

## 10. Horror and Laughter – Arendt, Tabori, Borowski

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In her essay entitled “Social Science and Concentration Camps”<sup>1</sup>, Hannah Arendt wrote that social scientists and historical scholars found it almost impossible to grasp the essence of totalitarian concentration camps, since they assumed our actions are always guided by more or less familiar motives and utilitarian goals. This, however, was not the case with concentration camps. Everything was unreal, incomparable, “as though it took place on another planet.”<sup>2</sup> Detention and killing were not based on guilt, the perpetrators feared responsibility more than death, there was a “terrible docility with which all people went to their certain death under camp conditions as well as the surprising small percentage of suicides”<sup>3</sup>, and neither the Ten Commandments nor the criminal codes provided suitable punishment. The recurring attempts to explain the Holocaust with anti-Semitism rather than totalitarianism – as seen in the biography *Eichmann before Jerusalem*<sup>4</sup> – are merely efforts to find a utilitarian and thus comforting explanation, i.e. to give the Holocaust a traditional pre-totalitarian meaning. For Arendt, however, reports from survivors show a world without meaning. Neither the murder itself nor its dimensions were unprecedented but rather “the ideological nonsense which caused them, the mechanization of their execution, and the careful and calculated establishment of a world of the dying in which nothing any longer made sense.”<sup>5</sup>

This leads to two questions: how can we grasp senselessness, “worldlessness”? And what does it mean for something to be unprecedented? Are not events such as the First World War unprecedented and thus in terms of motives and utilitarian goals understandable but avoidable? The answer to the first question refers to understanding and representation, the answer to the second question broaches the

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1 Hannah Arendt: Social Science and Concentration Camps, in: *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. by Jerome Kohn, New York: Schocken 1994.

2 Ibid., p. 242.

3 Ibid.

4 Bettina Stangneth: *Eichmann before Jerusalem – The unexamined life of a mass murderer*, Vintage, London 2016.

5 Hannah Arendt: Social Science and Concentration Camps, op. cit., p. 243.

fundamental problem of science, which deals with the complexity of events and actions but cannot handle the unprecedented.

## Thinking poetically

It seems that the traditional social sciences, such as sociology, psychology, and political science, have a problem with the fact that they want to explain something that escapes science. Regardless of any reduced claim to universality, science means that its results are objective, generally valid and verifiable. It claims to be able to explain the research object. This still holds true despite recognition that science is constructed and influenced by the standpoint of the observer, as well as by social relations, power games, and gender. It nonetheless remains science, the task of which is to explain. But what happens when the key characteristic of the Holocaust is the absence of motives and utilitarian goals? What if the event, as Arendt claims, cannot be explained?

Arendt drew two conclusions from this. The first concerns her method of exposure. Her research on totalitarianism is compiled from a series of essays she wrote in exile, initially in Paris on the Jewish question in modern Europe, and later in the United States on colonialism and imperialism. Following her knowledge of the Holocaust these were supplemented by studies on total domination. *Elements and Origins of Total Domination* was the (German) title she gave to this collection – an approach to the emergence and particularities of total domination: a phenomenon absent of causality or inevitability, but rather something she compared to a process of crystallization.

The second conclusion consists of a clear distinction between knowledge and understanding. In her essay “Understanding and Politics” she wrote:

Knowledge and understanding are not the same, but they are interrelated. Understanding is based on knowledge and knowledge cannot proceed without a preliminary, inarticulate understanding. Preliminary understanding denounces totalitarianism as tyranny and has decided that our fight against it is a fight for freedom. ... Preliminary understanding ... no matter how rudimentary and even irrelevant it may ultimately prove to be, will certainly more effectively prevent people from joining a totalitarian movement than the most reliable information, the most perceptive political analysis, or the most comprehensive accumulated knowledge. Understanding precedes and succeeds knowledge. Preliminary understanding, which is at the basis of all knowledge, and true understanding, which transcends it, have this in common: They make knowledge meaningful.<sup>6</sup>

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6 Hannah Arendt: Understanding and Politics, in: *Essays in Understanding*, op. cit., p. 310/11.

