to paper, and totalitarianism has remained vigorous, indeed, it has even gained more ground."[32] After the spectacular collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s, we have to conclude that Heller was wrong, and that Hannah Arendt was right in predicting as early as in 1966 a process of "detotalitarization" in the Soviet Union.[33]

Certainly, it would be more than foolish to attribute the collapse of Soviet-style societies to the "flourishing of the arts." What Arendt was calling attention to with this observation was the development of shared spaces—alternative or subaltern publics[34]—in the interstices of these societies as evidence of the loosening of totalitarian rule and the reassertion of the self-organizing power of civil society. She also cites the public trial of the dissidents Sinyavsky and Daniel as evidence of the slow but palpable transformation of totalitarian rule.[35] We know now that the formation of oppositional or alternative public spaces in the interstices of totalitarian societies was far less advanced in the Soviet Union than in other eastern European countries such as Poland, the former Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.[36] Nor should one underestimate the impact, on the Soviet Union in particular, of the Afghan war (which seems to have been their Vietnam) in undermining army discipline and causing elite demoralization and a nascent antiwar movement. No doubt, to the elements of the transformation of Soviet totalitarianism will also have to be added the intensified nuclear arms race of the 1980s and the impact of the global markets on the loosening of Soviet control over the satellite economies of east central Europe and other Third World clients of the Soviet Empire, such as Syria in the Middle East. I am not suggesting that the political sociology of alternative public spaces can constitute more than one element in a larger explanatory framework about detotalitarization that would have to combine internal as well as external factors. Yet the political sociology of alternative public spheres and associations to be derived from Hannah Arendt's theory of totalitarianism does have empirical-analytical power in enabling us to rethink the conditions of transformation of totalitarian societies. A hypothesis can result from these considerations: totalitarian rule cannot allow and will prevent the formation of independent and alternative public spheres in its midst. A totalitarian society begins to transform its nature when the number, frequency,

outreach, and intensity of modes of social relations constituting an alternative "public" begin to increase in number.

At this juncture, Arendt's diagnostic concepts of loneliness and worldlessness, which she saw as the hallmarks of totalitarianism in her time, lose their mooring in Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology. Interpreted in the light of a political sociology of associations, these concepts serve to refocus our attention on the model of alternative or subaltern public spaces as crucial indicators of detotalitarization processes. Read in this light, Arendt's theory of totalitarianism can be said to have anticipated the currently growing and rigorous literature on the formation of civil societies in systems undergoing transitions from authoritarian and totalitarian rule to democracy,[37] for a multiplicity of public spaces are the sine qua non of an independent and vigorous civil society as a component of democratic cultures everywhere.

Imperialism and the
End of the "Rights of Man"

Although both methodological and historical questions remain about Hannah Arendt's account of totalitarianism, and her use of this concept to describe National Socialism as well as Stalinist Russia, these perplexities are minor compared with the utter puzzlement that the contemporary reader is likely to face in view of Part II of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the section called "Imperialism." Long neglected by Arendt scholars,[38] this brief discussion contains one of the most insightful analyses of the phenomenon of European imperialism from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of World War I. Arendt's distinction between overseas and continental imperialism, her discussion of the British rule in India, the French conquest of Algeria, the Boer War in South Africa, the different cultural strands and national traditions that contribute to the formation of "racism," and her moving last chapter on the end of the "rights of man" are examples of brilliant synthesis of historically grounded empirical insights with philosophical depth. But what exactly is the place of these discussions in an analysis of totalitarianism? Whereas there is a clear

historical relationship between the elements of European anti-Semitism analyzed in the first part and the third section on totalitarianism, it is very hard to discern any causal and/or historical links between the phenomena discussed under the heading of imperialism and the political problems of totalitarianism.

Consider that British imperialism, which serves Arendt as exemplary in setting up some of her key concepts for analyzing imperialism in general,[39] did not issue in totalitarianism. In fact, France and Great Britain, whose conquests of Egypt, Algeria, and India Arendt considers as paradigmatic imperialist ventures, were and remained democratic nations, except for France's capitulation to Nazi domination during the Vichy period. The Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism developing among the German-speaking and Slavic peoples certainly were movements that left traces upon the totalitarian regimes of National Socialism and Stalinism. But in fact, National Socialist theories of racial superiority owed as much, if not more, to the pseudoscientism of British social Darwinist thinking than they did to the metaphysical theories of tribal nationalism, widespread among the Pan-Germanists, with their emphasis on the "divine origin" of a people.[40] These are just a few of the ways in which the discussion of imperialism, brilliant though it may be, makes little theoretical sense when understood as offering a causal hypothesis about the genesis or causes of totalitarianism. How then should we interpret this discussion?

