Resisting Biopolitics : Hannah Arendt as a Thinker of
Automation, Social Rights, and Basic Income

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Introduction: Arendt and biopolitical modernity

The notion of biopolitics was made famous by Michel Foucault.[1] In his manifold studies on the history of power and governmentality, Foucault analyzes how life as a biological fact emerges as the central concern of modern politics. According to Foucault, biopolitics is a distinctively modern phenomenon:

> What might be called a society's "threshold of modernity" has been reached when the life of the species is wagered on its own political strategies. For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question.[2]

Foucault's 1975–1976 lectures augment this analysis and reveal the multifaceted historical relationship between disciplinary power and biopower. For Foucault, the development of biopolitical racism saw its apex during the era of Nazi Germany.[3] During his 1977–1978 lectures, Foucault argued that the origins of biopower can be located in early Christian communities, in which an understanding of pastoral power, of a shepherd guiding and directing his flock, developed. Most importantly, however, Foucault analyses the historical development through which populations are transformed into a singular object of governance—for example, as the objects of statistical analysis, production, medication, taxation, and incarceration—as the key factor in the development of modern biopower.[4] Lastly, his 1978–1979 lectures sought to connect the history of biopower with the rise of modern liberalism, but he left this connection largely unexplored.[5]

Even though Foucault never directly quoted the works of Hannah Arendt—only mentioning her in passing in a 1983 interview[6]—Giorgio Agamben has argued that Arendt had, in fact, analyzed how

biological life entered the realm of politics "almost twenty years before *The History of Sexuality*." However, Agamben claims that Arendt's theory of totalitarianism is lacking a biopolitical perspective and argues that she never connected her analysis of totalitarianism with her other studies.[7] In seeking to both combine and correct the analyses of Foucault and Arendt, Agamben discovers the roots of biopolitical governance in Roman law and in the figure of *homo sacer*. This "sacred man" was a figure who was banished from the political community and could be killed with impunity by anyone. For Agamben, there is no disjunction between sovereign power and modern biopower: the question of life as a biological fact has always been a political question, but it is only in modern times that biological concerns have moved from the margins to the very center of politics.[8]

In recent literature, significant interventions by André Duarte, Claire Blencowe, and Johanna Oksala have followed Agamben in reading Arendt as a theorist of biopolitics. However, contrary to Agamben's arguments, these studies have shown that Arendt's theory of totalitarianism is, in fact, connected to the discourse of biopolitics. Furthermore, unlike what Agamben argues, Arendt's narratives concerning the modern biopolitical human condition—her account of the rise of the social and her multifaceted diagnosis of the laboring society—are intimately linked with her study of totalitarianism.[9]

Beyond analyzing her vision of modern biopolitics, important studies by Miguel Vatter and Kathrine Braun have shown that Arendt's understanding of natality as an unpredictable and spontaneous human capacity to begin something new in the world provides a model of resistance to the modern biopolitical mode of governance.[10] However, even though we are now beginning to see Arendt's importance to the field of biopolitical research, she is still often situated at the fringes of this discourse.[11] Roberto Esposito even explicitly argues that her work does not confront biopolitics in any direct sense.[12]

This paper examines Arendt's political thought from the perspective of biopolitics. By developing two closely interrelated arguments, I follow previous studies in reading Arendt as a critic of modern biopolitics *avant la léttre*.

First, in the following section I argue that when Arendt's famous differentiation between the private, the social, and the political is interpreted in the light of her lesser-known writings concerning technology and automation, Arendt emerges as a thinker who developed an original critique of modern biopolitical governance. In aiming to criticize the modern reduction of politics to mere bureaucracy, Arendt helps us to envision a future politics that would rise above its current biopolitical locus. I re-interpret Arendt's differentiation between the private, the social, and the political by arguing that this distinction implies two different arguments: a factual-historical description and a vision concerning future politics. Even though Arendt does indeed assert that, historically, it has been impossible to solve social problems in political terms, she also recognizes that the development of modern technology, especially the advent of automation, might make it possible to politicize private life and social questions with success. Arendt thinks that with the help of technology and automation, we can strive to politicize matters concerning life itself in a way that the requirements necessary for an adequate human life will begin to move from being the only political matters to being the preconditions of politics. The core idea behind this argument is that nothing is political as such, but that every human need can be potentially *politicized*. In Arendt's futuristic vision, the basic necessities of life are politicized through technological intervention in order to guard the public realm from being intruded upon by the necessity of the life process. In a world defined by technology, the slaves of the ancient *polis* are replaced by mechanical slaves—by machines. Unlike what others have often suggested, Arendt was not a theoretician who ignored social questions and social justice, but a political thinker who argued that politics must be something more than the mere bureaucratic administration of life's basic necessities.

Second, the subsequent section examines how Arendt's much discussed advocacy of "the only one human right"—the "right to have rights"[13]—arose as a critical response to totalitarian domination and, more generally, to the modern biopolitical human condition. Drawing on Arendt's analyses concerning technology and automation, the section explores how Arendt understood the economic preconditions of citizenship in the post-totalitarian world. I argue that Arendt saw the fulfilment of

basic social rights as a fundamental precondition for the realization of political rights. Connecting Arendt's reflections on technology and automation with her ideas on the right to have rights, I maintain that her differentiation between the private, the social, and the political can be fruitfully re-interpreted as an argument for what is today called basic income.

The concluding section provides a summary of my arguments and re-situates Arendt within the contemporary discourse on biopolitics and human rights. By comparing the different models of resistance to biopolitical governance that Arendt, Foucault, and Agamben envision, I aim to show that a critical reading of Arendt's work opens up a pathway toward understanding the right to life's basic necessities as a future human right.

Following the much supported incentive that in understanding Arendt we must proceed from a holistic perspective of her oeuvre,[14] this paper attempts to breathe new life into Arendt's familiar categories by relying on a broad array of her lesser-known and recently published writings. In re-reading Arendt as a critic of biopolitics and as a theorist of automation, social rights, and basic income, of special importance are her essays "The Cold War and the West" (1962) and "Public Rights and Private Interests" (1977), her lectures "Revolution and Freedom" (1961), "Labor, Work, Action" (1964), "On the Human Condition" (1966) and "The Freedom to be Free" (1966–1967), and the autobiographical interview "Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt" (1972).[15] Because Arendt overestimated the speed of technological development, my intention is to show that her reflections possess an untimely actuality.