Consequently, the scientist can only illuminate, but neither prove nor disprove uncritical preliminary understanding. Should he use the results of his research for political purposes, he loses common sense, “which alone will guide him securely through the labyrinth of his own knowledge.” And if he wants to make his knowledge meaningful,

he must become very humble again and listen closely to the popular language, in which words like ‘totalitarianism’ are daily used as political clichés and misused as catchwords, in order to re-establish contact between knowledge and understanding.<sup>7</sup>

Understanding is therefore close to judgement on the basis of common sense, which Arendt later described as judgement on the basis of ‘enlarged mentality’ in the style of Kant. In a footnote to her essay she added:

It seems quite doubtful that this kind of comprehensive knowledge, which is not yet understanding and does not deal with the essence of totalitarianism, can be produced by organized research. The chances are great that the relevant data will get buried in an avalanche of statistics or observations on the one hand and evaluation on the other, neither of which tells us anything about historical conditions and political aspirations. Only the sources themselves talk – documents, speeches, reports, and the like.<sup>8</sup>

This makes it evident that Arendt does not reject scientific knowledge. She distinctly ascertains, however, that the basis of our orientation is not science but common sense. Not only does such judgement contain several points of view, but narratives also have the ability to create meaning, understanding. This is not the result of argumentation, but of experience, of an example that is more universally memorable. So eye-witness reports and accounts of experience should be added to documents, speeches, and factual reports.

And here we come to a second limitation of science – understanding through literature, which Arendt sees as an equally valid albeit fictitious form of recounted experience (for instance Joseph Conrad’s novella *Heart of Darkness* as an account of the colonial experience of Europeans in unknown Africa and Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd* as the narrated experience of the impossibility of an absolute Good).

The question here is to what extent can we characterise Arendt’s way of thinking and writing as poetic thinking? I will try to answer this question with the help of her writings but also by comparing it to artistic representations of the Holocaust by author and theatre director George Tabori, and the writer Tadeusz Borowski, who wrote stories about his experience in Auschwitz.

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7 *Ibid.*, p. 311.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 324.

George Tabori was born in Budapest in 1914 and emigrated to London via Vienna and Prague. He worked in theatre and film in Great Britain and the United States in the 1950s, among others with Brecht, Hitchcock and Kazan. From 1969, he lived in Germany and wrote novels and plays, among them *Mein Kampf*, *The Cannibals* and *My Mother's Courage*. He worked at the Burgtheater in Vienna and the Berliner Ensemble in Berlin until his death in 2007.

Tadeusz Borowski was born in 1922 in Zhytomyr, in the Ukrainian SSR, and belonged to a large Polish minority. He moved to Warsaw at the age of ten, finished school in an underground *lyceum* and studied at an underground university. He was arrested in 1943 and deported to Auschwitz, where he survived as a paramedic at the camp hospital and later survived the concentration camp in Dachau. He wrote haunting documentary stories such as *We Were in Auschwitz* and *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*. After the war he published *The World of Stone* and became a member of the communist Polish Workers Party. He committed suicide in 1951.

I would now like to discuss in more detail the following aspects in Arendt, Tabori and Borowski:

- Being addressed by events, the intersubjective position of the citizen and the basis for an experience perspective,
- The role of engagement and emotions in the process of understanding and the correspondence between content and speech,
- Being aware that what is really at stake cannot be put into words.

## **Being addressed by events, the intersubjective position of the citizen and the basis for an experience perspective**

Arendt spoke of the danger of the scientist getting lost in his theories and of the need to uphold a relationship with the world, with experience. For Arendt, as for Heidegger, the starting point is truth, the event to be considered, not the outcome of a scientific theory or method in search of truth. Centre stage is not subsumption but distinction, the perception of the new. Dialogue, not logic, is the companion on the road to understanding.

In art the artist responds to their awareness of being addressed. In his essay *Eye and Mind*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty mentions a comment made by the artist André Marchand on Paul Klee's feelings:

In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me. ... I was there, listening. ... I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it."

