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Forthcoming February 2009

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## Poetics as a Presupposition of Philosophy: Hannah Arendt's *Denktagebuch*\*

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The *Denktagebuch*, kept by Hannah Arendt from 1950 until 1973, is not only a fascinating parergon, or secondary work, containing many reflections, observations, and notes on other articles that had not, or not yet, taken on their finished form as essays or books. It presents the foundations and premises of her writing that originate from her notebooks—foundations in a literal sense, i.e., those writings that preceded the author's work in political theory. Several entries contain methodological reflections, explanations of definitions, and analyses of philosophical texts. These are self-commentaries on her own publications, such as reflections on the ambiguous and often misunderstood use of the word "Origin" in the title of her book on totalitarianism; or they are materials for current projects—for example, the reflections on the methods of historiography or on concepts like tradition, progress, time, life, and judgment. At times, however, they also seem like concentrated monads of particular aspects of her later writings, as in her thoughts on forgiveness. Compared with a work journal, Arendt's *Denktagebuch* goes a step further, in that it also contains much that was *not* included in her writings; it is more than simply a personal or private journal, of the sort that supplies researchers with biographical material for the "decoding" of an author's work.

The *Denktagebuch* is, in fact, a journal of thought and *about* thought, in which the determination of thought as a space for dialogue with oneself weaves through the notebooks as a leitmotif: "The soundless dialogue

\* Translated by Matthew Congdon and Kathryn McQueen. Quotations from German-language sources have also been translated. Throughout, the word "poetics" has been used to translate "Dichtung," which should be understood in the broad sense of not just poetry but creative composition in general.

of thought, the two-in-one" (XXVI/25, 721).<sup>1</sup> Thinking understood and practiced in this way cannot be fully integrated and enveloped within philosophy, insofar as philosophy is dependent on concepts and systematic distinctions. For Arendt, thinking as a requisite for philosophy instead maintains a proximity to poetry, to the language of metaphor, to sensual perception in analogies, and to experience. In this way, the expectations extended to poets are by no means low, since Arendt brings them into association with truth: "We expect the truth from them (not from the philosophers, from whom we expect thought)" (XIX/35, 496). Despite—or because—of this expectation, poetic language, unlike the conceptual language of philosophy, maintains a consciousness of the problem of a fundamental "untranslatability" between the senses and truth (see the entry on truth, XXIII/4, 600).

#### *Journals and Privacy: The Early Notebooks*

Even prior to these twenty-eight notebooks, which were recently published by Ursula Ludz and Ingeborg Nordmann under the title *Denktagebuch* and which contain twenty-three years worth of notes, Arendt had already kept notebooks. For instance, in her *Nachlass* (collected papers), housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, are notebooks from 1923 onward, filled with poems, stories, essays, and reflections, dating from her years of study in Marburg, Freiburg, and Heidelberg. Many of the poems in these notebooks are personal entries of the young student, who—in the more lyrical, sentimental language typical of youth—gave expression to the effects of her intense yet secretive relationship with her teacher and lover, Martin Heidegger.<sup>2</sup> Insofar as the literary form is used here as a genre of autobiographical experience, these notebooks take on the status of a private diary—private also in the sense of Arendt's theory of the private as a place "where one is at once sheltered and hidden [*wo man zugleich*

1. Hannah Arendt, *Denktagebuch: 1950 bis 1973*, ed. Ursula Ludz and Ingeborg Nordmann (Munich: Piper, 2002). All the following quotes are from this edition, unless other sources are given.

2. Cf. *Notebook 1923–25*: "No Word breaks though the darkness—/No God lifts a hand—/Where ever I look/land piles up./No form that loosens,/No shadow that hovers./ And still hear it:/Too late, too late" (The Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, p. 022974). Arendt's poems from 1923 to 1925 are printed in Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, *Briefe 1925 bis 1975 und andere Zeugnisse* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1998), pp. 365–85.

