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Review of Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, eds. Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations.

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Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha, eds. *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012. 352 pp. ISBN 9780804775397.

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The relationship between philosophy and history is a difficult one. History is often construed as the more powerful in that it is assumed to be derived from factual evidence. Moreover, various models of enlightenment philosophy turned to history for teleological grounding. In history, philosophy sought an upbuilding telos that could enable it to explicate a grand narrative of progress. However, critiques such as Theodor Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* have revealed progress models of history to be nothing more than a re-mythologization of reason. How, then, does one pursue a teleological mode of thinking in light of the exposed powerlessness of historical determination, in the direct experience of unmitigated contingency?

Søren Kierkegaard foreshadowed this late modern predicament through his multifarious literary inventions, but above all as his own uncloaked self in the dissertation titled *The Concept of Irony*. There he demonstrated that the irony of history's attempt to ground philosophy lies in the fact that the more history asserts its founding force, the more unearthed the philosophical concept becomes. This is certainly the case with the concept of reason, and it has also befallen the concept of thinking in the context of the genocidal campaigns led by totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century and beyond. As Kierkegaard pointed out, the debacle of historical un-grounding produces a homesickness for the philosophical concept, which desires to belong somewhere; in turning to history, however, the concept finds only more justification to seem displaced. Kierkegaard writes:

Concepts, just like individuals, have their history and are no more able than they to resist the dominion of time, but in and through it all they nevertheless harbor a kind of homesickness for the place of their birth. Indeed, philosophy can now on one side no more disregard the recent history of [a] concept than it can stop with its earliest history, no matter how copious and interesting. Philosophy continually demands something more, demands the eternal, the true, compared with which even the most sterling existence is in itself just a fortunate moment. (Kierkegaard, 9-10)

Philosophy seeks "the eternal, the true," in comparison to which even the best existence is a mere happenstance. But Kierkegaard emphasizes more than other thinkers of his time that the eternal and true acquire meaning only when brought into a clash with temporality and finitude.

What it means to go on thinking in the face of such lived and conceptual homesickness is precisely the question that unites the divergent political and philosophical thought constellations in Theodor Adorno's and Hannah Arendt's authorships. Both the homelessness of thinking wrought by forced exile and displacement are prominent themes throughout their writings. There is an intertwining of history and philosophy in both themes and in the broader attempt to ascertain any shared meanings between Arendt and Adorno. Hence there are multiple ironies in the philosophical analysis of these two icons of diasporic intellectual history. In fact, their personal relationship was one of *disengagement*; until now they were better known for their

mutual dislike and disdain than for any possible sympathy they might have had for each other. Therefore, the most glaring irony in the case of Arendt and Adorno is that, despite the infamous antipathy between them, Arendt and Adorno have so much to say to each other. This emerges not only through a retrospective tour of their most significant philosophical accomplishments, but also in regard to some of their conceptual shortcomings and failures.

But this is no revisionism. The essays gathered in this volume pay heed to the most concrete facts of Adorno's and Arendt's writings and lived experiences, especially because their histories were and still are bound up with newly configured forms of truth for the philosophic tradition. They both continually strived for the ever new. In line with this, the history between them has been replaced not with a new story, but with the advent of a newly configured and shared *philosophical* history, as seen in the viewpoints of the authors included in this volume. Reading *Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations*, one comes to think that the conversation between these two great thinkers has been going on for a long time and that one only recently stumbled upon the symposium. The essays in this highly illuminating and thought-provoking volume are intricately and convincingly crafted to create new levels in the understanding of Arendt and Adorno as individuals, and in grasping the philosophic relationship between them, despite and because of their differences. Their dissimilarities are seen in this text more as what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls enabling prejudices, even when it concerns a way in which one or the other—or both—failed at the thinking to which they strived. Indeed, these essays are highly hermeneutical, and they force both thinkers to consider their respective forms of thinking through the written words of their texts, and also from the position most valued in the event of thinking: the center of action.