And Merleau-Ponty goes on to say:

There really is inspiration and expiration of Being, respiration of Being, action and passion so slightly discernible that it becomes impossible to distinguish between what sees and what is seen, what paints and what is painted.<sup>9</sup>

Psychologist Viktor Frankl, who survived Auschwitz, attempts a similar reversal of subject and object. In his analysis of the conditions of life, death and survival in a concentration camp he wrote:

We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that *it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us*. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life – daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfil the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.<sup>10</sup>

Arendt defines responsibility as a response to the challenges human beings are exposed to in a community. At the same time she dissolves subject and object into intersubjectivity, or more precisely inter-humanity, into the mutual relationship between human beings as actors and as sufferers, from which the place of freedom, politics and power emerges. All of this disappears once subjects or objects become predominant and destroy the realm of the in-between, replacing it with domination, violence, sovereignty or silence.

Arendt deduces from this responsibility the need to examine events and phenomena in their particularity, not to subordinate the particular to the general but to distinguish them in the Aristotelian way that A is not B. The same applies to Eichmann and Hitler. Arendt does not make a simple distinction between guilty perpetrators and innocent victims, but examines each experience. For example, the shock white colonists experienced in strange black Africa, one that increased their racism and need for colonial subjugation; or man's loss of orientation in a disintegrating class society and the search for ideological orientation; or the seduction of ideological thinking that gives some kind of order to a complex reality in line with the formula two and two are four; or the experience of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, where one of the worst criminals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century turned out to be an assiduous bureaucrat; or, finally, the tragic experience of the Jewish councils in countries occupied by Nazi Germany, who wanted to prevent the worst by collaborating, but ultimately facilitated deportation. All of these are understandable but momentous

9 Maurice Merleau-Ponty: *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. James M. Edie, Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1965, p. 167.

10 Viktor Frankl: *Man's Search for Meaning*, Boston: Beacon Press 2006, p. 77.

errors of judgement that make total domination and its goals possible. This does not blur the distinction between perpetrators and victims, but it does show how easily worldliness, common sense and the capacity to judge can be lost.

George Tabori's plays about the Holocaust make more drastic statements than Arendt. They are grotesque, the laughter of the audience sticks in their throats. While Arendt declared that all sense of justice was turned upside down under total domination and that completely innocent people were persecuted and killed, Tabori criticises the false conclusion that the latter were superhuman noble victims. On the contrary, they were normal human beings with strengths and weaknesses, virtues and vices; they were not only victims, but were also actors. In *The Cannibals* a man who dies accidentally in a quarrel in a concentration camp is cooked and eaten by his hungry cell mates. The cell mates are fathers and sons, are both victims and free men, contemporaries and later-born. The play depicts the extermination camp and, at the same time, is a critical reflection of the past. When a Kapo (a prisoner functionary) orders the men to eat the dead body, only two obey. The others refuse despite their extreme hunger and are sent to the gas chamber.

The messages in this play are multi-layered. "There are times," Tabori said, "when the most human and most violent act consists of the simple refusal to be forced to do something: although starving, not to eat."

The attitudes and emotions of the inmates show that there are no innocent victims. When one of the sons asks his father: What did you do during the war? he replies:

Oh, I always had fantastic dreams of moral excellence, some sort of exorbitant admiration – and fear. On the other hand, evil is the only thing that is genuine and authentic, isn't it? ... I followed orders. Everyone followed orders. The best of us have a Führer in our blood. And these poor souls were only obeying orders, too. What orders or whose orders I can't say, but my God, they had more discipline than the whole damned Wehrmacht together. Oh, I was terrified of them, even though I had been in Dresden when the bombing started. I didn't mind that, it was a fight among murderers, evil conversing with evil. I saw the ruins and burned children, and I screamed at the bombers: you stupid assholes, you're no better than I am! Yes, my son, I felt at home in Dresden.<sup>11</sup>

It is "a play", Tabori explained,

that is neither documentation nor accusation, but a Black Mass inhabited by the demons of my own ego in an attempt to liberate myself and others in the grip of this nightmare. There are taboos that need destroying if we are not to choke

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11 George Tabori *Unterammergau oder die guten Deutschen*, Frankfurt/M. Suhrkamp 1981, p. 132/33.

on them. ... Plays have to do with playing and this alone is blasphemy for those whose regressive spirit constantly demands impeccable heroes and innocent victims, those who want to deny the theatre its primal function, namely to produce fear and mercy, and in a mythical ceremonial way to create the community on the basis of which everything that is holy can be mocked, if only to discover what is still valid.<sup>12</sup>