*geborgen und verborgen ist*]"<sup>3</sup>—a kind of biographical secondary text that accompanies the work of the prospective philosopher.

The fact that Arendt's *Nachlass*, including these private notebooks, is widely available on the internet today, does not come without irritation when one recalls her theory of concealment in *Vita Activa* (1958) or when one comes across the following entry in the *Denktagebuch*: "Private life: a tautology, everything is private. No life, as long as it is being lived, can stand the public. For that reason, no life can be a 'work of art'" (XXII/14, 566). "As long as it is being lived": it follows from this claim that life loses its concealment and privacy through death, and becomes a part of history. A similar interpretation is confirmed in another entry, in which life—as event [*Begebenheit*—] is placed in a dialectical relationship with history.

History: only an event has a beginning and an end, history precisely not. . . . But that means: as long as one lives, one remains outside of history, because the event, which one is, has not yet come to an end. Only what has ended is worthy of history. The dead man, however, vanishes from the earth, not from history, insofar as he has left himself behind. (XXIII/5, 601)

This view of the relationship between life and death might also explain the fact that Arendt left behind her correspondence in a clearly ordered archive, in which her own letters, predominately in carbon copy, are kept. As such, her theory of legacy [*Hinterlassenschaft*] also materializes itself in the Arendt archive, as a documentation of life, which after death becomes a part of the history in which one lived, and which stands in tension with the lived life. The *Denktagebuch* speaks precisely from within this tension. Unlike the early notebooks, it does not recount the concealed traces of life beyond the work but instead surveys the space of writing that opens itself up to the transitions between experience and philosophy, between dialogues with others and the self-dialogue of thought, between reading and writing, between the languages of poetry and philosophy. On the other hand, it contains nothing of those intimate sketches of the soul that journal-writers otherwise like to confide to the page.

3. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 71 (translation modified).

*The Beginning of the Denktagebuch:  
Constellations of Multiple Transitions*

The transition from the previous entries to this changed status of the notebooks is marked by the establishment of a new beginning. In March 1950, three months after she had returned from her first visit to Germany since her emigration, Arendt designated this beginning in the middle of a notebook that already contained several entries, by writing the date "June 1950" and the number "1" on the page upon which she began a longer essay on guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation. With this, the newly added—dated and numbered—notes are separated from the texts that were entered previously (begun in 1942) in the same notebook. Before this break, one finds stories with titles such as "The Stone that Falls from Hearts," "The Door," "With One's Head through the Wall," which obviously reflect life experiences in allegorical form, as well as a number of poems, such as "To W. B.," from October 1942, presumably composed on the occasion of the second anniversary of Walter Benjamin's death.<sup>4</sup>

This poem could have also found its place in the *Denktagebuch*. In keeping with her conviction that only a life that has reached its end enters into history, the names of loved ones or intimate friends only appear in these notes as names of the dead: Herman Broch (1951), Erich Neumann (1960), Heinrich Blücher (1970). A memorial poem is dedicated to Neumann, a distant friend from university days who died in remote Tel Aviv, which holds on to one of the gestures with which he inscribed himself in her memory: "Nov. 30, 1960/*Erich Neumann's death.*/What was left of you? Nothing more than a hand..." (XXIII/15, 613). By contrast, the short note about Broch betrays the shock caused by his unexpected death: "Broch died on May 30 and was buried on June 2, 1951" (IV/11, 90). After three entries that concerned other topics, separate from the note about his death, follows a poem about this experience—"To survive. But how does one live with the dead?"—and in connection with it a reflection: "since Broch's death: unexpected for him... unexpected for me." It refers to the missed opportunity for closeness and friendship, for Arendt had not wanted to believe in the approaching death of the friend, one with whom she had been in intense dialogue, above all on literature, since

4. Notebook 1942–1950, The Hannah Arendt Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. I thank Ursula Ludz, who generously provided me with copies from the beginning of this notebook, which precedes the published *Denktagebuch*.

