genius and the actor as secondary to the role of the spectator. Payne relies on Kant's philosophy, rather than Arendt, to argue that the only person who is allowed to act or create will be the sovereign, whereas the remainder of the citizens must accept their role of spectators. To Payne, Kant's theory of action inevitably leads to inequality, and Payne implies that he prefers a much more democratic approach where the public is not limited to observation but is also allowed to act and create.

Although Payne's objection is coherent, it is arguable that Arendt answers his concerns through her reconciliation of the seemingly paradoxical relationship between morally condemned action that we nonetheless approve of in politics. Furthermore, Arendt does not make it clear whether or not her own theory of political judgments adheres to the enlightened absolutist system Kant lived in.[25] One would guess that she

[25] William II was King of Prussia from 1786 until his death in 1797. William II's system of government is characterized as enlightened absolutism to distinguish its progression from the monarchical system. Enlightened absolutism, also known as enlightened despotism and benevolent absolutism, is a form of absolute monarchy inspired by the Enlightenment.

does not conceive of the public realm and legislation in the same way as Kant did in the late eighteenth century while living under the rule of an "enlightened" king. Nevertheless, Payne's objection is legitimized by the lack of clarity Arendt leaves around the roles of judging actor and judging spectator, and he also raises the important question of whether or not Arendt's adoption of Kant's aesthetics for political judgment implies that her theory of judgment is as anti-revolutionary as Kant's own political views.[26]

Beiner and Payne effectively point out how an aesthetic conception of politics creates a political theory that will have little impact on the political actions humans will continue to take as the world stage unfolds with time. The picture of an aestheticized politics necessarily assumes that Arendt has neatly aligned her work with an abstract philosophical program that is against practical reasoning and action. David Marshall's "The Origin and Character of Hannah Arendt's Theory of Judgment," argues that Arendt's notes from her reading of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in 1953 reveals her choice to see politics as centered on the rhetorical act of debate rather than a struggle for power. Importantly, Marshall connects Arendt's reading of Aristotle to her view that rhetoric is "the political element in aesthetics" (Arendt qtd. in Marshal 380).[27] Marshall notes that

Enlightened monarchs embrace rationality. Most enlightened monarchs were proponents of education and tolerated freedom of speech, various religions, and the citizens' right to own private property (Bristow).

[26] Kant's conception of the categorical imperative makes him opposed to revolution even though he is in favor of freedom of speech. Part of this reflects Kant's troubles when King Frederick William II censured his 1793 publication, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793). The struggle with censorship inspired Kant to publish *The Conflict of the* Faculties in 1798, which detail his thoughts on the relationship between the university and its philosophical and theological capacities (Rohlf).

[27] See Ancillae Vitae and Roldphe Gasché's *Persuasion, Reflection, Judgment: Ancillae Vitae* (2017) for a comprehensive study on how heavily of Arendt's work is influenced by Aristotle.

Arendt does not agree with Aristotle in entirety, but Marshal is able to detail how her engagement with Aristotle reveals her reconciliation of action and contemplation at the end of her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. In effect, "rhetoric politicizes judgment by distinguishing between those communities of hermeneuts that exercise judgment relative to matters that concern themselves only and those communities that judge only in matters pertaining to others" (Marshall 376). Marshall further illustrates how Aristotle's emphasis on practical reasoning in *Rhetoric* aids Arendt's conception of reflective judgments. This is especially evident in Arendt's translation of Aristotle's word for judgment (*krinein*) into two German verbs that she uses interchangeably, *urteilen* (judging) and *entscheiden* (deciding). To Aristotle, a spectator is incapable of making a genuine judgment unless it is possible he can act on it. In combination, then, Arendt's notes on Aristotle and her later reference to the verb *krinein* in her lectures reveal a lifelong acceptance of the interconnectedness of acting and judging. What is more, this interconnectedness refutes arguments that claim her final conceptions of judgment in the *vita contemplativa* are incompatible with her earlier framing of judgment as action in the *vita activa* with political import. Marshall's claim is further supported by Arendt's choice to conclude her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* with the creation of a "categorical imperative for action" drawn from her discussion of political judgments.

While Marshall offers much insight on the possibilities of a working aesthetic theory of politics in Arendt, Beiner's problems with her work extend beyond potential incompatibility with *phronesis* and the problem of reconciling action with contemplation.

Their views are similar but much more elaborated than Marshalls, so for the purpose of this literature review, will not be discussed until the next chapter.

Biener points out that another problem with Arendt's aestheticized politics arises within the strict formalism of Kantian judgments. More specifically, Kant relies on the notion of universal validity, which to Biener, causes one to unable to appeal to his particular community in order to make a political judgment—instead, he must seek to gain the entire assent of the universe (strictly speaking, all of humanity, since we have yet to discover extra-terrestrial species). The requirement of universal validity makes "the substantive needs, purposes, and particular ends of . . . [his] own community . . . strictly irrelevant to the judgment as those of any other" (Beiner 136). To add further credibility to his objection, Beiner refers to Hans-Georg Gadamer's criticism of Kantian judgments in Part 1 of Truth and Method. To Gadamer, Kant's rendering of *sensus communis* over-intellectualizes the term at the cost of removing its relevance from the particularities of a community. This move over-intellectualizes taste, a faculty that was once seen as sociological and moral. In place of Kant's abstract *sensus communis*, Gadamer offers a hermeneutical theory of judgment that appeals to Aristotle's theory of ethics.

Beiner's final criticism of Arendt's lectures revolves around his dissatisfaction with her solution for the seemingly incommunicability of taste. Because Kant conceives of judgment lacking concepts, it follows that Arendt, too, does not view the product of judgment to contain concepts; without concepts, one would not be able to engage in a verbal discussion of the political knowledge gained from a judgment. Beiner refers to Jürgen Habermas' essay, "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power," in which he makes the claim that Arendt's refusal to allow argument to resolve the gap between knowledge and opinion renders her theory unintelligible and practically inert:

> [s]he holds fast to the classical distinction between theory and practice; practice rests on opinions and convictions that cannot be true or false in the strict sense. . . . An antiquated concept of theoretical knowledge that is based on ultimate insights and certainties keeps Arendt from comprehending the process of reaching agreement about practical questions as rational discourse. (qtd. in Beiner 137)

Habermas argues that Arendt's division of theory and practice is outdated to the point that she fails to account for how one could possibly have a rational discussion about practical matters if their judgment of them does not involve concepts. To Habermas, there must be some sort of cognitive claims and truth-claims that occur during the process of judging, or at least after the process of judging occurs when one engages in a reflection and makes his judgment public. If there is no cognitive content implicative of truth claims involved in opinion, how could we even make sense of one's judgment?

Marshall's discussion of Arendt offers one potential solution for how one can debate the validity of a judgment if political judgments lack content. Marshall traces how Arendt's reading of Hegel's *The Science of Logic* in 1955 and illuminates her conception of reflective judgments, which is how she understand political as well as aesthetic judgments. Arendt accepted Hegel's argument that all judgments require the faculty of imagination in order for cognition to occur, and as a result, all genuine judgments are reflective, including synthetic judgments. Consequently, Arendt concluded that "in order to be capable of generating *topoi*, judgments must address themselves to phenomena that are complex to the point of being controversial—that is, capable of being characterized in different ways" (Marshall 374). Thus, a judgment that reveals the predicates in a subject

such as 'this wall is green' is not a genuine judgment because there is relatively little controversy in such a statement (Marshall 374). Since reflective judgments are not restricted to aesthetic judgments, they can allow for an acute investigation in cases where predicates are obscure because the subject perceives what "appear[s] immediately to the senses and yet also stand[s] in place of concepts that cannot appear immediately" (Marshall 375). Still, the issue remains as to whether or not the *topoi* judgments generate are discussed using concepts, in spite of the fact that these judgments occur precisely when concepts are not available to make sense of an experience of an object or event.

The objections Beiner, Payne, and Habermas raise are essential, yet their reliance on aspects of Kant's theory of judgment to object to Arendt's final fragments may blind them to her added nuances. For example, Arendt refers to the use of persuasion and argumentation in the public realm at multiple points throughout her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, which makes one wonder if she really does remove a rhetorical mode of discourse from her theory of judgments. Patricia Roberts-Miller's, in "Fighting Without Hatred: Hannah Arendt's Agonistic Rhetoric," suggests that Arendt's work cannot be placed into the stereotypical philosophy versus rhetoric dichotomy. Instead, Roberts-Miller argues that Arendt conceives of the public realm in her lectures as a place where participants use agonistic rhetoric: "Arendt does not propose a public realm of neutral, rational being who escape differences to live in the discourse of universals; she envisions one of different people who argue with passion, vehemence, and intensity" (589). Importantly, if Arendt understands public discourse as agonistic rhetoric in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, she uses a rhetorical mode that does not require persuasion but merely a non-violent discussion of different opinions. In this way, Arendt

may not violate Kant's philosophical system, which in fact relies heavily on his use of validity and autonomy in judgment rather than relativity and persuasion. In line with this claim is Arendt's extensive discussion on how the imagination, the operation of reflection, and *sensus communis* work together to make a judgment of taste communicable. One wonders if Arendt is implying that there is some sort of content we are able to speak of regarding judgments? If not, how does one communicate a judgment without content?

The Invisible Totalitarianism of the Sensus Communis, or Trending toward Totalitarianism: Answering the Critics, Part II

The second set of objections to Arendt's theory of judgment center around ambiguities in her conceptions of the *sensus communis* and her stance on the communicability of taste judgments. The majority of her critics build their arguments on Lyotard's radically transcendental interpretation of Kant's third Critique in his publications, "*Sensus Communis*"(1987) and *Lessons on the Analytic and the Sublime* (1991).[28] In both, Lyotard argues that the *sensus communis* is an ineffable figment of transcendental human cognition and is not something that any human being can capture cognitively even though they can "sense" it on the periphery of aesthetic experiences .

