Arendt, Eichmann, and Reactionary Emotionalism in Education

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Introduction

The historical narrative of the West is inseparable from notions of inevitable progress, self-mastery, and the valorization of reason.[1] From the Enlightenment to positivism, rationality has been conceived of as superior to and distinct from emotion. "Masculine" rationality is perceived to be more capable in political, philosophical, scientific, and legal matters than "feminine" emotionality.[2] However, the West has also been characterized by emotional attachments to nationalism, culture, and tradition.[3] Such emotional attachments can be witnessed, for example, in recent public debates over school curriculum in the US.

In these debates, the framing of race and racism has become politically contentious.[4] How does the framing of these discussions change our perceptions of the USA, for example? How does it change our perceptions of Thomas Jefferson, of *Brown v. BOE*, of "progress" more generally? These questions point to the fact that the history of the US is contested. Displays of emotion along these lines have manifested at public gatherings, specifically at school board meetings, where par-

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ents have protested the perceived presence of Critical Race Theory in schools, and demanded that White children not be taught that "they're born racist."[5] One Virginia parent, for example, claimed during a board meeting that "CRT is racist; it is abusive; it discriminates against one's color...Think twice before you indoctrinate such racist theories."[6] Another example from the organization "No Left Turn" states that "diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, systemic racism, human rights education and health education conceal an aggressive, radical totalitarian ideology."[7] The organization claims that these ideologies are "attacking the very foundation of human society."[8]

Rhetoric such as this precludes the existence of authentic dialogue. Rather than assuming good-will and magnanimity, blanket accusations of racism and "attacking the foundations of society" create *a priori* divisions that prevent the pursuit of mutual understanding. Where do these emotional reactions originate? Why, in a paradigm that is supposed to conform to the Hegelian Absolute rationality, are *ad hominem* tactics and binaristic rhetoric still deployed in public discourse, rather than calm, detached, and cordial deliberation? The answer to these questions is ontological, which also means that they are historical. The ontological nature of the answer means that the questions should be equally ontological. For example, what kind of beings are humans, such that we are susceptible to such emotional reactions? What is the factical situation that we are dwelling in, and how might that situation collude with our way of being such that the structures of our being get covered over? This second question points to our unavoidable historicity. The nature of the matter in question, the framing of US history in classrooms and the emotional reactions that accompany it, also suggest that it is not simply a question of the *facts* of history, but rather a question of our *perception* of history. Martin Heidegger explains that "People still hold the view that what is handed down to us by tradition is what in reality lies behind us-while in fact it comes toward us because we are its captives and destined to it."[9] We are, in other words, *held* by history in such a way that we are formed (though not determined) by it. However, Heidegger is asserting that this *holding* is covered over because we view history as a museum to which we may be distantly indebted, whose main purpose is to be manipulated and objectified. I will therefore operate with a conception of history as *coming towards*, rather than lying behind us, which means that history is viewed as active, as dwelling among us while forming and *inter*acting.

To answer the question about the origins of reactionary emotionalism, then, it is necessary to look "backward" in such a way that we are simultaneously looking *around*. In the German language, there

is a term, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, that means "to cope with the past," or "overcoming the past," which is an accurate description of the phenomenon taking place within the debate over US history. In German, the word is meant in the context of World War II and the Holocaust. The process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany included De-Nazification and reparations, among other measures.[10] This "confrontation" and "overcoming" of Germany's Nazi past was *also* contested, and manifested not only in Germany, but across the Western world, including in the United States. One example of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* taking place in the US is the public debate instigated by a series of articles published in *The New Yorker* magazine by Hannah Arendt on the Adolf Eichmann trial. Arendt's *New Yorker* articles provoked a series of abrasive public responses. Arendt also received hundreds of letters from readers. Can this instance of an American confrontation with a German past offer any insights into our own, current *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*? What do the emotional responses to Arendt's piece tell us about the public emotions we are witnessing today surrounding the debate over history education? Can this example tell us anything about the origins of our reactionary emotionalism?