1946.<sup>5</sup> In this entry, one finds this sentence: "Who a man is, one knows only after he is dead" (IV/15–16).<sup>6</sup> Thus, for Arendt, the end of life is not only a condition for history, but also for a kind of knowledge that is not (or no longer) affected by intimacy and personal emotions, untinged by the overlapping of intellectual and personal encounters. In this respect, a certain interval opens itself in the *Denktagebuch* between concealment/privacy and public/politics, between life and history, between thinking and public spirit, which must be grasped as a presupposition of her work. Arendt also marked a clear separation from the autobiographical records of a private diary by attaching an additional notebook with an index, which gathers the ideas and reflections of the *Denktagebuch* and opens up a (later) analysis of her writings.

Although the end of the notes is just as significant as the beginning, the end, in contrast to the beginning, is not a matter of decision. It designates more of a cessation than a completion, for soon after the death of her life partner, the notes trickle away. The last notebook, which begins, "1971 Without Heinrich," contains only sporadic and increasingly scant entries; in the years 1972–73, one finds finally only travel plans and locations; and no entries appear for the remaining years prior to her own death in 1975. The beginning, by contrast, casts a clear light on the birth of Hannah Arendt as an American author of political theory.

When Arendt began on the first page with her reflections on guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation, she had just returned three months earlier, from her first trip to Germany after sixteen years of exile. Her 1950 article about her "visit in Germany," which she had written for the American magazine *Commentary*, bore marks of a great distance. Yet it also attests to a lucid understanding of the refusal of Germans at that time to set aside their recently past history. In this respect, one can also read the entry as *distinct* commentary on the visit to Germany, which—with reference to the reunion with Heidegger<sup>7</sup>—both reflects more personal experiences of the visit and outlines the problem areas that these experiences provided to her thinking, for a later theoretical elaboration. As Arendt writes: "The

5. Cf. Hannah Arendt and Hermann Broch, *Briefwechsel: 1946 bis 1951*, ed. Paul Michael Lützel (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1996).

6. A few years later, another poem to Broch followed, entitled "Brochs Grab" (XI/17, 265).

7. Cf. Heidegger's letter from May 6, 1950, in Arendt and Heidegger, *Briefe*, pp. 103–6.

interrelationship of thinking and memory consists therein that all thinking is actually a thinking-along things" (XX/25, 489).

Arendt began the *Denktagebuch* around the same time that she was finishing *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which represented her debut as a political theorist and also her appearance as a genuine American author. While her early writings, for the most part, originated from literature or from her preoccupation with literary writers (e.g., the Rahel book, the essays on Heine, Kafka, et al. in *Die verborgene Tradition*, and numerous articles and reviews<sup>8</sup>), literature faded into the background—more precisely into the hidden writings of the *Denktagebuch*, as a palimpsest and source of her work. While her own literary attempts, as forms of autobiographical expression, had become impossible given the established break in the notebooks, poetics extended into the *Denktagebuch*, with numerous poems, as an essential requisite of her thinking and philosophizing. Her own poems and many quotations of the poems of others, such as Dickinson, Goethe, Hölderlin, Rilke, and Brecht, as well as the many literary motifs and citations that find themselves in the *Denktagebuch*—from authors as different as Virgil, Meister Eckhart, Milton, Claudius, Klopstock, Schiller, Goethe, Schlegel, Heine, Balzac, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Valéry, Kafka, Melville, Faulkner, Dinesen, and Sarraute—are interpretable as mementos referring to the literary ground of her thinking.

Here, poetics no longer designates the other of philosophy—as was the case in the opposition between Arendt's poems as a young student, which express the experiences of a love of a philosopher, and her philosophical dissertation on the concept of love in Augustine—but, rather, it now describes *the path of, or to, thought*. It is a testimony to life, which gives way to philosophy. This also corresponds to the role of citations as friends and witnesses. For in Arendt, her many quotations are not demonstrations of cultural knowledge, but rather the verification of her own perceptions through the language of other authors: "Interpretation, quotation—but only in order to have witnesses, and also friends" (XXVII/7, 756).