What has become impossible after Auschwitz is not so much the poem,” said Tabori, alluding to Adorno, “but sentimentality or even reverence.”<sup>13</sup> Tadeusz Borowski’s stories about Auschwitz are comprehensive descriptions of the moral abyss in this hell. They do not avert the gaze, they conceal nothing. They are almost unbearable because the reader has no good human being, no moral valuation at their side. The reader is as solitary as the inmates of the concentration camps. In his book *The Captive Mind*, Czeslaw Milosz characterizes Borowski as a nihilist because of his ethical passion.

The human species is naked in his stories, stripped of those tendencies toward good which last only so long as the habit of civilization lasts. But the habit of civilization is fragile; a sudden change in circumstances, and humanity reverts to its primeval savagery.<sup>14</sup>

Borowski is not an indifferent observer, but relates as a foreman, sometimes as a Kapo. The fight for survival takes centre stage, deceit, theft, indifference to the fate of the others, and short-term alliances for personal benefit. Work at the ramp is popular because the prisoners unloading the trains on arrival can snatch food from those who are immediately sent to the gas chamber.

The heaps grow. Suitcases, bundles, blankets, coats, handbags that open as they fall, spilling coins, gold, watches; mountains of bread pile up at the exits, heaps of marmalade, jams, masses of meat, sausages; sugar spills on the gravel. Trucks, loaded with people, start up with a deafening roar and drive off amidst the wailing and screaming of the women separated from their children, and the stupefied silence of the men left behind. ... The train has been emptied. ... In the corners amid human excrement and abandoned wrist-watches lie squashed, trampled infants, naked little monsters with enormous heads and bloated bellies. We carry them out like chickens, holding several in each hand. ... ‘Take them, for God’s sake!’ I explode as the women run from me in horror, covering their eyes. ... ‘Don’t take them to the trucks, pass them on to the women,’ says the S.S. man, lighting a cigarette. ... I am furious, simply furious with these people – furious because I

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12 Ibid., p. 37.

13 Ibid., p. 38.

14 Czeslaw Milosz: *The Captive Mind*, New York: Knopf 1953, p. 122.

must be there because of them. I feel no pity. I am not sorry they're going to the gas chamber.<sup>15</sup>

In the story "A Day in Harmence" Borowski describes the everyday traps that can be fatal. A German guard, for example, who offers him bread if he comes to get it. If a prisoner did this, however, he would be crossing a borderline. The guard could happily shoot him and collect three extra days off and five Reichsmark. Another guard hears him talking about the recent liberation of Kiev. He is suspected of being a member of a secret organisation and can only save his life by bribing the guard with his watch. Then he discovers the soap that was stolen from him and denounces the prisoner at the next opportunity. The Kapo is known for his ruthless discipline. In another concentration camp he had his own son hanged for theft.

In the meantime, the prisoners are working on senseless construction sites, the sun is burning, the soup is watery, they collapse with exhaustion, and while a group of prisoners play football, the deported are murdered: "I came back with the ball and threw it into the game. A corner. Between two corner kicks three thousand people were gassed behind me."<sup>16</sup>

These are only some of numerous examples of the importance of concrete events, the intersubjective standpoint and the experience perspective in the works of Arendt, Tabori and Borowski. People are not objects of observation but actors, and these actors trace their behaviour and experiences with the help of examples. This is not about a moral discussion, but about understanding what happens. "Decisive is not good or evil among the Jews but their dying; the historical persecution"<sup>17</sup>, said Tabori. And there are no collectives, only individuals. In reply to the outraged question of her friend Gershom Scholem, who having read her book on the Eichmann court case, had asked her if she did not love the Jewish people, Arendt said she could only love her friends, not an entire people. Tabori said much the same: "Since love, like truth, must be concrete, the lover can't work with abstractions. I do not love 'Germany', the word is like a map, useful and informative, but not touchable." When one day as a boy he told his father what he had learned at school, namely that all Romanians were gay, his father declared,

that it is a time of hideous nationalism where human beings are reified with some sort of *Die-da-Isms* (i.e. those-there-isms WH) that makes it easier to annihilate them. First of all, not all Romanians are gay. Secondly, it wouldn't matter even if they were. And thirdly, there was no such thing as 'the Romanians'. Ever since

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15 Tadeusz Borowski *Bei uns in Auschwitz*, Munich Piper 1963, pp. 117–20. English in: This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, <http://fullreads.com/literature/this-way-for-the-gas-ladies-and-gentlemen/4/>

16 *Ibid.*, p. 187f.

