

HANNAH ARENDT'S *DOXA* GLORIFYING JUDGMENT AND EXEMPLARITY – A POTENTIALLY PUBLIC SPACE

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SÍNTESE – Através da leitura que Heidegger faz de *Aletheia*, Arendt vincula a noção de verdade à de aparência ao custo de dismantlar a conhecida dicotomia entre o ser verdadeiro e a mera aparência, deslocando a verdade do domínio dos *noumena* ao dos *phenomena* enquanto reino da visibilidade, o domínio doxástico da ação política. *Doxa* como desvelamento não mais nos conduz à adequação cognitiva do *self* interno, mas antes à dimensão arendtiana cognitiva interpessoal de seres humanos no mundo: *quem* nós somos no espaço público. Será mostrado que não há nenhuma contradição entre dialética e persuasão, na medida em que Arendt desloca o registro positivo da *doxa* em direção a suas considerações sobre a faculdade de julgar, reforçando a primazia da comunicabilidade, pluralidade e diversidade de pontos de vista na construção da *doxa* quando alguém constitui sua visão particular e única no mundo. Finalmente, mostrar-se-á que a amizade deve ser tomada como o tipo de *insight* político por excelência, enquanto praxis de ver o mundo a partir da perspectiva do outro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE – Amizade espaço público. Comunicabilidade. *Doxa*, *praxis*.

ABSTRACT – Through Heidegger's reading of *Aletheia*, Arendt links the notion of truth to appearance at the expense of dismantling the well-known dichotomy between true being and mere appearance, displacing truth from the domain of *noumena* to the realm of *phenomena* which is the realm of visibility, the doxastic domain of political action. *Doxa* as uncovering no longer leads to the cognitive adequation of the inner self, but rather to Arendt's main interpersonal dimension of men into the appearing world: *who* we are in the public space. Thus, it will be asserted that there is by no means sheer contradiction between the dialectics and persuasion. It will also be claimed that Arendt displaces the positive account of *doxa* toward her considerations on the faculty of judging, reinforcing the primacy of communicability, plurality and diversity of viewpoints in building up someone's *doxa*, in how one constitutes ones particular view and uniqueness, into the world. Finally, friendship is claimed to hold the political kind of insight *par excellence*, as the praxis of seeing the world from the other's viewpoint.

KEY WORDS – Communicability. *Doxa*. Friendship. *Praxis*. Public space.

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1 Aletheia Disclosed through Appearance and the Status of Doxa

In a Marburg lecture course taught by Heidegger in 1924-25, at the same period that he was elaborating his *magnum opus*, *Sein und Zeit*, Arendt, among other well-known philosophers, absorbs first signs of a non-essentialist conception of truth.¹ Through an Aristotelian reading of Plato, Heidegger opens *The Sophist* expressing the ancient meaning of truth. For the Greeks truth refers to a negative, in the sense that ἀλήθεια (*aletheia*), the Grecian equivalent word for truth, holds a α -privative. “ἀλήθεια means: to be hidden no longer, to be uncovered <nicht mehr verborgen sein, aufgedeckt sein>,” that which is disclosed (Heidegger, 1997, p. 11, original 16). This disclosure transposed to the domain of appearance comes up as its own mode of appearance, leading truth to be related with different modes of appearance, since being and appearance coincide.² “Appearing is the power that emerges. Appearing makes manifest. Already we know then that being, appearing, causes to emerge from concealment <Verborgenheit>. Since the being <Seiendes> as such is, it places itself in and stands in unconcealment <Unverborgenheit>, *alētheia*. We translate, and at the same time thoughtlessly misinterpret, this word ‘truth’. ... The power that manifests itself stands in unconcealment. In showing itself, the unconcealed as such comes to stand. Truth as unconcealment is not an appendage to being” (Heidegger, 1987, p. 102, original 77-8).

One must take into account that the Heideggerian project of a fundamental ontology (at the bias of Plato) turns the Aristotelian Praxis into an ontological motion of solipsism and denies authenticity to the plural realm of *doxa* and *lexis*, the very reason why *The Sophist* gave rise in Arendt to “a set of problems of immediate and urgent importance” (Taminiaux 1997, p. 9). By making use of Heidegger’s reading of Greek nomenclature, Arendt links the notion of truth directly with appearance at the expense of dismantling the well-known dichotomy between true being and mere appearance, the so called two-world-theory. *Aletheia*, meaning in Greek “that what is disclosed <nicht mehr verborgen sein>,” takes place through appearance, displacing truth from the domain of *noumena* to the realm of *phenomena* which is the domain of visibility. This reverberates the main themes of *The Human Condition*: work, action, fame, immortality, public and private do-

¹ Taminiaux captures precisely this Heideggerian heritage in Arendt. “It is well known that as soon as Arendt attempted those demonstrations of in *The Human Condition* she reappropriated in her own way the legacy of the Greek tradition. Regarding this point, many experts of political theory were surprised by the stress she was putting on Homer or Pericles and by her argument for *doxa*, or by her insistence on themes such as immortality and *eudaimonia*. All this is less surprising if one keeps in mind that, most of the time, these analysis are retorts to the reappropriation of the Greeks conducted by Heidegger at the time of the genesis of his fundamental ontology and already, more specifically, in the lecture course on *The Sophist*” (Taminiaux, 1997, p. 12).

² Heidegger writes: “Disclosure, however, in relation to which there is a ἀλήθεια, is itself a mode of Being. ... Insofar as disclosure and knowledge have for the Greeks the goal of ἀλήθεια, the Greeks designate them as ἀλήθεύειν, i.e., designate them in terms of what is achieved in them, ἀλήθεια.” (Heidegger, 1997, p. 12, original, p. 17).

mains. “This truth – *a-letheia*, that which is disclosed (Heidegger) – can be conceived only as another ‘appearance,’ another phenomenon originally hidden but a supposedly higher order, thus signifying the lasting predominance of appearance” (Arendt, 1978, p. 24). At this point, what is at stake in Arendt’s reading of Heidegger’s *Aletheia* is that by conferring to this “last predominance of appearance” to be in charge of the worth domain of truth, *aletheia* can be described in terms of opinion.