With Jaspers and Heidegger, those philosophers who also personally stand very close to Arendt, the citations become supplemented by conversation notes and fictional dialogues (or disputes). Here, thinking as a dialogical form of the "two-in-one," as self-dialogue, gives way to a staged debate, as for instance, when Arendt lets the voices of the two

8. Cf. the bibliography in Hannah Arendt, *Ich will verstehen: Selbstauskünfte zu Leben und Werk*, ed. Ursula Ludz (Munich: Piper, 1996), pp. 257–327.

appear as opponents: "Jaspers and Heidegger: Jaspers could say: 'How can a philosopher lack wisdom in this way?' Heidegger could answer: 'How can a thinker still care about wisdom, from where does he get the legitimation?'—Both are right" (I/23, 19).

Just as telling as the relation between literature and philosophy is the fact that, at exactly the same moment that she decides to consistently publish in English, Arendt begins an intellectual diary in German. That is, the publication of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1951 marks a significant change in association with her bilingualism, which has been given much too little attention in the discussion of her works.<sup>9</sup> Most of the texts written before this time were written in German, even if a few are like *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewish Woman*, which first appeared in English translation in 1958 and only afterward, in 1959, was published in Germany, in the unusual form of a subsequent original publication. The German publication of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which followed five years after its U.S. publication, is by contrast a translation from the English version, a practice that was the case for many of her subsequent publications.

As Arendt became a notable, international political personality in the 1950s, the beginning of the *Denktagebuch* in 1950 documents her desire for a necessary separation of thinking and writing, which keeps itself at a distance from the contemporary historical contexts in which she operated and involved herself. In this respect, the recently edited *Cahiers* are the documents of a multifaceted bilingualism: on the one hand, the author of political philosophy, the public person, professor at American universities, who teaches and publishes in English; on the other hand, the reflections, interjections, and thoughts that had not (yet) found their way in, or that could not find any place at all—and which, for the most part, were written in German. The *Denktagebuch* functions, then, as an arena for another kind of writing—beyond the expatriation from Germany and the naturalization in America.

#### *Bilingualism: Distance from Political Philosophy and America*

As Arendt's texts on political theory are regarded as her American work, the *Denktagebuch* constitutes a space of writing that thematizes a dual skepticism and distance: both toward life in the United States and toward

9. An exception can be found in the passages on foreign language in Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia UP, 2001), pp. 185ff.

political philosophy. Thus, the notes reflect over and over the opposition between politics and philosophy, coming to a head in the assertion "that 'political philosophy' is a *contradictio in adjecto* [contradiction in terms]," a note written in May 1968, of all times, when otherwise the politicization of all areas of life and knowledge was the order of the day. Yet the reflection of the objective contradiction between politics and philosophy is for Arendt no reason not to engage in political philosophy, but rather is its presupposition, as the beginning of the following passage formulates: "Every 'political philosophy' precedes an understanding of the relation between philosophy and politics. It could be that . . ." (XXV/56, 683).

The same goes for Arendt's attitude toward the United States. Thus, she describes the American "passion 'to make the world a better place to live in'" as a transformation to "a 'best of all possible worlds,'" in which life gets lost (V/6, 105) and events can no longer penetrate into human affairs: "Only in the event, however, in which the elements of human affairs come to a head, does the meaning of these affairs become clear; thus, the deprivation of meaning in American life" (V/10, 108).