Method

To examine the questions of emotionality in public discourse, I utilize a framework of "emotional history." This type of history views emotions as "active creators of the historical world," and focuses on "ordinary people rather than elites."[11] The emotions under consideration are those found in the reactions and responses to Hannah Arendt's text, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, published first in *The New Yorker* and then as a book. These reactions were preserved in written form through the personal documents of Hannah Arendt, which were archived and digitized as the "Hannah Arendt Papers, 1898-1977,"[12] held in the Library of Congress. The correspondence contained in this collection will be the focus of analysis. One of the limitations of this approach is the short time span in which the documents were sent. However, Green and Troup explain that trauma and emotions do not conform to traditional conceptions of time and are better addressed in terms of "depth" rather than "span."[13] Analyzing a "time depth" rather than a "time span" thus conforms to the previous contention that history is active and interactive, rather than static and objectively observable. Furthermore, the concept of "emotional communities" will be used to delineate the emotional norms of different, sometimes conflicting, communities.[14] Identifying socially normative

emotional expectations will aid in the uncovering of ontological structures that render human beings susceptible to extremism.

Background: The Eichmann Trial

The reactions under question in this analysis are those inspired by Hannah Arendt's piece titled *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. This piece was written during the Adolf Eichmann war crimes trial, which took place in Jerusalem in 1961. Eichmann, according to Arendt's telling, was a mid-level Nazi S.S. officer who was responsible for the logistics and coordination of "deporting" or "forcibly relocating" German Jews into concentration camps. He reported to both Reinhard Heydrich and Heinrich Himmler. Eichmann gained a reputation as an expert on the "Jewish question" by being well-read in Zionist literature and having close personal connections to influential members of the Zionist Jewish community.[15] He used these connections to spare "privileged" and elite Jewish leaders by sending them to Palestine.

Arendt quotes Eichmann's pre-trial interviews at length to portray Eichmann as he saw himself, and to contradict pieces of the prosecution's narrative. For example, Arendt explains that Eichmann "did not see much" of the actual death camps, but the few that he did see were described by him as "monstrous" and "sadistic."[16] Arendt claims that he was "shocked out of his wits."[17] Furthermore, Arendt suggests that Eichmann was not the mastermind that the prosecution would have liked for him to be. Rather than an ideologue or a committed party believer, Arendt described Eichmann initially as a petty bureaucrat who's "post turned out to be such an important one only because the Jewish question, for purely ideological reasons, acquired a greater importance with every day and week."[18] At the only meeting he was invited to that was attended by all of the high-ranking Nazi officials, Arendt describes his role as an assistant who kept the minutes.[19] Furthermore, Arendt describes Eichmann as only able to speak in cliches. She explains that most of his answers came in the form of repeated mantras that had been handed down to him from party propaganda. She claims that Eichmann's "inability to speak was closely connected to his inability to *think*."[20]

Arendt also provides details of compliance and cooperation by members of the Jewish leadership. She points out that "the final roundup of Jews in Berlin was...done entirely by Jewish police." In addition to the presence of Jewish guards in camps such as Treblinka, the lists of people who would be sent to Palestine rather than to Auschwitz were compiled by Jews, who coordinated directly with Eichmann. She ex-

plains that the problem of complicity went farther than the Jewish community, however, and extended to the general population of Germany. In fact, Arendt writes, "the most potent factor in the soothing of [Eichmann's] own conscience was the simple fact that he could see no one, no one at all, who actually was against the Final Solution,"[21] though she tempers these comments in order to "dissipate the haunting specter of universal cooperation."[22]

Arendt's main contention is that the prosecution, intent on pushing their own agenda, had an interest in "historical truth," while ignoring the "factual truth."[23] Israel had a nationalistic interest in portraying Eichmann as the standard-bearer for "anti-Semitism throughout history,"[24] which, for Arendt, was the motivating factor for the "circus"-like aspects of the "show trial." Arendt does not think Eichmann is innocent or morally unassailable. Indeed, she repeatedly remarks upon his willingness to overcome personal disgust for abstract notions of "duty" or career.[25] Rather, for Arendt, Eichmann's "banality" is the very thing that makes his evil so pernicious and chilling. Arendt shows, for example, that from Eichmann's own perspective, the crimes that he participated in seemed mundane and were planned casually over such trivial activities as bowling and smoking cigars in the parlor.