[28]I've used dates from Lyotard's original French publications to accurately reflect the progression of his work on Kant across time, but I rely on English translations in the biography. For the original French see the following: "Sensus Communis." *Le Cahier (Collège international de philosophie)*, vol.3, 1987, pp 67-87, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40972412 Accessed 12 July 2019 and *Leçons Sur L'analytique Du Sublime,* Galilée, 1987.

Lyotard is not afraid to admit that Kant, the master who he interprets, would not have agreed with his arguments on Kant. Kant's goal in the third Critique after all is dually theoretical as it is practical, for it is to literally form a bridge in Kant's complete system between the transcendental and physical realms. Kant's original discussion of the *sensus communis* leus unknown, and his descriptions of it push in opposing directions--both as pure theoretical conjecture and direct empirical mapping. This contradiction is clearly a problem, then, that originates in Kant's work yet Arendt fails to clarify in her own.

It ought not to surprise anyone that when Lyotard did read Arendt, he strongly opposed her goal of reconstruction political judgment by way of applying Kant's third Critique to the living and breathing the political world of appearances. In his 1989 essay "Le Survivant" (The Survivor), he describes her interpretation of Kant's *sensus communis* as "an abusively sociologizing reading."[29] Still, his initial distaste seems like obvious observations, and it would be interesting to further investigate how Arendt and Lyotard's differing interpretations of Kant are in dialogue with each other in a further study. For now, it is tempting to argue that Lyotard's interpretation of Kant was formed long before he read Arendt simply because she wasn't translated into French until the late 80s---in fact, the publication of Lyotard's criticism exists as part of a larger collection

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[29] The French occasion for publishing Lyotard and the English purpose for translating him have caused "Le Survivant" and "The Survivor" to be published in separate collections for different purposes (the French, general speculation, the English, giving students a survey of Lyotard's postmodern thought). Please see the following citation information for both French and English titles: *"*Le Survivant,*" Ontologie et politique: Actes du colloque Hannah Arendt*. Edited by Migel Abensour, Tierce: 257–76, 1989; "The Survivor," *Toward the Postmodern: Philosophy and Literary Theory*. Edited and Translated by Robert Harvey and Mark S. Roberts, Humanity Books, 1993.

Ontologie et politique: Actes du Colloque Hannah Arendt (Ontology and Politics: a Symposium on Hannah Ardent) was to gauge the first French reactions to Arendt from leading philosophers who were just now being introduced to her.[30] Still, as his 1991 *On the Analytic of the Sublime* indicates, he was not persuaded at all by Arendt, and his future writings maintain a consistent interpretation of Kantian judgment consistent with his consistent with his 1987 "Sensus Communis."

Lyotard begins by addressing the difficulty with understanding Kant's idea of *sensus communis* without transforming it into an *intellectio communis*. Lyotard would agree with Arendt's conception of the *sensus communis* as something that mediates between practical and theoretical reason yet does not result in practical moral imperatives. Nevertheless, Lyotard continues to grapple with the implications of an aesthetic experience as a feeling that people put on "house arrest" when they label something as beautiful (9). With this in mind, the idea of *sensus* is only analogical and there can be no real establishment of objectivity in beauty. Lyotard goes on to reject the idea of exemplary validity in aesthetic judgments because any type of example will act as a model tainted by reason and concepts. Lyotard uses this argument to support his radical claim that the idea of subjective universality in subjective aesthetic judgments does not refer to an empirical individual but "to the relationships of faculties with each other in the subject" (11). As a result, theory must leave behind the tempting anthropological interpretation of *sensus communis* and see that aesthetic pleasure is generated from

[30] For more on this Symposium, see Wolff, Francis. "Review of *Ontologie et politique, Hannah Arendt, Actes du Colloque H. Arendt*." *Les Études Philosophiques,* vol. 3, 1992, pp. 428-430, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/20848663. Accessed 9 July 2019.

harmony of the faculties during free play of the imagination. In contrast to the idea that aesthetic knowledge must be communicable, "the *sensus* is *index sui*" [the sense is a signifier of itself] (Lyotard 12). It is at this point that Lyotard reminds his readers that his ideas are interpretations of Kant's third Critique, for Kant is rather vague on how the *sensus communis* would appear were it to signify a concept outside of itself. Lyotard even asserts that Kant would not agree with his interpretation of s*ensus commmunis* as intersubjective harmony of the faculties because Kant's idea of exemplary validity require the hypothetical assent of every human being.

Lyotard is unclear as to whether his view dismantles the ability of Kantian aesthetic judgments to demand assent. One would guess that if one cannot demand assent from another on their aesthetic judgment, then these types of judgments would not have any claim for a validity. In spite of this, Lyotard does not try to disprove universal validity; instead, he maintains that universal validity is an idea that can never be experienced in reality, but is sensed ideal in the transcendental subject when judging a beautiful work of art. What is more, *sensus communis* is a supersensible idea that is natural to all subjects experiencing beauty. Universality is egalitarian, and implies that taste "hasn't conviction's means of argument, since itself it is unargued for" (Lyotard 18). Thus, the experience of beauty can still refer to harmony among the faculties that people cannot speak of without determining it, yet is an experience that all have the capacity to share.

Instead of assuming that an indeterminate conception of the *sensus communis* limits its existence to theory, Lyotard sees beauty as a feeling experienced daily, just not in full, cognitive and conscious awareness. To him, the *sensus communis* is "the task of

literatures and arts, the task of what is called writing to reinscribe it according to its miserable state, without filling its full, and without getting rid of it" (22-23). Ultimately, Lyotard's claim returns to the issue of the communicability of taste. Taste is both communicable and incommunicable, as we cannot put our sensation in the midst of judgment into words without determining it, yet we experience it when we read great works of literature and view artistic masterpieces.

Lyotard's concerns with the *sensus communis* inspire David Carroll's discussion of Arendt's work in "Community After Devastation: Culture, Politics, and the Public Space." In this essay, Carroll discusses how Arendt's notion of public space—the area in which a conglomerate of social, economic, cultural, and political opinions work to shape the ways individuals act and think in relation to their society—is under the constant threat of groups who wish to close the public space for selfish interests. Although Carroll agrees with Arendt's ideal of a free public space with equal-access to all citizens, he argues that Arendt does not resolve the question of how a public space can be open, common to all, and undetermined, even though Arendt turned to Kant's Third Critique primarily because she believed transposing it to a theory of political judgments would make a free public space possible.

Carroll turns to Habermas's and Lyotard's theories to discuss Arendt's reading of Kant's Third Critique, which he labels as unconventional, especially in respect to her interpretation of the Kantian "enlarged mentality," that is, how people go about transcending their subjective experience in order to communicate with others (168). As Habermas points out in "Hannah Arendt Communications Concept of Power," Arendt does not just view the shared judgments in a community as imagined, but she sees them

as based on "the 'presence' of empirical others" (Carroll 168). This, however, is problematic in two respects: (1) the required presence of others creates criteria for judgment, which violates Kant's argument that aesthetic judgments involve free play of the imagination; (2) the empirical group of people required for a community of judges necessitates the exclusion of those who are not present. Carroll goes on to build on Habermas's assertion by speculating whether "there is perhaps no communication-based theory of the political—whether privileging 'conversations,' open, noncoercive dialogue or even conflict, dissent, and the clash of opinions (as is the case for Arendt)—that does not depend on some sort of prior reduction of the possibilities of the public space, that is, on giving the public space a real or ideal form" (169). To Habermas and Carroll, then, Arendt's implications that critical judgments take place in practice through non-violent instances of persuasion is inherently flawed because persuasion inevitably leads to coercion and a closing of the public space.

Carroll gives more weight to his discussion of totalitarianism by applying Lyotard's conception of the *sensus communis* as a critical lens to Arendt's notions of communal consensus within the public space. Arendt, like Kant, turns to *sensus communis* as a feeling all people share that helps account for the general validity of aesthetic judgments; nevertheless, Carroll notes Lyotard would takes issue with Arendt's adoption of *sensus communis*, because unlike Kant, Arendt uses this term to support a community of undetermined, heterogeneous judgments. Lyotard argues that it makes little sense to ask how a community will find unity because the perpetual trait of the human race is that people create community through their unbound desire for it. Carroll notes that Lyotard's skepticism about the possibility of any community's ability—in

practice—to remain completely equal and open to new ideas should have been heeded by Arendt. To Carroll, Lyotard shows that Arendt's notion of public space is merely an ideal theory if the *sensus communis* that can never be articulated in reality. Any similiar attempt to do so will ultimately lead to a mass of unification by means of terror and coercion of the *sensus communis* and, therefore, universal consensus.

Carroll uses Jean-Luc Nancy's *La Communauté Désœuvrée* as a potential solution for Lyotard's central question: "what can a *communitas* be that isn't knitted into itself by a project?" (Lyotard 5). Nancy's *La Communauté Désœuvrée* articulates a possible way for political communities to exist in without predetermining heterogeneity in its members and leading to totalitarianism. Due to the human social tendency to reproduce ideologies, a theory on community must overcome the tendency to idealize a particular definition of community of the past.[31] To Nancy, a concept of community cannot be known or identified. Community is shapeless and instead of being one with other members of a community, people simply recognize that they share a common existence. Moreover, the only place where a community can be understood to reside is within a shared "non-communicable limit of communication" (Carroll 189).