Rethinking the social in Arendt: Automation and the liberation from poverty

The central lessons of totalitarianism—that everything is possible and that human beings have no permanent "nature"[16]—and a striking vision of technological modernity[17] set the ground for Arendt's famous agenda, "to think what we are doing," in *The Human Condition*. By writing against the background of the "first atomic explosions," which, according to Arendt, mark the birth of the

"modern world," she tentatively sketches the potentialities at the "advent of a new and yet unknown age."[18] In the substantially diverging German *Vita Activa*, Arendt speaks of a "situation of the European humanity at a moment, when a new era dawned for them and therewith for all the people of the earth."[19]

As Margaret Canovan notes, Arendt's analyses of modernity are very much concerned with what she terms the "unnatural growth of the natural": the modern rise of the social, the development of totalitarian movements, and the creation of atomic bombs are all processes that dislocate "natural energies" from their traditional locations.[20] For Arendt, of special importance is an event that she calls "the advent of automation," which, according to her, "in a few decades probably will empty the factories and liberate mankind from its oldest and most natural burden, the burden of laboring and the bondage to necessity." While freedom from life's necessities has always been a human dream, it has only become possible with "scientific progress and technical developments" that the modern age has brought with it.[21] Arendt's reflections on the "advent of automation" are by no means a mere side note in her thought. In fact, in *The Human Condition* she portrays automation as the last and most recent stage in the development of modern technology, one which could potentially lead to a large-scale liberation from labor.[22] As Brian Simbrinski argues, this portrayal of technology testifies to the fact that by 1958, Arendt's conception of political action "pivoted on automation and cybernetics."[23] While Simbrinski's study on Arendt and automation focuses on her writings from the 1950s, in what follows I aim to show that during the 1960s and 1970s, for Arendt, the rise of technology and automation comprised an important source of hope. Without succumbing to naïve technophilia or technophobia, she delivers a critical analysis of the ways technological development may change future politics.

We can begin by considering how Arendt understands the relationship between the social and technology. In one of the most cited passages of *On Revolution*, Arendt famously states that the "whole record of past revolutions demonstrates beyond doubt that every attempt to solve the social question with political means leads into terror," and a few pages later she continues that "nothing we

might say today, could be more obsolete than to attempt to liberate mankind from poverty by political means."[24] These arguably ignorant statements are slightly lessened by the rather obscure qualification that "it is only the rise of technology, and not the rise of modern political ideas as such, which has refuted the old and terrible truth that only violence and rule over others could make some men free."[25]

However, one can find additional elaboration on these statements if one compares them with Arendt's reflections in her 1961 lecture "Revolution and Freedom" and in her essay "The Cold War and the West," published in 1962. In both of these writings, Arendt re-states almost word for word her conviction that poverty simply cannot be conquered via political means.[26] However, the crucial difference is that in these writings, she actually elaborates more on what she means by the rise of technology. Instead of simply rejecting social questions as non-political ones, Arendt now explicitly differentiates between the *historical* inability to resolve the social questions in revolutionary-political terms and a potential future sphere of politics defined by a new kind of technological development. The French Revolution no longer appears as the ultimate proof that social questions cannot be dealt with politically, but instead as the "first fight to give battle to poverty and to deal politically with necessity"—a fight that was, however, ultimately "lost."[27] Elaborating on her statement that the history of revolutions has unequivocally shown that social questions cannot be solved politically, she writes:

> From this, I would conclude that there would indeed be no great hope that revolution and freedom could ever succeed in the world at large, if we were still living under the conditions where scarcity and abundance were beyond the scope of human power... But this is no longer the case. Even though the difficulties standing in the way to a solution of the predicament of mass poverty are still staggering, they are, in principle at least, no longer insurmountable. The advancement of the natural sciences and their technology has opened possibilities which make it very likely that, in a not too distant future, we shall be able to deal with all economic matters on technical and scientific grounds, outside all political considerations.[28]

This statement is truly astonishing. First, it clearly shows that Arendt did *not* simply ignore social questions. Rather, she makes a distinction between technocratic and political interventions and argues that poverty should be tackled on "scientific grounds." While her choice of words in *On Revolution* imply that we *should not* treat poverty as a political question at all, in "Revolution and Freedom" and

in "The Cold War and the West" Arendt evokes the possibility that social questions—mass poverty in particular—are problems that could potentially be tackled technologically, "outside all political considerations." This is especially interesting since Arendt's narrative of the rise of the social in *The Human Condition* and her interpretation of the French and American Revolutions in her work *On Revolution* have been almost unanimously interpreted as the concluding evidence that Arendt is a thinker who altogether excludes social questions from politics.[29]

In "The Cold War and the West," however, Arendt emphasizes that the future of the West and of the United States depends on the success of the struggle against poverty and misery at the *global* level. She warns us that, in case this struggle should end in failure, in the wealthy countries of the West "we shall have the occasion to learn by bitter experience how right the men of the French Revolution were when they exclaimed: '*Les malheureux sont la puissance de la terre.*'"[30] In fact, the whole essay is defined by a rather astonishing belief in the possibilities of technological development that could potentially define questions concerning basic human needs as a new sphere of political neutrality. One could even argue that the plausibility of Arendt's distinction between the social and the political *relies* on the potentialities of technology as a new realm of political "neutrality." This becomes clear from the way Arendt continues to ponder these matters:

> Our present technical means permit us to fight poverty, and force us to fight superabundance, in complete political neutrality; in other words economic factors need not interfere with political developments one way or another. This means for our political future that the wreckage of freedom on the rock of necessity which we have witnessed over and over again since Robespierre's "despotism of liberty" is no longer unavoidable.[31]

These quoted passages from "The Cold War and the West" also show Arendt's unwillingness to accept social struggles as *directly* political causes. To this end, Arendt equates technocracy with political neutrality. How should we understand this dilemma and her distinction between technocratic intervention and political action?

In a recent reading of Arendt's work, Ayten Gündogdu has argued that we should read Arendt as a thinker whose main concern is not to make unworldly conceptual differentiations, but as a thinker who helps us to figure out how to rightly *politicize* matters.[32] I think this is a key realization. As

Arendt herself clearly emphasizes in her *Denktagebuch*, when arguing against Aristotle's view of man as a political animal: politics is always located in the wholly contingent realm "between men," and therefore, "there is no political substance."[33] Everything is potentially political. Following Gündogdu's interpretation, I think we can read Arendt's differentiation between the social and the political as an argument that states that we *can* strive to *politicize* matters in a way that separates the "social questions" from political ones. What her commentators often seem to misunderstand is that Arendt is fully aware that defining what is and what is not political is itself always already a political question: Arendt's conceptual distinctions reveal *her argument*, *her own voice* in this discussion.[34] Thus, instead of understanding Arendt's conceptual distinctions as unworldly absolutes that remain attached to some ontological distinction between what is and what is not political, we should see them as political arguments, as contributions to a political discussion that aims to change our world. Arendt is acutely aware of the constantly changing nature of human reality, emphasizing that "men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence."[35] If anything then, her reflections on technology show that Arendt did not have a stagnant view of the realms of labor, work, and action. Rather, by rethinking politics in a world defined by technology, she aims to provide critical resources for contemporary political thought, for politicization, by drawing inspiration from such political events that have exemplary value in her eyes.

