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Thought and Political Judgment

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Abstract

Hannah Arendt's claim that thinking is the last defense against the moral outrages of criminal political regimes sets the problematic of good and evil in relief. Human freedom, Paul Ricœur reminds us, is responsible for evil. The avowal of the evil of violence is thus the condition of our consciousness of the freedom to act anew.

Aesthetic experience's lateral transposition onto the planes of ethics and politics highlights our capacity to respond to exigencies in apposite ways. Exemplary representations of the good, the right, and the justexpress a desire for being. Eros is accordingly the law of every work, word, deed, or act that answers to a difficulty, challenge, or crisis. Bound to living experiences, thought attains its true height through interrogating, demystifying, and vacating frozen norms, standards, and mores. Judgment actualizes thought's liberating effects in answer to the demands of the situations in which we find ourselves.

Keywords: Eros; Evil; Freedom; Philosophical Anthropology; Political Judgment; Phronesis; Reason; Reflective Judgment; Sensus Communis.

Résumé

L'affirmation d'Hannah Arendt selon laquelle la pensée est la dernière défense contre les outrages moraux des régimes politiques criminels met en relief la problématique du bien et du mal. La liberté humaine, nous rappelle Paul Ricœur, est responsable du mal. L'aveu du mal causé par la violence est donc la condition de la prise de conscience de notre liberté d'agir à nouveau.

La transposition latérale de l'expérience esthétique sur les plans de l'éthique et de la politique met en évidence notre capacité à répondre aux exigences de manière appropriée. Les représentations exemplaires du bien, du droit et du juste expriment un désir d'être. Eros est donc la loi de toute œuvre, parole, action ou acte qui répond à une difficulté, un défi ou une crise. Liée aux expériences vécues, la pensée atteint sa véritable hauteur en interrogeant, démystifiant et rejetant les normes, les standards et les mœurs figés. Le jugement actualise les effets libérateurs de la pensée en réponse aux exigences des situations dans lesquelles nous nous trouvons.

Mots-clés: Eros; Mal; Liberté; Anthropologie philosophique; Jugement politique; Phronésis; Raison; Jugement réflexif; Sens commun.

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By insisting that the activity of thinking is the last refuge against the wholesale adoption of values and customs that license the moral outrages of criminal political regimes, Hannah Arendt raises a formidable question that is no less pressing today. For her, the unprecedented rise to power of totalitarian systems shattered all traditional standards of conduct. To what, then, can we appeal in the absence of moral tenets, principles, and mores that would provide an adequate measure for judging the moral and political depravity of totalitarian rule? Arendt's conviction that thought—or more pointedly, "thinking without a banister"[1]—is the only safeguard against the ease with which, according to her, German Nationalist Socialism supplanted traditional moral precepts places the capacity to think at the root of our responsibility to assess the situation in which we find ourselves and to pursue the appropriate course of action in response to injustices, abuses of power, and outright violence. Can we then determine what the particular situation requires of us without our judgment as to the appropriate course of action itself becoming a matter of mere opinion, individual preference, or personal predilection?

The notion that we are capable of responding to exigencies and demands in morally and politically responsible ways sets the place that judgment has in distinguishing good from evil in relief. Arendt's contention that only good is radical, and Paul Ricœur's conviction that only the good as exemplified in works, words, deeds, and lives enhances our capacity to act in accordance with it stand as ripostes to the claim that evil is as or more originary than good or that instances of evil provide models that we could imitate in the sense of following after them. By asking how Arendt's contention and Ricœur's conviction bear on their respective views of the power of judgment, I intend to relate the activity of thinking as Arendt describes it to our capacity to reply to exigencies and demands in singularly fitting ways. Ricœur's remarks on aesthetic experience's lateral transposition onto the planes of ethics and politics provides a critical touchstone in this regard. For a theory of political judgment for which reflective judgment is the key, his claim that only expressions of the good augment the field of our experiences opens the door to a broader consideration of Arendt's assertion that evil has neither a root nor an essence of which thought could take hold. Arendt's recourse to reflective judgment acquires its broader amplitude in light of Ricœur's reflections on the work of an imagination that invites us to think more. The miracle that for her attests to the capacity to begin something new consequently assumes its practical efficacy only through the manner in which historical actors reply to exigencies and demands in ways befitting the situations in which they find themselves.

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[1] Hannah Arendt, *Thinking Without a Banister. Essays in Understanding 1953-1975*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2018); see Tama Weisman, *Hannah Arendt and Karl Marx. On Totalitarianism and the Tradition of Western Political Thought* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 16. For Arendt, the inability of the western tradition of political thought "to respond adequately to emerging and previously unheard of conditions" (16) of totalitarianism required that one think without the support of traditional standards.

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I therefore propose to proceed by first considering how the freedom inhering in the capacity to begin something new might relate to the idea that good is more originary than evil. The quest for meaning, which Arendt points out "appears in Socrates' language as love, that is, love in its Greek significance of *Erōs*,"[2] here provides a guide. By insisting that the activity of thinking addresses itself to "such concepts as justice, happiness, and virtue,"[3] Arendt highlights how the expression in language of the meaning of the experiences occasioned by the events we set in motion or undergo accompanies the activity of living. Since, as she tells us, "[n]o language has a ready-made vocabulary for the needs of mental activity,"[4] I will relate the activity of thinking to reflective judgment by way of the imagination's schematizing power. Turning to the love of wisdom provides an occasion for considering anew thought's relation to the ways that works, words, deeds, and acts give a figure to the desire for being. Drawing upon the exemplarity of works of art, I therefore propose to attribute the ability to distinguish right from wrong to the exercise of prudential wisdom instructed by examples of the good, the right, and the just.