17 George Tabori *Unterammergau oder die guten Deutschen*, op. cit., p. 25.

I have found it difficult not to meet a person on a one-to-one basis; I could not put Faust, Kleist, Heine, Böll, the list is endless, with Himmler into one Teutonic basket, just because they are all called Heinrich.<sup>18</sup>

## The role of engagement and emotions in the process of understanding and the correspondence between contents and speech

Emotions are taken for granted in the arts, but not in science. The scientist disappears behind the position of objectivity, the universality of which would be destroyed if emotion were to enter the picture.

It is well known that Arendt stood by her emotions. When political scientist Eric Voegelin accused her of breaking the rules of historiography in her book on totalitarianism by not writing *sine ira et studio*, she replied that conditions such as the extreme poverty of the English miners in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could not be portrayed without indignation.

If I describe these conditions without permitting my indignation to interfere, I have lifted this particular phenomenon out of its context in human society and have thereby robbed it of part of its nature, deprived it of one of its important inherent qualities. For to arouse indignation is one of the qualities of excessive poverty insofar as poverty occurs among human beings.<sup>19</sup>

The abhorrent and the emotional constitute part of the essential; there must be an adequate and responsible relationship between form and content. This has nothing to do with sentimentality or moralising, but with the fact that these events took place in the midst of human society.

To describe the concentration camps *sine ira* is not to be “objective”, but to condone them; and such condoning cannot be changed by a condemnation which the author may feel duty bound to add but which remains unrelated to the description itself.<sup>20</sup>

Analysis serves understanding, and understanding is a form of judgement. Hence Arendt can also use the metaphor “hell” to characterise Auschwitz, which is what Voegelin criticised:

18 George Tabori *Bett und Bühne Über das Theater und das Leben*. Essays, Artikel, Polemiken Berlin Wagenbach 2007, p. 23.

19 Hannah Arendt A Reply to Eric Voegelin, in *Essays in Understanding*, op. cit., p. 403.

20 Ibid., p. 404.

In this sense I think that a description of the camps as Hell on earth is more “objective”, that is, more adequate to their essence than statements of a purely sociological or psychological nature.<sup>21</sup>

Likewise, Arendt laughed heartily when she read the police reports on Eichmann's interrogation. “I do not know how many times I laughed – laughed out loud!”<sup>22</sup> Her laughter expresses the discrepancy between Eichmann's deeds and the quality of his evidence, it is an act of insight, or as Arendt said, a passion of thinking. This is why she emphasised the laughter of the writer and thinker Lessing in her portrait of him in *Men in Dark Times*, boasting the independence of his thinking. “Anger, and above all Lessing's kind of anger, reveals and exposes the world in the same way as Lessing's kind of laughter ... seeks to bring about reconciliation with the world.”<sup>23</sup> Arendt holds the view along with Bertolt Brecht, that Hitler, like Eichmann, was a ridiculous figure: “The great political criminals must be exposed, especially to laughter. They are certainly not great political criminals, but people who committed great political crimes, which is something entirely different.”<sup>24</sup> Arendt defended her method with the help of other writers.

For Tabori the oneness of content, presentation and emotions has enormous significance for the theatre as well as for science and everyday life.

How must memory be so that that we can finally feel free? ... In this country there is, I think, a huge need ... to find objective reasons for these murders. I believe that what made these murders possible was precisely this ‘objectiveness’ that transforms human beings into objects. Objects are not there to be identified with and if there is no longer a need to identify, the path to destruction is near. What theatre can teach the sciences is that true memory is only possible with sensual remembering: it is impossible to let go of the past without reliving it with skin, nose, tongue, behind, feet and stomach. Historians speak of six million murders, a statement as meaningless as garbage. When we think of it as murder six million times we come back to Shylock's pound of flesh ... The gas chambers were a deliberate method of desexualising murder, but on closer examination the naked pile of human beings left behind reveals itself to be not dirt but a pyramid of lovers. Their distorted faces and their tortured embraces are the holders of their secret. Who would want to touch, taste, kiss this secret?<sup>25</sup>

21 Ibid., p. 404.

22 Hannah Arendt: “What remains? The Language Remains”: A Conversation with Günter Gaus, in: *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. ed. by Peter Baehr, New York: Penguin Classics 2000, p. 15.