I propose two theses: (a) at the center of Arendt's reflections are the dilemmas of the modern nation-states and their historically proven incapacity to defend the "universal rights of man"; totalitarian movements absorbed lessons from this failure;[41] (b) at the margins of this analysis is the intuition, not fully proven, that the encounter with "non-European others" through imperialist conquests created moral and psychic patterns of racism in the pre- and unconscious of European settlers, which eventually were carried from overseas into the home country. As Arendt was to remark nearly twenty years later in her comments on the Vietnam war and the Watergate scandal, sooner or later the chickens come "home to roost."[42] Imperialism in other lands leaves indelible marks at home, upon the psyche of the nation as well. The other is not outside us in faraway lands; through the experiences of imperial domination and racism, we become prone to create the other within, in our midst.

Imperialism and the Dilemmas of the Modern Nation-State

Using a pithy formula, the historical significance of which would not have been lost on anyone familiar with discussions of imperialism within the socialist workers' movements at the turn of the century, Arendt writes, "Imperialism must be considered the first stage in political rule of the bourgeoisie rather than the last stage of capitalism" (*OT*, p. 138). Arendt here is clearly referring to Lenin's text, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*.[43] Polemicizing against Lenin, she distinguishes between capitalism as an economic system, the bourgeoisie as a social class, and the nation-state as a political formation. The force of her distinctions can be understood only against the background of debates concerning imperialism with which she was no doubt quite familiar.[44] It was largely accepted both by Marxist and non-Marxist political economists of the 1920s that capitalism essentially depended upon the existence of a "noncapitalistic world" to continue its process of growth, expansion, and capital accumulation. This dependence could be explained through various economic factors such as oversaving and maldistribution, which would then impel the capitalist nations to seek new ventures of investment and capital lending; or one could see the need for imperialist expansion, as did Lenin, to be the result of overproduction, which would then impel a capitalist economy to expand into new markets; or one could explain imperialist expansion through the search for new sources of material. Arendt is ready to accept all of these as factors that drive a capitalist economy to expand. However, she sides with Rosa Luxemburg against Lenin concerning the structural dynamics of this expansion. Rosa Luxemburg had maintained that capitalism, as an economic system, depended upon a noncapitalist and essentially a precapitalist environment, and not just at its final stage but at its inception. "Capitalism," wrote Rosa Luxemburg,

> arises and develops historically amidst a non-capitalist society. In Western Europe it is found at first in a feudal environment from which it in fact sprang—the system of bondage in rural areas and the guild system in the towns—and later, after having swallowed up the feudal system, it exists mainly in an environment of peasants and artisans, that is to say a system of simple commodity production both in agriculture and trade. European

capitalism is further surrounded by vast territories of non-European civili-
zation ranging over all levels of development. . . . This is the setting for the
accumulation of capital. . . . The existence and development of capitalism
requires an environment of non-capitalist forms of production. . . . Capi-
talism needs non-capitalist social strata as a market for its surplus value,
as a source of supply for its means of production and as a reservoir of labour
power for its wage system.[45]

Arendt is in fundamental agreement with this thesis, which she calls
"Rosa Luxemburg's brilliant insight into the political structure of impe-
rialism" (*OT,* p. 148). She further concurs with Luxemburg that the
capitalist mode of production "from the beginning had been calculated for
the whole earth" (*OT,* p. 148). At a political and cultural level, the
world-expansionist economic dynamic of modern capitalism requires that
the confrontation of the "West with its others" be seen as a structural
aspect of the development of modern capitalism in the West, and not just
an extraneous necessity imposed upon the system at a later stage by
contingent factors such as overproduction, search for raw materials, and
investment. In her subsequent essay on Rosa Luxemburg, Arendt com-
ments,

> In other words, Marx's "original accumulation of capital" was not, like
> original sin, a single event, a unique deed of expropriation by the nascent
> bourgeoisie, setting off a process of accumulation that would then follow
> "with iron necessity" its own inherent law to the final collapse. On the
> contrary, expropriation had to be repeated time and again to keep the system
> in motion.[46]