We can find additional evidence and elaboration on Arendt's views on the relationship between technology and politics from a 1964 lecture entitled "Labor, Work, Action." In it, Arendt goes into greater detail in describing her ideas on the future of politics and technology by relating her own reflections on Marx's ideas:

> the actual goal of the revolution in Marx is not merely the emancipation of the laboring or working classes, but the emancipation of man from labor. For "the realm of freedom begins only where labor determined through want" and the immediacy of "physical needs" ends. And this emancipation, as we know now, to the extent that it is possible at all, occurs not by political emancipation—the equality of all classes of the citizen—but through technology. I said: To the extent that it is possible, and I meant by this qualification that consumption, as a stage of the cyclical movement of the living organism is in a way also laborious.[36]

Here again, Arendt repeats her conviction that the emancipation from labor does not occur through political intervention, but, if at all, "through technology." She also clearly distinguishes herself from the Marxist and Socialist traditions of thought by downplaying the role of politics in a process of politicization that could potentially lead to the "emancipation of man from labor." However, Arendt makes an important augmentation to her earlier argument: for her, the liberation from labor can never be absolute because the life of living organisms itself is "in a way laborious."

She further develops her ideas on overcoming social injustice and poverty in a lecture from 1966/1967, which has been recently published under the title "The Freedom to be Free." In this essay, she emphasizes that the first two revolutions reveal that "the conquest of poverty is a prerequisite for the foundation of freedom, but also that liberation from poverty cannot be dealt with in the same way as liberation from political oppression."[37] It is well known that in *On Revolution* Arendt famously argues that every revolution necessarily has two sides and stages: first, each revolution must liberate itself from unwanted foreign or domestic domination and from the chains of poverty; second, every revolution is confronted with the phase of foundation—the constitution of a new political body.[38] In "The Freedom to be Free," Arendt elaborates on this argument further by noting that in history, "rulership" had its "most legitimate source not in a drive to power but in the human wish to emancipate mankind from the necessities of life," and she argues that this, and not the accumulation of wealth, is at the "core of slavery."[39] She continues this line of thought by arguing that it is only technology that has changed this reality, "at least in some parts of the world."[40] The following lines are worth quoting in full:

> What America achieved by great good luck, today many other states, though probably not all, may acquire by virtue of calculated effort and organized development. This fact is the measure of our hope. It permits us to take the lessons of the deformed revolutions into account and still hold fast not only to their undeniable grandeur but also to their inherent promise.[41]

Here, Arendt separates technological calculation and administration from political deliberation more clearly than anywhere else in her work. Although in some of her writings Arendt makes some very problematic interpretations and formulations concerning the history of slavery and modern forms of

social inequality, quite importantly in "The Freedom to be Free" she highlights the fact that the accumulation of American wealth in modern times depended "to a considerable degree on black misery."[42]

When reading these surprising passages, which reveal Arendt's belief in the possibilities of technology and, thus, give additional elaboration to her core arguments in *On Revolution* and in *The Human Condition*, one is compelled to ask: What does she hope to achieve by clinging to her distinction between the social and the political? In a telling passage from "The Cold War and the West," Arendt elaborates on this conceptual distinction as follows: "In a sense, the fight against poverty, though to be conducted by technical, non-political means, must also be understood as *a power struggle, namely, as the struggle against the force of necessity to prepare the way for the forces of freedom.*"[43] Here, Arendt is obviously attempting to formulate the idea that technical and non-political interventions to eradicate poverty should be understood as *preconditions* for political freedom.

A similar description can be found in a statement made by Arendt at a 1972 conference dedicated to her own political thought. Arendt was asked what she meant by her distinction between the social and the political. To the astonishment of anyone who is familiar with her critical narrative concerning the rise of the social, in her answer Arendt referred positively to Friedrich Engels: "Everything which can really be figured out, in the sphere Engels called the administration of things—these are social things in general. That they should then be subject to debate seems to me phony and a plague."[44] She stated that in relation to such pressing issues as education, health, urban problems, and living standards, "with every one of these questions there is a double face. And one of these faces should not be subject to debate."[45] How can Arendt positively refer to a communist thinker like Engels, who advocated just such an "administration of things" in the realm of politics that Arendt had apparently always criticized so harshly?

In fact, I think Arendt's critique of bureaucracy is more nuanced than is usually argued. She is not critical of bureaucracy as such, but even favors it in the realm of the social: what Arendt criticizes is,

more specifically, the reduction of politics to mere bureaucracy. By excluding the mere "whatness" of labor and human life from the public realm, her concern is to salvage our "whoness," which we can reveal only by inserting ourselves into the public realm through words and deeds—an event that, according to her, is like a "second birth."[46] Arendt's ambition is to protect the public realm from being intruded upon by the facticity of private life and to secure a space where human uniqueness can appear. The great potential that Arendt sees in automation is precisely the possibility of freeing politics from its current biopolitical locus: while modernity tends to reduce politics to a "gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping,"[47] Arendt's great hope is that with the help of technology, politics could be re-established above the mere administration of necessities.

Arendt on the priority of social rights: The right to have rights revisited

In this section, I move on to argue that Arendt's work provides a fruitful framework for thinking about basic income as a future human right and as a model of resistance to biopolitics. As we will see, such a move, however, requires thinking with and against Arendt. Previous research, such as erudite works by Seyla Benhabib, Patricia Owens, and Gündogdu, have explored how Arendt promotes the right to belong to some form of human community as a fundamental human right.[48] However, since Arendt is usually read as an author who gives little attention to economic questions and social justice, very little has been written on the connection between her understanding of citizenship and its materialist or economic preconditions. In what follows, I will tackle this issue.

In the introduction to *The Origins*, Arendt famously argues that after the disaster of totalitarianism, we need to establish a "new law on earth, whose validity this time must comprehend the whole of humanity while its power must remain strictly limited, rooted in and controlled by newly defined territorial entities."[49] This law would essentially mean the right of every human being to belong to some form of human community, and within a given body politic it would concretely mean the "right to action" and the "right to opinion."[50] Here, Arendt develops a vision of thin cosmopolitan federalism

that would remain conscious of the fact that "men cannot become citizens of the world as they are citizens of their countries."[51]

In other words, Arendt advocates the possibility of broadening our understanding of the juridical personality—even if in the thinnest possible sense—to the global realm. The danger for Arendt is precisely that without this fundamental right, without juridical personality, human beings can be reduced to their mere natural givenness and thus be dominated as subjects of biopower:

> Without his persona, there would be an individual without rights and duties, perhaps a "natural man"—that is, a human being or *homo* in the original meaning of the word, indicating someone outside the range of the law and the body politic of the citizens, as for instance a slave—but certainly a politically irrelevant being.[52]