23 Hannah Arendt: On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing, in: *Men in Dark Times*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World 1968, p. 6.

24 Bertolt Brecht *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 17, Frankfurt/M. Suhrkamp 1976, p. 1180.

25 George Tabori *Unterammergau oder die guten Deutschen*, op. cit., p. 201/02.

Tabori's plays are full of humour, grotesqueness and wit. "A good joke is never funny, it is always about a catastrophe." Thus, in the play *Mein Kampf*, which deals with Hitler in a hostel for the homeless in Vienna when he made an application to the academy of fine arts. A Jewish man takes care of him, his meals, proper clothes and a coat to keep him warm in the winter.

But it was not yet the Hitler we would come to know later on but a poor devil, a young lad trying to make his way in Vienna as an artist. ... What would have happened if a Jew and a young Hitler had met each other, what would have come of this relationship?<sup>26</sup>

Jokes are not popular in bourgeois theatre:

Laughter, even when it sticks in your throat, is *a priori* suspicious, an inferior pleasure to be enjoyed by inferior races only. ... I do not believe that laughter is of less worth than crying or thinking. It is a healthy reaction."<sup>27</sup>

It is obvious that the lack of emotion in Borowski's stories about Auschwitz, his meticulous description of things as they are, coupled with a perfect style à la Hemingway, provokes strong emotions. Borowski's style mirrors the content:

Look at how original the world is that we live in: there are so few people in Europe who have never killed another human being. And how few people there are with no desire to kill each other!"<sup>28</sup>

## The awareness that what is really at stake cannot be put into words

We can come to terms with what the words meaningless and unprecedented signify by understanding them, not by explaining them. Plays and stories about Auschwitz describe events, they do not explain them, but they help us to understand them. Nor do they explain the ethical alternative, but we understand it. What is really at stake is not put into words.

Although Arendt explains totalitarianism as a new form of domination in the Montesquieu sense, and the role of ideology, the function of extermination camps and the dehumanisation of the victims, she does not discover why this form of government came into existence, just as she cannot explain why spontaneous action takes place, what the secret pleasure of action is, and what it means that the sense of action lies in its performance. In the same way Arendt's work circles around the unnameable, in other words, understanding. This is why on several occasions

26 George Tabori *Bett und Bühne*, op. cit., p. 67.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 155.

28 Tadeusz Borowski *Bei uns in Auschwitz*, op. cit., p. 161.

she offered a seminar dealing with a practical exercise in “enlarged mentality” as the precondition for independent judgement, exclusively using novels and autobiographies. It also explains that her book on totalitarianism “does not belong to any school and hardly uses any of the officially recognised or officially controversial instruments”.<sup>29</sup> What makes our understanding today so difficult is the fact that Arendt, in her own words, “failed to explain the particular method which I came to use, and to account for a rather unusual approach ... to the whole field of political and historical sciences as such.”<sup>30</sup> What all the three authors have in common is their sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the world. Arendt is anarchic in the face of the prevailing political, social and scientific norms and behaviour, and critical of ruling opinions. Here she not only subordinates science to understanding, but also concludes from the necessities of understanding that science must facilitate understanding, in other words the understanding of facts and events. This is why she explains in her reply to Voegelin that unlike him, she had little interest in the relationship he mentioned between liberalism, positivism or pragmatism and totalitarianism:

I think what separates my approach from Professor Voegelin’s is that I proceed from facts and events instead of intellectual affinities and influences.<sup>31</sup>

This not only brings Arendt close to theatre and literature but also to the public, the community of committed spectators, of citizens, as she describes them in her essays on political judgement.

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29 Hannah Arendt: A Reply to Eric Voegelin, op. cit., p. 78.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p. 80.