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Chapter 1 : Table of Contents: Feminists theorize the political /

Toward an Agonistic Understanding of Law: Law and Politics in Hannah Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem. Lida Maxwell - Contemporary Political Theory 11 (1) Feminism as Revolutionary Practice: From Justice and the Politics of Recognition to Freedom.

In this essay I utilize her concept of the public space as a starting point to explore agency in her work. This capacity of making new beginnings in the world is the fundamental human capacity to be free – a capacity possessed by each and every individual. Plurality is, simply put, the fact that one is born into a world populated by other people who are different from oneself and who one has to come to terms with. It is the condition in which humans are forced to reveal and communicate their uniqueness in order to facilitate living with each other. Plurality is located within public spaces – only within their borders are action and speech possible. Its core is freedom: Freedom for Arendt is not simply liberty from outside forces or private necessities, but a freedom enabled by natality, by the capacity to make beginnings, a freedom expressed in action. It is the human freedom to act, to speak, and to create shared spaces through interaction with others. This interaction requires that a plurality of human beings communicate with each other about the terms of their coexistence. Plurality is thus both a basic existential fact of human existence which requires interaction, communication and cooperation, so that a shared life with others becomes possible, and plurality enables action and speech within shared spaces, because interaction is contingent upon the presence of others. At the intersection of these two notions we encounter the true meaning of the political: It is the realization of freedom through interaction with others in public spaces. The individual is able to realize her freedom only in action, in actively experiencing her worldly and public nature. Therefore, the public space is not a natural consequence of human coexistence. But the public space is not only contingent on new beginnings, on spontaneous and unforeseeable action on the part of humans living together. It also needs to be stabilized if it is supposed to persist, through rules, institutions, and the law. Public spaces will very often vanish without stabilization. Institutionalization gives them some durability; and the task of stabilizing freedom through institutionalization is in fact the hardest part. Political party machineries take over formerly autonomous free spaces, political elites replace internal equality with hierarchy, or the whole project of stabilizing a public space fails completely. But the freedom that exists within them can in fact be institutionalized, if the project of a self-organized polity can be realized. In the act of self-constitution, freedom which has formerly been expressed in spontaneous political action alone can also be expressed in rules and institutions – as long as these rules and institutions are open for amendment. The challenge of creating authentic political spaces is therefore one of making them a continuous project for everyone engaged in it. Wherever they exist, these spaces of freedom and action are especially fragile and endangered. Moreover, such spaces have vanished in modernity. Reasons for their decline are manifold, but Hannah Arendt blames it foremost on the lack of interest in public life, the alienation from the value and dignity of such a life, and the alienation from the meaning of the political as enabling freedom. For Arendt, action and the public space in which it can take place possess a certain existential priority. A fulfilled human existence cannot be situated in the private realm – the realm of labor and the necessities of life – alone. Arendt attempts to demonstrate throughout her work that an existence worth living must be rooted in the public as well as in the private realm. Therefore, Arendt seeks to revive the notion of the political for modernity in its theoretical as well as its practical implications. Her project is dedicated to polities that breaks with the illusion of state sovereignty and open up the space for political freedom; polities which constitute this space itself instead of only providing a limited public sphere to mediate between government and citizens. Arendt focuses on the problem of creating and maintaining such spaces in modernity. Her project seeks to revive the meaning of the public space and action as enabling freedom, a meaning which is tightly interconnected with an ancient notion of the political which she derives particularly from Greek and Roman history. Agency in Arendt Because Arendt inextricably links