Heidegger bonds *aletheia* with speaking as its more direct mode; “ἀληθεύειν [*Aletheia*] shows itself most immediately in λέγειν [*Sprechen*, to speak],” which together with acting, constitute the main Arendtian domains of being of the world. “This λέγειν was for the Greeks so preponderant and such an everyday affair that they acquired their definition of man in relation to this phenomenon and thereby determined man as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον [a mode of Being of man]” (Heidegger, 1997, p. 12, original, p. 17). This was in the sense of being shaped by speech and language. This relational mode of being, – since creatures as phenomena, namely, as “beings as they show themselves in the various possibilities of their becoming disclosed,” – necessarily requires “λέγειν: to speak about” (Heidegger 1997, p. 6, original, p.11). Retorting Heidegger’s excellence of *bios theōrētikos* rejoiced through Plato’s struggle against *doxa*, Arendt reverberates *doxa* as the celebration of *Aletheia*, displacing the realm of truth from noumenic singularity to phenomenic plurality. “The shift from rational truth to opinion implies a shift from man in the singular to men in the plural, and this means a shift from a domain where, Madison says, nothing counts except the ‘solid reasoning’ of one mind to a realm where ‘strength of opinion’ is determined by the individual’s reliance upon ‘the number which he supposes to have entertained the same ‘opinions’ – a number, incidentally, that is not necessarily limited to one’s contemporaries” (Arendt, 1977, p. 235). In other words, *doxa* places the ontological significance of plurality into the domain of disclosed appearances.³

Arendt turns speech (*lexis*) and acting (*praxis*), both coming from the domain of visibility, into the categories through which man is disclosed. One of the most meaningful basic concepts of Greek philosophy which – deeply reappropriated by Arendt and remote from Heidegger’s fundamental ontology – would place a central role in articulate a link between acting and the activities of the mind: is the notion of *doxa*. Since Heidegger, according to Arendt, never considers authenticity to the plural domain of appearance, *doxa*, understood first and foremost by him, as *dokei*, – “in appearing it gives itself an aspect,” – would sustain neither authentic-

³ Such a feature is well formulated by Villa: “Here we see the gap that separates Heidegger’s dialectic of concealment and revealment from Arendt’s appropriation. Heidegger’s equation of disclosure or unconcealment with truth (*aletheia*) leads him to identify the illuminative activity of the Greeks not with doxastic political action, but rather with the poetic or creative activity that ‘wrests’ the truth of Being concealed by the ‘dimmed down’ appearances of the public realm” (Villa, 1996, p. 154).

ity nor truth (Heidegger, 1987, p. 103, original, p. 78).⁴ “*Doxa* is the regard <*Ansehen*, looking-at, esteem> which every being conceals and discloses in its appearance <*Aussehen*> (*eidōs*, *idea*).” Into the diversity of points of view, “the aspect <*Ansicht*> is always one that *we* take and make for ourselves. In experiencing and dealing with beings, we are always forming views of their appearance” (Heidegger, 1987, p. 104, original, p. 79). Departing from Heidegger’s *Dokeō*, which means, “I show myself, appear, enter into the light”, (Heidegger, 1987, p. 103, original, p. 78). Arendt increasingly reviews *doxa*, leading it to a “strong connotation of the visible,” and re-establishing the ontological constitutive power of opinion in the shape of *it-appears-to-me*, based on the twofold movement of seeing and being seen (Arendt, 1990, p. 94).⁵

Arendt leads Heidegger’s notion of truth as *Un-verborgenheit* “un-concealment” to the notion of opinion, *doxa*, borrowed from Socrates. It springs out a complete reversal on the concept of truth towards a phenomenality of the appearance – by what is disclosed as *physis*, [*Schein*] –, attained in the shape of opinion, *doxa*. Opinion is *dokei moi*, that what appears to me. “The assumption was that the world opens up differently to every man, according to his position in it; and that the ‘sameness’ of the world, its commonness (*koinon*, as the Greeks would say, common to all) or ‘objectivity’ (as we would say from the subjective view point of modern philosophy) resides in the fact that the same world opens up to everyone and that despite all differences between men and their positions in the world – and consequently their *doxai* (opinions) – both you and I are human.” (Arendt, 1990, p. 80)

By dealing with the value of appearance, one can mostly clear distinguish Heidegger’s metaphysical language being turned, by Arendt, into a sort of phenomenology of action and an ontological valuation of the surface. Going further on Heidegger’s conception of appearance, one finds a semblance’s face of appearance, that is, appearance as distortion, as illusion. In a different manner, one locates in Arendt’s account of appearance as semblance as well. What frees man from merely semblance in Arendt’s account is permanency and consistence of the appearing image, – which, in other words, is constituted by opinion, and sustains

⁴ In another passage: “*Doxa* means aspect, regarding <*Ansehen*>, namely the regard in which one stands.” *Ibid.* Taminiaux underscores, at the contrary of Arendt, that by displaying *aletheia* through *doxa*, “what is thus unveiled, Heidegger insists, is threatened with being ‘immediately covered over by opinion. Opinion crystallizes in positions that are repeated in such a way that what had been seen originally is veiled anew, covered over.’ Hence the necessity of fighting against *doxa*.” (Taminiaux, 1997, p. 90).

⁵ It is undeniable that Arendt’s theorization on *doxa* resounds Heidegger’s reconstitution of the Greek manifold apprehensions of *doxa* -- already in 1935’s *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. In this latter, *doxa* is named for basically four accounts: “1) regard as glory; 2) regard as sheer vision that offers something; 3) regarding as mere looking-so: ‘appearance’ as mere semblance; 4) view that a man forms, opinion.” (Heidegger, 1987, p. 105, original, p. 79-80). It is important to mention that among Arendt’s texts, there is not a consensual positive approach of opinion, and its relationship to truth. *Philosophy and Politics* is the substantial text where Arendt offers a positive account of opinion as *doxa*. In fact, as it will be seen in others sections, Arendt deals with *doxa* as opinion, as fame and glory, and as mere semblances as well.

a showing as well as a hiding feature. We are in a certain extent, responsible for what to show and what to hide. Astonishing enough, self-presentation also makes a case for lying.