As Arendt notes, the original meaning of the word *persona* was elaborated in the mask that ancient actors wore in plays. It had a double-function: on the one hand, it hid or replaced the actor's own face, but, on the other, this happened "in a way that would make it possible for the voice to sound through."[53] Arendt criticizes the French Revolution precisely because it had no concept of the juridical persona and the fact that the revolutionaries believed they had "liberated the natural man in all men."[54] Without the rights of citizenship, no voice of a unique person can "sound through." She also portrayed the history of the Holocaust as a process of extermination that begun by killing the juridical person, continued through the destruction of the moral person, and, ultimately, aimed at destroying human spontaneity as such.[55] The goal of totalitarian domination was to reduce human beings to "undistinguishable and undefinable specimen of the species *homo sapiens*,"[56] to the "lowest common denominator of organic life itself,"[57] in order to make murder "as impersonal as the squashing of a gnat."[58] In an "ideal" situation, death factories would merely process "superfluous human material"[59] that was nothing more than "unqualified, mere existence."[60] It is in relation to these unparalleled events that Arendt writes: "the world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human"; she further states, "it seems that a man who is nothing but a man has lost the very qualities which make it possible for other people to treat him as a fellow-man."[61]

For Arendt, totalitarianism appears as the most extreme form of biopolitical domination. In her view, this unparalleled event was a contingent crystallization of different elements inherent to the

modern age as such.[62] It is thus not surprising that Arendt contends that it is in the modern world *in general* that we have become "more and more concerned with <u>life</u> (or labor) per se."[63] She explicitly states that "contemporary politics is concerned with the naked existence of us all."[64] For Arendt, the modern factories of mass destruction were both an unforeseen event *and* the most extreme expression of what she terms a potentially deadly "linkage of politics and life" that is "the peculiarity of modern society."[65]

Arendt's vision of a "right to have rights" was obviously conceptualized against these historical realities. She was always of the opinion that "politics is never for the sake of life"—that "life *qua* life" *should not* matter in the realm of the political, arguing that politics is only possible when individuals have the possibility and the time to free themselves from the toils of labor.[66] What is often misunderstood is that, for Arendt, poverty and politics are, in fact, incompatible:

> Only those who know freedom from want can appreciate fully the meaning of freedom from fear, and only those who are free from both want and fear are in a position to conceive a passion for public freedom, to develop within themselves that *goût* or taste for *liberté* and the peculiar taste for *egalité* or equality that *liberté* carries within it.[67]

Arendt was very clear in expressing the opinion that "to be free for freedom mean[s] first of all to be free not only from fear but also from want."[68] As I argued in the previous section, Arendt thought that only the development of technology, and what she once in a letter to Jaspers terms the "coming automation,"[69] could potentially liberate human beings from the toils of labor on an unprecedented scale. These same ideas are also implied in *On Revolution*. In it, Arendt argues that we should not, as during the French Revolution, equate the rights of men with nature and make the "rights to the necessities of life" the absolute end of government. Instead, one of Arendt's more complex sentences implies that these rights should be understood as "*prepolitical* rights that no government and no political power has the right to touch and to violate."[70] But do these passages really change anything in terms of understanding Arendt as a political theorist?

Even though many of Arendt's arguments are problematic, she was nevertheless aware that "the emancipation of women and of the working class—that is, of the segments of humanity never before

allowed to show themselves in public life—puts a radically new face on all political questions."[71] Arendt's clearest articulation of the interconnectedness of positive freedoms and the liberty from poverty occurs in a posthumously published essay entitled "Public Rights and Private Interests" (1977). By differentiating between "private rights we have as individuals from the public rights we have as citizens," Arendt seeks to challenge what she deems the "traditional assumption" prevalent in the West: that our rights are private and our obligations public.[72] Here, Arendt repeats her famed assertion that public life is like a second life, "a luxury; it is an *additional* happiness that one is made capable of only after the requirements of the life process have been fulfilled."[73] After making this point, Arendt directly endorses the correct politicization of private life as a precondition for citizenship:

> So if we talk about equality, the question always is: how much have we to change the private lives of the poor? In other words, how much money do we have to give them to make them capable of enjoying public happiness? Education is very nice, but the real thing is money. Only when they can enjoy the public will they be willing and able to make sacrifices for the public good. To ask sacrifices of individuals who are not yet citizens is to ask them for an idealism which they do not have and cannot have in view of the urgency of the life process. Before we ask the poor for idealism, we must first make them citizens: and this involves so changing the circumstances of their private lives that they become capable of enjoying the "public."[74]

In this passage, Arendt clearly recognizes minimum economic equality as a precondition of political freedom as such and argues that we should pursue the eradication of poverty through the correct politicization of these matters. She continues this line of thought by stating that the precondition of freedom is not wealth, but, on the one hand, security and a place of one's own that can shelter individuals from the "claims of the public." For Arendt, the primary condition of privacy is thus ownership, which she distinguishes from mere property. On the other hand, she argues that freedom requires the existence of a public realm, one which must also be protected from the reckless promotion of private interests.[75] At the very end of "Public Rights and Private Interests," Arendt criticizes the prevalent political systems for their inability to provide such a world of in-between, noting that "neither the capitalist system nor the socialist system respects ownership any longer," and coming to

the conclusion that, "hence, one of our problems is to find a way to restore ownership to private individuals under the conditions of modern production."[76]

In my opinion, these passages testify to the fact that Arendt would actually have agreed with her husband Heinrich Blücher, who wrote in a letter to their mutual friend Karl Jaspers: "Like philosophy [whose task is to bring together] truth and freedom, the task of politics is the equally immense task of bringing together freedom and justice."[77] But how could such a change towards combining politics and justice by altering the private lives of the poor be successfully pursued?

As Steven Klein highlights, Arendt never really pursues her ideas in this direction.[78] Even though Arendt herself once noted that the two key problems of the contemporary world are "the political integration of technical power" and "the political organization of mass societies,"[79] beyond the writings analyzed above she leaves this connection largely unexplored. However, and though she remained quite skeptical of how far to take such an idea, Arendt recognized that a successful "administration of things" could only be achieved "in a more or less central manner."[80] In any case, she was sure that this could not happen as a result of the capitalist free market. Even though Arendt herself said that she was never "either a socialist or a communist," she was nevertheless always very critical of capitalism and of the "liberals' political philosophy according to which the mere sum of individual interests adds up to the miracle of the common good." This liberal attitude, to her, was "always 'totalitarian,'" because it falsely understood the relationship of society, economics, and politics solely in the light of private interests.[81] In a roundtable talk from 1975, just before her death, Arendt criticized capitalism and classical economic theory in clear terms, noting that Adam Smith's theory of an invisible hand is one of the most harmful and falsest of theories that exist.[82]

In interpreting Arendt's critique of capitalism, then, a problem remains: if one refuses to accept modern liberal individualism and capitalism, and if one also rejects socialism and communism, as Arendt does, what realistic political alternatives remain? Arendt herself, of course, always refused to accept any such political isms and opted instead to "think without bannisters," notoriously stating the

following words in relation to prevailing labels and political ideologies: "I don't think the real questions of this century will get any kind of illumination by this kind of thing."[83]