But there is something else that brings Arendt and Adorno together, as the authors here have testified: namely, the significance of what Adorno called the nonidentical and what Arendt, harkening back to Immanuel Kant, called the particular. It is this quality of difference in the nonidentical and the particular that Arendt and Adorno painstakingly sought to preserve against the destructiveness in the twentieth-century wars on otherness. We can turn again to Kierkegaard for reinforcement in the fight for difference, for the preservation of what lay bare in the phenomenon, which refuses to be conceptualized in any administrative manner. It is the phenomenon that acts as the motor of difference and which refuses to be categorized into any efficient system of identitarian thinking. Kierkegaard calls for the right of the phenomenon, the ironic semblance of which becomes uncovered through the entanglement of history and philosophy. It would seem that Kierkegaard falls short of securing the right of the phenomenon when he reappropriates G.W.F. Hegel's battle against any one-sidedness and thereby favors the concept. But alas, Kierkegaard is writing ironically. Through their respective critical refusals, Arendt and Adorno also forestall the dialectic coming to a standstill. Within this context they endeavor to sustain difference without fear of philosophical or historical reprisal. And in this they have succeeded, as the volume's editors have attested. Lars Rensmann and Samir Gandesha write in Chapter One:

Moving beyond typical disciplinary borders, few thinkers have had a more lasting influence on critical debates on the social and political dimensions of “modernity” and its myriad crises. Although they have had a highly fraught reception, there can be little doubt that Arendt's and Adorno's overall impact on the social sciences and the humanities, political and social

philosophy in particular, is profound. They shared similar life experiences, intellectual origins, and even theoretical interests in light of the catastrophes they faced. Moreover, they were perhaps the most uncompromising, nonconformist public intellectuals of their day, engendering distinct modes of public criticism. (1)

Arendt and Adorno were contemplative philosophers, sometimes castigated for their over-conceptualization (in Arendt, evil metaphysicalized as banal) or over-aestheticization (in Adorno, art as the only possibility of redemption). They believed deeply in a rehabilitation of the philosophic tradition through a constructive critique of that tradition's false claims to totality, universality, reason, and identity, thus contributing to the delegitimation of late modern democratic notions of freedom and truth. But these characteristics and catchphrases should not distract from the productive and upbuilding praxis embedded in their thought images: in the unique ways they each subscribed to the Aristotelian *theoria* as practice vigorously engaged in the social and political—and therefore public—spheres. The ways in which they differently interpreted theory as practice, and subsequently applied this practice in the social, political, legal, and public spheres, are elaborated in this volume of essays.

The new *philosophical* history developed in this volume is recapitulated in a clear and thorough manner in the first chapter, “Understanding Political Modernity: Rereading Arendt and Adorno in Comparative Perspective,” written by the volume's editors. In this overview of the book's purpose and approach, Rensmann and Gandesha present the conflict between Arendt and Adorno as parallel to a general disagreement between phenomenology and critical theory. Since Arendt is closely tied to the phenomenological tradition, she remains faithful to appearances, whereas Adorno is clearly situated in the domain of critical theory, thus prompted to search for “true being” behind the appearances. Adorno is somewhat in line with Plato, while he was also moved by Hegel, Sigmund Freud, Kant and Karl Marx. Arendt, on the other hand, is closer to Aristotle and takes inspiration from the ancient Greek polis, Kant, and Martin Heidegger. However, the editors point out that phenomenology and critical theory have long since intersected “at other places and through other venues too,” citing Fred Dallmayr's scholarship on the relationship (Dallmayr). Some might still raise a skeptical eyebrow and this certainly is justified. Arendt has been quoted, for example, in a conversation with Richard J. Bernstein, as questioning what is critical about critical theory, when in her judgment, all theory is critical. Gandesha and Rensmann turn to the connecting link of Jürgen Habermas, an exception to the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, who “either ignored Arendt or rejected her ‘non-dialectical’ theorizing and her robust opposition to Marx and Hegel.” These differences, as the editors articulate, “prevented theoretical dialogue between the contributions of Arendt and Adorno” (6). Habermas stands out in this history:

[he] has sought almost from the beginning of his career to instigate a shift from the relation of subject and object to intersubjectivity, from the paradigm of consciousness philosophy to that of communicative action. Significantly, Habermas argues that his own Frankfurt predecessors (and Adorno in particular) represent the final aporia of the philosophy of consciousness [. . .] Crucially, this shift of paradigm—one that has been taken over and deepened by Axel Honneth's theory of recognition—is underwritten not only by the speech-act theory of Austin and Searle but also by Arendt's crucial differentiation of the *vita activa* into labor, work, and action in her book *The Human*

Condition (1958). Habermas has appropriated both Adorno and Arendt in his own way.
(6)

The editors declare that their book “breaks with the dominant tradition of disrespect and indifference,” and that the dialogue the book has sparked between Arendt and Adorno “is a worthwhile and timely endeavor.” I most certainly agree. This text evokes questions instead of providing closure or resolution: a most appropriate response, considering that the material at hand aims for the nonidentical and the particular in ways that try to think ever anew. Moreover, what makes the project worthwhile and timely is the focus on Arendt and Adorno’s “common concerns for politically transformative human solidarity, difference, spontaneity, and plurality,” as well as the ways in which both thinkers “productively engage with political modernity’s ambivalences, antinomies, and paradoxes” (9). As the editors remark and as I have also underscored: “For Arendt and Adorno . . . the loss of experience and the false abstraction from particulars—and their meaning—is a constitutive motive of their critique of modernity.” In the darkness experienced by Arendt and Adorno through forced exile, a light nevertheless shone upon a retrieval of the ability to act in direct confrontation with this darkness. Rensmann and Gandesha write: “Both thinkers illuminate the ‘dark side’ of modernity in intriguing ways. Yet they also staunchly defend the possibility of human action, subjectivity, and political transformation” (10). This is clearly evidenced in the chapters that follow. The degrees of success achieved by Arendt and Adorno, and how they compare on the scorecard of political transformation, are examined in several essays.

After the editors’ introduction, the book is divided into three parts. Part One, “Political Modernity, Theory, and Philosophy,” contains Seyla Benhabib’s “Arendt and Adorno: The Elusiveness of the Particular and the Benjaminian Moment”; Jay Bernstein’s “Political Modernism: The New, Revolution, and Civil Disobedience in Arendt and Adorno”; Dana Villa’s “From the Critique of Identity to Plurality in Politics: Reconsidering Adorno and Arendt”; and Dieter Thomä’s “Passion Lost, Passion Regained: How Arendt’s Anthropology Intersects with Adorno’s Theory of the Subject.” Part Two, “Legacies of Totalitarianism, Antisemitism, and Crimes Against Humanity,” comprises Lars Rensmann’s “Grounding Cosmopolitics: Rethinking Crimes Against Humanity and Global Political Theory with Arendt and Adorno”; Robert Fine’s “Debating Human Rights, Law, and Subjectivity: Arendt, Adorno, and Critical Theory”; Jonathan Judaken’s “Blindness and Insight: The Conceptual Jew in Adorno and Arendt’s Post-Holocaust Reflections on the Antisemitic Question”; and an article co-authored by Julia Schulze Wessel and Lars Rensmann titled “The Paralysis of Judgment: Arendt and Adorno on Antisemitism and the Modern Condition.” Part Three, “Political Theory in Exile, Exile as a Theoretical Paradigm,” includes Dirk Auer’s “Theorists in Exile: Adorno’s and Arendt’s Reflections on the Place of the Intellectual” and Samir Gandesha’s “Homeless Philosophy: The Exile of Philosophy and the Philosophy of Exile in Arendt and Adorno.”