Her fundamental agreement with Rosa Luxemburg, or, formulated
more precisely, the profound influence Rosa Luxemburg exercised on
Hannah Arendt,[47] no doubt led Arendt to see the most momentous devel-
opments of the modern world such as the rise of capitalism, imperialism,
and totalitarianism in the West in a global context. Unfortunately, some
recent commentators have judged Hannah Arendt through the experiences
of black-white racial relations in the United States alone, and have
thoroughly missed the import of Arendt's discussions of all forms of
European imperialism, including the British, the French, the German, the
Dutch, and the Russian, as being essential to the formation of European
racism.[48]

Arendt's analysis of imperialism, though, differs from Luxemburg's in
one fundamental respect: Arendt's threefold distinction between capital-
ism as a socioeconomic formation, the bourgeoisie as a social class, and
the nation-state as a modern polity makes her avoid the reductionism of
much Marxist theory that sees the state as an instrument for administering
the interests of the capitalist class alone. Quite to the contrary: for Arendt,
the political significance of imperialism derives "from the nation's losing
battle against it" (*OT,* p. 132). The modern nation-state, established in the
wake of the British (1648 and 1688), American (1776), and French
Revolutions (1789), was based from the beginning on three potentially
contradictory principles: the universal rights of man and citizen, the
consent of the governed, and the sovereignty of the nation. The drive for
ever-expanding lands, markets, and goods, the search for the domination
of ever more remote peoples and parts of the earth, contradict, according
to Arendt, the political principle of consent. For consent is dependent on
the more or less stable formation of a public sphere of speech and action
in common among human beings. But the principles of growth for
growth's sake or accumulation for the aggrandizement of capital are
forever forcing the limits of consent by following their own logic. "The
limitless process of capital accumulation needs the political structure of
so 'unlimited a power' that it can protect growing property by constantly
growing more powerful" (*OT,* p. 143). The bourgeoisie hankers after a
form of power that transforms the state into an instrument for the protec-
tion of its interests in ever-expanding growth. Imperialism is the tempta-
tion, very often realized at the expense of the population of the lands that
one dominates, to escape the constraints of consent and to render power
unaccountable. Imperialism teaches that power and consent can be disso-
ciated, and that this is a permanent possibility within the modern state.
Arendt agrees with Edmund Burke that "the breakers of law," in India,
most notably Lord Hastings, cannot be trusted with obedience to the law
at home.[49]

Unfolding the complex relations among the principle of "the rights of
man" and the paradoxes of the nation-state is also the task of Arendt's
penultimate chapter in the section on imperialism. This chapter explores
the conceptual contradictions between the principles of universal rights
of men and national sovereignty with much more clarity than her earlier
reflections on capitalist growth and democratic consent. It also illustrates

Arendt's search for certain "crystalline structures" (see the first section in this chapter) in the culture and politics of the twentieth century that could be considered anticipatory elements of that complex configuration of events, trends, and developments characterized as totalitarianism. For the topic of this chapter is not the lawlessness of colonial administrations in the provinces of their empires and their attempt to free the exercise of power from the limits of consent. This chapter deals with the destruction of the European nation-state system at the end of World War I.

> Modern power conditions which make national sovereignty a mockery except for giant states, the rise of imperialism, and the pan-movements undermined the stability of Europe's nation-state system from the outside. None of these factors, however, has sprung directly from the tradition and the institutions of national-states themselves. Their internal disintegration came only after the first World War, with the appearance of minorities created by the Peace Treaties and of a constantly growing refugee movement, the consequence of revolutions. (*OT*, p. 270)

With the disintegration of the German Reich and the Austro-Hungarian and, at a more remote level, the Ottoman Empires, the peace treaties created many peoples in a single state calling them the "state people," such as the Czechs in what would be then Czechoslovakia and the Serbs in Yugoslavia, assuming thereby that Slovaks in the first case, and Croats and Slovenes in the second, were simply secondary groupings or nationalities. Furthermore, a third group of nationalities, such as the Jews in all the newly created east central European nation-states, or the Greeks in modern Turkey, became official minorities. The peace treaties concluded at the end of World War I brought the clash between the principles of respect for universal human rights and of national sovereignty to a head. Everybody was convinced, observes Arendt, that

> true freedom, true emancipation, and true popular sovereignty could be attained only with full national emancipation, that people without their own national government were deprived of human rights. In this conviction, which could base itself on the fact that the French Revolution had combined the Declaration of the Rights of Man with national sovereignty, they were supported by the Minority Treaties themselves, which did not entrust the governments with the protection of different nationalities but charged the League of Nations with safeguarding the rights of those who, for reasons

of territorial settlement, had been left without national states of their own. (*OT*, p. 272)