Backlash: The Archives

After Arendt's piece appeared in *The New Yorker*, she received a letter from Henry Schwarzschild, a friend and the Director of Publications for the Anti-Defamation League. Schwarzschild was writing to warn Arendt that the *Eichmann* piece had caused "much wailing and wringing of hands, especially on the part of the German Jews, who feel their honor and that of their late friends attacked," adding that she was likely to become the subject of much "animosity."[26] After quibbling with her portrayal of German Jewish leaders as too complicit, Schwarzschild encourages her to return to New York soon, writing that "I can't single-handedly preserve you from character and scholarship defenestration."[27] These warnings would prove prescient, as Arendt would soon write to Karl Jaspers that her "whole apartment [is] literally filled with unopened mail about the Eichmann business."[28] These letters, digitally preserved in the "Hannah Arendt Papers," contain admonitions, confessions, and commendations from readers. For the purpose of this paper, these letters have been categorized into "emotional communities."[29] The difficulties inherent in this categorization stem from the fact that many of the letters do not contain any form of general self-identification from the writer, other than a name.

Where this occurs, the letters were placed in a "general population" category. Included in the "general population" category are letters pertaining to the scathing book review published by Judge Michael Musmanno in *The New York Times*. Other letters contain identifying letterheads, many of which are academic, and are categorized as such. The final emotional community identified in the documents includes Jewish organizations, Jewish community leaders, and general writers who self-identify as Jewish.

I. General Population

Writers in the "general population" category include varied responses to Arendt's piece. While all of them include an emotional element, not all of them are critical of Arendt. One of them, a letter from a 36-year-old male film enthusiast, opened by saying that "you are probably the only person alive with enough character and humanity to help me."[30] The man, Arnold, was artistically enraptured by the "genius" Nazi-era German films. Arnold writes that he "searched [his] conscience to its very depths, and in [his] heart [he] could feel no hatred whatsoever" for the filmmaker.[31] He even says that he could "not feel great hatred for Hitler," but only pity.[32] The crime they committed haunted him, and he "suffers" knowing that he cannot bring himself to hate the perpetrators. Though he does not elaborate on why Arendt's piece inspired him to write, the reader can surmise that her depiction of Eichmann as a "banal" bureaucrat who bore no moral conviction for National Socialism justified his attachment to the films he admires.

Another letter, from Barbara Deming, a writer for *The Nation*, writes that "Like many people, I suppose, I had to put your essay down repeatedly and take time to recover before reading on."[33] Deming describes as "heartbreaking" the "truth that the Nazis depended on cooperation" from Jewish leaders. Similarly, a Reverend Sheldon Flory writes in support of Arendt, embellishing that during the trial "one looked for blood to run down the walls, and all that ran was the memory of organizational flow-charts. One listened for the final naked outburst of defiance...and all one heard was the mild disclaimer of a puzzled bureaucrat."[34] Fred Riesenfeld, writing in support of Arendt, claims that, while Eichmann himself deserves to hang, the nation of Germany as a whole "should be quarantined or, at least, put on probation for a thousand years."[35]

Many of the letters referenced the *New York Times* book review from Judge Michael Musmanno, who was personally mentioned in the Eichmann piece. Musmanno's response accused Arendt of sympathiz-

ing with Eichmann and portraying him as more innocent than the cooperative Jewish leaders. One such letter, to Arendt from a New York City English teacher, described how "shocked" the writer was at Musmanno's intelligence (or lack thereof). Similarly, Anne Lloyd Basinger (a self-professed "Southern nobody") wrote directly to *The New York Times Book Review*, claiming that Musmanno's review "disturbed me profoundly."[36] In a letter written to (and in support of) Musmanno himself, S. Jay Levin writes that Arendt's "egregious lexicon" of evasive existentialist terminology commits her to the idea that "no one may be called to account even if caught with blood stained hands."[37] A newspaper clipping included in the collection contains a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*, written by Edith Samuel in support of Musmanno. Samuel writes that Arendt's piece is an "appallingly ugly and vicious work," and that Musmanno's review was "inspired."[38]