Many of the essays indicate common philosophical and/or political ground between Arendt and Adorno as something positive, frequently as a way in which either Arendt could have helped Adorno or Adorno could have aided Arendt, or ways in which their thoughts become entangled productively by questioning both thinkers. One dissenter, Jonathan Judaken, articulates the common ground between Arendt and Adorno as a *shared* failure at the conceptual level; but he nonetheless proposes this failure as practical ground for reconsideration and reconceptualization

of their ideas. Some of the articles seamlessly weave together thought strands from Arendt and Adorno, while others enact a half-and-half model by treating first either Arendt or Adorno, and then the other, still resulting with some kind of nexus between the two. Each of the essays provides an immense amount of food for thought and, in its own right, a moving or compelling presentation of how or why these two thinkers should be thought together. Each of the essays offers something unique, beginning with Chapter Two in which Seyla Benhabib asserts that:

psychological attitudes and personal animosities cannot guide our evaluations of a thinker's work, texts, and legacy. And this is particularly true in the case of Arendt and Adorno, who not only reflected upon the "break in civilization" caused by the rise of fascism and Nazism, the Holocaust, and the defeat of the working classes in Europe and elsewhere, but asked, "What does it mean to go on thinking?" after all that. (33)

Benhabib points out that both Arendt and Adorno focused on the task of "thinking anew"—"beyond the traditional schools of philosophy and methodology": this is what she calls the "Benjaminian moment" shared by Arendt and Adorno. Benhabib draws on the thrust in collective thinking to become free from "false universals." She writes: "This means not only refuting historical teleologies but, at a much deeper level, it involves a categorical critique of all philosophical attempts at totalizing and system building." Freeing thinking from false universals, Arendt and Adorno then find a meeting point in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. In turning to Kantian reflective judgment, Arendt can secure "the intersubjective quality of all judgment" while "elucidating the particular" epistemologically (34). Meanwhile, for Adorno, "aesthetic judgment becomes a paradigm for thinking beyond the false harmonies of the naturally beautiful [*Naturschöne*], on the one hand, and awe of the sublime [*das Erhabene*], on the other." And then Benhabib poses a tantalizing question: "Can reflective judgment, whether moral, political, or aesthetic, restore the power of thought, then?" Indeed, in Chapter One Rensmann and Gandesha highlight an important disagreement between Arendt and Adorno in regard to any possible restorative power in Kantian reflective judgment; this disagreement lies in "their very different relationship to the *sensus communis* (in Kant's sense of an understanding shared by all) and to common sense—both of which are important reference points for Arendt and the object of scathing criticism for Adorno" (8). On this issue Benhabib introduces Wellmer's term "the rationalistic fiction," to which Adorno subscribes. Wellmer writes: "[T]here is a mimetic force at work in the life of linguistic meaning, a force which enables what is non-identical in reality—as Adorno would say—to be reflected as something non-identical in linguistic meanings" (Wellmer 1991, 71). And as Benhabib concludes, in foreshadowing Habermas's transition to communicative action, which was based on a critique of the aporetic structure in Adorno's "rationalistic fiction," Arendt "herself saw this 'nonidentical in linguistic meaning' to be revealed through the 'web' of relationships, embedded in narratives, and . . . constitutive of the 'who' of the self and the 'what' of our actions" (Rensmann and Gandesha, 94).

In Chapter Eleven, Gandesha reiterates some of what Benhabib has presented, yet in contrast to Benhabib, he moves the discussion into a Heideggerian direction. Gandesha claims that "the importance of Arendt and Adorno lies in their attempts to rehabilitate experience, and that their own experiences of exile were central to such rehabilitation" (249). The collective definition of the capacity of experience for Arendt and Adorno is, in Gandesha's words, "a steadfast openness

or receptivity to what is genuinely new, unfamiliar, or other. Such receptivity cannot be expected to materialize spontaneously, but is rather, paradoxically, the result of often strenuous effort.” And “[f]or both Arendt and Adorno, the *conception of experience* undergoes an intensified development as a direct effect of their own *experience of exile*,” thus creating what Gandesha calls “a homeless philosophy.” This position unites Arendt and Adorno, and Gandesha develops it into a defense of Adorno against the accusation of a retreat from the public sphere, because “through his indefatigable work as an academic, administrator, and public intellectual, Adorno never actually gave up on politics” (248). This ground is secured by “suggest[ing] . . . that we see [a] new historical consciousness at work in Arendt and Adorno’s *Auseinandersetzung* with the German philosophical tradition as a whole” (251). Gandesha relies on their differentiated wrangling with Heidegger, after Kant and Hegel, as the locus in which Arendt and Adorno find a base and then go in different directions—for Arendt in the finding again of a world, and for Adorno through the performative of an immanent critique of Heidegger—only to situate themselves and each other through their homeless positions. Gandesha writes:

Arendt appropriates Kant’s notion of “reflective judgment,” which finds its analogue in Adorno’s conception of a mimetic relation to the object. In the first, a universal is generated out of the particular as an effect of the imagination, while in the second, the boundary between subject and object is held in tension, simultaneously affirmed and questioned. (279)

Gandesha then concludes: “What speaks to us most directly today lies precisely in the force field between Arendt’s phenomenological impulse to show the possibility of making a home for human beings amid the depredation of nature, on the one hand, and Adorno’s dialectical impulse to show how any conception of home must be limited by the form of its own negation, on the other” (279).

The position of homeless philosophy articulated in Gandesha’s perspective takes on a substantive ontology in Dirk Auer’s essay. Consonant with the Heideggerian tones of Gandesha’s article, Auer quotes Adorno’s statement from *Minima Moralia* that “Dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible” (Adorno 1951, 38; cited in Rensmann and Gandesha, 237). The impossibility of dwelling after the fact of the totalitarian destruction provides a “distance that is required for knowledge and judgment (*Erkenntnis und Urteilen*) which causes a certain homelessness to become a moral imperative of intellectual and political responsibility for Arendt and Adorno” (Rensmann and Gandesha, 237). From this Auer asserts that exile is “a form of utopia that points to independence and freedom from the confines of identity” and recalls Adorno’s statement to Thomas Mann that “one no longer feels at home anywhere; but then, of course, someone whose business is ultimately demythologization should hardly complain too much about this” (Adorno and Thomas Mann 2006, 46; cited in Rensmann and Gandesha, 237). I wonder whether it is possible to transform the position of exile into a “moral imperative” and “a form of utopia” in light of the demythologization of historical determinism internal to Adorno’s and also Arendt’s enlightenment critiques. Indeed, Auer highlights the same issue when he writes that “it may sound cynical to valorize exile as a place of privileged knowledge (*Erkenntnis*)” and specifies that “[i]nstead of hypostasizing the state of exile unilaterally, Adorno and Arendt therefore insist that humans require connection to a common sphere, if they are not to lose the very medium in which they can constitute and express their individuality” (Rensmann and Gandesha, 238). This,

in turn, pushes both Arendt and Adorno into an intermediary position between modernity and postmodernism through which “the classic question” of

the relationship between the universal and the particular, between political equality and difference, can no longer be answered by the (re-)construction of universal conditions of communal life, but only in the negative critique via the critique of rendering absolute one side of the pair of opposites: on the one hand, hypostasizing difference at the expense of the common [. . .] and, on the other, the abstract notion of equality, which negates the “human condition of plurality.” (238)

Nonetheless, Auer calls the position of exile “the ultimate model” (245), but qualifies this as a stance in which the critic “must simultaneously be *in* society and place himself *outside* of it” (244).

Because of the difficulty of the “neither-nor’s and simultaneities from which the social ambivalence of the intellectual results” (245), as Auer describes it, J. M. Bernstein, makes clear that “‘utopia’ is just a bad name for the normative authority of what emerges as the principle (ideal, idea, value) under which a collective struggle occurs” (77). Jay Bernstein is more modernist in comparison to Auer in that his version of what is utopic in Arendt and Adorno “is just the new as it flashes up in a terrible moment of resistance, the new in its continual movement of rising up and falling.” This definition captures the staccato in the movement of founding within unbounding in Bernstein’s rhythm of philosophic analysis. But the mutual irruptions of unbounding and founding are precisely what deliver promise. Bernstein writes:

This . . . is not to deny the promise of happiness given with our founding, orienting ideas, the promise of a different form of life; it is only to insist that these are indeed only *promises*, hence contingent, conditioned things, political things whose very nature as a mode of experience is to be something that we lose, are always losing, and thus having to be recovered, renewed, again and again and again. (77)