Nancy proposes a new praxis by developing a new mode of discourse for community. To find to this new discourse, Nancy turns to language, which like community's lack of signification, always refers to something that has passed. What must be investigated is a theory of a literary communion—who can write, what should be

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[31] A recent example of this is evident in Trump's election slogan "Make America Great Again," especially considering that the slogan presents the restoration of a historically inaccurate vision of idealized white communities as its primary goal.

written, and how should we understand the methods people use to share community in the act of writing. Nancy argues that writing should not be understood as work or production, just as community and the beings within it should not be understood as producers. Writing, in fact, undoes community, just as it is essential to it. More specifically, writing and reading literature exposes the limits of community and the impossibility of a complete communion of its members. Nevertheless, it is through literature that "singular beings share their limits, share each other on their limits. They escape the relationships of society ('mother' and 'son,' 'author' and reader,' 'public figure' and 'private figure,' 'producer' and 'consumer'), but they are in community, and are unworked" (Nancy 41). Ultimately, literature saves community from the death drive resulting from an individual's forced identification and sublation with the immanent ideal, for the act of writing aids the infinite need to fulfill the imperative of discussing community and preserving it from its own destruction.

Carroll accepts Nancy's notion that community manifests itself in literature in spite of any ideological misunderstandings that accompany this claim, because literary works are constantly in the process of reshaping themselves. On the whole, we can never articulate our sense of commonness, and art (understood as literature) functions to destroy this by showing the limits of communication and our sense of publicness. Moreover, art leads us to a sense of contradiction and fragmentation in social identity, protecting communities from their inherent drive to eliminate diversity in pursuit of homogeneity.

In "Communal Narcosis and Sublime Withdrawal: The problem of Community in Kant's Critique of Judgment," Vivasvan Soni uses Nancy's theory of the "inoperative

community" to conceive of a solution for thinking about community in a way where individuals can live in relation to one another without promoting fatal homogeneity. To Soni, Kant's own theory of community contains an inoperative community at its core. To explain this, Soni argues aesthetic judgments are an essential precursor to the possibility of community; thus, aesthetic judgments should not be seen as separate from the political, but as an opening to the possibility of politics.

Nevertheless, pulling a rational idea of community from the Third Critique requires more ingenuity. Soni turns to Nancy's term "inoperative community" to deal with this problem, arguing that Nancy's term resists a traditional construct of an empirical community homogenized through a rational form of common sense, predetermined communication, and an empirical conception of taste that operates by means of education and validity through the consensus of others. Before delving into Nancy's idea of the "inoperative community," Soni turns to Kant's own discussion on the possibility of "a politics of finitude . . . in his account of the community of aesthetically judging subjects" (17). To Soni, there are two functions of judgments of the beautiful: (1) "a will to community" through a required consensus (17); (2) a resistance of the coercion of other's judgments by replacing an empirical community with an inoperative one. With this in mind, attacks on Kant's aesthetic theory are unwarranted when they interpret Kant's view of the *sensus communis* as a bourgeois ideal of homogenous universal consensus. In fact, instead of a concrete and determinate community, Kant shows us a "mourning" for community through this incommunicable experience where "the inoperative community remains doubly invisible within the Critique, first because it is masked by the community of harmonious agreement; second because it can never be

given in the plentitude of experience" (Soni 18). This leads Soni to argue that Kant unconsciously conceals this inoperative community in his Third Critique, leaving the empirical notion of community as a presupposed projection; nevertheless, an empirical conception of community cannot work in reality, and thus, Kant's work serves as the springboard the "inoperative community."

These objections raise the question of whether or not Arendt's interpretation of Kant's *sensus communis* inadvertently leads to a conception of a totalitarian community, and if an attempt at applying Arendt's theory of judgment to 21st Century politics will inevitably sort groups into a homogenous totality. What is more, Nancy's conception of an inoperative community and the use of literature to unwork community may be irreconcilable with Arendt's interpretation of Kant's Third Critique as a theory of judgment that creates general unification by means of assent.

The common comparison of Arendt's late theory of judgment to Nancy's inoperative community raises the question of *where* judgment is to take place and *where* community is to be found, especially since Arendt left us with unclear answers to these questions. Nancy's comments on the inoperative community indicate that he places the inoperative community in literature; similarly, Lyotard argues that the *sensus communis* cannot be fully grasped yet is always sought in the creation of the arts and literature, which leads to a position that taste judgments are neither communicable nor incommunicable. In contrast, Arendt leaves us with a characterization of judgment in terms of a spectator who is removed from all action and creation and, therefore, capable of putting himself or herself into the minds of others and anticipating what he or she will think: "by closing one's eyes one becomes an impartial, not a directly affected, spectator

of visible things. The blind poet" (Arendt 68). Like Lyotard and Nancy, Arendt argues that judgment is a task that will never be finished: "there is no point at which we might stand still and look back with the backward glance of the historian" (Arendt 77).

At this point, whether or not Arendt intends to characterize her sense of community, and in effect, the judging community, as a physical reality in the here and now or only something to be hinted at, is unclear. It is impossible to say whether Arendt would have elaborated more on the applicability of her theory of taste judgments to practice had she lived to complete *The Life of the Mind*. The notes Arendt left behind on the practice of taste judgments often shy away from practical details in favor of technical discussions of judgment's abstract functions. What Arendt does make clear of judgment's practical manifestations can be boiled down to Arendt's application of judgment to The Amerian and French Revolutions in Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy and her frequent statements in these lectures that historians and poets are capable of judging and ascertaining the viewpoints of others, which in effect culls meaning from the past and reconciles us to it.

This review has not exhausted criticism on Arendt's theory of judgment, but it surveys the leading interpretations of her late fragments on judgment. Critics that favor political theories with practical application, such as Beiner and Payne, find Arendt's late fragments on reflective judgments to be incompatible with the practice of judging politics; Habermas, too, views Arendt's conception of judgment as impractical because she relies on antiqued conceptions of theory and practice. Habermas' objections to Arendt's fragments on judgment align with Carroll's, and both agree that Arendt naïvely assumes that a communication based theory of judgment leads to a democratic ideal of

open public spaces where people can debate in harmony. Carroll compares Lyotard's conception of the *sensus communis* to Arendt, and he illustrates how Lyotard may have interpreted Arendt's concept of the *sensus communis* as problematic because she attempts to place it in a closed community. Carroll concludes by arguing in favor of Nancy's conception of an inoperative community because it fosters openness, diversity in our concept of community that fosters diversity and progress. Soni, a Kant scholar, further illustrates the benefits of applying Nancy's inoperative community to Kant's Third Critique, and he concludes that Kant subconsciously mourned the absence of an empirical community within his concept of *sensus communis*, and as a result, his theory of judgment contains an inoperative community at its core.

The importance Marshall and Roberts-Miller place on Arendt's use of rhetoric in her theory of judgment suggests that she combines traditionally rhetorical conceptions of judgment with Kantian aesthetics. If they are right, then arguments that claim Arendt should have, but did not, account for a practical application in her theory of judgment, miss the full scope of her ideas. Ancillae Vitae and Rodolphe Gasché's 2017 publication offers a booklength study of all of Arendt's works, and from the beginning, it is quite clear that awareness of Aristotle is just as essential to understanding all of Arendt's work on judgment as it is to understanding her early work on political action.

Their reliance on Aristotle accompanied by Marshall's indicates that more discussion of implicit rhetoric in Arendt's fragments on judgment will be necessary to fully grasp the extent to which she integrates the formalistic aspects of Kantian aesthetic judgments with practice. Whether or not her utilization of rhetoric and application of judgment to practice is implicitly totalitarian is another matter entirely. Gaining a better

picture of how her theory of judgment exists in practice will allow a more accurate assessment of whether or not critics like Carroll and Soni are right to favor Nancy's concept of an inoperative community.

CHAPTER 2

WHERE KANT ENDS AND ARENDT BEGINS: JUDGING THE BEAUTY OF POLITICAL APPEARANCES IN A WORLD OF HUMAN ARTIFICE

As discussed in the previous chapter, leading criticism of Arendt's theory of contemplative judgment can be sorted into two groups based on the foundation of their objections: the first group argues Kant's highly abstract account of aesthetic judgments is fundamentally incompatible with the practice of political judgment, and therefore, a wayward departure from her compelling vision of judgment as political action based upon Aristotelian *phronesis*. The other group of critics anticipate that her politicization of Kant's theory of judgment in practice transforms his philosophical ideals of universal validity and the *sensus communis* into a totalitarian reality where the desire for universal homogeneity destroys the political realm altogether.

While these views are quite convincing, Marshall's interpretation of the Aristotelian influences implicit in her theory of judgment and Robert-Millers's choice to conceive of Arendtian judgment as the practice of debate in public space demonstrate that her fragments on judgment in the *vita contemplativa* are as implicitly Aristotelian as they are explicitly Kantian. Marshall demonstrates how her discussion of Kantian reflective judgment is consistent with her 1953 notes on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, where she translates the Greek term for judgment (*krinein*) into two German verbs that she uses interchangeably, *urteilen* (judging) and *entscheiden* (deciding). Thus, when Arendt discusses the spectator removed from action, it is likely that she would have also adopted Aristotle's notion that one is incapable of making a genuine judgment unless it is possible he can act on it. Of even greater significance is her comment that "rhetoric is the political

element in aesthetics" (Arendt qtd. in Marshal 380). One can see that before Arendt turned to using Kantian aesthetics as a model for political judgment she conceived of both rhetoric and politics as intertwined in aesthetics.

What Arendt means by aesthetics ought to be separated from postmodern conations of the term. In "Politics versus Aesthetics: Arendt's Critique of Nietzsche and Heidegger," Lawrence J. Bikowski separates Arendt's definition of aesthetics from the postmodern impetus to aestheticize the political in order to circumvent the tyrannical imposition of instrumental reason. This schism between the sensory and the supersensory realm was first noticed by Nietzsche when he wrote of the destruction of metaphysics and religion in the wake of modernity. Postmodern aestheticians following the tradition of Nietzsche have used a radical aesthetic of self to define the relationship between the individual and the world, where substantive theories of ethics, morality, and politics are discarded in favor of a perfection of form and an explication of action and judgment in stylistic terms of impression, gesture, rhythm, and symbolization (62). While Arendt and Nietzsche share a mutual recognition of the destruction of traditional frameworks of reference to comprehend the realities of modernity, they do not share the same solution (68). Arendt's own definition of aesthetic avoids postmodern implications, as she relies on Kantian aesthetics to form her theory of political judgment only because he conceives of judgment as reflective rather than determinate or subsumptive. Nevertheless, while Arendt sees aesthetics as relevant to politics, she does not collapse the two, but rather views reflective judgment as revealing a novel way to revive an ethical and morally responsible relationship between the self, others, political communities, and the world (66).