Heidegger, on the contrary, mainly attributes perversion and distortion to opinion. As well formulated by Villa, he “creates a clear raking of authentic, wrestling, ‘bringing-into-the-light,’ on the one hand, and the inauthentic, obscuring character of everyday opinion and discourse, on the other” (Villa, 1996, p. 154). It is worth mentioning how Arendt, differing to Heidegger’s conception, appropriates the pathos of *doxa* in the sense of appearance, – as the triumph of opinion – in order to positively enhance appearance.⁶

In the attempt to investigate the epistemology of appearance in Arendt, there are two main implications towards ethics. First, by bestowing an ontological positive value of appearance, it can be upheld that appearance would be the accurate measure – instead of an invisible true self – for a visible consistent opinion and *praxis*. Appearance no longer sustains the same measure of inner truth merely turned into the realm of visibility; it instead gathers the power to conceal, asserting an affirmative account of concealment. “Yet, here again, we are not dealing with a sheer arbitrary error; the truth is, not only do appearances never reveal what lies beneath them of their own accord but also, generally speaking, they never just reveal; they also conceal.” (Arendt, 1978, p. 25) It is a matter of course that positively valuating appearance would by no means lead to attribute appearing speaking and acting with the same apparatus proper to inner truth, transposed to the realm of visibility. Through Arendt’s account, the key point here is that ethics can no longer be raised in terms of what is *to be* a good person, but rather what is *to act consistently* and responsibly as a good person.⁷ Second, and consequently, by embracing a twofold meaning of revealing and concealing, truth as *doxa*, as uncovering, no longer leads to the cognitive adequation of the inner self, but rather to Arendt’s most interpersonal dimension of men into the appearing world: *who* we are.⁸ Arendt’s account on the visibility of the *who* based on the permanency and consistence of speech and acts, dislodges the ethical dimension from the inner good man towards the outward good citizen, necessarily visible among others in order to appear good to them.

⁶ Heidegger affirms that “The path now mentioned it that of *doxa* in the sense of appearance. Along this path the being looks now thus and now otherwise. Here only opinions prevail. Men slide back and forth from one opinion to another. They mix being and appearance.” (Heidegger, 1987, p. 112, original, p. 85).

⁷ The Arendtian terminology appropriated to deal with ethics no longer fits into the usually way of addressing ethics, that means, in terms of which principles, whether universal or particular, define the good man. The “self” of Arendt’s mind activities is at the service of the *who*, a self which instead of concerning the good man, concerns the good citizen.

⁸ Through Husserl’s account, Taminiaux has already paid attention to the evaluative feature of truth. “He [Husserl] had shown also that truth – more deeply than is entailed in its definition as adequation of, or correspondence between, intellect and thing – consists in every mode of intentionality exhibiting (*aufweisen*) its specific correlate” (Taminiaux, 1997, p. 39).

2 Thinking with Socrates: Thaumadzein and Doxa

It not by chance that Arendt chooses Socrates⁹ not only to exemplify, but to describe the thinking activity. Arendt's account of thinking is permeated by Socratic assumptions.¹⁰ Arendt searches for a model to portray the activity of thinking, someone able to think without becoming a "professional thinker" (*Denker von Gewerbe*),¹¹ able to combine such agonistic brace in the history of the Western philosophy and metaphysics, namely, thinking and action. "The best, in fact the only, way I can think of to get hold of the question is to look for a model, an example of a thinker who was not a professional, who in his person unified two apparently contradictory passions, for thinking and acting – not in the sense of being eager to apply his thoughts or to establish theoretical standards for action but in the much more relevant sense of being equally at home in both spheres and able to move from one sphere to the other with the greatest apparent ease, very much as we ourselves constantly move back and forth between experiences in the world of appearances and the need for reflecting on them." (Arendt, 1978, p. 167, emphasis added) Socrates embodies the turning point from a classic-archaic moral thinking to a post-classic-Hellenistic one. This latter Arendt coincides with the beginning of an oblique relationship between philosophy and politics as well. Socrates is then ascribed as "a citizen among citizens," (Arendt, 1971, p. 427) someone capable of feeling at home in both realms. Socrates figures out as a model not based on our philosophical classical tradition, he rather portrays a pre-Hellenic thinking activity mainly described as a continuous flow of asking and answering, making possible the thinking experiment of searching for meaning and understanding in the experiences, the reflection *par excellence*. Arendt tries to justify her choice of Socrates¹² by characterizing him as a non-professional thinker, in order to emphasize that the faculty of thinking is not a prerogative only of the few so-called scholars and experts, but rather it is accessible to all individuals,

⁹ It import to add that we are not taking into account the scholar debate regarding the several levels of validity or disregards of the Socratic sources concerning the earlier, the middle and the later platonic dialogues.

¹⁰ Concerning my approach on Arendt's Socratic philosophy, it is noteworthy to highlight my debt to Bruno Snell, Pierre Hadot, and Alexandre Nehamas, whose readings of Socrates are quite elucidative and in several points at the same direction as Arendt's. The similarity of the Arendtian description of Socrates with the Snell's book, written in 1955, as well as, with Hadot's book are particularly remarkable. See: Snell, Bruno, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*, (Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 1955); Hadot, Pierre, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie antique?* (Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1995); Nehamas, Alexander, *The Art of Living – Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, (Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 1998). See also: Nussbaum, Martha C., *The Fragility of Goodness – Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1868.

¹¹ Expression borrowed from Kant. (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B871/A843) See: Arendt, Hannah, "Thinking and Moral Considerations." In *Social Research*, 38(3), (autumn 1971): pp. 417-46.