Bernstein’s thesis implicitly questions Gandesha’s defense of Adorno against the accusation of a retreat from the public sphere; and Bernstein explicitly sides with the “suppressionist thesis that Adorno’s reductionist reading of democratic practice should be rejected, and that democratic thought should be reconceived in ways that match the demands of critical theory” (57). Bernstein in the end chooses Arendt as the more forceful and thus the more promising when looking for a critical political philosophy “matching the modernist program of first generation critical theory” (58). He presents his argument as follows:

[. . .] after numerous detours and false leads, Hannah Arendt’s political theory can be read as accomplishing the translation of artistic practice into political praxis; in her writings, modernism for the first time takes on a systematic political vantage. If one supposes that Adorno’s thought is a vision of philosophical modernism that is the companion proper to his continual defense of artistic modernism, then one might urge that it is modernism itself that lies at the bottom of Adorno’s thought; as a consequence, one would expect that the correct way to proceed, following Adorno, is to ask the question: what might political modernism be? The answer to that question would hence

become the answer to the question of a political philosophy proper to critical theory. Arendt's political philosophy is the closest approximation to a critical political philosophy matching the modernist program of first generation critical theory to have appeared. (57-58)

Dana Villa concurs with Bernstein in finding more substantive political resources in Arendt than in Adorno. Accordingly, the Arendtian promise articulated by Bernstein carries even more utopic weight in Villa's narrative. Villa, too, calls upon Wellmer, who declared pointedly that "Adorno did not have a political theory—he had a dream" (Wellmer 2006). Villa explains the following predicament for Adorno through Adorno's own conceptual trajectory into the nonconceptual:

Adorno's self-conception is that of a theorist who has stepped beyond [a] "liberal" illusion. The struggle of parties and politicians does not limit the reach of the "total" society; rather, it is one of its more familiar (and misleading) manifestations. Moreover, even if the struggle of parties offered more than a choice between Tweedledee and Tweedledum—even if the agonism of liberal democratic electoral politics *meant* something—it would still be far from the utopia of unconstrained difference that serves as Adorno's critical-ethical lodestar. (Rensmann and Gandesha, 95)

Because of this, "Adorno's difference-affirming utopia, like Marx's 'free association of producers,' can exist only on a place *beyond* politics, beyond the difference-repressing sphere of the public or general (*Allgemeine*)." Arendt also knew well "the pathologies of mass public opinion" (97). But Villa notes, "However, unlike [Adorno], she never viewed adult citizens as patients in need of therapy or children in need of paternalist-pedagogical guidance." Nonetheless, "[w]hen plurality reigns in the public realm—as Arendt argues it must if relations are to be nonhierarchical, carried out through modes of speech and persuasion—the actor is also always a sufferer" (99). In Villa's evaluation, Arendt's pragmatically suffering position of plurality in the public sphere stands in distinct contrast to Adorno's "dream of 'reconciliation'" (103). Utopia is therefore:

found in Arendt's idea of an institutionally articulated public space, one that provides an arena for the articulation of politically salient differences. The ground of such differences is not competing sets of values, identities, or moods. Rather, the ground is found in the fact that we occupy different positions in a shared world. Arendt's utopia is thus one in which diverse perspectives, no matter how opposed, find their *raison d'être* in a shared care for the public world. (103)

The analysis of Arendt and the political also uncovers shortcomings. Dieter Thomä calls attention to a conceptual failure in Arendt's anthropology, and this time it is Adorno who can come to the rescue for illumination. Thomä argues that "there is a certain ambivalence in Arendt's account of 'love of the world'" which sheds light on "a blind spot in her theory of the person." He explains that "her account fails to recontextualize agency or activity with reference to the 'internal ocean' of emotions and their social implications. Yet, as it turns out, a critical analysis of her account of agency can take its cue from hints given by Arendt herself" (106). Thomä therefore frames his analysis accordingly: "As we are invited to think with Arendt contra