I. Thinking and Judging

The capacity for discerning what, in the midst of changing circumstances and exigencies, is the right, better, or in some cases the least harmful course of action immediately brings to the fore how the freedom inhering in the power to begin something new is bound up with the ability to scrutinize and critique established precepts and conventions. This power, Arendt reminds us, actualizes the condition of natality, where each of us is a new beginning by reason of our births. Everything new, she emphasizes, "always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability."[5] Discoveries and sometimes infinitely improbable innovations in artistic and scientific endeavors as well as in the field of praxis thus appear in the likeness of miracles. Our capacity to set a new course of events in motion in the midst of a history in which we are caught up is thus the first indication of how the freedom inhering in this capacity draws its meaning and force from the ability to discern what the situation requires and to respond in a singularly appropriate way.

That the love of beauty, wisdom, and justice gives rise to the "wind of thought"[6] places the activity of thinking in relief. For Arendt, "[b]ecause thought's quest is a kind of desirous love, the

[2] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1978), 178.

[3] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 178.

[4] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 102; see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 75; Paul Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor. Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language,* trans. Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

[5] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 178; see Philip Walsh, *Arendt Contra Sociology. Theory, Society, and its Science* (London: Routledge, 2015), 59.

[6] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 193.

objects of thought can only be lovable things—beauty, wisdom, justice, and so on."[7] As the work of art's immediate source, this "human capacity for thought"[8] transforms these objects in the case of poetry, narrative fictions, musical compositions and the like into world-producing things. Hence, "[u]gliness and evil are almost by definition excluded from the thinking concern."[9] In Arendt's view, Socrates "believed no one could do evil voluntarily,"[10] since like ugliness, evil has no root of its own and no essence of which thought could get hold. Socrates, she tells us, apparently therefore "had nothing more to say about the connection between evil and the lack of thought than that people who are not in love with beauty, justice, and wisdom are incapable"[11] of it.

Why, then, might "those who are in love with examining [received opinion, criteria, values, and standards] and thus 'do philosophy'"[12] be incapable of intentionally committing evil acts, as Socrates says according to Arendt? Putting received opinion to the test in order to think more has an initially destructive effect. Our experiences are a guide to thinking in this regard. Hans-Georg Gadamer reminds us that "[e]very experience worthy of the name thwarts an expectation"[13] based on accumulated habits, customs, and mores. Moreover, every experience in which we are confronted with a difficulty, dilemma, or crisis for which there is no obvious precedent or ready solution confronts us with the question, how must I respond? As regards artistic creations, genius, Kant says, "is the talent … that gives the rule to art."[14] Here the capacity for thought, which for Arendt is "by its very nature … world-open and communicative,"[15] acquires its specific concretion in the way that a work expresses the "idea" exemplified by it. When it comes to the field of our practical experiences, could we not say that *phronesis*, which Aristotle tells us is a virtue that cannot be taught, similarly rests on the ability to reply in a singularly fitting way to a dilemma, difficulty, or crisis as apprehended by the agent? Ricœur explains that the tie established by Aristotle between *phronesis* and *phronimos* ("the man of *phronesis*"[16]) is meaningful only if this person "of wise judgment determines at the same time the rule and the case, by grasping the situation in its

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[7] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 179; see Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, ed. Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 9; Paul Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred. Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, ed. Mark I. Wallace, trans. David Pellauer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). Ricœur remarks that love "is initially a discourse of praise where, in praising, one rejoices over the view of one object set above all other objects of one's concern" (317).

[8] Hannah Arendt, *Reflections on Literature and Culture*, ed. Susannah Young-Ah Gottlieb (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 173. For Arendt, art works are "thought things" (173). Accordingly, she points out that workmanship "makes the thought a reality and fabricates things of thought" (173).

[9] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 179.

[10] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 179.

[11] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 179.

[12] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 179; see 175.

[13] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 356.

[14] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 174.

[15] Arendt, *Reflections on Literature and Culture*, 173.

[16] Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 174.

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singularity."[17] Aristotle, he tells us moreover, "does not hesitate to compare this singular nature of choice in accordance with *phronēsis* to perception (*aisthēsis*) in the theoretical dimension."[18] The ability to respond to practical exigencies and demands is accordingly the *vis-à-vis* of the talent for discovering the right word, turn of phrase, narrative configuration, or musical expression in response to a problem or challenge as the poet, story teller, or composer apprehended it.

Highlighting the kinship between the talent that gives the rule to art and a virtue that manifests itself in exemplary words, deeds, and acts in this way brings to the fore the imagination's creatively productive role. Aesthetic experience's lateral transposition onto the planes of ethics and politics places the conjunction of thinking and judging under the aegis of reflective judgment in this regard. The synthetic operation that in the case of a narrative or a piece of music, for example, renders the work communicable through drawing a configuration from heterogeneous elements owes its force to an art that for Kant is "concealed in the depth of the human soul."[19] This operation is the bass note of the imagination's productive, medial role. Ricœur emphasizes how, for instance, the intentional structure of the power of knowing rests on the unity of appearances and meanings. Through bringing into focus the disproportion "between the word that speaks of being and truth, and the gaze tethered to appearance and perspective,"[20] a transcendental critique of the power of knowing places the imagination's operative role on stage. In turn, the affirmation that in speaking about the world takes the form of the consciousness of it places the imagination's schematizing power at the root of the truth intention of discourse broadly conceived.