¹² Regarding the turning of Socrates' historical figure into a model see *LMT* 167. Hannah Arendt was aware of the difficulty to justify the use of a historical figure as a model, although she agrees that by using "ideal-types", as Weber for instance, one is doing the same. Arendt has as a model the historical Socrates, rather than the Platonic one. Regarding Arendt and the use of ideal types see: Parvikko, Tuuija, *The Responsibility of the Pariah*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä University Printing House, 1996.

regardless of cultural, educational and social conditions. Arendt suggests that the faculty of thinking is prior to any intellectual philosophical activity.¹³

Thinking is *thaumadzein*, wonder, best illustrated in *Meno*, where Socrates was called an *electric ray*,¹⁴ a fish that paralyzes and numbs by contact. This Socratic thinking activity provokes perplexity that set established standards into motion, as if in the first instance one of the basic outcomes of Socratic 'talking through' was to stop daily judging and acting based on unexamined values and principles. (Villa, 1999, p. 159) Thinking holds the effect of dislodging individuals from their crystallized dogmas and rules of behavior, displacing them from pure epistemic means-ends logically that are based on taken-for-granted habits. As if the faculty of thinking had the potentiality to put man in front of a blank canvas, without good or evil, without right or wrong, but simply activating in him the conditions for establishing dialogue with himself, reflecting by himself and deliberating toward his own judgment about events in his life. Hence, thinking's first attribute is described as wonder, provoking perplexity and able to paralyze and interrupt taken-for-granted accounts on words as for instance, justice, courage and happiness. It is outstanding how for Arendt, the difficulty started with the usage of "adjectives which we apply to particular cases as they *appear* to us (we see a happy man, *perceive* the courageous deed or the just decision)," by turning them into axiomatic concepts and a "non-appearing measure," (*aphanes metron*) in Solon words, or which Plato "later called ideas perceivable only by the eyes of the mind."¹⁵ In fact, the Socratic thinking enterprise is described as "dialectical and critical because it goes through this questioning and answering process, through the dialogue of *dialegesthai*, which actually is a 'traveling through words,' a *poreuesthai dia t n log n*, whereby we constantly raise the basic Socratic question: *What do you mean when you say ...?* Except that this *legein*, saying, is

¹³ In *The Life of the Mind*, it is clear that in Arendt's account, "thinking in its non-cognitive, non-specialized sense as a natural need of human life, the actualization of the difference given in consciousness, is not a prerogative of the few but an ever-present possibility for everybody – scientists, scholars, and other specialists in mental enterprises not excluded." (Arendt, 1978, p. 191) Also in "Thinking and Moral Considerations," Arendt highlights "the faculty of thinking, as distinguished from the thirst for knowledge, must be ascribed to everybody; it cannot be a privilege of the few" (Arendt, 1971, p. 425).

¹⁴ Arendt points out that according to Plato "somebody else called him [Socrates] an 'electric ray' (*Meno* 105), a fish that paralyzes and numbs by contact" (Arendt, 1978, p.172).

¹⁵ (Arendt, 1971, p. 429) In this text, Arendt did not consider the notion of *doxa*, its implications on the relationship between truth as *aletheia* and a positive account of opinion. Thinking is mostly approached as the wonder provoking perplexity and described as an aporetic activity. Arendt only mentions the word opinion once, and not even brings up any explanation of *doxa*. Arendt writes, "He [Socrates] purged people of their 'opinions', that is, of those unexamined pre-judgments that would prevent them from thinking – helping them ... to get rid of the bad in them, their opinions, yet without making them good, giving them truth," (Arendt, 1971, p. 432). This paragraph leads Villa to point out a contradiction in her account of opinion between "Thinking and Moral Considerations," and "Philosophy and Politics. See Villa "Arendt and Socrates," in *Philosophy and Politics and Terror*. I rather consider that here Arendt uses the notion of opinion in its vulgar sense of unexamined *pre-judgment*, which, at once, also supposes the idea of taking-for-granted concepts, doctrines, definitions and so on. "Socrates submitting this own *doxa* to the irresponsible opinions." (Arendt, 1990, p. 74).

soundless and therefore so swift that its dialogical structure is somewhat difficult to detect" (Arendt, 1978, p. 185).

Arendt's approach on Socrates' activity of thinking leads thinking to *doxa*, to *dokei moi*, out of pre-judgment, whose main metaphorical figure is Socrates as the *midwife* from *Theatetus*. Although chronological "Philosophy and Politics," written in 1954, holds at once Arendt's most positive account of thinking as well as its imbrication with the activity of judging, and consequently, its relevance to politics. In other words, among all Arendt's approach on Socrates, it is in this 1954 article that the boundary between the good man and the good citizen is underlined. It is amazing how in this text Arendt reinforces the primacy of communicability, plurality and diverse viewpoints in building up someone's *doxa*, in how one constitutes ones particular view and uniqueness, into the world. The Socratic dialectical questions, – the dialectics and dialogue of "talking something through" –, lead not his interlocutor to the point of formulating a conclusion under the shape of a proposition regarding the subject inquired. The aporetic Socratic dialogue has the possibility of concluding and formulating a viewpoint derived from the dialectical practice. In Arendt's combination of Socrates' articulation on thinking with the Kantian dimension of imagination, in both appropriations, certainty and universal validity remain aside. Arendt's approach on understanding and meaning bears still neither irrationality nor an abstract theory.¹⁶ In *Theatetus*, Socrates takes the role of midwife whose queries and interrogations aim to help those interlocutors to come up with their own viewpoints, making them realize that they have just been reproducing posteriori unexamined self-evident principles. (Hadot, 1995) Socrates claims "simply for the right to go about examining the opinions of other people, thinking about them and asking his interlocutors to do the same" (Arendt, 1978, p.168).¹⁷

To the self as standard – which, as a matter of fact, already affirms plurality into ourselves –, is added the plurality of words and deeds and how we place ourselves into the world. Thinking as building *doxai* not only provokes perplexity and self-examination – which in Arendt's own account cannot tell you what to do, but only what not to do. It also promotes, according to each of us position, the way in which the world opens to us. As it has been mentioned in the topic on *Aletheia*, Arendt attributes Socrates with finding out a way of philosophizing that did not oppose truth to *doxa*. This is later described as the formulation in speech

¹⁶ Nehamas pays attention to the Greek distinction between a knowledge derived from the Socratic dialectical practice and the "verifiable truth certain knowledge, from self-evident principles; deduction from fundamental axioms. This requires necessity and produces certainty" (Nehamas, 1998, p. 74). He claims that the Socratic form of knowledge has not been theoretically enough articulated, holding then weakness and fallibility.