I would like to suggest that it is at this point that Arendt's thought shows quite surprising similarities to a discourse that is gaining popularity among political theorists: the idea of an unconditional and universal basic income.[84] When Arendt's distinction between the private, the social, and the political is connected to her reflections on technology and automation, Arendt no longer appears as a theorist who ignores social justice, but as a thinker who seeks to open up new realms for democratic political action without giving any substantial goals for concrete policies beyond taking care of the necessities of life. In reversing Arendt's distinction between the social and the political in this manner, and by connecting her ideas to the discourse concerning basic income, we can also avoid reading her work and categories in teleological terms—a key point in understanding her work.[85]

On the one hand, with Arendt we can assert that, more often than not, it has been historically impossible to overcome poverty and to tackle social questions via political means. In the age of social media and the Internet, Arendt is also a timely theorist who reminds us that all human beings need a distinct place in the world, a private realm of darkness from which action can arise into the light of the public realm. Being both with and against Arendt, on the other, we must recognize that with technological development, the distinction between the social and the political takes on a new meaning. What Arendt only recognizes as an indirect political struggle—the technological and scientific intervention into social questions concerning the basic necessities of life—is something that can and must be countered politically in the present world. However, in thinking with Arendt, we can affirm that this should not be envisioned as the ultimate end of politics, but as an endeavor that strives to redefine political citizenship. To apply an apt categorization developed by Andreas Kalyvas, institutionalized politics, in distinction to a revolutionary and extraordinary political agency, is only possible in the proper sense of the word in such a world in which taking care of life's basic necessities does not consume the entirety of our time.[86] Even though I agree with Kathrin Braun and Miguel Vatter, who have argued that in distinction to modern biopolitical governance, Arendt's concept of

natality provides an alternative understanding of human life, temporality, and politics, I believe that an Arendtian politics of natality and plurality must be supplemented with a political vision concerning economic questions and poverty. [87]

Arendt helps us in arguing that in the technically and economically developed modern world, basic economic equality and the right to belong to some human community can and should become the *preconditions* of politics. In fact, it is possible to argue that her whole political theory is defined by what I call a *politics of affirmative exclusion*: as preconditions of future politics, we can strive to politicize fundamental social questions in a way that they would achieve a self-evident stature as human rights, and as fundamental human rights, rise above political debate, even though we would remain conscious of their political origins. Arendt is not an author who simply distinguishes between all "things social" and all "things political," but a theoretician who argues that this is what all technologically developed societies *can* strive toward after "social things" have been correctly politicized with the help of technology. In effect, Arendt's way of understanding politics presupposes that citizenship and the right to the necessities of life are inextricably bound to each other: on the one hand, without freedom from labor our rights as citizens are effectively diminished because our time will be consumed in the realm of labor; on the other, without citizenship we do not have direct access to the public realm nor can we lay a legally valid claim to the necessities of life. Just as public rights cannot exist without a minimum of private rights, private rights become endangered if they are not protected by a public realm. For Arendt, the fulfilment of basic social rights is thus the *sine qua non* without which the fulfilment of political rights is impossible.

However, Arendt herself over-estimated the speed of technological development. In one of the last papers before her death, Arendt notes rather sardonically that the "debate over automation and unemployment quickly disappeared" because it had become "universally accepted that we must make cars to keep our jobs."[88] Indeed, it is only today that we can say that automation, in some sense, will become a reality of the current or next generations. What Arendt saw only partially is that the way this will happen depends on our current political decisions.

The right to *zoe*: Toward a politics of affirmative exclusion

In this last section, I conclude my reflections by shortly comparing how Arendt, Foucault, and Agamben have imagined alternative realities to current biopolitical governance and by arguing that a critical reading of Arendt's work can provide an original model of resistance. I maintain that Arendt provides us with a pathway toward understanding the right to life's basic necessities, to *zoe*, as a future human right.

Let us begin with Foucault and Arendt. On the surface, Arendt's quest to "think what we are doing" displays similarities with Foucault's famous notion of an "ontology of ourselves."[89] Foucault and Arendt agreed that biopolitics is a distinctively modern phenomenon: both recognized the rise of liberalism as a key factor in locating the roots of modern biopolitical governance and both also saw Nazi totalitarianism as the most violent form of biopolitics.[90] However, a key difference between these two thinkers appears when we compare the way they looked for alternatives to prevailing political systems and technologies of normalization. As Sergei Prozorov shows, one can read Foucault's later reflections on the Cynic practice of *parrhesia* (truth-telling) as a paradigm of affirmative biopolitics. Cynic *parrhesia* becomes affirmatively biopolitical because it extends the philosophical question of truth to one's own way of life as concrete self-practice. As Prozorov convincingly argues, Foucault's turn to *parrhesia* arose during his active engagement with Eastern European dissident movements. His notion of this self-practice can be understood as one that shows affinity with the dissident liberalism of Charter 77, and, more specifically, with Vaclav Havel's vision of "the power of the powerless." By refusing to participate in the official rituals of the Communist Party and to act as if they believed in the prevailing ideologies, the dissidents refused to live a lie and, instead, affirmed their own truths against oppressive power.[91]

In contrast to Foucault, who helps us in imagining forms of resistance at the individual level (and thus, perhaps, primarily under conditions where political freedom does not exist), Arendt turns our attention toward reforming institutionalized politics and the very notion of citizenship itself. As

Kathrin Braun and Ella Myers rightly argue, it is here that Arendt and Foucault radically diverge from one another: while Foucault's discovery of *parrhesia* and philosophically motivated self-practices rely on an individualistic notion of politics and ethics, Arendt's reflections are animated by what she calls *amor mundi*—the care and love for the common world.[92] This difference of approach also reflects two entirely different ways of understanding human freedom. Unlike Foucault, Arendt explicitly separates the philosophical freedom of the will from political freedom.[93] Arendt argues that the rise of modern biopolitics, in fact, testifies to how the "modern age has separated freedom and politics."[94] Arendt always *criticized* the Greek philosophers and Christianity for replacing the concrete political freedom of the *polis* with a non-worldly freedom of the will.[95] She always thought that political freedom must be understood as a spatially limited "tangible reality" and as a "space in which men could move freely": for her, political freedom means the right to participate in government.[96] Thus, while Foucault's analytics of biopower are rooted in a vision of self-critical individuality and remain primarily negative, Arendt's "pearl diving" into history is driven by a positive vision of what a radically democratic politics and political freedom *can* be.[97]