Still, to say that Arendt falls back on Kant, rather than substituting aesthetics for morality, ethics, and politics does not offer a positive definition for what she means by aesthetics. Moreover, the question of how to conceive of rhetoric as the political element in aesthetics remains unanswered without first investigating what rhetoric is, much less politics, and the relationship of all three categories to one another. Due to these blind spots, it is of the upmost importance to fully establish both the implicit and explicit allusions to rhetoric in her fragments on judgment, especially when she combines them with elements of Kantian aesthetic judgments. Once a definition of rhetoric is better established, Arendt's conceptions of the political and the aesthetic are more easily gleaned from her oeuvre.

Establishing the Compatibility of Kantian judgment within the Rhetoric Tradition

Before investigating Arendt's unique understanding of rhetoric as the phenomenological appearance of the political aesthetic, it is essential to first establish the relationship between the rhetorical tradition and Kant's metaphysical system within which aesthetic judgment operates. Without this understanding, it is quite easy to assume, like many of Arendt's critics, Arendt's task was doomed from the start given that Kant disdained rhetoric and would have viewed the persuasive arts as manipulative tactics that destroyed the autonomy of the judging subject. Luckily for the sake of this study, popularity of establishing a Kantian rhetoric has boomed in the last decade. Kant remains such a central figure to philosophy that many scholars of rhetoric have investigating him, leaving behind a variety of sources who define just what they mean by Kantian rhetoric. Even more, some scholars have also noticed links between Kantian judgment and

Aristotle's *phronesis*, suggesting that Arendt's own adaption of Kant was ahead of her time rather than naive idealism.

Scott R. Stroud devotes his book length study, *Kant and the Promise of Rhetoric*, to appraising the role of rhetoric, both implicit and explicit, in Kant's philosophical system. Stroud defines rhetoric in simple terms as "the art of persuasion through communicative means" (4). Stroud places large importance on not grouping rhetoric in the binary argument of rhetoric as persuasive appeal versus philosophy as logical appeal by offering a refined definition of rhetoric as "human communicative practices oriented toward persuasion, belief formation, and actionable change" (7). The definition of rhetoric as placing emphasis on human communication, especially regarding communication between two or more individuals with the goal of swaying their beliefs and mobilizing political action groups, is helpful for understanding how rhetoric is implicit within both Kant's and Arendt's work on judgment. The assumption that her conceptions of judgment in *vita activa* and *vita contempletiva* are contradictory by a natural incompatibility of theory and practice comes into question when one considers that her initial model for judgment, Aristotle's conception of *phronesis*, is intentionally combined with her reinterpretation of Kantian judgment in her later works, "The Crisis in Culture," "Truth and Politics," *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, and *The Life of the Mind*.

Kant and Rhetoric: The Roles of Affect and Cognition in Judgment

An investigation of the growing research on the implicit rhetoric within Kant's theory of judgment is necessary before delving into Arendt's own adaptations. In "The Implicit Affection Between Kantian Judgment and Aristotelian Rhetoric," Joseph

Tinguely discusses the breadth of recent scholarship linking Immanuel Kant with rhetoric, and he goes on to assert that Kant's theory of judgment reveals "an inclusive relation between affectivity and cognitive judgment" (1).[32] This inclusivity, however, defies the traditional assumptions of philosophy that rationality and sensibility cannot coexist within the same framework. To clarify the necessity of the interworking of affect within the cognitive framework of perceptual judgments, Tinguely turns to a close reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. There are three overlaps in Kantian judgment and Aristotelian rhetoric that illustrate the unity of affect, logic, and communication, which in turn explain (1) how communicative capacities shape initial perception of objects; (2) how individual's communicative capacities shape their perception for the world as a whole; (3) how broad mental frameworks interact with specific affective states. These overlaps are significant, for they "adumbrate an integrated picture of the affective sensibilities and cognitive capacities largely missing from the contemporary landscape" (Tinguely 1).

Tinguely is quick to point out that his argument is separate from any relation between Aristotle and Kant as scholars. To date, there has been no evidence that Kant read Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; moreover, Kant limits his discussion of rhetorical theory to vilification of the *ars oratoria*. Tinguely refers to Kant's famous incendiary review in the

[32] Tinguely does not offer a clear definition of how he is using "affect" in his article, but his translation of Aristotle's *pathē* as "affects" is indicative of his intended meaning (see p. 5). Furthermore, Tinguely periodically substitutes "affect" with "aesthetic," indicating that he also views Kantian pleasure/displeasure as in the same category as Aristotle's conception of *pathos* (see p. 5-6).

Third Critique of the coercive thought processes at work in oration, which Kant argues hinder the necessary free agency for autonomous judgment:

> [t]he explicit treatment of rhetoric in the *Critique of Judgment,* for instance, is especially critical if not downright hostile. In one particular dramatic passage (5:327n), oratory is vilified as the 'insidious art that . . . came to its peak both in Athens and Rome only at a time when the state was hastening to its ruin, and any true patriotic way of thinking was extinct.' (qtd. in Tinguely 198)

Consequently, the *ars oratoria* is deemed 'unworthy of any respect whatsoever' (qtd. in Tinguely 198). It is often noted in scholarship that Kant's explicit objection to rhetoric in this passage is its capacity 'to move people like machines to a judgment,' which is perceived as a threat to the internal autonomy required for moral judgment" (qtd. in Tinguely 2). Tinguely argues that Kant's dislike of rhetoric is systematic and complete, rather than arising in a few offhand remarks. As evidence, Tinguely cites Don Paul Abbot's study, "Kant, Theremin, and the Morality of Rhetoric," in which Abbot demonstrates Kant's distaste for rhetoric aesthetically and epistemologically, for *ars oratoria* "is less beautiful than poetry (e.g., 7:247) and less truthful than logical demonstration" (e.g., 9:16-17) (1992, 531)" (Kant qtd. in Tinguely 2).

Tinguely goes on to cite recent scholastic trends on Kant and rhetoric that illustrate how, while Kant is not friendly with rhetoric, rhetorical theory is essential for understanding the Kantian system. Instead of focusing on what Kant explicitly says about rhetoric, these scholars focus on how rhetorical theory is implicit within Kant's philosophical system. Important studies include Samuel McCormick's "The Artistry of

Obedience" (2005) and Pat Gehrke's "Turning Kant Against the Priority of Autonomy," (2002) where both focus on Kant's use of rhetoric in the practice of his philosophical writings. Of further importance is Gina Ercolini's recent study, "Ethics Improper: The Embodied Ethics of Kant's Anthropology." Ercolini offers an exposition of Kant's "Pragmatic Anthropology" to reveal the communicative techniques Kant must employ in order to connect his abstract moral principles to ethical practices in political communities.

Tinguely reviews Stroud's study, "Kant on Education and Rhetorical Force of the Example," as a successful step toward understanding the combination of epistemic, moral, and affective forces at work in Kant's practical philosophy. Here, Stroud reviews Kant's adoption of *hypotyposis*, a rhetorical technique where an author explains abstract ideas by means of providing examples of concrete experiences and/or illustrations. To Tinguely, Stroud effectively argues that examples are a means of persuasion because they do not communicate through assertoric claims but by placing the audience into a specific disposition in order to enter the necessary state of mind required to experience the presented concept or object (Stroud 426). *Hyptotyposis* is especially prevalent where Kant discusses morality using epistemic terminology, yet cannot teach morality without communicating the affective state his audience must experience in order to navigate ethical particularities (Strout 426-427). Of importance to Tinguely is Stroud's emphasis on the affectivity and communicability of perceptual judgments.

Tinguely steps back to note that Stroud's purpose in the study is not to present a unified account of affectivity and rhetoric; and in effect, Stroud has not presented us with a defensible portrait. Kant's use of *hypotyposis*, while a compelling account

demonstrating affect working *on* the framework of judgment, does not demonstrate the necessary state of affect working *within* the judging process itself. After all, in the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant defines judgment as "the faculty for thinking of the particular as contained under the universal" (5: 179). As Tinguely explains, "the problem [with judgment] arises because a dominant picture of the human mind draws a categorical distinction between affection and cognition and thereby makes any claim to their integration appear false by definition" (5). This confuses readers when they read Kant's critique of aesthetic judgments because they often fail to interpret Kant's integration of pleasure and displeasure as operating within the same logical structure of the judging process. After all, if readers maintain that cognition and affect are mutually exclusive, then they must also assume that the affective feeling of Kantian judgment either precedes or follows the cognitive process of judgment but is not integrated into the judging process itself.

The link between communication and judgment is shared by both Kant and Aristotle, which becomes evident when reviewing their shared conception that communicative capacities are working at the base of perception. To understand Kant's placement of mankind's communicative capacities as integral to empirical perception and transcendental analysis, Tinguely emphasizes Kant's profound statement in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (A51/B75).[33] Here, Kant argues that we cannot perceive anything if we cannot articulate it—so in essence, seeing without knowing how to describe what we are seeing

[33] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for definition of "intuition."

takes away our ability to comprehend what it is that we see (Tinguely 6). Tinguely thinks Kant's argument here does not seem so leftfield if we review how Aristotle anticipated his view. Tinguely quotes Aristotle's anthropological writings in the *Poetics*, noting that here he alludes to the *Rhetoric*: "What, indeed, would be the good of the speaker, if things appeared in the required light even apart from anything he says?" (qtd. in Tinguely 6). Through the observation that we would not need to speak if vision told us everything, Aristotle, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, makes the argument that human beings are not merely sentient (*zōon*), but are *zōon logon echon*— sentient by means of our rational and communicative capacities (qtd. in Tinguely 6). In other words, we do not speak to interpret what we see, rather, we speak to make sense of what we see and to gain consensus on our shared interpretation of the exterior world.