Minorities had existed before, but the recognition that millions of people would live outside normal legal boundaries and would need protection from an international body for the guarantee of their elementary human rights implied that only nationals could be citizens. The modern state was thereby transformed from being an instrument of the rule of law and the protection of the human rights of all its citizens to being an instrument furthering national interest alone. The ensuing creation of stateless peoples, of groups of people who were rejected by their respective nation-states, the massive denaturalizations of other groups of individuals who were deemed "alien" by their host countries, were simply juridical steps that increasingly transformed the nation-state into an instrument serving the needs and interests of one group of people alone. "In other words," writes Arendt,

> man had hardly appeared as a completely emancipated, completely isolated being who carried his dignity within himself without reference to some larger encompassing order, when he disappeared again into a member of a people. From the beginning the paradox involved in the declaration of inalienable human rights was that it reckoned with an "abstract" human being who seemed to exist nowhere, for even savages lived in some kind of a social order. . . . The whole question of human rights, therefore, was quickly and inextricably blended with the question of national emancipation; only the emancipated sovereignty of the people, of one's own people, seemed to be able to insure them. . . . The full implication of this identification of the rights of man with the rights of peoples in the European nation-state system came to light only when a growing number of people and peoples suddenly appeared whose elementary rights were as little safeguarded by the ordinary functioning of nation-states in the middle of Europe as they would have been in the heart of Africa. (*OT*, p. 291)

Arendt's words have proved prophetic: the nearly half century that has elapsed after the composition of these words has made the refugee problem a worldwide question; not only in east central Europe but in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, ever-new groups of human beings—the Hutus and the Tutsis, the Cambodians, the Vietnamese, and the Kurds—are drawn into the vicious cycle of statelessness, minority status, and often

elimination and extermination. Yet Arendt's reflections, as she herself observes, are "ironical," "bitter," and almost confirm Edmund Burke's critique of the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of Man (*OT*, p. 299). Leaving aside for a moment the daunting political question of how global human rights can be protected, we can ask Arendt what she offers in effect as a philosophical, conceptual reply to Edmund Burke. Is the whole category of "human rights," the "existence of a right to have rights," in her perspicacious phrase (*OT*, p. 296), a defensible one? Do human beings "have" rights in the same way in which they can be said to have body parts? If we insist that we must treat all humans as beings entitled to the right to have rights, on the basis of which philosophical assumptions do we defend this insistence? Do we ground such respect for universal human rights in nature, in history, or in human rationality? One searches in vain for answers to these questions in Arendt's text. But, by withholding a philosophical engagement with the justification of human rights, by leaving ungrounded her own ingenious formulation of the "right to have rights," Arendt also leaves us with a disquiet about the normative foundations of her own political philosophy. In the concluding chapters of this work, I will return to these issues and explore the limits of Arendt's political thought.

"We are not born equal; we become equal as members of a group on the strength of our decision to guarantee ourselves mutually equal rights," observes Arendt. "Our political life rests on the assumption that we can produce equality through organization, because man can act in and change and build a common world, together with his equals and only with his equals" (*OT*, p. 301). Political equality is always created against the background of difference, what Arendt names "the dark background of mere givenness" (Ibid.). So far we have examined this dialectic of equality and difference as it is manifested in the emergence of modern civil society, and in particular with respect to Jewish identity in the modern world; but on a global scale, what forever transformed European consciousness and confronted Europe with the most unsettling experience of racial difference was the "scramble for Africa." The European colonization of Africa created a hiatus between the white peoples of Europe and black peoples. This hiatus testifies to the permanent fragility of the polity within the walls of which alone equality can be guaranteed.

The Scramble for Africa and the Curse of Racism

Arendt notes that race thinking in Europe originated in different intellectual and political currents, and was by no means restricted to the white-black divide. She singles out three major currents: the aristocratic racism of Count Arthur de Gobineau, who published in 1853 his *Essai sur l'inégalité des Races Humaines* (Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races) (*OT*, pp. 161 ff.), and the critique of the "rights of men" as opposed to the "rights of Englishmen," in British political thought, which is initiated by Edmund Burke (*OT*, pp. 175 ff.) but gives way in the late nineteenth century to pseudoscientific theories of social Darwinism (Ibid.). Arendt also explores how German nationalism, developing after the defeat of the old Prussian army by Napoleon in 1807, while first emerging as a patriotic movement against the French, eventually developed into Pan-Germanism and the belief in the unique destiny of the German nation. These forms of race thinking are largely reaction formations to the ideals of universal equality, human rights, and the brotherhood of men propagated by the French Revolution. Both Count de Gobineau and Edmund Burke sought to restore the ancien régime of Europe by destroying the egalitarian arguments of the French Revolution. They were searching more for "a race of aristocrats" than "a nation of citizens" (*OT*, pp. 161 ff.). What radically transformed these inter-European forms of race thinking into a confrontation between human groups whose differences were presumably "biologically" rather than "culturally" grounded was the "scramble for Africa." In the struggle for the domination of Africa, European man confronted a limit experience, namely, the limits of his own civility and civilization.