Since she discusses such an integration of elements in the event, comparable to the dialectical picture or Benjamin's theory of the monad—as well as a theory of history, namely, "Event and Element Theory," which makes possible historical comprehension (V/5, 105)—it is not surprising that her manner of thinking and speaking encountered resistances and misunderstandings from American audiences. She analyzes this fact in April 1970 in the *Denktagebuch* under the heading "On the difficulties I have with my English readers," which she systematically examines in four points. In it she distances herself from a view of language that she calls "thesaurus-philosophy," which assumes "that words 'express' ideas that I supposedly have prior to having words." She doubts, however, "that we would have any 'ideas' without language." It has to do, then, with the opposition between analytic philosophy and a thinking that takes language as its point of departure, a kind of thinking that today operates in the United States under the name "Continental Philosophy." In reference to several reviews of her writings, she interprets their critique as an attack on her specific kind of thinking: "What he means is that my thinking transcends mere description. Or: similes and metaphors." This follows an example that, probably not accidentally, has to do with Benjamin, namely, Arendt's declaration that he thinks poetically, that is, in metaphors, an observation that lead her to questions about metaphor, etc., reflections that,

according to views of the critics, have nothing to do with a representation of Benjamin: "What this adds up to is that the whole notion of thinking a matter through is alien to English 'philosophy'" (XXVII/45, 770). This means that a poetic thinking and the notion of "thinking a matter through" are connected for Arendt. From this point of view, the English language, in which she publishes and which is "alien" to her thought, remains a foreign language, while the German language develops in the *Denktagebuch* as a space of thinking.

Yet it is precisely through bilingualism that Arendt arrived at her own writing. And thus she polemicalizes too against the "Nonsense of world language—against the 'condition humaine,' the artificial, violent reduction of ambiguity [*Vereindeutigung des Vieldeutigen*]" and pleads for a "plurality of languages" and for the "multiplicity which is given with language and above all with languages" (II/5, 42). With language and with languages—i.e., that the interaction with the multiplicity of meaning can happen between various languages as well as in language *as such*—insofar as one does not understand language as expressing pre-linguistic ideas, but rather takes into account and uses its metaphorical nature, with which the nearness of thinking and poetics comes into play.

#### *Metaphor and Concept—Poetics and Thinking*

"What connects thinking and poetics is metaphor. In philosophy, one calls *concept* what in poetics is called *metaphor*. Thought creates from the visible its 'concepts,' in order to indicate the invisible." Thus is it described in a commentary on Hans Blumenberg's *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*: "He overlooks the fact that all thinking 'transmits,' is metaphorical" (XXVI/30, 728).

Here it becomes clear, how through the reading, i.e., debating with another, one of the leitmotifs of the *Denktagebuch* condenses into a thesis: all thinking is metaphorical. This does not mean that Arendt understands the relationship between philosophy and literature as analogous to the relationship between concept and metaphor, but rather that the representationality or figurativity of language reflects a fundamental requirement for all thought. The same words can be understood as concepts *or* metaphors, yet their designation as metaphor reflects the moment of transmission that is always inscribed in them—at least when it is a question of the designation of the invisible. Therefore, metaphors also maintain a closer relationship to truth than do concepts, a thesis that is not tantamount to the

assertion that metaphors are more truthful. The first note on metaphor that one finds in the *Denktagebuch* reads:

Metaphor and the Truth:

Nothing more clearly exposes the peculiar ambiguity of language—through which alone we can have and speak truth, through which alone we may actively create truth from the world, and which, in its necessary refinement, is always in our way in finding the truth—than does metaphor. (II/22, 46)

With this, Arendtian metaphor is by no means defined as the language of truth, but rather as a symptom, in which the very ambiguity of language becomes clear, which is the condition of possibility and, as it were, impossibility of truth. Even philosophy, which has to do with those areas that lie beyond the world of the visible, the material, and the phenomenal, is therefore reliant on metaphor: “The role of metaphor: the connection (is...as) of the visible to the invisible, the known to the unknowable, etc.” (XXVI/32, 729). Or: “The precedence of the sensual in metaphor” (XXVII/28, 764).