Nevertheless, Kant and Aristotle operate from vastly different metaphysical foundations for their philosophical systems. As Tinguely points out, we miss many similarities between Kant and Aristotle because Kant painstakingly places his conceptual framework at the transcendental level, whereas Aristotle deals primarily with empirical matters (Tinguely 6-7). In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant goes to great lengths to distinguish his definition of transcendental cognition as "occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*" (A11/B25). Kant's unique conception of the transcendental was revolutionary, so much so that he felt a need to publish the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* because his critics failed to grasp what he meant by "transcendental" in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant corrects critical misinterpretation of "transcendental" by explaining that it "does not signify something passing beyond all experience

[transcendent] but something that indeed precedes it *a priori,* but that is intended simply to make cognition of experience possible."[34] This unique definition of transcendental extends to Kantian transcendental idealism, which hinges on the concept that we cannot experience things in themselves [*noumena*] but merely their appearances [*phenomena*], and therefore, space and time are subject to our senses as intuitions but do not independently constitute things in themselves (A369).[35] As Tinguely points out, a large part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* consists of Kant's effort to explain the task of the transcendental schematism, which in short, accounts for how humans are able to extend the pure concepts of the understanding to the objects they perceive in space and time.[36]

Nevertheless, Tinguely points out that Kant does not expound on how human's cognitive capacities are working within their perceived experiences, especially regarding the scenario where rhetorical methods are employed to direct judgments by manipulating perception (7) Due to this, Kant leaves a gap between theory and practice, which has led to varying, and often unsatisfying, interpretations of how theoretical determinant and reflective judgments are to be formed when we are faced with practiced application to matters of particular experiences.

While Kant does not think that the problem of judgment working on the empirical level constitutes the same type of paradox as the transcendental schematism, he pays some attention to its extensive problems. Tinguely believes this problem is summarized in the fact that our communicative capacities are supposed to be structuring and

[34] 373n48.
[35] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for a description of the functioning of space and time as pure intuitions.
[36] See Appendix: Glossary of Terms for definition of "schematism."

informing our perceptual experience, yet "that experience would not be possible unless it had already been determined which concepts are supposed to give logical form to which intuitions" (Tinguely 8). In other words, there is an unresolved interdependence on the relationship between understanding and practical experience. In spite of his efforts, Kant leaves an unresolved gap between our transcendental knowledge of general concepts and our ability to subsume one particular experience under them. The obvious point is that judgment is supposed to transport us through this gap by subsuming particular sense experiences under general concepts, yet Kant does not create a higher rule to determine exactly how this process is supposed to occur; instead, Kant labels the misapplication of intuitions and concepts to sense experiences as stupidity. Stupidity is not a failure to judge, but incorrect judgment (Tinguely 9).

Tinguely steps back to point out that the problem of judgment—the application of the particulars of sensed experience to general concepts—is a problem of semantics that rhetorical and philosophical methodologies share. Inevitably, matters of judgment bring about the issue of semantic description and redescription, for lived experience is vaster than an isolated object in space and time. In practice, one can see that a single sensed object can be matched or mismatched to multiple empirical concepts, which in themselves range in levels of generality and specificity. For example, one must use semantic description and redescription to sort through varying concepts ranging from object to animal to mammal to dog before they can transition from perceiving a dog and becoming cognizant that *what* they are seeing is a dog (Tinguely 10).

The requirements of semantic description and redescription bring about moral ambiguities in a number of situations. Tinguely invokes Quintilian's use of *paradiastole*,

a figure of speech where by means of "'rhetorical redescription,' you can 'call yourself wise rather than cunning, or courageous rather than overconfident, or careful rather than parsimonious' " (qtd. in Tinguely 11). Returning to the example of a dog in a single scenario, a man can accurately describe his dog as well-trained when it defends him from an intruder, yet the attacked mailman's description of the man's dog as vicious is also accurate. Obviously, the problem of judgment arises in this example because the same object, scenario, or event can be described in accurate yet contradictory terms based upon the spatial relation and preceding mental and emotional background of both subjects. Importantly, the rhetorical argument over which words should be used to describe the dog can exist because of the philosophical assumption that there is an inherent relationship between the appearance of an object and the concepts we use to describe it.

Aristotle is also concerned with the way description, subjective disposition, and language affect judgment, yet his work on rhetoric does not have an equivalent concept to *paradiastole*. Nevertheless, Aristotle devotes sections in his *Rhetoric*, *Poetics*, and *Metaphysics* to answer the question of how humans go about judging objects of experience. Judging an object or situation does not occur in a cognitive void. Rather, the judging subject, with a preceding emotional and mental background, chooses which concept(s) to apply to an event or object by picking out the relevant, or salient, circumstances of a particular situation. To describe this occurrence, Aristotle, in his "book of definitions" contained within the *Metaphysics*, defines the term "disposition" (*diathesis*) as " 'the order of that which has parts, either with respect to place, or with respect to potency, or with respect to kind; for there must be a position of a sort, as the word "disposition" indicates' " (qtd. in Tinguely 13). Here, disposition (*diathesis*) refers

to the phenomenon where we cannot understand the internal properties of an object or the salient features that make it significant unless we look at the object's relationship to the wider order (*taxis*) that contains it (Tinguely 13). Diathesis is both internal to the subject and external to the object. For better understanding of this concept, Tinguely provides the example of the star Polaris ("pole star"); the name, "pole star" does not refer to properties within the star, but to the relation someone has when viewing the star from Earth and comparing it to its position in the wider order of the galaxy. Someone on a different planet can look at the same star without it being their "pole star." In this simple example, the identity of an object and the truth claims about the object change without internal properties of the object changing, all because of disposition.

Aristotle is concerned with the effect of *diathesis* when dealing with the affective disposition of the judging subject. Tinguely points out that in book II of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, "the underlying connection between the diathesis of the object and diathesis of the subject very much matters to the work of rhetoricians who must learn how to 'prepare the judge' ('*ton kritēn kataskeuazein*' [1377b]) by actively 'disposing the listener in some way' ('*ton akroaten diatheinai pōs'* [1356a])" (2007, 38) (Tinguely 14). Thus, not only does the disposition refer to objective frame of reference of which the object is part, but it also refers to the psychological disposition of the judging listeners. The implication of Aristotle's argument here is that there is an inherent, rather than "nominal connection" between the internal disposition of the judge and the external disposition of the object up for judgment (Tinguely 18). In practice, the internal and external disposition of an object are necessary to take into account, for logical consistency, a criterion for accurate perception and judgment, does not solely suffice for an argument's persuasive power.

Aristotle's task in the *Rhetoric* is to show how there are extraconceptual conditions—both the external context of an object or event and the internal emotional state of the audience—that an orator must endeavor to press upon an audience if he hopes to persuade them of a point. A claim may be true and presented with accurate language, but an audience will deem it as irrelevant or inaccurate if it is presented outside of the proper context. Tinguely provides the example of a party appealing to an audience that a guest ought to pay for furniture he broke. This request, however, is denied, when the audience becomes aware that the guest had a sudden health problem that caused him to break the chair, and thus, cannot be held morally responsible for breaking the furniture because he was not in control of his actions.

The need to take into account, and possibly alter, the internal disposition of the judging audience by reframing the objective context of an argument leads into Aristotle's conception of *pathē*, which he defines at the beginning of book II in the *Rhetoric* as "'those things through which undergoing change, people come to differ in their judgments'" Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 2.113; qtd. in Tinguely 5). Aristotle argues that of *pathē* arises in moments where the orator, desiring a particular outcome in judgment from an audience, intentionally predisposes the audience "'to feel *pathos* by the speech'" (qtd. in Tinguely 18). Here, the stereotypical aspect of rhetoric comes to mind if one imagines, for example, a preacher predisposing his audience to feel guilty through his sermon in hopes that they will judge it necessary to pay tithe. Aristotle's discussion of *pathē*, however, runs deeper than the scene where one uses emotional manipulation to gain a desired outcome in judgment from an audience. In fact, reflecting on the traditional pedagogical conception of *pathos* as a means for strictly emotional appeals ignores the

integral relation Aristotle places between judgment and *pathos*, which, brings "people to differ in their judgments." As Tinguely points out, *pathos* does not have a mere causal relationship with judgment but is in fact an integral element working *within* the process of judgment. Thus, in order for one to judge a scene correctly, one must be affected by it in a particular way. Since the Stoics, we have traditionally argued that rational judgments are what alter emotional states. Still, Aristotle posits the opposite—that *pathos* controls rationality, meaning we cannot make a correct rational judgment unless we are first in the correct emotional state.

Initially, locating similar extra-conceptual factors occurring within Kant's theory of judgment can seem forced. As Tinguely points out, in the first three critiques, Kant treats judgment as an abstract matter, where one intuition is paired with one concept. Without an example of the complexity of judging lived experience, readers may assume that applying judgment to lived experience is merely a process of "rapid-fire succession" of single intuitions with single concepts (Tinguely 15). Nevertheless, Kant's conception of judgment is much more complex, and some of his lesser-known essays provide more in-depth examples of judging live experience. Tinguely focuses on Kant's 1786 "Orientation" essay because it is rife with the extra-conceptual aspects of theory and provides illustrations demonstrating the similarity of Kant's conception of judging perception to Aristotle's concept of *diathesis*. Here, "Kant imagines a 'joke' in which a prankster 'moved all the objects around . . . in a room that is familiar to me . . . so that what was previously on the right was now on the left' " (qtd. in Tinguely 15). With the surroundings having been turned on their head, Kant imagines that he "would be quite unable to find anything in a room whose walls were otherwise wholly identical" (qtd. in

Tinguely 15). Like Aristotle's argument with *diathesis*, Kant argues that one would be unable to judge his surroundings without first being familiar with his orientation to them. The implication here is that for us to be able to form even the most basic judgments of perception, we must be oriented both to the whole of our surroundings and to the single part we are judging; in other words, judgment of the whole requires judgment of the part, just as judgment of the part requires judgment of the whole. In this way, a single judgment of something seemingly small within the world implies a judgment about the world as a whole. Tinguley thinks that this realization illuminates Kant's argument that "intuitions without concepts are blind." In short, to be able to perceive, we must already be filled with conceptual knowledge, which in itself implies our abilities to use language and process how our world has taught us to see.