Far from consigning this intention to the metaphysics of presence, the schematizing operation on which the structure of consciousness depends inscribes itself within the activity of thinking. Ricœur remarks that Jacques Derrida's stroke of genius was to enter the "domain of metaphor not by way of its birth but … by way of its death,"[21] thereby exposing how the dissimulation of metaphysics' alleged metaphorical origin effects the drift toward idealization that puts into play the metaphysical oppositions between nature and freedom, history and spirit, the sensible and the spiritual or intelligible as well as sense or meaning. The complicity between the wearing-away of metaphor, where the primary philosophemes such as *eidos*, *logos*, and *theoria* that define the field of metaphysical thought assume their "proper" meaning, and the raising up of metaphysics, however, is not the final word. To be sure, this transference of the sensible to the nonsensible governs the system of Western metaphysical thought. Ricœur, however, stresses that the "effectiveness of dead metaphor can be inflated … only in semiotic conceptions that impose the primacy of denomination, and hence of [the] substitution of meaning."[22] By affecting the copula in its relational function—as for example when the verb *to be* connects the predicate "temple" to the

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[17] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 175.

[18] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 175.

[19] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York/London: St. Martin's Press/Macmillan, 1929), 183; see Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 81.

[20] Paul Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology. Writings and Lectures, Volume 3*, ed. Johann Michel and Jérôme Porée, trans. David Pellauer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 7.

[21] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 285.

[22] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 290.

subject "nature" in the poetic statement "nature is a temple where living columns …"[23]—the use of bizarre predicates brings to the fore poetic discourse's existential aim. The critical incision of the literal "is not" in the metaphorical reference to nature's living columns consequently liberates the truth intention of this poetic statement from habituated ways of thinking and feeling.

Does the recovery of this truth intention beyond the deconstruction of metaphysical thought not also return thought to this field of play? Every proposal of meaning by a poem, literary fiction, musical composition, or theatrical performance raises a claim to truth. The truth intention of poetic discourse widely conceived thus bears out the power of the imagination at work. Through augmenting the ways available to us for inscribing our lives in the web of human affairs, fictive explorations of modes of thinking, feeling, and acting accordingly open the world to us and us to the world anew. We could therefore ask if our receptivity to the rule that in the case of the work stands as testament to its worlding power is also the requisite condition of the work's enlargement of the possibilities available to us for inserting ourselves in the world. These "thought experiments" in the mediums of words, sounds, and visual displays invite us to think more. Should we then not also say that the power of imagination is vital to the activity that we carry on in the solitude of the company we each keep with ourselves?

II. The Love of Wisdom

By crediting the significance of works and acts that respond to exigencies and demands in exemplary ways to the imagination's schematizing power, I want to search out how the love of beauty, wisdom, and justice figures in a theory of political judgment for which the matter of taste serves as the guide. In attempting to bring together an Aristotelian conception of judgment in which *phronesis* plays a critical role and a Kantian understanding of judgment's place in cultivating an "enlarged mentality," Arendt provides a framework for inquiring into the faculty of judgment's moral and political dimensions. Seyla Benhabib remarks that Arendt "herself was misled in these matters by a quasi-intuitionalist concept of moral conscience on the one hand and an unusually narrow concept of morality on the other."[24] Moreover, Benhabib stresses that Arendt's reflections vacillate between judgment as a moral faculty and judgment as a retrospective one. Arendt's concern with "judgment as the faculty of 'telling right from wrong,'"[25] and her focus on judgment's orientation toward the past sets historical actors' perspectives against those of world historical spectators.[26] By taking the love of beauty, wisdom, and justice as a starting point, I intend to relate reflective judgment's prospective dimension to exemplary deeds, acts, and lives that appear in the likeness of miracles. By preserving something of the "thought experiments" that in the case of fiction, poetry, music, and works of art renew the real in accordance with the worlds they project,

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[23] Charles Baudelaire, cited in Ricœur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 247; see Charles Baudelaire, "Correspondences," in *Flowers of Evil*, trans. James McGowan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 19.

[24] Seyla Benhabib, "Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Hannah Arendt's Thought," in Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky (eds), *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics. Themes from Kant and Arendt* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 183-204, here 185.

[25] Benhabib, "Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Hannah Arendt's Thought," 184.

[26] See Paul Ricœur, *The Just*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 103-7.

aesthetic experience's lateral transposition onto the planes of ethics and politics provides a key to how these miracles are signs and ciphers of our capacity for surpassing the real from within.

The myth of the birth of Eros is instructive in this regard. The offspring of Poros and Penia, Eros is born of a principle of abundance from the womb of impoverishment. Eros, Ricœur accordingly tells us, "carries in himself that original wound which is the emblem of his mother, Penia."[27] The "hybrid of Richness and Poverty,"[28] Eros personifies the soul of the philosopher who desires the good that she in herself is not. The ontic poverty that Ricœur explains constitutes the root of the account of the aspiration for being is the emblem of the deficiency that places its negative stamp on the part we have in it. The philosophy of fallibility that in his analysis of the "originarily dialectical structure of human reality"[29] Ricœur relates to the disproportion between 1) one's perspective and the truth intention of discourse, 2) one's character and the totality adumbrated by the idea of the person, and 3) vital desires and happiness uncovers the tie between this aspiration for being and the impulse to create something new. From this vantage point, all "creation, all ποίησις (*poíisis*), is an effect of Eros."[30] Eros is accordingly the law of every work that, born of desire, is replete with a "richness of Meaning and [the] poverty of brute Appearance."[31] This Eros, which "goes toward being [, …] also … recalls being as its Origin."[32] Ricœur here cites Plato: "The cause of anything whatever that emerges from non-being into being is always an act of creation."[33] Every such act brings about an increase in being in response to a question, dilemma, or difficulty as apprehended by the artist or social, political, or historical agent. Innovations in artistic as well as social, moral, and political realms consequently augment dimensions of our experiences in answer to the ontic indigence that places its seal on our intermediary condition.