Interesting contrasts can also be found between the positions of Arendt and Agamben. For both, the greatest danger in modern politics is the reduction of human beings to nothing more than human beings. Long before Agamben's figure of *homo sacer*, Arendt made an allusion to "the ancient and medieval custom of outlawry," referring especially to the practice of "excommunication in the late Roman Empire."[98] In the German version of *The Origins*, Arendt describes the dangers that are inherent to the condition of being modern refugees and stateless people in a way that greatly resembles Agamben's ideas. Already her central worry is that the growing number of stateless and rights-less human beings would become mere "abstract human beings (*abstrakte Menschenwesen*)." Arendt even states that "their non-relatedness to the world, their worldlessness is like an invitation (*Aufforderung*) to murder, to the extent that the death of human beings, who stand outside all worldly relations of the juridical, social and political kind, remains without any consequence to the surviving ones (*Überlebenden*)."[99] Against the background of twentieth-century totalitarianism, which brings these

phenomena into the open in the most extreme manner, both Agamben and Arendt pose the question of how to rethink politics against a Western tradition that now lies hollow and devoid of authority.[100]

However, upon closer analysis the differences between Agamben and Arendt emerge. As Gündogdu convincingly argues, unlike Agamben, Arendt never homogenizes all of Western history as a history of sovereign exclusionist violence: while Agamben demands that we abandon all concepts bound to sovereignty in order to overcome the violent exclusion of *zoe*, Arendt encourages us to open up the aporias connected to human rights; human rights are not only an epiphenomenon of sovereign violence, but also, potentially, a way to reorganize humanity in a more just manner.[101] Closer to Foucault, Arendt argues that only the modern concept of *state* sovereignty within the political context of nation-states links life and politics in an unforeseen manner.[102] Even though Arendt also famously proclaimed that "if men wish to be free, it is precisely sovereignty they must renounce," her critique of sovereignty is not a wholesale debunking of this concept, but rather a nuanced attempt to criticize the idea that "the essence of politics is rulership."[103] While Agamben has famously insisted that there is an "inner solidarity" between democracy and totalitarianism,[104] he never really explicates what he means by "democracy." In contrast, Arendt draws a distinction between parliamentarian representative democracy and grassroots council democracy.[105] In seeking to re-discover the "lost treasure" of *Rätedemokratie*, Arendt turns to the Communist council tradition, which she attempts to read and re-appropriate from an original republican perspective.[106]

On the basis of these brief comparisons, we are now in a better position to sketch a critically Arendtian vision of resistance to biopolitics. In contrast to Foucault, who turned to *parrhesia* and to an alternative individuality, and in contrast to Agamben, who claims that we must abandon sovereignty altogether, Arendt argues that biopolitics can only be resisted if "the right to have rights" becomes a universal human right and, as such, a condition guaranteed by "humanity itself."[107] While Foucault's solution remains rather individualistic and gains significance primarily under conditions where political freedom does not exist, Agamben's quest to abandon sovereignty altogether seems wildly utopian. In contrast, Arendt's political thought carries an untimely actuality because her

distinction between the private, the social, and the political and her re-discovery of *Rätedemokratie* help us to envision the sense in which politics could be established above and beyond its current biopolitical locus. A critically Arendtian account of a "right to have rights," broadened by a vision of minimum economic equality in the form of basic income, provides a more realistic and concrete option in countering the biopolitical reality of contemporary liberal democracies. One could also argue that Arendt's account thus *complements* Foucault's vision of affirmative biopolitics as a critical self-practice.

In re-reading Arendt's concept of the social and critically connecting her ideas to the debate concerning basic income, this paper has argued that Arendt's vision of a "right to have rights" must be based on a minimum of economic equality. This critically Arendtian idea of a "right to have rights," which is grounded in the politicization of social questions with the help of technology, provides us with a vision in which *the slaves of the ancient polis are replaced by machines* and what used to be the privilege of the few can now, at least potentially, be transformed into a basic right for all. What I am suggesting here is that Arendt's "right to have rights" must take its bearings from another right: from the right to *zoe*—the right to life's basic necessities. As we have seen, the central distinctions in Arendt's thought are, in fact, grounded in the idea that political rights cannot be effectively realized without the fulfilment of basic social rights. In contrast to Foucault's self-practices, which consist of "bringing the *bios* down to the level of *zoe*,"[108] and in contrast to Agamben, who aims to make *zoe* and *bios* entirely indistinguishable so as to escape the logic of sovereignty, Arendt suggests that in order to resist biopolitical governance we must *strive to politicize zoe with the help of technology in order to exclude zoe from politics*. This "politics of affirmative exclusion," as I have chosen to call it, aims to politicize life in order to depoliticize life; in other words, it aims to tackle social questions with the help of technology in order to grant them the stature of self-evident human rights. This, I have suggested, could possibly occur by introducing basic income as a human right.

This critically Arendtian vision of a politics "above biopolitics" can be elaborated upon as an emancipatory strategy by briefly analyzing the intricate relationship between three of Arendt's key

notions: *bios* (or "life-story"), *persona*, and the right to have rights as the right to *zoe*. On the one hand, Arendt always thought that "the chief characteristic of this specifically human life … is that it is itself always full of events which ultimately can be told as a story," and it is this life, a "*bios* as distinguished from mere *zoe*," that only properly becomes possible beyond the realm of necessities.[109] For Arendt, "individual life, a *bios* with a recognizable life-story from birth to death, rises out of biological life, *zoe*," and unlike the repetitive and circular realm of labor, "the rectilinear *bios* of the mortals"—as defined by human spontaneity—"interrupts the circular movement of biological life."[110] On the other hand, Arendt thinks that a human *bios* that rises above "mere *zoe*" is only properly possible if the juridical *persona*—the mask that allows us to become more than our natural selves and makes it possible for our voices to "sound through"—is established as a legally guaranteed human condition. Arendt's provocative argument is that a life in public, a *bios*, is only possible if citizenship itself is understood as consisting of both the right to *zoe* and to a juridical personality.

To end these reflections, I want to highlight that although we may legitimately bestow an important measure of hope on automation and technology, we should also remain skeptical of any easy solutions. As I stated at the beginning of this paper, Arendt certainly was no naïve technophile. Nothing could be further from the truth. While being skeptically hopeful, Arendt always remained aware of the potentially Pyrrhic nature of a potential "liberation of man from labor" in a world dominated by the *animal laborans*. So should we. The prospect of a "society of laborers without labor" could also potentially end up in a dangerous *cul-de-sac*, making "large sections of the people superfluous, even in terms of labor."[111] As Arendt highlights in a 1966 paper, entitled "On the Human Condition," if human beings are deprived of the "life cycle of the simple things" in which "most men have gained their reward and seen their purpose," we might end up facing an unprecedented problem: that of vacant time. As Arendt emphasizes, it is by no means certain that human beings could adapt to such conditions.[112]

In the end, Arendt's reflections on the intricate relationship between politics and technology testify to the fact, to borrow the eloquent words of Richard H. King from a different context, that she "was

opposed to ideologies of progress, but not of hope."[113] If we want to remain faithful to Arendt's ethos of *Selbstdenken*, a critically Arendtian politics of affirmative exclusion must avoid both "reckless optimism and reckless despair"[114] and hold on to the "uncertain and flickering ray of hope in the otherwise rather dark and threatening prospects of the future."[115]

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[1] For introductions to biopolitics, see Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*, trans. Eric Frederick Trump (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Sergei Prozorov and Simona Rentea, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Biopolitics* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[2] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 143.