Arendt's papers also contain letters written by Musmanno himself, one of which was addressed to William Shawn, editor of *The New Yorker*. In it, Musmanno claims that Arendt's piece sympathized with Eichmann, and that Arendt thought it "unfortunate" that "some of [Eichmann's] plans for persecution of the Jews miscarried."[39] He further characterizes Arendt's remarks about the judges as "contemptuous," and accuses her of "find[ing] some nice qualities in some of the Nazi leaders."[40] In a separate letter, also to William Shawn, Musmanno states that, rather than accusing Arendt of having "excess" sympathy for Eichmann, his claim is that "*any* sympathy for so odious a being [is] too much."[41]

Other letters in the "general population" category, however, are not so overtly emotionally driven. A three-page letter from Max Dimont to *The New Yorker*, for example, combs through Arendt's statements in excruciating detail, questioning her claims about Reinhard Heydrich's Jewish ancestry, and claiming that Arendt's focus on Jewish cooperation is in accordance with Nazi efforts to "shift the blame for the murder of Jews onto the Jews themselves." Dimont points out that Arendt's bibliography page contains gaps that constitute a failure to sufficiently justify some of her claims.[42] Similarly, a Mrs. Alvin E. Charnes implies that Arendt's claim that Heydrich was part Jewish is "absurd" and encourages her to make her sources transparent so that people might believe her.[43] Another letter, again questioning Arendt's factual account, this time of the paucity of Jewish resistance, states that Arendt has "made an unfair and sweeping statement," and that the entire piece was an "over-simplification."[44] While these fact-driven documents do not contain overt emotional content, their detail and tone betray an emotional urgency of the writers. In other words, the

facts of the matter are *important* to them, and it is apparent that this import belongs to the writers *personally*.

The writers in the "general population" category are characterized by repetition, opinion, admonishment, and emotion. Many of the letters, for example, contain restatements of Arendt's own words, repackaged in harsher language and sent back to Arendt herself. These examples occur in letters written in support of Arendt and are meant to sympathize with her. The writers also never fail to give their own opinion on some aspect of Arendt's piece, which is significant because this category does not include academics, which means that the writers are not obviously experts in politics, the law, or philosophy (as evidenced by the self-proclaimed "nobody"). The letters in this category also include admonishment, often in harsh language, of either Arendt, of Eichmann, or of Musmanno. The writing is animated, lengthy, and vulnerable.

II. Academia

Letters sent from those in the academe resemble the letters from those in the "general population" category that scrutinize Arendt's factual details. A letter from a political scientist at DePauw University, for example, calls Arendt "brilliant" before contending that her explication of the German resistance movement is dismissive, and "leave[s] the level of illuminating the universalist significance of Nazism and drop[s] down to a...melodrama in which the Germans as a whole are portrayed as 'bad guys.'"[45] The writer then details his own accounts of different German social groups and their resistance to Hitler. He ends his letter by encouraging Arendt to "revise your section on the resistance" to avoid binarism and to acknowledge the extent to which average Germans "find it difficult to confront descriptions of the horrors of the Nazi period."[46] Similarly, Judah Goldin, a professor of Jewish studies at Yale, chides Arendt for forgetting her own philosophical positions. Again, Goldin takes issue with the claim that Jewish leaders were cooperative with the Nazi regime. He writes "is not the courage to resist itself often the first victim when one is terrorized?...When in panic a person really goes berserk."[47] Goldin also states that "To the extent that I fail daily to develop courageous conduct, I am of course guilty even at the critical moment."[48]

Though these two examples are critical of Arendt, other letters from within academia display more vulnerability and thankfulness to Arendt. For example, in a letter sent from Wesleyan University's Center for Advanced Studies, Gloria Wagner states that she had avoided *Eichmann in Jerusalem* because she wished to "avoid that pointless