Is the love of beauty, wisdom, and justice also then the spring of thought? Elsewhere, I drew on aesthetic experience's lateral transposition onto the planes of ethics and politics to extend the analogy of the work's fittingness to exemplary moral and political acts. There, I argued that initiatives that reply to exigencies and demands concretize reason through vesting it with its historical, juridical, and political specificity.[34] Normative claims are indices of the kinds of expectations that fuel struggles for recognition, rights, and equitable shares in social goods in this regard. These normative expectations thus stand as the riposte to the moral harm, systemic injustices, and weaponization of crises of legitimation that infect the body politic. The "very

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[27] Paul Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 10; see Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 4.

[28] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 10.

[29] Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 3.

[30] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 10.

[31] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 10.

[32] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 102.

[33] Plato, cited in Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 10; see Plato, "Symposium," in Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (eds), *The Collected Dialogues Including the Letters*, trans. Michael Joyce (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 557.

[34] Roger W. H. Savage, *Paul Ricœur's Philosophical Anthropology as Hermeneutics of Liberation* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

belonging of existence to the being whose thinking is reason"[35] is itself nourished by aspirations, desires, and needs to which the thirst for meaning gives rise. Exemplary words, works, deeds, and acts through which we insert ourselves in the world are therefore manifest signs of reason's inscription in the ways in which we respond to difficulties, crises, and challenges requiring and even demanding that we think more and judge well.

Should we then place the activity over which reason ostensibly rules under the aegis of the good, the right, and the just? We have to admit that ideas of the good, the right, and the just are as diverse as the axiological systems of the cultural traditions from which they arise. At the same time, what bearing would these ideas have on the ways that we and others conduct our lives apart from the note of sanction they place on the work we undertake in making the life given to us our own? Ricœur stresses that the word "life" acquires the "appreciative, evaluative dimension of *ergon* [work]"[36] when the practices and skills we develop as musicians, doctors, or architects, for example, qualify this life. Placing the perfection of this specifically human work under the aegis of happiness distinguishes the love of beauty, wisdom, and justice from the pursuit of bodily and social pleasures in this regard. Ricœur explains that the "polarity of *ἐπιθυμία* (*épithumía*) and *ἔρως* (*eros*)"[37] internally divides the perfection of these partial pleasures from happiness. Happiness, which according to Aristotle is the "desirable in itself,"[38] thus perfects the work we undertake in quest of the life we claim as our own. Reason, Ricœur therefore tells us, has the same breadth as happiness, since the supreme good that places its seal of perfection on the intended aim of the good life is at the same time an idea from which the demand for totality springs.

By maintaining that ideas of the good, the right, and the just are given by example, I want to draw out how the rule summoned by a case acquires its prospective dimension. Ricœur reminds us that Kant invokes the "power of imagination 'to present' (*Darstellung*) ideas of reason for which we have no concept"[39] in order to account for aesthetic productions of genius. For Kant, the imagination sets thought to work because there is no concept adequate to an aesthetic idea's representation in the medium of the work. Kant emphasizes that this aesthetic representation "cannot be completely compassed and made intelligible by language."[40] Gadamer similarly reminds us that the meaning of a work cannot be recuperated conceptually.[41] Through conferring the "ability to *think* further"[42] on thought, the imagination proves to be the spring of the power for running ahead of the real. For, by bringing "the faculty of intellectual ideas (the reason) into

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[35] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 103; cf. Alain Badiou, *Plato's Republic. A Dialogue in Sixteen Chapters*, trans. Susan Spitzer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

[36] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 177; see Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 94.

[37] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 93.

[38] Aristotle, cited by Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 96; see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 14-9.

[39] Paul Ricœur, *Hermeneutics. Writing and Lectures, Volume 2*, trans. David Pellauer (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 151.

[40] Kant, cited by Ricœur in *Hermeneutics*, 151; see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 182.

[41] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Bernasconi, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 33.

[42] Ricœur, *Hermeneutics*, 151.

movement by a representation,"[43] the creatively productive imagination occasions more than can be grasped in it.

Aesthetic experience's lateral transposition onto the planes of ethics and politics brings to the fore the conjunction of the work's singularity, exemplarity, and communicability in this regard. The difference between determinative and reflective judgment here proves to be crucial. The reversal of direction of the act of subsumption that in determinative judgment places the individual case under an already established rule vests aesthetic judgment with its distinctive force. Hence, in aesthetic judgment, "one 'seeks' the appropriate rule under which to place the singular experience."[44] The relation of singularity, communicability, and claim to universality evidenced by the work's worlding power offers a unique point of access to the phenomenon of testimony. The testimony given by exemplary deeds, acts, and lives, we could even say, is analogous to a work's claim to truth. This testimony similarly puts into play the singularity, communicability, and claim to universality that in the case of the work is the *vis-à-vis* of the reader, listener, or spectator's apprehension of the meaning intended by it. In the case of words, works, deeds, acts, and lives attesting to "an intention, an inspiration, an idea at the heart of experience and history which nonetheless transcend experience and history,"[45] this conjunction of singularity, communicability, and claim to universality is the *sine qua non* of a hermeneutics of testimony that for Ricœur is tantamount to a project of liberation under the name of the absolute. The moral or political effect of being drawn to follow the example set by the act, which he stresses is the analogical equivalent of the work's communicability, turns our regard for words, works, deeds, acts, and lives that we admire toward future expectations. The testimony given by words, deeds, acts, and lives in answer to social, moral, and political difficulties, dilemmas, and crises thus stands as the demonstration and proof of ideas of reason that sanction the creative themes with which we engage in quest of our common humanity.[46]

The problem that Ricœur tells us the exemplarity of the singular work or act poses for him thus opens a line of inquiry into the way that the work or act's communicability vests reflective judgment with its prospective dimension. Like a work, which presents the idea exemplified by it through figuring this idea in the medium of words, sounds, or textural materials, the historical testimony of words, deeds, and acts is also "a 'presentation,' an 'exhibition' [*Darstellung*] of what for reflection remains an idea."[47] An excessive disjunction between the prospective and retrospective dimensions of the power of judging obviates how "the ability to think from the standpoint of everyone else"[48] draws its force from the effect of being drawn to follow exemplary models proffered by individual works and acts. The capacity to receive the injunction proceeding

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[43] Kant, cited by Ricœur in *Hermeneutics*, 151, n. 29; see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 183.