Hannah Arendt uses Joseph Conrad's well-known short story, *Heart of Darkness*, to frame and explore this experience.[50] In this story, Conrad examines the regression of a German engineer, entrusted by his company with the supervision of an engineering project, in some unidentified Central African nation. Kurtz, confronted by the strangeness and alienness of tribal African life, increasingly develops a trancelike condition. He is unable to escape "the lure of the primitive," eventually loses all boundaries between himself and the natives, sleeps with native women, and lets

himself be declared their king. Conrad's story serves Arendt as a device to explore the threat to the limits of European identity and civilization posed by this encounter with the "other" in the heart of Africa. Note that Conrad's title is ambiguous: the "heart of darkness" can refer to the heart of the Dark Continent of Africa, the innermost, secret being of Africa; but the "heart of darkness" can also refer to the darkness within Kurtz that he discovers as he travels from Europe to Africa, and as he regresses into ever deeper recesses of his psyche, into the night of memory. Arendt comments and quotes Conrad:

> The world of native savages was a perfect setting for men who had escaped the reality of civilization. Under a merciless sun, surrounded by an entirely hostile nature, they were confronted with human beings who, living without the future of a purpose and the past of an accomplishment, were as incomprehensible as the inmates of a madhouse. "The pre-historic man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us—who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be, before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. *We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember, because we were traveling in the night of first ages that are gone leaving hardly a sign—and no memories.* The earth seemed unearthly, . . . and the men . . . No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; *but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar*" (*OT,* p. 190, quoting from Conrad, *Heart of Darkness,* emphasis added)

What interests Arendt, and what proves to be such a powerful guide for the exploration of Conrad, is this mixture of attraction and repulsion, kinship and antagonism that the European soldiers of fortune who dug into Africa in search of gold and riches, as well as the Boer settlers, felt for the natives. By referring to his travels in Africa as travels "in the night of the first ages," Conrad has the character of Kurtz affirm the shared humanity of the natives with the Europeans. The natives' way of life then becomes a permanent temptation, the temptation of regression to a condition in which everything is possible, and a dull engineer from Europe can deify himself as a god in the eyes of the believing natives.

Arendt's purpose in using Conrad and his character Kurtz to delve into these issues has been misunderstood. Anne Norton, for example, argues that

> it is in her own voice that Arendt says of the Africans "they had not created a human world." It is in her own voice that Arendt denies history and politics to the Africans. Yet if Arendt had written these words in another voice, marking them as foreign to her own sentiments, one would still have reason to question her views of racial difference and their significance for her political theory. Arendt put herself in the mind and circumstances of the Boer. She did not attempt to enter the minds and circumstances of the African. Arendt gave voice to the Boer. She left the African silent.[51]

Norton's dismissive reading is belied by the very historical and social distinctions that Arendt makes: first, "Africa," as such, as a whole unit, is a historically misleading category; it is the product either of the racist discourse of whites who assimilate all of Africa into one, or of the political rhetoric of Pan-Africanists. Arendt's refusal to speak of Africa "en bloc" is not an attempt to erase Africa, as Norton maintains; rather, it is the result of a political theory that takes political distinctions more seriously than culturally unexamined placatives of demonstrative political gestures. Recent debates among African American scholars concerning "essentialism" and "constructivism" in racial discourse show very well that the creation of fictive entities like "Africa" must always be challenged in the name of historical and cultural specificity and the differential experiences of racism to which different peoples, in different social classes and pertaining to different genders, religions, and ethnicities, are differentially subject. Arendt had a sense of these differences.[52] Second, precisely because she shares the discourse neither of white supremacism nor of Pan-Africanism, Arendt distinguishes the Arab countries such as Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco in the north of Africa from the Cape of Good Hope and South Africa, and both from Central Africa (*OT,* pp. 187 ff.). Norton completely misses these distinctions and takes Arendt's characterization of the innermost peoples and tribes of Central Africa, as experienced by European settlers, fortune seekers, and crooks, to be descriptions in Arendt's own voice. Third, why indeed did Arendt try to analyze the mind of the Boer and leave "the African silent"? The answer simply is that Arendt analyzed the "scramble for Africa" from the standpoint of