Extra-conceptual aspects of Kantian judgments extend from orientation to feeling. As stated earlier, popular knowledge of Kant indicates that he does not believe how something feels dictates objective reality. Moreover, readers often interpret the feelings of pleasure and displeasure associated with aesthetic judgment as either preceding or produced by judgment, and thus, separate from the judging process. These arguments are based on Kant's de-intellectualization of feeling in all three of the critiques. As Tinguely points out, in the first critique, Kant point blank states that "feeling is not a faculty whereby we represent things but lies outside our whole faculty of knowledge" (A801/B829). Similarly, Kant's separation of feeling and knowledge continues in the Third Critique, where Kant explains that the subjective feeling of pleasure we experience during aesthetic judgments is just that—subjective feeling, not knowledge about an object (5:228).

Kant's work on aesthetic judgment demonstrates an ambiguous relationship between feeling and rationality within the faculty of judgment. On the one hand, Kant fears that feeling distracts people from arriving at a truthful assessment of an argument by themselves. This fear of the relationship between affect and judgment, as Tinguely explains, exists within Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as well where Aristotle discusses the dangers of *pathē*. In Book 2 of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explains that he introduces rhetorical techniques beyond logic, such as tone, arrangement, delivery, and style, because he feels that one needs these rhetorical skills to arm themselves against the "corruption of the audience," who will be too common, and thus, unintelligent, to be persuaded by logical appeals (qtd. in Tinguely 19). With this attitude, it is almost as if Aristotle would have agreed with Kant's distrust of rhetoric, yet he concedes that he has the skill to impart how one can use the weapon of rhetoric as a corrupt means for a good end. Yet, on the other hand, passages in Aristotle and Kant concede that feeling and judgment also have a place together in which affect does not inhibit rationality but aids it.

Tinguely takes an interesting passage from Kant's *Anthropology* in order to show how, even for Kant, context is an important part of perception. Kant uses the German *Laune* to mean an affective state just as Aristotle defines *pathē* as an emotional disposition:

> *Laune*, in its favorable sense, means the talent enabling us to put ourselves at will into a certain disposition, in which everything is judged in a way quite different from the usual one (even opposite of it) . . . but yet is judged in conformity with certain principles of reason [present] in such mental attunement. (qtd. in Tinguely 20-21)

Tinguely points out that the striking aspect of this passage is that Kant reveals that *Laune*, as one's mood or disposition, works hand in hand with the rational processes in judgment, and not always in a way that opposes rationality. Here, Kant explains how certain states of *Laune* allow us to judge from a perspective that is rational even if the judgment in question is only accessible from this specific affective disposition. To be sure, Kant writes this passage after disparaging those whose *Laune* is whimsical, and therefore, in their sudden attacks of joy or grief, are incapable of judging rationally (Tinguely 20). Yet, the point to take here is that even to Kant, the preceding emotional state of the judge works with cognition rather than against it.

In Kant, we see how judging an object as beautiful requires a proper affective disposition toward a beautiful object to inspire the free play of the imagination. As Tinguely has pointed out, reviewing the concept of *paradiostol* along with Aristotle's conceptions of *diathesis* and *pathē* in juxtaposition to Kant shows how judgment and communication depend on being oriented to the world, and that this orientation is both cognitive and emotional. Moreover, Kant's and Aristotle's works show how cognition and feeling are linked in the judging process, so much so that the question of a judgment's validity includes the proper feeling as orientation regarding the judgment.

"The Crisis in Culture": The Overlapping of Aristotelian Phronēsis and Kantian Judgment

The connection between affect and rationality in judgment up to this point has shown how rhetoric, as a persuasive art of communication, can play a role in judgment that is not necessarily manipulative of rational thought processes. While Kant's theory of reflective judgment signals the coexistence of affect and cognition, Arendt goes beyond

Kant's transcendental understanding of judgment to create a unique theory of political judgment in the empirical realm where rhetoric can exist as a political aesthetic.

In "The Crisis in Culture: Its Political Significance," Arendt translates Kant's Third Critique in a way that directly invokes the art of rousing emotion and rationality simultaneously in the act of judging. In her translation, Arendt emphasizes that agreement in taste judgments rely on a type of cajoling that is shared with political discussions.

> Taste judgments, furthermore, are currently held to be arbitrary because they do not compel in the sense in which demonstrable facts or truth proved by argument compel agreement. They share with political opinions that they are persuasive; the judging person—as Kant says quite beautifully—can only 'woo the consent of everyone else in the hope of coming to an agreement with him eventually. This 'wooing' or persuading corresponds closely to what the Greeks called πειθειν [*peithein*], the convincing and persuading speech which they regarded as the typical political form of people talking with one another. (222)[37]

Arendt's translation of Kant's conception of exemplary validity to a process of the judge wooing agreement with persuasive speech goes against the assumption that philosophy and rhetoric are incompatible disciplines. Carroll's critique of Arendt's interpretation of Kantian judgment as logically incoherent in "Community After Devastation: Culture, Politics, and the Public Space" offers a helpful stepping-stone to see how different Arendt's theory of political judgment is from Kantian aesthetic judgment. Carroll

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[37] πειθειν [peithein] is the present active infinitive of "to prevail upon, win over, persuade" ("πείθω").

recognizes that Arendt has taken considerable liberties by using the English verb "to woo" when she translates Kant. When Kant writes about the judging process, the English translation should be "we *solicit* everyone else's assent," meaning that valid taste judgments are necessarily *a priori*, and that the subject has the right to demand their universal validity.[38] Relying on his traditional philosophical training and allegiance to Kant's authorial intent, Carroll reminds Arendt's readers that her translation of Kant is an error because he took pains to separate aesthetic judgments from persuasion and argument. It is quite possible that Carroll is reading received opinions on Kant's intention back into Arendt's translation. To Kant, (in Carroll's reading of him) accurate taste judgments are universally communicable, and while the subject may desire to communicate his or her taste judgment, exemplary validity does not require this communication.

Ancillae Vitae and Rodolphe Gasché's comprehensive study, *Persuasion, Reflection, Judgment: Ancillae Vitae* demonstrate that it was never Arendt's intent to provide a philologically correct reading of Kant's third Critique, but to use his theory to develop her own. Viate and Gasché point out that Arendt borrows from Kant the notion of reflective judgments, but unlike Kant, she argues that reflective judgments are the only true judgments, whereas determinant judgments merely prove what is already known.

"The Crisis in Culture" is valuable because Arendt explains that she turns to Kant's conception of judgment precisely because she sees Kant as a true egalitarian and a champion of the equal capacity for people—not just intellectuals—to judge. To Arendt,

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[38] Carroll also cites Kant's original German "'*Man wirbt um jedes andern Beistimmung*'" (qtd. in 171).

Kant shows how judgment enables true empathy, which, in technical terms of judgment is the enlarged mentality—"the ability to see things not only from one's point of view but in the perspective of all those who happen to be present" (221). The ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes is necessary for one to be a member of the public, communicate effectively with others, and to judge accurately enough to be persuasive to his or her fellow human beings. To Arendt, Kantian judgment in this sense is not so different from what the Greeks labeled as *phronesis*. Arendt writes,

> The Greeks called this ability φρόνησις [*phronesis*], or insight, and they considered it the principle virtue of excellence of the statesman in distinction from the wisdom of the philosopher. The difference between this judging insight and speculative thought lies in that the former has its roots in what we usually call common sense—which the latter constantly transcends. Common sense—which the French so suggestively call the 'good sense,' *le bons sens*—discloses to us the nature of the world insofar as it is a common world; we owe to it the fact that our strictly private and 'subjective five sense and their sensory data can adjust themselves to a nonsubjective and 'objective' world which we have in common and share with others. Judging is one, if not the most, important activity in which this sharing-the-world-with-others comes to pass. (221)[39]

Arendt's reference to the Greek conception of *phronesis*, oftentimes translated as the Latin *prudentia* or practical wisdom, is a clear indicator that she also relies on Aristotle

[39] φρόνησις [*phronesis*] translates to "thought, practical wisdom, purpose."

for a model that informs her conception of political judgment.[40] Kantian judgment and Aristotelian *phronesis* are not necessarily incompatible. As Kant sees the power of judgment as the ability to judge the particular *qua* the particular, so does Aristotle articulate *phronesis* as the ability of wise and experienced statesmen to judge particular instances without the need of deducing precedents from previously established universal concepts. Vitae and Gasché further elaborate that "*phronesis* is a practical disposition that incarnates the correct rule (*orthos logos*) for the choices to be made in the ever-changing reality of human affairs with the intent of realizing in every situation the only possible good, namely, the (merely) human good as opposed to the other good that is Good in itself." (193). As part of the political sphere of action, *phronesis* is the virtue of deliberation and opinion, and thus, is not part of the rational soul. Like Aristotle, Arendt considers judgment an activity for human beings participating in the public sphere where the main goal is to deliberate the highest good.