excess of guilt feeling," even though she was a native-born American. The book, she writes, "led me to do so much tortured brooding."[49] Wagner thanked Arendt for having the "courage squarely to face what is really most horrifying about this whole matter-the fact that so many 'average' persons allowed it to happen."[50] Another letter, from a student at Columbia University, states that his purpose of writing is to "show you that not all of us in America have forgotten, that I have not forgotten, that there is a debt that I feel (to history if you like, or to man)."[51] Finally, in an unsigned letter sent from Roosevelt University, a survivor of Nazi Germany writes that he was "oppressed and haunted" by "guilt and bitterness-for having survived when all the others didn't." The writer continues, "The minute the command for the Final Solution had come down from on high," Jews "were to be regarded as having technically ceased to possess the attributes of human beings... therefore...did the Nazis commit 'murder'?"[52] Echoing Arendt's characterization of Eichmann as "banal," the author makes the argument that, since thinking "en masse" has become the norm, "mass killing is not necessarily a sign of 'abnormality' at all."[53]

Though more focused on details, factual accounts, and philosophical clarity, the letters from within academia are not devoid of emotional content. Specifically, the themes of "guilt" and "shame" are prevalent, and there is a palpable sense of the duty to remember. These letters also contain nuanced arguments, where those in the "general population" category tended to extremes. References to philosophy, broad historical trends, and political movements are also more prevalent among the academic letters. Displays of emotional vulnerability are intermingled with acute commentary and poignant questioning.

III. Jewish Communities

In an internal letter to Anti-Defamation League regional offices, Arnold Forster informs ADL members of Arendt's piece and warns them that Arendt "has given the world a concept about Jewish participation in the Nazi holocaust which may plague Jews for years to come." The problem, Forster writes, is that Arendt is a person of "eminent respectability," which he claims will legitimize the anti-Semites' view that "Jews were no less guilty than others."[54] Forster also criticizes Arendt's claim that Eichmann was "only a small cog," and that the trial was a "circus...a propaganda device to emotionalize the world in behalf [sic] of Jews."[55] In a separate piece published in *The Jewish Floridian*, Leo Mindlin claims that none of the previous work on the Holocaust "besmirches the Jew as Miss Arendt does."[56] "She has been able," he

continues, "sifting through the tear-sodden ashes of six million Jews, to find both the gall and the capacity to place the blame for their dying upon the dead."[57] Mindlin writes that Arendt, in her "self-hatred," has done "yeoman's work for the anti-Semite."[58] He concludes his piece by arguing that Arendt is "digging future Jewish graves to the applause of the world's unconverted anti-Semites."[59] A similar, if less hyperbolic, report published by The Anti-Defamation League calls Arendt's views "personal," and admonishes her for insinuating that Jews "collaborated with the Nazis in the process of their own destruction."[60] The report writes that "it would be tragic and a disservice to Jewish-and world-history if this work were to go unchallenged."[61] The ADL calls the piece "a banal book," and argues that Arendt was on a "fault-finding mission... heavy with pre-conceptions, irony and half-developed ideas."[62]

A number of personal letters to Arendt were also written from people within the Jewish community. For example, a writer who identifies as a Jewish woman and mother who escaped Germany proclaims "How dare you write such a thing," referring to the claim that "Jews took their sufferings so much like sheep."[63] The writer detailed the difficulties (which Arendt was sure to be familiar with) that Jews in Germany had to deal with in order to go into hiding or escape the country. The author asks "How can you write about something you have not suffered yourself?"[64] apparently being unaware that Arendt, too, barely escaped from Germany.

The writing produced by the Jewish community contains perhaps the *most* extreme language of the three categories delimited in this paper. These pieces, with a few exceptions, rather than being written to Arendt herself, are more frequently published in magazines, or meant for consumption through internal networks to members of their respective organizations. For this reason, emotional appeals are made to a sympathetic audience through frequent references to "the ashes of six million dead," or the revival of anti-Semitism and Jewish self-hatred. The pieces also contain appeals to remembrance, justice, and loyalty to the deceased. Here, Arendt is portrayed as a Nazi sympathizer and accused of perpetuating "Big Lies" about the Jewish community. In other words, solidarity with the Jewish community is upheld as an absolute positive value.