its influence upon the perversion of European morals, manners, and customs; she was concerned to explore how the experience of lawlessness, of civilizational regression, the threat to identity posed by otherness, all return back home from the "Dark Continent" to create the heart of darkness within Europe itself. Given that her topic is European racism, and the exploration of the alliance between capitalism and elements of the displaced and uprooted European mobs who sought to penetrate into Africa to seek their fortune, it is perfectly understandable that her methodological emphasis would lie on the one rather than the other perspective. Norton misses the moral, as well as political, significance of even exploring the links between the emergence of totalitarianism in Europe and the scramble for Africa. Arendt's brilliant insight was that experiences in the Dark Continent and the heart of darkness in Europe were profoundly related. But the weakness of her discussion has been identified at the beginning: she did not translate this insight into a causal or genetic account of the rise of European totalitarianism. We have to remain satisfied with her method of exploring "crystalline structures" rather than discovering a causal nexus. At this stage, a more in-depth exploration of Arendt's methodological considerations in writing *The Origins of Totalitarianism* can shed light on some of these perplexities.

The Politics of Memory and the
Morality of Historiography

Whereas for Alexis de Tocqueville a new reality required a new science to comprehend it and extract meaning from it, for Hannah Arendt totalitarianism required not so much a new science as a new "narrative." Totalitarianism could not really be the object of a "science of politics," even if Arendt believed that there could ever be such a thing as a "science" of politics, for totalitarianism signified the *end* of politics and the universalization of domination. Instead, one required a narrative that would once again reorient the mind in its aimless wanderings, for only such a reorientation could reclaim the past such as to build the future. The theorist of totalitarianism, as the narrator of totalitarianism, was engaged in a moral and political task. Put more sharply: some of the conceptual perplexities

of Arendt's treatment of totalitarianism derive from her profound sense that because what had happened in Western civilization with the existence of Auschwitz was so radically new and unthinkable, telling its story required that one first reflect upon the moral and political dimensions of the historiography of totalitarianism. Although the *politicization of memory* was part of the destruction of tradition in the twentieth century that Arendt lamented, the *politics of memory* and *the morality of historiography* are at the center of her analysis of totalitarianism no less than of her subsequent reflections on Eichmann in Jerusalem.

My thesis is that the historiography of totalitarianism presented Arendt with extremely difficult methodological dilemmas with normative dimensions,[53] and that in reflecting upon these dilemmas, Arendt developed a conception of political theory as "storytelling." The task of this kind of political theory is to engage in "exercises" of thought by digging under the rubble of history so as to recover those "pearls" of past experience, with their sedimented and hidden layers of meaning, to cull from them a story that can orient the mind in the future.

For Hannah Arendt, writing about totalitarianism, but in particular about the extermination and concentration camps, which she saw as the most unprecedented form of human domination, presented profound historiographical dilemmas. These can be summed up around four issues: first, historicization and salvation; second, the exercise of empathy, imagination, and historical judgment; third, the pitfalls of analogical thinking; and fourth, the moral resonance of narrative language.

Historicization and salvation. All "historiography is necessarily salvation and frequently justification."[54] Historiography originates with the human desire to overcome oblivion and nothingness; it is the attempt to save, in the face of the fragility of human affairs and the inescapability of death, something "which is even more than remembrance." Proceeding from this Greek and even Homeric conception of history, for Arendt the first dilemma posed by the historiography of totalitarianism was the impulse to destroy rather than to preserve. "Thus my first problem was how to write historically about something—totalitarianism—which I did not want to conserve but on the contrary felt engaged to destroy."[55]

The very structure of traditional historical narration, couched as it is in chronological sequence and the logic of precedence and succession,

21. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer; trans. George Lawrence (New York: Anchor, 1969), p. 12.

22. Arendt, *OT*, preface to the first edition (summer 1950), p. viii.

23. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 192.

24. Ibid., p. 506.

25. Ibid., p. 508.

26. Ibid., p. 510.

27. Arendt, 1966 Preface to Part III, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

28. See Hans Mommsen's introduction to the German edition of *Eichmann in Jerusalem: Ein Bericht von des Banalität der Bösen* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1986), pp. i-xxxvii.

29. *OT*, pp. 310 ff.

30. See Andras Bozoki and Miklos Sukosd, "Civil Society and Populism in East European Democratic Transitions," *Praxis International* 13, no. 3 (1993), pp. 224-242; H. Gordon Skilling and Paul Wilson, eds., *Civic Freedom in Central Europe: Voices From Czechoslovakia* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991).