[44] Ricœur, *The Just*, 95.

[45] Paul Ricœur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Lewis Seymour Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 78.

[46] Cf. Badiou, *Plato's Republic*. By identify the fifth form of government that in this hypertranslation of Plato's *Republic* he names communism with the Idea of Truth, Badiou trades on the way that ideas of reason sanction these creative themes.

[47] Ricœur, *Hermeneutics*, 151.

[48] Ricœur, *The Just*, 105.

from the example, kin to the act of "being-enjoined by the Other,"[49] is consequently the condition of a cosmopolitan view instructed by ideas of reason for which no one concept of the good, the right, and the just suffices.

By suggesting that the ability to think is the counterpart of this receptivity to moral and political injunctions, I am clearly looking to the idea of humanity as a way to account for how an activity that is carried on in solitude could countermand the moral outrages of criminal political regimes. This idea is the ground of the imperative of respect. If, as Ricœur points out, an ethics without an ontology would be stripped of its root in a philosophical anthropology, the task of humanity—that is, the task of realizing our common humanity since it is given nowhere but through the idea of it—rests on the capacities inscribed in the human condition.[50] These capacities (the capacity to act with others, to remember, to tell one's own story, to hold oneself to account for one's actions, and to be receptive to the injunction coming from the Other) are the phenomenological correlates of the ontological constitution of human being. Respect, Ricœur reminds us, "makes possible the practical representation of human beings who have value and are filled with meaning"[51] by conferring on each an inestimable worth. The imperative to treat oneself and others not as a means but as an end thus acquires its normative force only in light of the moral expectation of the recognition of the humanity of all.

III. Freedom of Thought

That the normative requirement of respect draws its force from the moral expectation of recognition brings the intermediary condition of the being that we are into view. For a philosophical anthropology for which the *pathétique* of human misery is the inexhaustible source, the notion of being as power and act acquires its practical and affective dimensions in light of this condition. The disproportion of the "self within itself"[52] that for Ricœur is the source of our originary fragility marks the place of the transcending intention that makes human being intermediary between the poles of finitude and infinitude. As I noted previously, the disproportion between one's finite perspective and the truth intention of discourse, one's character and the practical totality at which the work (*ergon*) we undertake aims, and vital wants and happiness in each case has as its *vis-à-vis* the medial term that Ricœur respectively identifies with the transcendental imagination, the idea of respect, and the human heart (*θυμός*). The transcending intention that at each stage of his analysis vests these medial terms with their meaning and force is accordingly the sign of the will, effort, and desire to be.

By attributing the freedom of thought to this transcending intention, I want to highlight how what for Arendt is the last refuge of moral judgment is rooted in the ontological constitution

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[49] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 351.

[50] Paul Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. George H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 253; see Paul Ricœur, "Ethics and Human Capability. A Response," in John Wall, William Schweiker and W. David Hall (eds), *Paul Ricœur and Contemporary Moral Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 284.

[51] Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 14.

[52] Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 19.

of human being. When, previously, I remarked on how the truth intention of discourse confounds the system of transference that governs Western metaphysical thought, I noted how the critical incision of the "is not" in the use of bizarre predicates turns against the wearing-away of the metaphorical attributes of the primary philosophemes. By preserving the tension between the literal and figurative meanings in a metaphorical statement, this critical incision sets thought to work. The predicative assimilation of semantically incongruent terms produces a new meaning as when, for example, we see a ceasefire agreement *as if* it were demolished by the storm of the warring factions' violations. Accordingly, we resolve the enigma of this emergent meaning's iconic presentation each time we grasp the intended meaning as displayed in the thickness of the imagining scene.[53] The icon of the image, which Ricœur explains is nothing other than the "schematization of metaphorical attribution,"[54] is the matrix of the new predicative pertinence drawn from the literal ruins of the initial semantic clash. The creativity of language here bespeaks the freedom inhering in the power to shatter congealed systems of meaning and to refashion our understandings and outlooks through producing something new. The capacity to reply to questions or problems in singularly fitting ways, as when the words of the poet give voice to a modality of being in a manner that only they can, is consequently the spring of the miracle for surpassing or transcending from within the given order of the practical field.

How, then, does the activity that in her analysis of the human condition Arendt sets against the specifically political activities of speaking and acting stand as surety of the freedom that she tells us depends upon the presence and equality of others?[55] The capacity that for Kant enables each of us "to think from the standpoint of everyone else"[56] for her liberates us from our private perspectives. Exchanging the "standpoint given to us by nature for that of someone else, with whom we share the same world"[57] thus enlarges our way of seeing it. Arendt tells us that Aristotle distinguishes between *phronesis* and the wisdom of philosophers on the basis of this ability to acquire "the greatest possible overview of all the possible standpoints."[58] The cardinal political virtue of *phronesis*, she adds, is hardy mentioned at all prior to Kant's discussion of the *sensus communis*, where we encounter it again as it relates to the faculty of judging individual cases in the absence of established norms, standards, and rules.