This “role” of transmission and analogy, which Arendt emphasizes in metaphor, also pertains to an aspect that interests her in Kant. While the notes in her Kant notebook revolve, above all, around the concepts of judgment and critique, the same author occurs in the other notebooks in the context of her reflections on metaphor: “*Ad* metaphor: Kant on analogies: they must guide us wherever ‘the understanding lacks the threads of unmistakable proof’ (*Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*). For example: the relation of God to the world in analogy to the relation of man to his product” (XXV/34, 674).

This “wherever the understanding lacks the threads of unmistakable proof” refers not only to philosophical work in the realm of the invisible, but also—as she reflects in another note—“human affairs”: “The invisible: the ‘images’ of the power of the imagination, which induce contemplation and the identification of truth and outlook, and the ‘concepts’ that allow language. The latter are always attained in the realm of human affairs; the former refer to ‘givens,’ nature, the universe, etc.” (XXVII/38, 767).

This proximity between thinking and experience in “human affairs” also derives from this comparability in the relation to language and its figurative possibilities in the interaction with realms beyond visibility, evidence, and the empirical world. A more radical consequence of her

thesis that all thinking is transmitted than the necessity of establishing analogies, as Arendt finds it formulated in Kant, is the conception of a quasi-unsaid within language. If thinking, in order to signify the invisible, creates its concepts from the visible, as she formulated on the occasion of the readings of Blumenberg, then this linguistic transmission must necessarily fall short of the invisible. It is this problem that is responsible for some significant citations of Heidegger in the *Denktagebuch*:

*Ad* Heidegger interpretations: the new consists in the following: Heidegger not only assumes (as others did before him) that every work bears in itself a specific unspoken quality, but that this unspoken quality forms its essential core...thus quasi-empty, the space that lies in between, around which all things revolve and all else is organized. Heidegger positions himself in this place, in the middle of the work, where the author precisely is not, as if this were the *spared* space for the reader or listener. From here, the work re-transforms itself from the result-oriented, dead printed word into a living speech, open to the possibility of response and protest. It yields a dialogue, and hence the reader no longer comes from outside, but rather participates right in the thick of it. (XV/13, 353)

According to this view, here Heidegger’s, the proximity between philosophy and literature is closest—and the distance to political philosophy largest. The dialogue of thinking becomes also a model of reading and the basis of a dialogical signature of Arendt’s conception of philosophizing. Following such notes, the *Denktagebuch* also allows itself to be read as an accumulation of those reflections, which did *not* enter into Arendt’s political writings, but which later generated the multi-volume project *The Life of the Mind* (posthumously published in 1978). This work formulates a theory of thinking, in which the thinking and writing style of the *Denktagebuch* is quasi-sublated [*gleichsam aufgehoben*].

*Love as Passion: Traces of Metaphors of the Heart*

The notes in the *Denktagebuch* also contain innumerable building blocks for a series of unwritten books. Perhaps most regrettable is that no work was written based upon the numerous notes on love, passion, and pathos, out of which a comprehensive philosophical critique of the emotions could have been established. Along this thematic trail, it is possible to observe in Arendt the ways in which thoughts consolidate, repeat, vary, and connect with other topics. Thus, an essay on “Love and Marriage” in the second of



the notebooks begins with a remarkable phrase: "Love is an event, which can become history or fate" (II/26, 49).

It is followed by a number of reflections on the disappearance of love as event. While marriage as an institution wastes this event, men and women each have their own manners of resistance: women make love into a feeling, and men transform it into a friendship. If the *Denktagebuch* contains several entries and poems, in which the named alternatives of fate [*Geschick*] and history [*Geschichte*] are concretized—whereby it is tempting to associate "fate" with Arendt's relationship with Heidegger and "history" with Blücher—then this first monad toward a theory of passion or a critique of the emotions resonates over and over in several notes on the theme of love—in varied temporal rhythms, shorter and longer entries: in February 1951, for example, a note about the degeneration of passions (*pathos*) into emotions; in May 1951, a renewed reflection on the transformation of love into emotion, "in order to evade the power of love"; and in July of the same year, the problem of the concept of "emotion" is marked through quotation marks. All of these are variations, which finally in May 1953—after a span of thirteen full notebooks—flow out in an essay entitled "Ad Love." Woven throughout the essay are the insights concerning love in Arendt's theory of the "between" as the space of togetherness and public spirit:

Love is a power and not a feeling. It empowers the heart but it does not originate in the heart. It is a power of the universe, inasmuch as the universe is alive. It is the power of life and guarantees its process against death. For that reason love overcomes death. As long as the power of love has taken possession of a heart, it becomes power and eventually force. Love burns, penetrates like lightning the between [*das Zwischen*], i.e., the space [*Welt-Raum*] between people. (XVI/3, 372)

Although a number of these considerations are assumed in the theory of *Vita Activa*, the series of notes on love still marks the fascinating signature of those books that remained unwritten.

In the last quoted passage, the fragments of a theory of passion are connected with the very trace that marks the metaphor of the heart in the *Denktagebuch*. For it is striking that the word "heart," as a kind of medium, links together the considerations about metaphor, the entries on love, and the poems. In Arendt's own poems, the heart often appears as a metaphor for a feeling subject. So it is in the poem "Up life's hill my life bundle"

that the heart—in the paradigm of conventional rhetoric on feeling—has the duty to acknowledge "homelessness as home" (II/21, 44–45). In the poem that begins with the verses "Two years in its tides/of hours and days fulfilled," the "heart grown lonely" remains behind without companion (VII/24, 194); and in the poem "So is My Heart," it is associated with corresponding images from nature: the moon draped with clouds of tears, the burning fireplace, and the crescent moon hanging in the firmament (XXII/1, 561). By contrast, in the poem that begins "Beating, my heart once beat out a path," the heart represents metonymically the "I" and its life-trace, so that the subject appears as *subjectus*, which is subordinated to the facilitations of the beating heart (XXII/17, 568). The use of the *topos* of the heart in Arendt's poetry follows a conventional lyrical, sentimental language, and is accompanied by notes associated with the motif of the metaphor, which examines the effectiveness of imagery [*des Bildes*]. So it is the metaphor of the heart through which Arendt reflects the "specific ambiguity of language [*eigentümliche Vieldeutigkeit der Sprache*]," and, using the example of the saying "to pour out one's heart [*es öffnet sich mir das Herz*]," she discusses the reciprocal dependency of physical sensation and the meaning of images: "Only since I know the physical sensation. . . . But how would I have ever experienced the *truth* of physical sensation, if language with its metaphor had not already given me an inkling of the significance of the process?" (II/22, 46). And half a year later, it is the "Heart revived again" that Rilke describes in his last poem as "what is most dwelled in," which Arendt cites as a testament to this experience (IV/10, 90).

The bodily nature of the metaphor of the heart leads Arendt to a reflection on the corporeal foundation of other figures of speech, such as rootlessness (II/10) or gentleness [*Sanftmut*] and dejection [*Schwermut*] (XXI/39). These reflections, which revolve around the literalness and embodiment of linguistic phrases, give themselves over to the very quasi-corporeal-spatial dimension of meaning in language, which time and again have provided the motive for the discussion of specific thinking and writing styles of German-speaking philosophy and cultural studies, and for what Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, for example, has analyzed as "the unconscious of language."<sup>10</sup> The most significant is certainly an entry on the connection between renunciation [*Entsagung*] and un-saying

10. Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, *Als Freud das Meer sah: Freud und die deutsche Sprache* (Zürich: Ammann, 1999).

[*Ent-sagen*], which is reminiscent of the important incitement that Arendt derived for her theory of privacy as a sphere of sheltering [*Geborgenheit*] through Heidegger's talk of unconcealment [*Entbergung*]:

Freiburg, April 22, 1971  
Heidegger

Re-nouncing

←

→

*Ad* Saying—Being: The re-nouncing (like de-tracting) detracts that which is to be said from being and thereby un-says, i.e., returns it.