Analysis

An examination of the emotional communities previously delineated reveals that the two main points of contention over Arendt's piece were over her characterization of Eichmann as "banal," and her focus

on the collaboration of Jewish officials. Every emotional community took issue with the second contention, Jewish cooperation. Academics, for example, quibbled over minute details of instances of compliance. However, while these detailed disagreements do betray a personal concern over who deserves blame and responsibility, the language used in these letters is not typically hyperbolic. The first contention, Eichmann's "banality," was less controversial, and was a major focus primarily among the Jewish emotional community. Jewish community members viewed Arendt's portrayal of Eichmann as a dismissal of his guilt, which they claimed Arendt was instead placing squarely on the shoulders of the Jewish leaders themselves. The language used by the Jewish emotional community also tended to be more pointed, hyperbolic, and directed towards Arendt personally, portraying her as a "self-hating Jew," and as a shill for anti-Semites.

In a private reply to a critic, Arendt clarifies that she never thought of Eichmann as merely a "cog," and that she treated him seriously, and as an individual. Furthermore, she writes, her insistence on the cooperation of Jewish Councils was a result of the fact that the trial itself featured these details as part of the prosecution's case. She explains that, while the Jewish Councils who cooperated with the Nazi regime "wanted to prevent the worst" crimes by working within the system, they ultimately "became the instruments in doing the worst."[65] She describes this belief, that to work with and moderate the Nazis was better than to leave them to their own devices, as an unfortunate fallacy. Thus, rather than blame the Jews themselves, Arendt explains that she viewed resistance to have been a near impossibility. Why was it, considering these clarifications, that the Jewish community took such a hard line against Arendt, who was herself Jewish? Why were they, in Arendt's opinion, unable to see the "true" facts of the case?

Arendt's philosophy addresses these questions. Deborah Nelson explains that, much like Arendt's view of "evil," Arendt conceptualized suffering, too, as "ordinary."[66] Nelson is referring to the ubiquity and "commonness" of suffering. For this reason, Arendt was skeptical of the "consolations" of pain, such as "intimacy, empathy, and solidarity."[67] Nelson explains that Arendt was particularly skeptical of solidarity based on "national belonging, ideological partisanship, and party politics."[68] Arendt once even claimed that "I do not 'love' the Jews, nor do I 'believe' in them; I merely belong to them as a matter of course."[69] National belonging, Arendt claimed, was a palliative that covered over the common everyday suffering of life with the superficial consolations of mass society.[70] Apart from concerns over nationalism, then, Arendt was concerned that solidarity insulated people from uncomfortable as-

pects of the "world," such as multiple and conflicting perspectives, uncomfortable facts, finitude, and the contingent nature of our historicity. Arendt advocated for individuals *qua* individuals to "check vigilantly their impressions of reality against others' and to amend and revise accordingly."[71] Eichmann himself, Nelson suggests, is an example of the dangers of solidarity. "Eichmann," she writes, "could not recognize his own culpability at his trial because when confronted by a perspective other than his own, he could not see it."[72] Instead of solidarity and empathy, Arendt recommends that we "face reality with as little to console [us] as possible. Remaining alone *while* sharing the world with others [leaves] the individual in a condition of maximum exposure to cold, hard facts."[73] Nelson gives the example of Arendt and novelist Mary McCarthy, upon their first meeting, standing at a railway station, alone together, staring ahead across the tracks. In this way, the two women were both "facing reality," while remaining in communion with each other *and* remaining authentic in their individuality.

In the case of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and its backlash, Arendt's own philosophy suggests that the emotional responses that she inspired, and specifically the negative responses from the Jewish community, were a result of insulated identities that were characterized by emotional solidarity, and therefore unable to cope with differences of opinion or different world views. Arendt's contention that Nazi operations relied on Jewish collaboration threatened the worldview and identity of Jewish communities, as did her characterization of Eichmann as "banal." Arguably, Arendt's philosophy of reality, self, and community suggests that, had her readers shunned membership in palliative identities, the conversation would have been much more nuanced. However, such a view seems to suggest that membership to *any* community would be frowned upon by Arendt. If Eichmann's attachment to German nationalism is a mere "palliative," then, according to Arendt, so is the Jewish attachment to Judaism and Israel. Furthermore, both the American exceptionalists who valorize US history *as well as* the groups that support a confrontation with that history would be described by Arendt as entangled in superficiality. But Arendt herself was a known Zionist, and she was a strong advocate for the rights of oppressed groups and asylum seekers.[74] How, then, does she rationalize holding both positions?