Does putting ourselves in the positions of everyone else in order, as Kant says, to compare "our own judgment with human reason in general and thus escape the illusion that arises from the ease of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones"[59] in the end authorize supplanting measured opinions and considered convictions with some normative idea of reason

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[53] Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 214; see Paul Ricœur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 5/1 (1978), 148-51.

[54] Paul Ricœur, *A Ricœur Reader. Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 126.

[55] Arendt, *The Human Condition*; see Weisman, *Hannah Arendt and Karl Marx*, 16-9.

[56] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 160; see Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2005), 160.

[57] Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 168.

[58] Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 168.

[59] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 160.

or truth? The "non-political, and, potentially even anti-political nature of truth"[60] that for Arendt sets it apart from the political realm for her acquires its real political significance in light of the need for an impartial judiciary and institutions that safeguard the search for and interpretation of facts outside struggles for power. As the "polis's most determined and most influential opponent,"[61] Plato never dreamed that the political realm would realize this need.[62] Arendt moreover remarks that the political virtue of *phronesis* has hardly any place in Kant's political philosophy. All the same, for her, "the real political faculty in Kant's philosophy is not lawgiving reason, but judgment."[63]

The "split within the idea of subsumption"[64] that Ricœur explains distinguishes aesthetic judgment from determinative judgment proves to be critical in this regard, since it entails reversing the way that in determinative judgment the case is placed under a rule. In Albrecht Wellmer's view, the term reflective judgment is rendered somewhat deceptively when it is used in this way.[65] Nevertheless, he also points out that defining the term in opposition to determinative judgment's act of subsumption has a distinctive advantage in that it highlights the imagination's productive role. Like Wellmer, Benhabib recognizes how for Arendt reflective judgment provides the key to what Kant calls an enlarged mentality. According to Benhabib, Arendt consequently "discovered a procedure for ascertaining subjective agreement in the public realm"[66] through extending reflective judgment's operative significance beyond the aesthetic domain. However, we should ask whether a critical faculty that "in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else's way of presenting [something], in order *as it were* to compare our own judgment with human reason in general,"[67] as Kant says, depends first on the communicability of the rule exemplified by the singular case. In the realm of aesthetic experience, the capacity for apprehending the rule exemplified by the work is the condition of the work's success in giving voice to the truth to which

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[60] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 260.

[61] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 260.

[62] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 260; cf. Badiou, *Plato's Republic*. In Badiou's hypertranslation, Socrates states: "There are two main types of mental activity: opinion, whose objects are the changes in the given realm, and thought, which is concerned with transworld being… Opinion is divided into assumption and certainty, while thought is either analytic or dialectical" (238). Contrariwise, for Arendt, "every claim in the sphere of human affairs to an absolute truth, whose validity needs no support from the side of opinion, strikes at the very root of all politics and all governments" (233).

[63] Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, 169.

[64] Ricœur, *The Just*, 95.

[65] Albrecht Wellmer, "Hannah Arendt on Judgment. The Unwritten Doctrine of Reason," in Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky (eds), *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics. Themes from Kant and Arendt*, 170. According to Wellmer, Arendt "wanted to preserve the internal relationship between judgment and discursive reason, that is, to preserve judgment as a *rational faculty*" (165).

[66] Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 189. Benhabib at the same time remarks that the hermeneutic puzzle stemming from Arendt's incomplete reflections on judgment "arises from three sets of claims that … stand in tension with each other" (173).

[67] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 160; see Wellmer, "Hannah Arendt on Judgment," 171. Wellmer cites the translation of this passage from Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 151.

it lays claim. In each case, the claim to universality that is the counterpart of the work's singularity broadens and deepens the field of representations in which diverse expressions of humanity rooted in different histories and cultural traditions figure.

Setting the concrete universality of the *sensus communis* against reason's abstract universality brings the mode of representation appropriate to reflective judgment into view. The *sensus communis*, which Gadamer emphasizes founds community and gives the will to live together its direction, has its express articulation in the symbolic order of the cultural system that structures its social, religious, and political bonds.[68] Moreover, the freedom to think, from which for him we cannot turn away[69]—inheres in every experience that puts the given order of existence into question. Every such experience is one that is brought to language. Language, Gadamer accordingly tells us, is not just one of our possessions, nor is the world the object of it.[70] Rather, language is the medium through which we bring our experiences to expression. The ability to "reason silently with oneself"[71] in order to give an account of things as they appear to us puts into play the imagination's schematizing power, as I previously explained. Hence, just as reason depends on the "given circumstances in which it operates,"[72] as Gadamer points out, thinking and judging acquire their manifest specificity in answer to moral aporias, social problems, and political crises arising from the history of which we are a part.

The ability to say, "This is wrong," is the sign of the moral courage of individuals who, daring to think and to judge for themselves, take a stand. Thinking, Arendt tells us, "deals with invisibles, with representations of things that are absent … [whereas] judging always concerns particulars and things close at hand."[73] Judging actualizes thought's liberating effects through the ways that the knowledge, insights, and understanding acquired through thinking bear on the manner in which we conduct our lives. For Arendt, this realization of the "wind of thought"[74] does not appear in the form of knowledge. Rather, it acquires its material expression when individual moral agents exercise their "ability to tell right from wrong."[75] Conscience and consciousness for Arendt are therefore interrelated. Hence, even the self can condemn itself as a murderer in the solitude of the silent intercourse where one holds oneself to account for one's words, works, deeds, and acts.

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[68] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 21; see Paul Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*.

[69] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hermeneutics between History and Philosophy. The Selected Writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer: Volume I*, ed. and trans. Pol Valdevelde and Arun Iyer (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 69.