¹⁷ Concerning Arendt's choice on Socrates see Canovan, Margareth, "Socrates or Heidegger? Hannah Arendt's Reflections on Philosophy and Politics," in *Social Research*, Vol. 1 (Spring 1977): 135 – 65; Beatty, Joseph, "Thinking and Moral Considerations: Socrates and Arendt's Eichmann," in *Journal of Value Inquiry* 10 (Winter 1976); Vallée, Catherine, *Hannah Arendt – Socrate et la Question du Totalitarisme*. (Paris: Ellipses, 1999); Villa, Dana, "The Philosopher versus the Citizen – Arendt, Strauss, and Socrates," in *Political Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 2, April 1998, 147-72.

of *dokei moi*, of what appears to me. "This *doxa* had as its topic not what Aristotle called the *eikos*, the probable, the many *verisimilia* (as distinguished from the *unum verum*, the one truth, on one hand, and the limitless falsehoods, the *falsa infinita*, on the other), but comprehended the world as it opens itself to me. It was not, therefore, subjective fantasy and arbitrariness, but also not something absolute and valid for all. The assumption was that the world opens up differently to every man, according to his position in it; and that the 'sameness' of the world, its commonness (*koinon*, as the Greeks would say, common to all) or 'objectivity' (as we would say from the subjective viewpoint of modern philosophy) resides in the fact that the same world opens up to everyone and that despite all differences between men and their positions in the world – and consequently their *doxai* (opinions) – 'both you and I are human.'" (Arendt, 1990, p. 80) The fact that it is the sameness of the world that guarantees commonness and objectivity, recalled as the objective in-between world of artifacts, leads us once more to the conclusion that it is not a taken-for-granted certainty from a prior rationality which assures reality. It is my claim that the dignity of the appearing world, with its specific political relevant attributes such as plurality, communicability and viewpoint, do not deny the realm of thinking activity.

At this point regarding the imbrication between truth and opinion, I will only stress that in Arendt portrays in Socrates that "Philosophy and politics." there is by no means sheer contradiction between truth and *doxa*, and consequently, between the philosophical language such as dialectics and the political form of speech which is persuasion. Arendt attempts to oppose the figure of Socrates as antagonist to Plato's, regarding the opposition that she highlights between truth and opinion, linked to the own notion of dialectics play different roles in both authors. "The opposition of truth and opinion was certainly the most anti-Socratic conclusion that Plato drew from Socrates' trial." And, Arendt concludes: "In the process of reasoning out the implications of Socrates' trial, Plato arrived both at his concept of truth as the very opposite of opinion and at his notion of a specifically philosophical form of speech, *dialegethai*, as the opposite of persuasion and rhetoric. ... Although it is more than probable that Socrates was the first who had used *dialegethai* (talking something through with somebody) systematically, he probably did not look upon this as the opposite or even the counterpart to persuasion, and it is certain that he did not oppose the results of this dialectic to *doxa*, opinion" (Arendt, 1990, p. 75-80).¹⁸

Arendt would agree that Socrates' desertion of epistemic certainty is the base of his philosophy, taking into account that it neglects neither the material and factual truth nor the responsibility of judgment and opinion.¹⁹ It recalls the Greek

¹⁸ See Villa, Dana, "Arendt and Socrates", in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 2/1999 – n. 208 – pp. 241-57; Tassin, Étienne, *Le Trésor Perdu – Hannah Arendt l'Intelligence de l'Action Politique*. Paris: Éditions Payot & Rivages, 1999.

¹⁹ See Vlastos, Gregory, *Socrates – Ironist and Moral Philosopher*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991. See also, Vlastos, Gregory, *Socratic Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

distinction between a knowledge derived from the Socratic dialectical practice and the “verifiable truth certain knowledge, from self-evident principles; deduct[ed] from fundamental axioms. This requires necessity and produces certainty” (Nehamas, 1998 p. 74).²⁰ In Arendt’s Socratic articulation of thinking, there is a level of rationality, such as the criterion of consistence which was in the first place attributed to logics as well.²¹ What remains aside is the certainty of reason and logic which claim self-evidence and command universal validity and assent.²² Arendt’s approach on understanding and meaning bears neither irrationality and abstract theory nor an arbitrarily selfish subjective, since plurality, publicity and the others’ viewpoint remain at the base of thought. In fact, “the method of doing this is *dialegesthai*, talking something through, but this dialectic brings forth truth *not* by destroying *doxa* or opinion, but on the contrary reveals *doxa* in its own truthfulness.” (Arendt, 1990, p. 81) Truth as *aletheia* is not opposed to opinion; the former is rather the formulation in speech of how the world appears to each of us. In “Philosophy and Politics,” the Socratic maieutic figures out as a political activity, whose results instead of arriving at general truths, leads to the citizen’s *doxa*.