Ken Reshaur points out that Arendt does, in fact, endorse a version of solidarity, albeit one that, while it "may be aroused by suffering, is not guided by it."[75] This version of solidarity is "committed to 'ideas'...rather than to any 'love' of men."[76] Reshaur explains that this qualified solidarity distinguishes between "feelings" and "judgment,"

such that judgment is able to ascertain that "certain factual conditions involved in the objective situation...constitute an affront to the dignity of human-kind."[77] Such solidarity is self-less, while being founded upon the unique spatio-temporality of each individual. In the example that Nelson gives of Arendt and McCarthy staring at "reality" while being alone together, the crucial point is that neither of them are staring *inward*. In fact, they are looking at the world, which is always already a world populated by others and *with* others, constituted by webs of meaning that form a referential totality.[78] Arendt would therefore have us "stare" at the referential totality of meaningful relationships in reality from the vantage point of our own Otherness. From this vantage point, human beings can decipher affronts to human dignity and join in solidarity with groups of people, while circumventing the danger of nationalism or cultural chauvinism that results from insular communities and unquestioned emotional attachments. Arendt's individualistic solidarity therefore does *not* preclude the possibility of affinity groups, cultures, traditions, or even national interests. The caveat, however, is that these groups, according to Arendt, should be built upon a foundation of individuals *qua* individuals. In fact, such individual self-reference is the *only* foundation upon which authentic group membership can be based.[79] The unquestioned and unequivocal loyalty to group membership that Arendt critiques is characteristic of the conception of history as a museum. When objectified and viewed as deterministic and static, history lends itself to nationalistic and essentialist projects. History as an interactive coming-towards, however, reveals the *clearing* in which our agency is grounded, and in which we are free to authentically be with others.

In regards to the Eichmann case, then, Arendt's criticism of the Jewish community would be that their solidarity is too insular and consuming, and that it covers over its individual members such that access to reality is barred.[80] In the debate over history education, Arendt's critique would be levelled at those who would maintain the traditional version of American history as built upon universal Enlightenment values, and characterized by unceasing progress. The emotional attachments to this version of American history preclude any possibility of a *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Effectively, people attached to a group in this way have *forfeited* their individuality, particularly in light of alternative worldviews that challenge their own. According to Arendt, only a community built upon individuals confronting their own realities alone-together can precipitate the type of solidarity that would break the barriers of rigid historical loyalties. Arendt's solidarity therefore allows individuals to take responsibility for their past in *Gägenwartsbewältigung*, a coping with the present.

This conclusion points to the necessity of taking a long view of history into consideration when examining reality and making Arendtian judgments about solidarity. Several of the letters from those within academia emphasize this point. These letters made references to "debts to history," and the guilt and shame felt by Americans who had not participated in the Holocaust. Ken Reshaur explains that this guilt, rather than a particular, personal guilt, is the result of a "universal solidarity" that is "burdened by the obligation of a general responsibility for the actions of one's fellow human beings."[81] This solidarity constitutes a challenge to the "unstable compromise" between the nation-state "as the vehicle for the expression of the will of nationals... and the state as the expression of legal and political equality between different peoples regardless of their national origin and relative power position."[82] Such universal solidarity, which is "the only guarantee that one 'superior' race will not be successful in dominating humankind,"[83] is only possible through an education that prioritizes the teaching of history, albeit a history that is interactive and contingent. Without an education that confronts and copes with this type of history, barriers to communication will continue to be erected, resulting in inauthentic and binaristic public discourse.

Notes

[1] Michael A. Peters, "The Enlightenment and its Critics," *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 51, no. 9 (2019): 886-894.

[2] Anne Ross-Smith and Martin Kornberger, "Gendered Rationality? A Genealogical Exploration of the Philosophical and Sociological Conceptions of Rationality, Masculinity and Organization," *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11, no. 3 (May 2004): 280-305.

[3] Gerard Delanty and Patrick O'Mahony, *Nationalism and Social Theory: Modernity and the Recalcitrance of the Nation* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002).

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