[3] Michel Foucault, "*Society must be Defended*," trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), pp. 239–264.

[4] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population,* trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2009).

[5] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2008).

[6] Michel Foucault, "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Katherine Porter, (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 373–80.

[7] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 3–4.

[8] On Foucault and Agamben, see Mika Ojakangas, "Impossible Dialogue on Bio-power: Agamben and Foucault," *Foucault Studies* 2 (2005): 5–28.

[9] André Duarte, "Biopolitics and the dissemination of violence: the Arendtian critique of the present," *HannahArendt.net* 1 (2005): 1–15; Claire Blencowe "Foucault's and Arendt's 'insider view' of biopolitics: a critique of Agamben," *History of the Human Sciences* 23 (2010): 113–30; Johanna Oksala, "Violence and the Biopolitics of Modernity," *Foucault Studies* 10 (2010): 23–43.

[10] Miguel Vatter, "Natality and Biopolitics in Arendt," *Revista de Ciencia Politica* 26 (2006): 137–59; Kathrin Braun, "Biopolitics and Temporality in Arendt and Foucault," *Time & Society* 16 (2007): 5–23.

[11] E.g., Lemke, *Biopolitics*.

[12] Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, trans. Timothy C. Campbell (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[13] Hannah Arendt, "Es Gibt nur ein einziges Menschenrecht," *Die Wandlung* 4 (1949): 754–70; Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1994), p. 298.

[14] See, for instance, Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); Ayten Gündogdu, *Rightlessness in an Age of Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[15] All of these writings are included in the recently published collection Hannah Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister: Essays in Understanding 1953–1975*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2018).

[16] Arendt, *The Origins*, p. 456; Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding 1930–1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 1994), p. 408.

[17] On Arendt and technology, see Benjamin Lazier, "Earthrise; or, The Globalization of the World Picture," *American Historical Review* (June 2011): 602–30; Waseem Yaqoob, "The Archimedean point: Science and technology in the thought of Hannah Arendt, 1951–1963," *Journal of European Studies* 44 (3) (2014): 199–224. On Arendt and automation, in particular, see Brian Simbirski, "Cybernetic Muse: Hannah Arendt on Automation, 1951–1958," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 77 (4) (2016): 589–613. While these studies see parallels between Arendt and Heidegger—of special importance is his study "Die Frage nach der Technik," in F-W. von Hermann, ed., *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 2000), pp. 5–36—my reflections rather point to a crucial

difference between these two thinkers. Whereas Heidegger's vision of modernity remains altogether pessimistic, Arendt discovers an important measure of hope from technology and from the history of *Rätedemokratie*. On Arendt and Heidegger, see especially Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996); Benhabib, *Reluctant Modernism*; Jacques Taminiaux, *La fille de Thrace et le penseur professionel, Arendt et Heidegger* (Paris: Payot, 1992).

[18] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 6.

[19] Hannah Arendt, *Vita Activa* (Munich: Piper, 2016), p. 15, my translation. On the differences between reading Arendt in English and German, see Marie-Luise Knott, *Unlearning with Hannah Arendt*, trans. David Dollenmayer (London: Granta, 2013).

[20] Canovan, *A Reinterpretation*, p. 84; Arendt, *Human Condition*, p. 47.

[21] Arendt, *Human Condition*, p. 4.

[22] Ibid., 147–53.

[23] Simbrinski, "Cybernetic Muse," p. 590.

[24] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 2006), pp. 102, 104.

[25] Ibid., 104.

[26] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, pp. 251–52, 348.

[27] Ibid., 348.

[28] Ibid., 252. This passage appears in a slightly different form in "Revolution and Freedom" (ibid., 352).

[29] Because the countless examples of this interpretation are known by everyone familiar with the commentaries on Arendt´s work, it is sufficient to refer to the most erudite and comprehensive study: see Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt´s Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[30] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 253. Elsewhere, Arendt writes in a similar fashion: "if our increase in wealth does not stimulate productivity and, eventually, prosperity in other parts of the

world, especially the backward regions, we shall earn hatred and not admiration for our system" (ibid, 200).

[31] Ibid., 252. Once again, these ideas appear in a somewhat different form in "Revolution and Freedom" (ibid., 352–53).

[32] Gündogdu, *Rightlessness*, pp. 15, 57.

[33] Hannah Arendt, *Denktagebuch 1950–1973*, ed. Ingeborg Nordmann and Ursula Ludz (Munich: Piper, 2003), pp. 15–7, my translation.

[34] However, my intention is obviously not to claim that this reading is simply trouble-free. As Nancy Fraser, Hanna Pitkin and Andrew Schaap, among others, have rightly highlighted, Arendt sometimes tends to confuse needs with necessity. See Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1989), pp. 160 note 32, 169–171; Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob*. pp. 11–12, 190–192; Andrew Schaap, "The Politics of Need," in Andrew Schaap, Danielle Celermajer and Vrasidas Karalis, eds., *Power, Judgment and Political Evil: in Conversation with Hannah Arendt* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 157–170.

[35] Arendt, *Human Condition*, p. 9.

[36] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 295.

[37] Ibid., 382.

[38] Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 23–4; Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 251.

[39] Ibid., 382.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 377. On the question of slavery in Arendt's work, see especially Kathryn T. Gines, *Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); Richard H. King, *Arendt and America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

[43] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 253, my italics.

[44] Ibid., 457.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Arendt, *Human Condition*, pp. 10–11, 176.

[47] Ibid., 28.

[48] Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism*; Idem, *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens*; (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Patricia Owens, *Between War and Politics: International Relations and the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Gündogdu, *Rightlessness*.

[49] Arendt, *The Origins*, p. ix.

[50] Ibid., 296–8.

[51] Arendt, *Human Condition*, p. 257. On Arendt as a thinker of international relations, see especially Anthony F. Lang and John Williams (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and International Relations* (London: Palgrave, 2008); Owens, *Between War and Politics*.

[52] Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 97.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 98.

[55] Arendt, *The Origins*, pp. 447–53; Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, p. 240.

[56] Ibid., 304.

[57] Ibid., 198.

[58] Arendt, *The Origins*, p. 443.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 301.

[61] Ibid., 300, 302.

[62] Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, p. 403; Arendt *Denktagebuch*, pp. 96–97.

[63] Ibid., 535.

[64] Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2005), p. 145.

[65] Ibid; *Between Past and Future*, ed. Jerome Kohn (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 184.

[66] Ibid., 183; Arendt, *Human Condition*, p. 37.

[67] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 378.

[68] Ibid., 377.

[69] Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1926–1969* (Munich: Piper, 1993), p. 523, my translation.

[70] Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 99, my italics. Also see Gündogdu, *Rightlessness*, pp. 56–8, 68–76.