3 Doxa Glorifying Appearance through Judgment and Exemplarity – A Potentially Public Space

In most of her writings on the mid-1960’s that dealt with morality,²³ Arendt assigns Socratic thinking not only as wonder but also as conscience in which the self is at the core of an ethics called “an ethics of emergencies.” Arendt’s account of Socrates in those writings neither mentions *doxa* as a positive attribute of thinking, as mentioned in the 1954 essay “Philosophy and Politics,” nor discusses truth as *aletheia*, as “that what is disclosed,” – which takes place through appearance and displaces the notion of truth from the domain of *noumena* to the doxastic political action. Arendt oscillates between a redeemed Socrates who is able to

²⁰ I disagree with Nehamas’ claiming that by the fact the Socratic searching for knowledge has not been theoretically enough articulated, it holds then weakness and fallibility. I think it would hold weakness and fallibility if the Socratic experience of thinking had claimed the same sort of certainty and universal validity of knowledge based on solid axioms.

²¹ Arendt affirms: “Since I am one, it is better for me to disagree with the whole world than to be to be in disagreement with myself.” From this sentence attributed to Socrates in Gorgias (482) Arendt points out: “From this sentence both Occidental ethics, with its stress upon being in agreement with one’s own conscience, and Occidental logic, with its emphasis upon the axiom of contradiction, took their starting point.” (Arendt, 1977, p. 220)

²² Regarding this passage of displacing truth from identifying it only with sheer logical certainty to turning logic as merely one more tool of thinking can be well illustrated by Wittgenstein’ shifting from truth based on *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* to language on *Philosophical Investigations*.

²³ “Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship,” from 1964, “Some Questions of Moral Philosophy,” from 1965, “Basic Moral Propositions,” from 1966, “Truth and Politics,” from 1967, “Civil Disobedience,” from 1970, and “Thinking and Moral Considerations,” from 1971, in all those essays *doxa*, as “what seems to me”, as the ground basis of opinion, is not mentioned as a Socratic thinking attribute, but rather as an element of the faculty of judging. From the 50s to the middle 60’s, Arendt not only displaces Socrates from a positive coming out of thinking, but, she rather emphasizes the distinction between truth and opinion.

preserve “an still-intact relationship to politics and the specifically philosophical experience,” locating opinion at the heart of *aletheia*, and Socrates as the protagonist of an altogether anti-political counsel of conscience who signs the demarcation line between the individual self and member of the community. In the 1960’s essays on morality, Arendt displaces the positive account of *doxa* toward her considerations on the faculty of judging.

In terms of conscience it seems that in placing the self as the standard for morality Arendt aims to condemn morality only to individual man, thus enlarging the gap between the good man and good citizen. If we take into consideration an Arendtian approach on ethics beyond its purely negative dimension, – as an ethics of impotence, of avoiding evil-doing by knowing when to stop doing something –, the Socratic model as well as the exclusive usage of the faculty of thinking become insufficient. The realm of *doxai* demands judgment, an activity that presupposes the presence of others. To promulgate an opinion in public means to expose oneself to the test of the others. Beiner highlights that the power of judgment not only turns out to be evident, but crucial to the path of reconciliation to a world – since the totalitarian events – that is tragic. We would be compelled to the faculty of judging for being condemned to “thinking without a banister” (*Denken ohne Geländer*).²⁴

Arendt’s transposition of a positive account of *doxa* from thinking to judging does not reflect loss of the link between the self and the world, between the individual and the citizen. This is promoted in the passage from Socrates to Plato as beautifully enlightened by Hadot. In the 1960’s manuscripts, Arendt places in Socrates’ activity of thinking the impossibility to underline truth as “it seems too me” into the appearing world of opinion. Arendt displaces this process of opinion toward the capacity of judging. Judgment and opinion go hand to hand, as does their ruin. Arendt’s concerns on *aletheia* as *doxa* and her positive account of *doxa* on the 1954 essay, lead otherness and plurality to the core of the speechless dialogue of thinking activity and anticipate the shift from ontological and phenomenological considering “man in the singular to men in the plural.” (Arendt, 1977, p. 235) It is in judging and opinion that plurality takes place. Opinion is a plurality-based faculty. However, “to have an opinion in Arendt’s lexicon was not, as it is for modern survey research, a matter simply of responding to a question or registering one’s ‘feelings’ on an imaginary thermometer of differential affect. Rather, it is a consequence of judgment. By the same token, the public deliverance of one’s opinions, be it in speech or writing, on Arendt’s view of such things bore little

²⁴ See Arendt, Hannah, “On Hannah Arendt,” in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, edited by Melvyn A. Hill. (New York: St. Martin’s Press), 1979, p. 336. There are several readings on Arendt’s faculty of judgment concerning political theory, such as, communitarians, participatory democracy, intersubjectivity, among others. See Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror – Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt*; Benhabib, Seyla, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*. London-New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996; Kateb, George, *Hannah Arendt: Politics, Conscience, Evil*. N. J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1984); Canovan, Margaret, *Hannah Arendt - A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

resemblance to the conventions of subjective enunciation that elicit either a conventional nod of agreement or the equally conventional sign of its refusal, 'that's just your opinion.' Instead, and crediting Kant with the discovery that even thinking, seemingly the most solitary of activities, depends on others, to deliver one's opinion in public was to 'communicate and expose to the test of others... whatever you may have found out when you were alone'" (McClure, 1997 p. 59-60).

Critical judgment is "possible only where the standpoints of all others are open to inspection. Hence, critical thinking, while still a solitary business, does not cut itself off from 'all others.' To be sure, it still goes on in isolation, but by the force of imagination it makes the others present and this moves in a space that is potentially public, on to all sides; in other words, it adopts the position of Kant's world citizen" (Arendt, 1982, 43). This power of imagination and abstracting from private conditions and circumstances – those conditions that atrophy and hold back the capacity of judgment –, sustain what Arendt calls a "general" agreement. The enlargement of mind is the ability to move into a space that is potentially public, through which *sensus communis* appears as a *general standpoint*. "The very process of opinion formation is determined by those in whose places somebody thinks and uses his own mind, and the only condition for this exertion of the imagination is disinterestedness, the liberation from one's own private interests. Hence, even if I shun all company or am completely isolated while forming an opinion, I am not simply together only with myself in the solitude of philosophical thought; I remain in this world of universal interdependence, where I can make myself the representative of everybody else. Of course, I can refuse to do this and form an opinion that takes only my own interests, or the interests of the group to which I belong, into account; nothing, indeed, is more common, even among highly sophisticated people, than the blind obstinacy that becomes manifest in lack of imagination and failure to judge. But the very quality of an opinion, as of a judgment, depends upon the degree of its impartiality" (Arendt, 1977, p. 242).