[70] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 450; see Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*. Ricœur points out that representative thought espouses a concept of language that "treats language as *Ausdruck*, 'expression'—that is, as the exteriorization of the interior" (284).

[71] Anselm of Canterbury, cited by Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 99-100.

[72] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 277.

[73] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 193.

[74] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 193.

[75] Arendt, *The Life of the Mind. Volume One, Thinking*, 193.

IV. Freedom and Evil

By turning again to the idea that only good is radical and only exemplary representations of the good augment the field of action, I now want to put to the test the notion that the ability to tell right from wrong rests more radically on our ontological constitution as capable human beings. The power to discriminate between the good that we desire to be and the evil that threatens to lay waste to the world has its root in the intermediary condition of the being that we are. We have to admit that the enigma of our "plural and collective unity"[76] places a limit on a cosmopolitan ideal that would be equal to the idea of the humanity of all. At the same time, this enigma sets the directive idea of humanity in the place of a deontological principle and a teleological aim. By maintaining that the good is given only by example, as I previously outlined in discussing the phenomenon of testimony, I accordingly intend to draw out the anthropological root of the ability to judge between right and wrong.

To what do we appeal when, confronted with an unprecedented moral or political crisis, no historically extant standard suffices for judging the situation and responding to it? The ability to set before the mind ideas that are not given to experience and therefore remain empirically unknowable such as God, death, and freedom gives wing to thought. Living experiences, Arendt reminds us however, are the guideposts for the activity of thinking. She therefore stresses that "[t]hought itself … arises out of the incidents"[77] from which it takes its bearing and to which it remains bound in order not to lose itself in the heights to which it soars. Moreover, "[w]ho says what is … always tells a story."[78] The evaluative textures of the narratives we construct in recounting incidents, acts, and events thus constitute the cultural moorings of the capacity for thinking more and for judging better the history of the violence directed against the victims of social, religious, and political conflicts.

Why, then, might Arendt have come to believe that evil "is never 'radical,' … it is only extreme, and [hence] … it possesses neither depth nor any demonic dimension"[79]? Evil, she insists, is thought-defying inasmuch as it frustrates thought by its absence of depth. Conversely, "only the good has depth that is radical."[80] Warren Harvey notes that, in responding in this way to Gershom Gerhard Scholem's view of the problem of evil, Arendt holds fast to the idea that "[o]nly the good

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[76] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 138.

[77] Arendt, *Thinking without a Banister*, 202.

[78] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 260. Arendt adds that "in this story the particular facts lose their contingency and acquire some humanly comprehensible meaning" (261-2); see Hannah Arendt, "Introduction. Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1968), 3-55. Arendt remarks that "in society everybody must answer the question of *what* he is—as distinct from the question of *who* he is" (3). Cf. Walsh, *Arendt Contra Sociology*, 76.

[79] Hannah Arendt, "Letter to Gershom Gerhard Scholem," in *Correspondence—Scholem, Gershom Gerhard—1963-1964* (Series: Adolf Eichmann File, 1938-1968, n.d.). Accessed May 15, 2021: https://www.brainpickings.org/2017/02/07/hannah-arendt-the-banality-of-evil/; see Bethania Assy, "Eichmann, the Banality of Evil, and Thinking in Arendt's Thought," *Contemporary Philosophy*, 2021. Accessed October 10, 2021: https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cont/ContAssy.htm.

[80] Arendt, "Letter to Gershom Gerhard Scholem."

… can be radical."[81] In the case of "those rare individuals who during the Nazi regime bravely acted to save Jews,"[82] saving one life to save the world in each instance exemplified the idea of each human being's dignity and worth.

The notion that only good is radical, or that good is more originary than evil, once again brings our capacity to respond to moral and political exigencies and demands in ways that, in light of our considered convictions, we believe advance the good, right, and just to the fore. Previously, I rehearsed how aesthetic experience's lateral transposition onto the ethical and political planes rests on the work's singularity, exemplarity, and communicability. Like the artist whose audacity in responding to a question or problem as she apprehends it leads to the creation of something new, the revolutionary's initiative in answer to political ills and failures sets a new chain of events in motion. Natality for Arendt is the ground of this capacity for beginning something new. Not the blessing of genius but the givenness—the gift—of existence makes surpassing the real from within possible. This possibility bespeaks the ontological constitution of a being who stands neither at the beginning nor at the end but is always *in medias res*. The freedom of new beginnings within the history of which we are part is consequently the spring of the power for surpassing congealed systems of practices and habits of thought in creatively productive ways.

By resisting the idea that manifestations of evil could give rise to a summons, Ricœur, like Arendt, distinguishes good from evil in a way that refuses to grant evil an originary value. For him, only "good gathers together,"[83] while expressions of evil infect the social, moral, and political order through the contagions they spread. There is therefore no equivalent in the realm of evil to the ways that poetry, fiction, and music, for example, refashion the real in accordance with their explorations into new ways of thinking, acting, and feeling. Nothing in the realm of evil belongs to the order of *Nachfolge*. Rather, the only model we have of the transmission of evil comes from biology, such that "we think [of evil] in terms of *contamination*, *infection*, *epidemic*."[84] Hence, only "expressions of the good gather themselves *together*"[85] through the manner in which, in apprehending the rule exemplified by the act or life that we admire, we are drawn to follow after it (*Nachfolge*).