Arendt's use of Aristotle's phronesis assists in her conception of reflective judgment as an empirical reality in the public sphere. Rather than adopting Kant's notion of universal validity, which depends on judgment conceived as a transcendental ideal, her notion of political judgments carry specific validity. Specific validity remains subjective, but individuals bring judgment forth by "wooing and "persuading." These verbs imply political judgments involve communication in order to transcend subjective private conditions and find the agreement of others. Therefore, the cognitive process that occurs within judgment is different from Kant's, for judgments, like opinions, gain their validity

[40] See "Judgment and the Vita Activa" by Mauizio Passerin d'Entreves for the comparison between Aristotelian *phronesis* and Kantian judgment

when one accounts for their imagined judgments of others rather than relying on the isolated dialogue with themselves. To Arendt, a judgment is private, but not valid, if one does not consider the viewpoint of others; with this condition in mind, judgments are not universally valid, but specifically valid only for those who do not have membership in the public realm where judgments appear.

The Rhetoric of "Truth and Politics"

Arendt's treatment of the importance of opinion, rather than truth, in the public sphere, and her comparison of the specific validity in judgments to opinion, is further elucidated in Arendt's essay "Truth and Politics." The cause of conflict between truth and politics was the "two diametrically opposed ways of life—the life of the philosopher, as interpreted first by Parmenides and then by Plato, and the way of life of the citizen" (Arendt 228). Philosophers hold a different conception of truth than citizens. To the philosophers, the citizens' opinions, dependent upon the dynamic nature of human affairs, were too fickle. It is not as if the citizens believed no ideas were true, it is that philosophers granted no validity to the eternal truths from which the citizen could derive rules to govern human affairs. The strategy of philosophers was to attack opinion by framing it as illusion. Almost as a counter-attack, the ever-relevance of opinion to political discourse fueled the conflict between truth and politics, where politicians recognized that the opinion of citizens is what granted them power. Arendt quotes James Madison to emphasize the point that "all governments rest on opinion" to gain and maintain power (qtd. in Arendt 228). A claim to absolute truth threatens the political sphere, for such a claim does not rest upon the support of others, whereas an opinion requires consensus to obtain the power of validity. Arendt elucidates the threat absolute

truth makes upon opinion by equating the conflict between truth and opinion with the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy in Plato's work. In *Gorgias*, Plato frames the conflict of truth and opinion as the incompatibility of philosophical dialogue, the ideal discourse for communicating truths, and rhetoric, the speech a demagogue uses to sway the multitudes (229).

Arendt's modern age has led to a change in contemporary perceptions about meanings of opinion and truth. Arendt implies that the overt conflict between rhetoric and philosophy in the sphere of politics has disappeared in the modern age. In the eighteenth century, the enlightenment led to a triumph in rationality, eradicating what we once believed was "the inexhaustible richness of human discourse" (229). Citizens once believed that opinions, constituting the richness of human discourse, were more significant than absolute Truth, and evidence of this view held in the earliest parts of the modern age. Hobbes attributes eloquence as the "passions and interests of men, which are different and mutable," in contrast to "solid reasoning . . . grounded upon principles of truth" (qtd. in Arendt 229). At the rise of the Enlightenment, the meaning of truth changes, and all begin to view truth as the highest knowledge, whereas the importance of public discourse wanes to the point where people forget its Ancient status: "Even where the note of jubilation—the insight that for men, living in company, the inexhaustible richness of human discourse is infinitely more significant and meaningful than any One Truth could ever be—is absent, the awareness of the frailty of human reason has prevailed since the eighteenth century without giving rise to complaint or lamentation" (229). Exemplars of this tradition are Kant and Madison, who questioned the infallibility of human reason. Madison remarks that the power of reason depends on the presence of

others to function: “the reason of man, like man himself, is timid and cautious when left alone, and acquires firmness and confidence in proportion to the number with which it is associated” (qtd. in Arendt 230). The recognition that reason depends on the presence of others is what inspired men to champion freedom of speech.

Arendt places high importance on representative thinking, the idea that for reason to flourish, man must have the freedom to communicate with his fellows. The validity of a political judgment depends on the subject’s ability to think representatively; opinions, too, depend upon representative thinking, for debate and discussion of opinions are their source of validity. Kant argues that human reason, and the basic ability to think, is threatened by the forced privacy imposed by laws restricting free speech. Arendt quotes Kant remarking that “the external power that deprives man of the freedom to communicate his thoughts publicly, deprives him at the same time of his freedom to think” (qtd. in Arendt 230). The next step in Kant’s argument is that validity of thinking relies upon the “community with others to whom we communicate our thoughts as they communicate theirs to us” (qtd. in Arendt 230). To Kant, truth depends upon the opinions of others to gain validity, and reason itself cannot form in an individual if he does not have the company of his fellows to tutor him and direct the formation of his ideas in agreement with standards the public deem as correct. Arendt clarifies that reason depends on others for guidance when one is a student or even a scholar, yet the act of reasoning must occur in isolation; opinions on the other hand require the presence of others to exist. In the sense that neither activity gains validity without the presence of others, the processes of opinion and truth formation are not so different from one another.

Rhetoric and the Communicability of Taste in Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy

In Arendt's interpretation of Kant's faculty of judgment then, *sensus communis*, representation, the imagination, impartiality, and enlarged thinking are intimately interlinked and offer the key to understanding what constitutes the public realm of judgments and how one goes about making such judgments. Arendt remarks that it is surprising Kant uses *sensus communis*, a public sense, as the essential faculty of taste, because taste and smell are entirely subjective, while the other three senses (sight, hearing, and touch) are objective and capable of representation. Taste and smell cannot be represented by the imagination as an object of sight can, yet, as with an object of sight, one can withhold judgment more easily than they can with taste or smell, primarily because the sensation of displeasure or pleasure with an object one can taste and smell is immediate and overwhelming. One may assume that judgments of taste, because they result from the free play of the imagination and do not attach themselves to any particular concept, are "utterly noncommunicable" (Arendt 66). Citing the Latin dictum, *de gustibus non disputandem est*, Arendt agrees that with matters of direct and overwhelming subjective sensation of the agreeable, i.e., the sensation of taste and smell, there can be no dispute because "we are so little able to communicate [these sensations] that we cannot even dispute about them" (65). Yet, when concerned with matters of beauty, we can properly expect that others should agree with our taste judgments once the imagination converts direct sensation to reflection. Thus, Arendt's answer to the riddle of the seemingly incommunicability of taste is the faculties of imagination and *sensus communis*. In taste judgments, "imagination, the ability to make present what is absent, transforms the objects of the objective senses into 'sensed' objects, as though they were

objects of an inner sense" (65). The imagination in turn gives way to the "operation of reflection," which works when the subject reflects on the pleasing or displeasing representation of the object instead of the actual object, and in turn, experiences a secondary event of displeasure or pleasure. By the time one reflects on the representation his imagination has prepared for him, his judgment has achieved true impartiality because he is removed from the overwhelming immediate sensation of the object. The subject can assume that others will share his pleasure by means of a nonsubjective principle inherent within subjectivity—*sensus communis*. This leads to the idea that "the nonsubjective element in the nonobjective senses is intersubjectivity," and it is only within matters of private taste that we are able to breach solipsism and feel a moral obligation to others (Arendt 67).

CONCLUSION

ALTERATIONS OF JUDGMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES: SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE DIGITAL ERA

The works discussed here reveal the rhetorical elements implicit within Arendt's theory of judgment. Prior to reviewing her adoption of Kant and Aristotle as sources for judgment, we have seen that Kant and Aristotle view affectivity and cognitive judgment at work within the basis of all sensible perceptions. This inclusivity defies the traditional parameters of philosophy that rationality and sensibility cannot coexist within the same framework. Applying the inclusivity of affectivity and cognition within the framework of judgment to Arendt's unpacking of the faculty of judgment in "The Crisis in Culture," we see how she combines the affective capacities of persuasion and *phronesis* with Kantian judgment in order to demonstrate how judgment can work to protect culture and politics from the onslaught of mass entertainment society. Moreover, in "Truth and Politics," Arendt shows how opinions, not truth, unite mankind within an enlarged mentality that constitutes the public space and paves the way for revolutions in political action. It is not until her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, however, that Arendt truly reconciles action and contemplation, and then demonstrates how a model of judgment can be applied as a retrospective faculty for disclosing the potential in political revolutionary activities (such as those associated with the French and American challenges to monarchy). Here, Arendt's model of judgment as a faculty for retrospective contemplation and the creation of revolutionary concepts enables the liberation of mankind through social change. Arguably, Arendt's faculty of judgment can be used as a paradigm for analyzing contemporary judgments in digital public spaces, and, most

importantly, for gleaning the revolutionary capacity of novel concepts introduced in communal discussions of political events.

In the concluding notes of *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Arendt draws a parallel between the political spectator and actor and the spectator and the genius. The spectator is removed from all action and creation: "by closing one's eyes one becomes an impartial, not a directly affected, spectator of visible things. The blind poet" (Arendt 68). The mechanism of removing oneself from an event gives one the ability to perceive it. The political actor does not have this ability because he is consumed by *doxa*, the quest for fame and the desire to gain the high opinion of others. Spectators are above *doxa*, and as a result, are truly impartial and can take "disinterested delight" in certain events. For this reason, Kant privileges the spectator more than the genius (who creates art objects)—even though the genius poses more ability to create works of art that include the potential to stimulate the faculties of taste, imagination, spirit, and intellect. The faculty of the spirit makes an ineffable feeling communicable, and it is this ability to make what is overwhelming and indeterminate communicable that sets the standard for a great work of art, and it is this communicability that allows the spectators to judge the work. Unsurprisingly then, bad art does not communicate what the artist intended and is lost to oblivion.[41] Hence, the spectator's ability to judge something as communicable and pleasing is regulative of the production of art and of political action. As Arendt explains,

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[41] See Julian Roberts' "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" for an illuminating discussion of Theodore Adorno's distinction between true art and entertainment: "Art is like reflective thought int hat it refuses the affirmative and points up the 'negation' of all finite conclusions Amusement perfidiously seeks to relieve people of this necessary burden (qtd. in Roberts 71).

an actor "does not conduct himself according to an innate voice of reason but in accordance with what spectators would expect of him. The standard is the spectator. And this standard is autonomous" (55).