Arendt translates the German word *allgemein* to "general," instead of Kantian scholar's accepted standard translation as "universal," as has been described in the four movements of the reflective judgment of taste. The general communication of disinterested delight does not suggest a consensual agreement. It is potential agreement through imagination. From such potential agreement, Arendt attributes the validity of the faculty of judging. "This generality, however, is not the generality of the concept – for example, the concept of 'house,' under which one can then subsume various kinds of individual building. It is on the contrary, closely connected with particulars, with the particular conditions of the standpoints one has to go through in order to arrive at one's own 'general standpoint'." (Arendt, 1982, p. 44) It is such conditions that rely on the power of exemplarity.²⁵

²⁵ Arendt asserts that "Judgment, finally, the mysterious endowment of the mind by which the general, always a mental construction, and the particular, always given to sense experience, are brought together, is a 'peculiar faculty' and in no way inherent in the intellect, not even in the case

“The autonomous nature of judgment is even more obvious in the case of ‘reflective judgment,’ which does not descend from the general to the particular but ascend ‘from the particular ... to the universal’ by deciding, without any over-all rules, This is beautiful, this is ugly, this is right, this is wrong; and here for a guiding principle, judging ‘can only give [it] as a law from and to itself.’ (Arendt, 1978, p. 69) This general standpoint is the very base of validating exemplarity, in which the example could be described as *if* “bringing a concept.”

In a seminar on Kant’s political philosophy taught at Chicago in 1964, written six years before the published lecture “Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy,” Arendt pays a careful attention in linking the notion of appearance with the judgment of taste, through which the so-called dichotomy between the life of the mind and the public realm of acting can no longer be straightly assumed. “The world of appearance qua appearance is the human world in which I live only qua man, not qua member of an intelligible world. Under this assumption, art is the most human of all occupations: the fabrication of appearances, which may also be useful, but whose essence is not use but, Appearance” (Arendt, 1964, p. 032258).

An ethical dimension based on appearance can be here identified, since in the reflective judgment, “we must renounce ourselves in order to please others or for the sake of others. In other to please others; for it in society; a social judgment, we must overcome our special, subjective conditions” (Arendt, 1964, p. 032271). The Socratic criterion of not contradicting oneself and dealing with plurality still on inward terms, is switched into the real realm of otherness through the faculty of judging. “Instead of the commitment of trying to be in agreement with oneself, by judging, we must try to come to a agreement with the others” (Arendt, 1964, p. 032271). The faculty of thinking, in its attempt to bring company to oneself reaches a positive and concrete dimension through judgment. The Socratic statement “it is better to be at odds with the whole world than being one to be at odds with yourselves” can no longer be enough, if we want to leave the field of an “ethics of impotence” or a “negative morality,” as Arendt mentioned referring to the ethical potentiality of thinking. In the judging activity, the level of plurality and of imagining possible others, which has been exercised through thinking activity, accomplishes tangible instances and consequently moves from an abstract level of imagination toward a current exercise of facing the other’s viewpoint in concrete situations.

In this 1965 lecture on Kant, Arendt pronounced the significant statement that judgment of taste is “the faculty of the mind which corresponds to appearance” (Arendt, 1964, p. 032258). It brings back the link between appearance and the realm of *doxa*, the realm of what “appears to me.” *Doxa* as uncovering no longer leads to the cognitive adequation of the inner self, but rather to Arendt’s main

of ‘determinant judgments’- where particulars are subsumed under general rules in the form of a syllogism – because no rule is available for the *applications* of the rule.” (Arendt, 1978, p. 69)

interpersonal dimension of men into the appearing world: *who we are*.²⁶ As I have been claimed before, *doxa* places the ontological significance of plurality into the domain of a disclosed appearance. In experiencing and dealing with other human beings, we are always forming views of our and their appearance. By departing from Heidegger's *Doke*, which means, "I show myself, appear, enter into the light" (Heidegger, 1987, p. 103, original, p. 78), Arendt increasingly reviews *doxa*, leading it to a "strong connotation of the visible," (Arendt, 1990, p. 94) re-establishing the ontological constitutive power of opinion in the shape of *it-appears-to-me*, based on the twofold movement of seeing and being seen.

4 Dialectics, Persuasion and Friendship as a Political Mode of Equalization

In "Philosophy and Politics," one of the most remarkable texts written in 1954, Arendt asserts that Socrates was the first to make use of the term *dialegesthai* "talking something through with somebody," namely, the art of dialogue and dialectics. Here I examine the imbrication between this so-called art of philosophical speech named dialectics and the political appropriated art of speech which is persuasion. It is astonishing how Arendt in this essay does not oppose dialectics from *doxa*, since opinion is then described as the proper way of reveling *aletheia*. In approximating dialogue to *doxa* and opinion, tension between dialectics and persuasion is dismissed.