Arendt, we are tempted to think with Adorno contra Arendt as well. Although it contains its own difficulties, [Adorno's] critical discussion of modern subjectivity and autonomy aptly complements the systematic considerations of agency and interaction that have been the fruit of our discussion in Arendt" (106). The pragmatically suffering position elucidated by Villa embodies more emotional character in Thomä's reading of Arendt's deliberations about *pathein*. In her preparatory thoughts on writing *The Human Condition*, Arendt refers in her *Denktagebuch* to the "fundamental activities," "or the 'active modes' of human life" (109). As Thomä explains:

Four Greek terms are listed: *pathein*, *prattein*, *poiein*, *erganzesthai*. The last three easily translated into the triad of "action," "work," and "labor" familiar to every reader of *The Human Condition* . . . Yet *pathein*, the first term in the list above, comes as a surprise . . . It is not self-evident that *pathein* or suffering could be regarded as an 'active mode' at all. One of the short explanations given by Arendt at the time reads as follows: "*pathein*: suffering; paramount 'relation': love." (109)

But as Thomä notes, Arendt "presents a brief to an appeals court, which then rescinds the emancipation of passion. This court is convened in the notebooks themselves" (111). As a result, *pathein* becomes eliminated from the active modes of human life, since passion, in Arendt's estimation from 1955, is construed as opposite to action. And therefore "love or passion is banned from the realm of activity." However, Thomä suggests that "the defeat of passion is not final" (116). He focuses on Arendt's later discussion of love in her *Denktagebuch* in order to claim that love in her thinking is that "which seems to be the mode of passion most fiercely defying reduction to passivity." The *Denktagebuch* succeeds against *The Human Condition* in rounding off this anthropological dimension, so crucial to Arendt's own earlier philosophic concerns and emphases.

Adorno comes back into the picture through Thomä's redemption of love and passion in Arendt. As Thomä understands it, "this theoretical experiment *intersects* with Adorno's considerations of subjectivity" (120). Thomä presents the intersection in this way: "As if Adorno were talking about *amour mundi* as well, he muses about 'abandonment,' about surrendering oneself to the world when discussing Wilhelm von Humboldt's theory of the person." In Adorno's concern to reawaken "the living," the latter "seems to be a label for those aspects of human life that evade practical determination; sometimes Adorno chooses the phrase 'not expressible in terms of exchange value' for these matters" (121). But the precise intersection that Thomä envisions comes to the fore when he writes: "Whereas Arendt strictly distinguishes between 'action' and the 'living process,' Adorno moves to a broader realm of human functioning. He does not settle for a defense of heteronomy or a critique of self-constraint, but strives for a moral reorientation circling around the notion of the "living." It takes refuge in the terms impulse, suffering, compassion, and reconciliation." And this intersection is placed squarely in the situation with which both Arendt and Adorno are confronted:

They have to redefine the connection between the individual and the social sphere. After returning from the detour to the passions and to love, Arendt argues for a "love of the world" that strangely outbids the love of individuals. The defense of the "world" as public sphere marginalizes human relations that do not serve this purpose. At least temporarily, she considers theoretical amendments, both on the individual and on the

social level, mainly under the headings of passion and love. Adorno maintains a broader perspective on agency and the “living” and argues for a reappraisal of nonrational impulses. (123)

From this Thomä concludes: “The systematic premises of Adorno and Arendt’s theories are worlds apart, but the phenomena that they discuss are closely related, as is their inconclusive coverage of these phenomena” (125). The intersection between Arendt and Adorno “lies in areas where their attempts remain tentative and fragmentary; this may prove the point that the seismic center of theoretical dynamics does not lie in the center of philosophical systems, but at their margins” (126). And indeed, what Thomä’s essay, as well as the remainder of the volume affirms, is Seyla Benhabib’s conclusion that “beyond all the dogmatisms of schools, personal hostilities, and struggles to position oneself as an Arendtian or as an Adornian, there lies a vast horizon of philosophical moves and countermoves, which are breathtaking in their configurations” (55). The Benjaminian moment lives on.

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