Does a freedom that is responsible for evil in fine inhere in the ontological constitution of the intermediary being that we are? We have to admit that the freedom of the power to set a new course of events in motion by taking the initiative to act also makes us responsible for the evil brought into the world through the violence exercised by one person, group, or nation over another. This freedom, Ricœur therefore tells us, "is the ground of evil."[86] By the same token, the

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[81] Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah. Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age* (New York: Grove Press, 1978), 251; cited by Warren Zen Harvey, "Two Jewish Approaches to Evil in History," in Steven T. Katz, Shlomo Biderman, Gershon Greenberg (eds), *Wrestling with God. Jewish Theological Responses during and after the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 201.

[82] Harvey, "Two Jewish Approaches to Evil in History," 201.

[83] Paul Ricœur, François Azouvi and Marc de Launay, *Critique and Conviction. Conversations with François Azouvi and Marc de Launay*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 184.

[84] Ricœur *et al.*, *Critique and Conviction*, 184.

[85] Ricœur *et al.*, *Critique and Conviction*, 184.

[86] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, XLVI.

"avowal of evil is also the condition of the consciousness of freedom"[87] incarnate in works, words, deeds, and acts that break new paths. It is possible, Ricœur remarks, that we ourselves are neither "the radical source of evil"[88] nor absolute doers of evil. Yet, even if the source of our contamination by evil came from elsewhere, "this other source would still be accessible to us only through its relation to us, only through the state of temptation, aberration, or blindness whereby we would be affected"[89] by it. Hence, evil becomes manifest only in the ways in which it disfigures and distorts our relations to ourselves and others in our personal, institutional, and social affairs.

By placing philosophical anthropology under the aegis of a philosophy of fallibility for which the *pathétique* of misery provides a guide, Ricœur's decision to tie an ethical vision of the world to the effort to understand freedom and evil in terms of each other sets in relief the capacities inscribed in the human condition. Among these capacities, the ability to hold oneself to account for one's words and deeds is the hallmark of the responsibility we have to think and to judge for ourselves and to respond to the suffering of others. The power one individual, group, or nation wields over another is the perverse underside of the recognition of the right of each person to exercise their capacities and powers. New beginnings that for Arendt appear in the likeness of miracles conversely are signs of the freedom manifest in works, words, acts, and lives that, in answer to the evil of violence, attest to the good, the right, and the just that we desire to be.

Moral catastrophes befall us, Arendt says, only if we assume that we and others are intrinsically incapable of judging right from wrong in the face of socially accepted mores, customs, and standards that support the abject conduct of criminal political regimes. For her, the inability to think is by no means due to some fundamental deficiency but is instead the result of the refusal to examine aspects of the world that are questionable. When the "overwhelming majority of the German people [who] believed in Hitler"[90] fell in line with Nazi directives, the thoughtlessness inculcated by a totalitarian system where every command was blindly obeyed smoothed the way for replacing one order of values with another. The unsettling question raised by this (anti-)political experience for Arendt, however, is not and "should never be 'Why did you obey' but 'Why did you *support*'"[91] a command that makes you complicit with the unlawful rule of a criminal regime? Equating obedience with consent covers over the responsibility each person has for her own conduct. In her postscript to her report on Adolph Eichmann's trial, Arendt remarks that the fundamental problem on which the postwar trials of war criminals touched concerns this one, central moral question: are human beings "capable of telling right from wrong even when all they have to guide them is their own judgment"[92]? There were no rules to guide those few who were able to tell right from wrong, she says, "because no rules existed [under which] … the unprecedented"[93] horrors of monstrous acts could be placed. *Sittlichkeit*, Ricœur adds in this

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[87] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, XLVI.

[88] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, XLVI.

[89] Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, XLVI; see Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 547.

[90] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 98.

[91] Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2003), 48.

[92] Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 294-5.

[93] Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 295.

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regard, "did not prevent Nazism."[94] On the contrary, only "the *Moralität* of some people, like [Dietrich] Bonhœffer and others, based on a certain idea of human beings,"[95] stood against the violent onslaught of this world-destroying conflagration.

Can we judge right from wrong apart from an idea of humanity that vouchsafes the dignity and worth of every human being? And if we can judge only "by having present in our mind some incident and some person, absent in time or space that have become examples,"[96] as Arendt claims, can we tell right from wrong apart from those exemplary representations that commend themselves to us through promoting the good, the right, and the just? Submitting experiences for which there is no pre-existing standard to the test of the rule exemplified by the case we call to mind gives the wind of thought its force and direction. Refusing to judge at all due to an "unwillingness or inability to choose one's examples"[97] is the real stumbling-block to thinking for ourselves. The examples we choose and the company we keep are thus manifest expressions of the moral and political ideals that we espouse in quest of our own identities and self-worth.

The impulse that liberates us from the condition of thoughtlessness exploited and weaponized by totalitarian, authoritarian, and anti-democratic populist regimes ultimately owes its force to the testimony of works, words, deeds, and acts that open the world to us and us to the world anew. Every claim to truth by a work or act that shatters habituated conventions and mores invites us to think more. The meaning of the work or act is the matter that the activity of thinking brings to mind. The love of beauty, wisdom, justice and the like that gives wing to thought is the spring of the desire that also sets imagination to work. The freedom inhering in the capacity for new beginnings consequently manifests itself in works and acts that augment the real through refashioning it from within. Such works and acts attest that only good has depth through exemplifying the rule that in each case we are drawn to follow. Only expressions of the good, the right, and the just place their notes of sanction on the being that we are. Thought that remains bound to living experiences attains its true height in interrogating, demystifying, and vacating norms, standards, and mores that overtly or covertly authorize the evil of violence. In turn, the ability to say this is wrong sets the quest for the good, the right, and the just at the heart of the capacity to respond in apposite ways.

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[94] Ricœur, *Philosophy, Ethics, and Politics*, 9.

[95] Ricœur, *Philosophy, Ethics, and Politics*, 9.

[96] Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, 145.

[97] Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, 146.

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