Arendt points out that "the opposition of truth and opinion was certainly the most anti-Socratic conclusion that Plato drew from Socrates' trial. In the process of reasoning out the implications of Socrates' trial, Plato arrived both at his concept of truth as the very opposite of opinion and at his notion of a specifically philosophical form of speech, *dialegesthai*, as the opposite of persuasion and rhetoric. Aristotle takes these distinctions and oppositions as a matter of course when he begins his *Rhetoric*, which belongs to his political writings no less than his *Ethics*, with the statement: *hé rhétoriké estin antistrophos té dialektiké* (the art of persuasion [and therefore the political art of speech] is the counterpart of the art of dialectic [the art of philosophical speech])." (Arendt, 1990, p. 79) Thus, the chief distinction between persuasion and dialectic taken granted in Aristotle is that persuasion, always addressing a multitude (*peithein ta pléthé*) stands for opinion, whereas dialectic, possible only as a dialogue between two, stands for truth. Arendt concludes: "Although it is more than probable that Socrates was the first who had used *dialegesthai* (talking something through with somebody) systematically, he probably did not look upon this as the opposite or even the counterpart to persuasion, and it is certain that he did not oppose the results of this dialectic to

²⁶ Taminioux calls attention that neither labor nor fabrication can reveals the uniqueness of the disclosed *who*, only "action in the strict sense is that by which a singular individual exhibits who eh or she is. And this individual can make appear who he or she is only in facing other who accept this appearing and themselves too show who they are" (Taminioux, 1997, p. 85).

doxa, opinion" (Arendt, 1990, p. 75-80).²⁷ She continues, "the method of doing this is *dialegesthai*, talking something through, but this dialectic brings forth truth *not* by destroying *doxa* or opinion, but on the contrary reveals *doxa* in its own truthfulness" (Arendt, 1990, p. 81). Arendt calls attention to the fact that *dialegesthai* was named maieutic by Socrates, the art of midwifery. This "talking something through" reinforces the primacy of communicability, plurality and diversity of viewpoints in building up someone's *doxa*, in how you constitute your particular view into the world. Dialectics, as the way to reveal one's *doxa*, are still not understood as a self-referential individualist domain born of subjective private conditions. Although *doxa* underlines one's particularity, as the world "opens or seems to" for each of us, it does not embrace self-interest and self-pleasure.

To begin, the better dialectics involve not merely the ability to create or denounce the subtleness of argumentation in the search for solid reasoning. It is the idea of knowing how to dialogue and recognizing the others' presence and rights thus establishing his answer under what the other distinguishes and knows. A better dialectic is able to make the best possible effort to see from the perspective of the others; up to the point at which this effort contaminates our vision of the world and our inward and outward attitudes (Hadot, 1995, p. 257).

The distinction between rational truth in relation to opinion, persuasion and dialogue leads to considering men in plural, contrary to the solipsism of "solid reasoning," proper to rational truth, in which man is primarily considered singular. Publicity is the shift from rational truth to the strength of plural opinions.²⁸ As soon as the antagonism between *aletheia* and *doxa* is set aside, the philosophical mode of dialectics ceases to be an exclusive domain of philosophical reasoning. Persuasion and dialectics embrace similar modes of communication. *Aletheia* as opinion replaces the solipsist philosophical truth, bringing communication to the front, instead of as an "expressing thoughts or feelings" (Arendt, 1994, p. 441-442).

The search for the "best convincing argument," proper to rhetoric and persuasion, holds elements of dissimulation and violence, yet it also demands this "taking the other points of view." As well highlighted by Bernstein, "persuasion is not manipulation of others by image making. Persuasion involves free and open debate among equals in which they mutually seek to clarify, test, and purify opinions" (Bernstein, 1983, p. 209). In term of dissimulation and properly being exposed to the public light of opinion, demagoguery stops to be a privileged feature of persuasion, at the same time that sophism ceases to stand only for dialectics. Persuasion cannot be mistaken by coercion. A good example Arendt makes is in "Truth and Politics", regarding Socrates statement "It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong." Once such announcement is taken as a matter of truth, there

²⁷ See Villa, Danna, "Arendt and Socrates", in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 2/1999 – n. 208 – pp. 241-57.

²⁸ Regarding Arendt's distinction between factual truth and rational truth, see: Arendt, Hannah, *Truth and Politics*, in *Between Past and Future - Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: The Penguin Books, 1977, p. 243.

is shift from persuasion to coercion as well. Unless we take this statement as the outcome of an exercise, it is possible to make use of argument, opinion, permission and agreement. Judging holds a dialogical as much as a persuasive disposition, in less or more proportions regarding the position one takes. As a judging actor, persuasion assumes more vitality and, conversely as a judging spectator, the dialogical domain encourages a more evocative dimension even above the current and contemporary instances of otherness.

It is still in question whether persuasion or even dialogue can promote free and open domains of otherness in want of a real instance of isonomy and equality. Even if we take for granted that the public domain is the proper sphere to encourage such egalitarianism, we cannot disregard that as the model contemporary societies are organized, we must considerer power and economical relations as compromising free and open debate. It is interesting how both dialogue and persuasion “can only ‘woo the consent of everyone else’ in the hope of coming to an agreement with him eventually.” (Arendt, 1977, p. 222) This wooing or hoping encouragement, so crucial to our public life, is by no means considered a matter of rational attempts for agreement or consensus. It reinforces rather the necessity for cultivating public feeling. In this 1954 essay, Arendt has described that the political mode of equalization *per excellence* is able to uphold a dialogical and persuasive exercise of otherness because it has friendship as model. “The equalization in friendship does not of course mean that the friends become the same or equal to each other, but rather that they become equal partners in a common world – that they together constitute a community. Community is what friendship achieves, and it is obvious that this equalization has as its polemical point the ever-increasing differentiation of citizens that is inherent in an agonal life.” (Arendt, 1990, p. 83) Friendship is the political kind of insight *par excellence*. It is the exercise of seeing the world from the other viewpoint. To Arendt, friendship is one of the best experiences in which to experiment this cultivation of humanity.²⁹

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²⁹ Regarding Arendt’s approach of the political realm related to friendship, displaced by an anti-normative agonistic public space of singularities see the accurate and beautiful essay by Francisco Ortega, *Towards a Politics of Friendship – Arendt, Derrida, Foucault (Para uma Política da Amizade – Arendt, Derrida, Foucault)* Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará, 2000. See also: Chiba, Shin, “Hannah Arendt on Love and the Political: Love, Friendship, and Citizenship,” in *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 57, N. 3, (Summer 1995), 505-36.

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