[71] Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, p. 144.

[72] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 506.

[73] Ibid., 510.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., 510–11.

[76] Ibid., 511–12.

[77] Arendt and Jaspers, *Briefwechsel*, p. 488, my translation.

[78] Steven Klein, "'Fit to Enter the World': Hannah Arendt on Politics, Economics, and the Welfare State," *American Political Science Review* 108 (4) (2014): 856–69 (857). Klein argues that such a politicization would require the creation of "mediating institutions" that could politicize social matters as common political concerns.

[79] Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, p. 427. In

[80] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 465.

[81] Ibid., 447; Arendt, *The Origins*, p. 336. See also Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, pp. 510–12.

[82] Hannah Arendt, "Legitimität der Lüge in der Politik?" in Adalbert Reif, ed., *Gespräche mit Hannah Arendt* (Munich: Piper, 1976), p. 121. Because this interview was not authorized for publication by Arendt before her untimely death, and thus remains an intellectual curiosity, see also substantially harmonious passages: Arendt, *Human Condition*, p. 185; Arendt, *The Origins*, p. 336.

[83] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, pp. 470, 473.

[84] For an overview of basic income research and of different visions concerning basic income, see Karl Widerquist, Jose Noguera, Yannick Vanderborght, and Jurgen De Wispelaere, eds., *Basic Income: An Anthology of Contemporary Research* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). For a comprehensive work that addresses basic income as a "real utopia" and outlines possible ways of implementation, see Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (London: Verso, 2010).

[85] See especially Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Villa *The Fate*; Jussi Backman "The End of Action: Arendtian Critique of Aristotle's Concept of praxis," in Mika Ojakangas, ed., *Hannah Arendt: Practice, Thought and Judgement, Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, 2010), pp. 28–47.

[86] On this distinction, see Andreas Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). In evoking this threefold distinction, I want to highlight that Arendt fails to see that revolutionary political action, in contrast to institutionalized politics, can and has been undertaken by those who do not enjoy full political rights. For example, Arendt bluntly ignores the Haitian Revolution—an extraordinary political event that shows the power of those Arendt did not see as political agents in the full sense of the term. For opposing perspectives on Arendt and the Haitian Revolution, see Gines, *Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question*, pp. 12–3, 74–6; Gündogdu, *Rightlessness*, pp. 185–6.

[87] This said, I must note that Vetter's claim that Arendt's thought would be related to a "negative political theology" strikes me as quite problematic (see Vetter, "Natality and Biopolitics," p. 158). If anything, Arendt´s thought is a secular elaboration of traditional metaphysical questions and an elaborate critique of all transcendentally understood metaphysical "anchors."

[88] Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgement*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2003), p. 272. On the changes in Arendt's understanding of technology, see Simbrinski, "Cybernetic Muse," pp. 591–592.

[89] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 32–50.

[90] Foucault writes that Nazism is the "paroxysmal development of the new power mechanisms that had been established since the eighteenth century" and calls the Nazi state one that "has generalized biopower in an absolute sense … [and] which has also generalized the sovereign right to kill" (Foucault, "*Society must be defended*," pp. 259–260). Both Agamben and Blencowe remain unaware of this point: c.f., Agamben, *Homo sacer*; Blencowe, "Insider View."

[91] Sergei Prozorov, "Foucault's Affirmative Biopolitics: Cynic Parrhesia and the Biopower of the Powerless," *Political Theory* 45 (6) (2017), pp. 801–823.

[92] Braun, "Biopolitics," p. 20; Ella Myers, *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

[93] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. II, pp. 198–201.

[94] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 149.

[95] However, as Mika Ojakangas eloquently shows, both Arendt and Agamben greatly idealize and exaggerate the Greek distinction between *oikos* and *polis*. See Mika Ojakangas, *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics: A Reinterpretation of the History of Biopower* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[96] Arendt, *On Revolution*, pp. 210, 267.

[97] This must not be confused with a strict moral vision of politics. Arendt is not a Kantian in the imperative sense of his second critique: she notes clearly that her "chief reservations about Kant's philosophy concern precisely his moral philosophy, that is, the *Critique of Practical Reason*" (Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, *vol. I*, pp. 222–223, note 83). In contrast, in her redemptive reading of the Western tradition she draws on Kant's third critique, persuading and "wooing" others to understand the present through history as she does. On "wooing," see especially Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), p. 72.

[98] Arendt, *The Origins*, p. 302, note 54.

[99] Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft* (Munich: Piper, 2016), pp. 623–624, my italics, my translations. These passages are not included in the English version.

[100] On Agamben's way of rethinking politics against tradition, see Sergei Prozorov, *Agamben and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

[101] Gündogdu, *Rightlessness*, pp. 51–52.

[102] Arendt, *The Origins*, pp. 267–302.

[103] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 163; Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 268. Arendt's critique of sovereignty is framed against Carl Schmitt, who for Arendt was the most "the most able defender" of this notion (Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 289, note 21). On the differences between Arendt and Schmitt, see especially Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary*; Andrew Arato and Jean Cohen, "Banishing the Sovereign? Internal and External Sovereignty in Arendt," in *Constellations* 16 (2) (2009): 307–30; Anna Jurkevics, "Hannah Arendt Reads Carl Schmitt's The Nomos of the Earth: A Dialogue on Law and Geopolitics from the Margins," *European Journal of Political Theory*, 0 (0), (2015): 1–22.

[104] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 10.

[105] This also reflects a decisive methodological difference. Arendt always emphasizes that political thought arises "out of incidents of living experience" and that singular political events "are the true, the only reliable teachers of political scientists" (Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 14; Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 109). Agamben proceeds from a diagnosis of modernity that is explicitly ontological, even discovering parallels between Guantanamo Bay and Nazi concentration camps (see Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005]). As Patricia Owens rightly emphasizes, this analogy between Auschwitz and Guantanamo Bay is, in fact, nonsense (Owens, *Between War and Politics*, pp. 67–9).

[106] On the crucial importance of council democracy in Arendt, see John F. Sitton, "Hannah Arendt's Argument for Council Democracy," in *Polity* 20 (1) (1987): 80–100; Jeffery C. Isaac, "Oases in the Desert: Hannah Arendt on Democratic Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1) (1994): 156–168. For an historical contextualization of her reflections, see Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the*

Jewish Question, chapter 6; James Muldoon, "The Origins of Hannah Arendt's Council System," *History of Political Thought* 37 (4) (2016): 761–89.

[107] Arendt, *The Origins*, p. 298.

[108] Prozorov, "Foucault's Affirmative Biopolitics," p. 820.

[109] Arendt, *Human Condition*, p. 97.

[110] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 42.

[111] Arendt, *Human Condition*, pp. 4–5, 131; Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 2006), p. 273.

[112] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, pp. 324–27.

[113] King, *Arendt and America*, p. 67.

[114] Arendt, *The Origins*, p. vii.

[115] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, p. 332.