31. Agnes Heller, "An Imaginary Preface to the 1984 Edition of Hannah Arendt's 'The Origins of Totalitarianism,'" in *The Public Realm: Essays on Discursive Types in Political Philosophy*, ed. Reiner Schürmann (New York: SUNY Press, 1989), p. 254. See Arendt, Preface to Part III of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1966), p. xxxvi.

32. Heller, "An Imaginary Preface," p. 254.

33. Arendt, preface to Part III (1966), *OT*, pp. xxiii-xl.

34. I borrow the phrase from Nancy Fraser, who uses it to describe the formation of multiple public spheres under conditions of late-capitalist democratic societies. See Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 109-143.

35. Arendt, 1966 preface to Part III, *OT*, p. xxxvii.

36. See Andrew Arato, "Civil Society Against the State: Poland 1980–1981," *Telos* 47 (Spring 1981), pp. 23-47; "Empire vs. Civil Society: Poland 1981–1982," *Telos* 50 (Winter 1981–1982), pp. 19-48; and "Revolution, Civil Society and Democracy," *Praxis International* 10, nos. 1-2 (1990), pp. 24-38.

37. See in particular Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

38. An exception is George Kateb in *Hannah Arendt: Politics, Conscience, Evil* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allenheld, 1984), pp. 60 ff.; see also Anne Norton, "Heart of Darkness: Africa and African Americans in the Writings of Hannah Arendt," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pp. 247-263; Norma Claire Moruzzi, "Re-placing the Margin: (Non)representations of Colonialism in Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 10, no. 1 (1991), pp. 109-120.

39. Arendt cites the following figures: "Within less than two decades, British colonial possessions increased by 4 and ½ million square miles and 66 million inhabitants, the French nation gained 3 and ½ million square miles and 26 million people, the Germans won a new empire of a million square miles and 13 million natives." Arendt, *OT*, p. 124; quoting in turn Carlton J. H. Hayes, *A Generation of Materialism* (New York: Harper, 1941). See *OT*, pp. 127 ff., for the discussion of British empire building efforts in comparison with the French.

40. Arendt notes, "If race-thinking were a German invention, as it has been sometimes asserted, then 'German thinking' (whatever that may be) was victorious in many parts of the

spiritual world long before the Nazis started their ill-fated attempt at world conquest. . . . The historical truth of the matter is that race thinking, with its roots deep in the eighteenth century, emerged simultaneously in all Western countries during the nineteenth century. Racism has been the powerful ideology of imperialistic policies since the turn of our century." *OT*, p. 158.

41. The most vivid example of this connection is the statement attributed to Hitler, "Who remembers the Armenians today?" (in a speech delivered on August 22, 1939, to his military commanders). The massacre of Armenian peoples under the Ottoman regime is an example not only of the fragility of the "rights of man" but also an illustration of a case in which wars and massacres, seemingly at the periphery, sooner or later find their way to the center. See K. D. Bardakjian, *Hitler and the Armenian Genocide*, Special Report No. 3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Zoryan Institute, 1985).

42. Hannah Arendt, "Home to Roost," *New York Review of Books*, June 26, 1975, pp. 3-6.

43. Arendt refers to Lenin's text in *OT*, footnote 45, p. 148. See V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 10th impression, vol. 22 of the *Works of Lenin* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1961).

44. Hannah Arendt's mother, Martha Arendt, was an ardent admirer of Rosa Luxemburg, and had taken her eleven-year-old daughter to demonstrations in Königsberg in support of the Spartacists League, which Rosa Luxemburg chaired with Karl Liebknecht. Hannah Arendt's husband, Heinrich Bluecher, had been a member of the Spartacists and later of the "KPD" (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands), founded by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Debates between the Spartacists, on the one hand, the Russian Bolsheviks and German Social Democrats, on the other, were well known in the Arendt household. See Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 124 ff.

45. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, trans. from the German by Agnes Schwarzschild, with an introduction by Joan Robinson (New York: Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1968), p. 368.

46. Hannah Arendt, "Rosa Luxemburg," in *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), p. 38.

47. See Young-Bruehl, *For Love of the World*, pp. 293 ff.

48. This is a dimension of Arendt's discussion that is totally ignored in Anne Norton's "Heart of Darkness." The only curious omission in Arendt's discussion is the colonization of the New World by the Spanish empire and the impact this confrontation with the "others" had on the development of early modern consciousness in Europe. See Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), for an exploration of this conquest.