[*Ent-sagen*

←

→

*Ad* Sagen—Sein: Das *Ent-sagen* (wie *ent-nehmen*) entnimmt das zu Sagen von dem Sein und *ent-sagt* dabei, d.h. gibt es zurück.] (XXVII/7, 803)

## *Confession, Obedience, and Subjectivity: Michel Foucault's Unpublished Lectures On the Government of the Living\**

Jean-Michel Landry

Delivered at the Collège de France between January and March 1980, the lectures entitled *On the Government of the Living* (*Du gouvernement des vivants*) seem to be the missing piece in the Foucauldian puzzle. Still unpublished, those eleven lectures were intended to set the theoretical foundation for the book announced as the fourth and last volume of the *History of Sexuality*, under the title *Confessions of the Flesh* (*Les aveux de la chair*). This book, however, was never published, despite the fact that his editor described it as the keystone for the entire *History of Sexuality*.<sup>1</sup> The value of Michel Foucault's 1980 teachings is clear: first, their exegetic value, since they cast a new light on Foucault's philosophical journey, and more precisely on the movement of thought that led him to focus on Antiquity. But beyond the undeniable interest that they spark in the exegete, the value of these lectures is also resolutely political: the 1980 lectures attempt to relate the historical foundations of "our obedience"—which must be understood as the obedience of the Western subject. Foucault locates these foundations in the connections between obedience and confession within early Christianity. He even claims, in the last lecture, that the movement through which the subject discovers and reveals *what he*

\* This text is based on an integral transcription of the tape recordings of the lectures *On the Government of the Living*. The transcription was carried out between the June 14 and June 25, 2005, at the Institut Mémoire de l'Édition Contemporaine (Caen, France) depository of Michel Foucault's archival fund. Another interpretation of these lectures was published in French as Jean-Michel Landry, "Généalogie politique de la psychologie," *Raisons Politiques* 25 no. 1 (2007): 31–45.

1. Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992), p. 323.



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Institutions: Print: \$198/year (US), \$238/year (International) · Online: \$242/year

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*Shipping rates:* Flat rate per individual subscription: \$6.95 (US), \$13.95 (International). Institutional subscribers, please note: shipping is included in institutional subscription rates.

TELOS is published quarterly, in the Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, by Telos Press Publishing. Periodicals postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices. Send address changes and inquiries to:

TELOS PRESS

431 East 12th Street · New York, NY · 10009

Tel: 212-228-6479

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ISSN 0090-6514 (print) · ISSN 1940-459X (online)

# TELOS

NUMBER 146

SPRING 2009

## CRITICAL THEORY: NEW DISCUSSIONS

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| <i>Introduction</i><br>Russell A. Berman   | 3   |
| <i>Morality and Critical Theory: On the Normative Problem of Frankfurt School Social Criticism</i><br>James Gordon Finlayson                 | 7   |
| <i>Metaphysical Elements in the Aesthetics of Benjamin, Adorno, and Horkheimer</i><br>Joshua Rayman  | 42  |
| <i>How Should Philosophy Be Clear? Loaded Clarity, Default Clarity, and Adorno</i><br>Nicholas Joll  | 73  |
| <i>Poetics as a Presupposition of Philosophy: Hannah Arendt's Denktagebuch</i><br>Sigrid Weigel  | 97  |
| <i>Confession, Obedience, and Subjectivity: Michel Foucault's Unpublished Lectures On the Government of the Living</i><br>Jean-Michel Landry | 111 |
| <i>Confessions of the Self: Foucault and Augustine</i><br>Thomas Lynch   | 124 |
| <i>Political Theology and Pauline Law: Notes Toward a Sapiential Legality</i><br>Aaron Riches  | 140 |