The standards set by the spectator are what constitute the public realm through which we act and create. In regard to politics, the judge embraces what the actors communicate and sets a standard by which we can agree or disagree upon what human activities offer hope for the progress of the human race. Arendt's innovation is her explanation of how judgments are not incommunicable, but constitute the communication that weaves the fabric of the public realm. Moreover, the act of judgment entails "freedom of speech and thought, as we understand it" (Arendt 39). To Kant, freedom of speech "is the right of an individual to express himself and his opinion in order to be able to persuade others to share his viewpoint. This presupposes that I am capable of making up my mind all by myself and the claim I have on the government to permit me to propagandize whatever I have already fixed in my mind" (Arendt 39). Freedom of speech and pen is at once demystified by judgment, the faculty that explains the seeming paradox between Kant's moral condemnation of rebellion and his acclamation of the French Revolution.

To Kant, a person may very well condone a revolutionary act, such as the French Revolution, because its beginning exemplifies the hope of progress for the human race. Kant's sympathy lies in his view of himself as a spectator of the revolution, which is well captured in the second part of *Contest of The Faculties*:

> The revolution of a gifted people which we have seen unfolding in our day may succeed or miscarry; it may be filled with misery and atrocities to the

> point that sensible man, were he boldly to hope to execute it successfully the second time, would never resolve to make the experiment at such cost—this revolution, I say, nonetheless finds in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in this game themselves) a wishful participation that borders closely on enthusiasm, the very expression which is fraught with danger; this sympathy, therefore, can have no other cause than a moral predisposition in the human race. (qtd. in Arendt 45)

To Kant, the unfolding of the French Revolution engendered just as many evils as it meant to prevent, yet the promise embodied in the goals of its outset is what makes it an event that cannot be forgotten. Again, Kant speaks of the spectators' "wishful participation that borders closely on enthusiasm" as the cause of their "sympathy." Importantly, Kant speaks of "wishful participation" and "enthusiasm" as "disinterested" at multiple points in the essay, reiterating a parallel between his political judgment and the feelings excited by the beautiful in a judgment of taste.

To Arendt, even though Kant conceived of the French Revolution as a failure, the moral inclination of the spectators resulting from their ability to judge gave the event meaning. Arendt maintains that without the public judgments of the actions generated by the French Revolution's participants, the events would lack the meaning they have now or would have been forgotten entirely. Thus, onlookers' continual willingness to make their attitudes of an event public have generated what Kant understands as containing a kind of radical hope: revolutions, "with all their transforming effects," engender the "highest purpose of nature, a *cosmopolitan existence* . . . within which all original capacities of the human race may be developed" (qtd. in Arendt 47). Cosmopolitan

existence is innate to all men by the very fact that they are human. Human beings, with their natural capacity for judgment, are able to love selflessly, cultivate their sociability, and flourish as part of a community, provided that they are able to communicate through the guidance of their community sense. Communicability, again, is dependent on an enlarged mentality, for "one can communicate only if one is able to think from the other person's standpoint; otherwise one will never meet him, never speak in such a way that he understands" (Arendt 74). Thus, the larger the scope of the object's ability to communicate and the greater the number of judges, the higher the worth of the object. Kant stipulates that the enlarged scope of men who are able to engage in "general communication" by being united in their "original compact" of communicability will result in the greatest possible increase in the enlarged mentality of mankind, yet this cannot be obtained until war ceases. The compact of mankind, united in pleasure, communicability, and the enlarged mentality, is the place in which contemplation inspires action. As Arendt puts it,

> [i]t is by virtue of this idea of mankind, present in every single man, that men are human, and they can be called civilized or humane to the extent that this idea becomes the principle not only of their judgments but of their actions. It is at this point that actor and spectator become united; the maxim of the actor and the maxim, the 'standard,' according to which the actor judges the spectacle of the world, become one. (75)

As one can see, Arendt deviates from the general conception that action and contemplation are entirely divorced. While they function separately according to their own laws, both must collide in the situation of politics, in which the judgments of

spectators communicate events promoting the basic rights and progress of mankind, and through their judgments, regulate political action. Arendt expresses this idea through her final reconceptualization of Kant: "The, as it were, categorical imperative for action could read as follows: Always act on the maxim through which this original compact can be actualized into a general law" (Arendt 75). As we can see, all actors contain the ability to become a spectator, and perhaps, Arendt's theory of judgment successfully generates a maxim for action, implying that the judgment of spectators has a direct causal effect.

The interdependence of political actors and spectators has become increasingly evident as twenty-first-century politics becomes dependent on social media for its dissemination of information and gathering of supporters. One must ask how Arendt would have perceived the rise of digital public spaces in social media giants such as Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, and Instagram. Arguably, she would have seen digital public spheres as creating new positives and negatives; negatively, mass communication online has reduced the capacity to absorb complex information by shortening attention spans and degrading culture by speeding up mass consumption through digitalizing cultural objects. Moreover, the possibility for incorrect source material and widespread manipulation has become greater than ever, with events like the supposed rigging of the most recent United States election by means of mass dissemination of fake news and artificially constructed controversy. Nevertheless, Arendt would have seen the positive side of the creation of public spaces free and open to the public. Arendt championed Kant as a proponent of egalitarian enlightenment, and in this sense, she would have seen the hope in such numbers people now sharing access to social media platforms. Here, we have freedom of speech available where public space is open and the ability to self-

publish is free. The “enlarged mentality” has a greater capacity to grow, and one who judges can empathize with the globe, rather than those he or she would have been limited to seeing physically. The best way to analyze the hope that digital media has on both mankind’s judging and thinking capacities will be to reflect on the most recent political events of moment that were generated over social media— #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo. The questions to ask will be did the digital public spheres truly enable mankind to make novel judgments, and more so, did these judgments truly have an effect on political actors in the present? Are the masses choosing to pursue truth and beauty within the parameters of digital public space where politics and entertainment meet and shift into one another?

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APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Categories: *Genera* of concepts. Kant argues categories must be used in order to classify all objects into empirical knowledge, and he argues there are four main categories—quality, quantity, modality, and relation. The four main categories have three sub-categories. which form a twelve-part architectonic pattern.

Concept: In brief, the content through which we think. In more detail, the product of representation that our mind grasps through the faculty of understanding that in turn enables the thinking process. Concepts initiate the human perception's conformity of sense perceptions to categories, which in turn work as rules that allow mankind to differentiate between representations.

Hypotyposis: a rhetorical technique where an author explains abstract ideas by means of providing examples of concrete experiences and/or illustrations

Judgment: Kant unpacks judgment in the first *Critique* as the implementation of the understanding's use of synthesis, intuitions, and concepts to determine that an object exists in empirical reality. In the third *Critique*, Kant constructs a systematic implementation of the faculty of judgment as the tool through which mankind can examine feelings of pleasure and displeasure.

Intuition: Passive representations that make up human sensations and allow the human mind to distinguish one representation from another. Intuitions enable the mind to perceive space and time, and thus enabled, perception limits empirical knowledge to the sensible realm.

Paradiastole: Rhetorical redescription of a vice as a virtue. For example, choosing to describe someone as frugal instead of as stingy.

Phronēsis: The function one uses to determine the best course of action in accordance with the *orthos logos* [right reason] of virtue when confronted with particulars. *Phronēsis* is oftentimes translated into the Latin *predentia* or the English practical wisdom, yet most rely on Aristotle's definition in book VI of *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he feels a need to define *orthos logos* and *phronēsis* because of the difficulty his audience will encounter if they use their knowledge of *logoi* to determine their best courses of action in accordance with their particular circumstance. In book II, Aristotle explains that arguments (*logoi*) concerning universal ethical principles will be of no assistance when one is confronted with particularities that fall under no precepts. Thus, the realization of THE *orthos logos* of virtue is self-actualized in the correct application of *phronēsis*.

Natality: an ontological, as opposed to biological, condition that Arendt ascribes to the human capacity for free action. Arendt uses a consistent definition of natality throughout her *oeuvre*, yet she defined it most explicitly in *The Human Condition* as "the new beginning inherent in birth [that] can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting" (178). Birth itself (from a non-biological standpoint) is an excellent way to understand the coeval implications for plurality and free political action in Arendt's conception of natality.Arendt sees natality as a second birth that happens when human beings will novel action into being. Their ability to do so, of course, depends on a public political sphere for them to act in. True novel action means an individual's action in the public sphere godlike in the sense that it can bring new events into being that are not predetermined by

previous categories and rules. Moreover, natality presuppose plurality as within it, all individuals are unique yet are united in the phonemal sphere of the world of appearances.

Representation: The most general word a subject grants to an object throughout all stages in which the subject perceives the object. The common types of representations are concepts, intuitions, and ideas. Kant uses the faculty of the understanding as the dominant faculty in determining representations in the first *Critique*, but in the third *Critique*, Kant turns to the faculty of the imagination.

Rhetoric: Both the discipline and study of communicative practices used for the purpose of mobilizing groups toward a belief or taking action.

Schematism: The process through which the faculty of imagination combines/synthesizes concepts and intuitions in accordance to the rule of schema.

Space and Time: Transcendental and pure intuitions that exist within the human mind, making knowledge possible by allowing us to form a context where objects exist outside of ourselves.

Transcendental: The opposite of transcendent (an entity that is beyond experience); if something is transcendental, that means it is part of the cognitive function that precedes experience *a priori* and is what makes human beings capable of cognition.

Understanding: The faculty that produces knowledge through the use of concepts. The faculty of understanding is the grounds for a logical perspective, which functions as our ability to compare concepts to one another, and the empirical perspective, which allows us to form judgments by combining concepts with intuitions.