49. See Edmund Burke, *Speeches on the Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, vols. 1 and 2, reprinted from the *Works of Edmund Burke*, vol. 8 (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 1987); see also Connor Cruise O'Brien, *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 255-385; see also Arendt, *OT*, p. 207.

50. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1988).

51. Anne Norton, "Heart of Darkness: Africa and African-Americans in the Writings of Hannah Arendt," p. 253.

52. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

53. These dilemmas concerning the historiography of National Socialism, and the moral and political issues involved were repeated in the so-called historians' debate, which erupted

in German historiography in the 1980s. For documentation, see *Historikerstreit: Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der national-sozialistischen Juden-vernichtung* (Munich: Serie Piper, 1987); Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

54. Arendt, "A Reply," *Review of Politics*, p. 77.

55. Ibid., p. 79.

56. Ibid. See also Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Its Political Significance," in *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Meridian, 1961), p. 221.

57. Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture," pp. 220-221; see also Seyla Benhabib, "Urteilskraft und die moralischen Grundlagen der Politik im Werk Hannah Arendts," in *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung* 41, Heft 4 (October-December 1987): 521-547; revised English version, Benhabib, "Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics in Hannah Arendt's Thought," *Political Theory* 16, no. 1 (1988): 29-51.

58. When Arendt discusses Nietzsche extensively in *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 2, *Willing*, she treats him first and foremost as a philosopher of the will and not as an epistemologist (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), pp. 158-172. Nonetheless, Nietzsche's epistemic influence on Arendt is hard to miss. On Nietzsche's perspectivalism, see Alexander Nehamas, *Life as Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).

59. I have dealt with some of the dilemmas of Arendt's moral theory in my article, "Judgment and the Moral Foundations of Politics." The obligation to take the standpoint of the other is part of a universalistic-egalitarian morality that needs a stronger justification in moral philosophy than Arendt was willing to offer. See Chapter 6 on these issues.

60. See Kateb, *Politics, Conscience, Evil*, pp. 61-63.

61. In light of post-Kuhnian developments in the social sciences in particular, some of Arendt's observations on the topic of generalization in these sciences have proved remarkably prescient; see, on the general topic, Richard J. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

62. "A Reply," *Review of Politics*, p. 83.

63. In Young-Bruehl, *For Love of the World*, p. 331, 367.

64. See the exchange with Karl Jaspers on this point in *Arendt-Jaspers Correspondence*, pp. 414 ff.

65. See Hans Mommsen, Vorwort to *Eichmann in Jerusalem: Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen* (Munich: Serie Piper, 1986), pp. xiv-xviii.

66. See Voegelin, review of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Review of Politics*, p. 71.

67. Arendt, "A Reply," *Review of Politics*, p. 79.

68. See Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, p. 22; preface to *Between Past and Future*, p. 14. There is an excellent essay by David Luban, which is one of the few discussions in the literature dealing with Hannah Arendt's methodology of storytelling, see D. Luban, "Explaining Dark Times: Hannah Arendt's Theory of Theory," *Social Research* 50, no. 1, pp. 215-247; see also E. Young-Bruehl, "Hannah Arendt als Geschichtenerzählerin," in *Hannah Arendt: Materialien zu Ihrem Werk*, pp. 319-327.

69. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1, *Thinking* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), p. 212.

70. See her essays "What Is Authority?" and "What Is Freedom?" in *Between Past and Future*, pp. 91-143 and 143-173, respectively.

71. Arendt, *Thinking*, p. 210.

72. Arendt, *Thinking*, p. 212.

73. Arendt, "Walter Benjamin," in Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, p. 193.

74. See M. P. d'Entrèves, *The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt* (London: Rout-ledge, 1994), pp. 28-34, for one of the few discussions in the literature on this link between Arendt and Walter Benjamin.

75. Arendt, "Walter Benjamin," in Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, p. 200.

76. In her essay on Brecht, Arendt quotes: "Of Poor B.B.": "We have sat, an easy generation/In houses held to be indestructable./Thus we built those tall boxes on the/island of Manhattan/And those thin aerials that amuse the/Atlantic swell./Of those cities will remain what passed/through them, the wind!/The house makes glad the eater: he/clears it out./We know that we are only tenants, provisional ones/And after us will come: nothing worth talking/about." Arendt, "Bertolt Brecht," in *Men in Dark Times*, pp. 207-251; here, p. 219. See also B. Brecht, "Von Armen B.B.," in *Gedichte, 1918–1929* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1960), pp. 147-149.

77. Arendt, preface to *Between Past and Future*, p. 5.