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the concepts of freedom, action, and the political with her notion of the public space, the latter is a highly complex but fruitful field for exploring these and other key concepts of political theory. These criteria enable us to think in more complex ways about action and agency in contemporary public spaces. Following a general discussion of these criteria, I will briefly touch on a few of the questions they trigger regarding feminist theories of female agency in public spaces. Only within the borders of the public space it is possible for her to appear before others. This appearance has several existential effects. It is a space for her commemoration, for the remembrance of her deeds. Public spaces thus give some kind of reality and durability to human life and to the world that is created between individuals through their actions. It is thus not simply the individual human existence that persists through the public space, but also the worldly reality that is sustained by it. Becoming visible to others through action not simply means revealing, but also performing an identity. A complete experience of self-identification thus demands public action. Furthermore, it is an experience of individuation – the subject becomes truly indispensable within the public space. The subject can experience and perform her identity to the fullest only in the disclosure within a space that is shared with others. Her appearance and visibility in the public space is thus one of the criteria for her agency. Tightly linked to visibility is the capacity to interact and communicate. Actions are oriented toward plurality. That means that they not only address others but are contingent on their presence. This plurality of others makes agency possible – for those who are able to interact and communicate. Even though Arendt emphasizes the significance of political equality in the public space as a crucial condition for interaction, she does not pay attention to factors which may limit this kind of equality, e. What is more, withdrawing or preventing access to a public space or to opportunities of effective interaction within it also results in the denial of agency. The third criterion for agency is freedom. Freedom for Arendt is the capacity for making a beginning, the capacity for initiative. In this feminist reading of Arendt, women are attributed to the realm of necessity and should not appear in the sphere of freedom. I do not follow this line of interpretation. It is a freedom to choose action or non-action, to act this way or another. This freedom is not contingent on performing the action, because inaction can be an unforeseeable event and therefore an act in itself. Thus it is not the lack of independence but the lack of initiative or of opportunity to initiate action that renders humans unfree. Therefore, the acts of alignment, conversion or even submission do not necessarily amount to a loss of subjectivity and agency, as has been claimed by feminist theorists. Even these acts, as long as they occur within a space of possibilities and as long as the agent retains the capacity to initiate action within this space, may indeed be real actions and expressions of agency. Finally, the worldly attachment of actions affects the state of agency. However, she does imply that the interest in political action is not evenly distributed among a population. If we view the public space as a facilitator of agency, the denial of agency becomes a denial of publicness. We can now discuss questions of agency with regard to the public space. It must be a space for communication and interaction; and it must be generally inclusive enough to allow access and action to everyone while, at the same time, leveling the playing field for all agents. Genuine public spaces offer alternatives for action; only then would they be spaces of opportunities of public action for all agents within them. A space that is in any way predetermined would withhold these opportunities and preclude the expression of individual freedom. This space would be a starting point for experiencing the world, as a part of the worldly reality that will be changed. Precluding or withdrawing any of these opportunities for publicness and the merits of a public life from individuals results in their loss of agency. Similarly, denying them a space which can fulfill these criteria has the same effect on their capacity to act together. This reading of the criteria for agency and the link between publicness and agency can open up new perspectives on several issues. In order to appear in the public space as co-agent one needs to be acknowledged by others as an equal. This acknowledgment is based on very specific shared codes of appearance, which are sometimes difficult to understand and to meet by people who were socialized in a different community. One example for this is the public debate about the veil. The acknowledgement of veiled women in public spaces as public agents has proven to be problematic in many Western secular societies. Furthermore, for many the veil is a symbol of the private sphere, symbolically

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dislodging the veiled woman from the public sphere even when she is physically present. In this case, cultural codes of appearance and visibility clash, rendering public agency for veiled women more difficult. Is she, in the reading of Arendt presented above, still a free agent, that is, is she free to decide and initiate action, or is it true that “as feminist critics of pornography claim” most women working in pornography do not act within spaces of sustainable alternatives? And does a woman whose public appearance is ascribed to a private rather than to a public self still possess public agency? Taking into account the four layers of agency discussed might shed new light on these and other questions raised by the feminist philosophical discourse on pornography. Female toddlers learn to occupy less space in the world around them and to approach it less actively and explorative. Throughout their childhood and youth, justified by the presumed fragility of their clothing, their bodies, and, in many cultures, their sexual integrity, the space of movement for girls is limited. This holds true even in Western culture; girls and women are socialized to take good care of their bodies and looks, but not to take hold of the world around them. How does female agency suffer from this, and what effect does this have on female empowerment? These aspects are in several ways associated with the public space as a crucial enabling condition of agency. On these grounds, we can conclude that Arendt assumed a strong connection between agency and publicness. I have argued that this connection can enrich our understanding of agency in fruitful ways, and have illustrated how questions of female agency may be illuminated if we explore, in more depth, the four layers of agency in relation to the public spaces they create. The feminist discourse on agency is only an example for one of the fields whose analysis might be enriched by taking these criteria into account. Regarding the decline of stable and vital public spaces in many aspects of shared community life, we may need to reconsider the ways we utilize, as public beings, public spaces around us. In any case, thinking about appearance, freedom, fundamental equality in our abilities to act, or the worldly attachment of our actions can extend our perspective on agency in a highly fruitful way. Selected literature Arendt, Hannah *Feminism and Pornography*, Oxford Honig, Bonnie *Die Neubestimmung des Politischen*. Villa, Dana Richard ed. *The Search for Political Space: Political Theory 9* Schaufler, Birgit *The Fate of the Political*, Princeton Notes: Hannah Arendt “Nach dem Totalitarismus, Hamburg, pp. For a comprehensive representation of the feminist scientific discourse on pornography see Drucilla Cornell ed.

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Chapter 2 : Works by B. Honig - PhilPapers

Honig, B. () 'Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity', in B. Honig (ed.) *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*.

John Wolfe Ackerman Agonality: Wolfgang Heuer et al. Metzler, , pp. Agonality and its others: The Human Condition is seen as arguing for this agonal, Greek perspective, but, for many critics, it is happily eroded, and perhaps even superseded, by her later works. Agonal types, let loose in the world of politics, would end up destroying politics and the world, but accommodational politics was procedural, non-violent and sustainable. For George Kateb, the problem was less centrally justice than moral conscience, though the two are not unrelated. He appealed to Aristotle to rebut the claim that action could be judged by its own standards of greatness. Arendt, however, reads these passages in Aristotle differently [HC]. In the s, as Rawlsian justice came to be seen as crowding out all politics, Arendt became a vehicle for the recovery of the political Honig a , including among those who had criticized her overly autonomous conception. One was Hanna Pitkin, who found promise in Arendtian politics when she sought to respond to the apathy of late 20th century democratic orders But, earlier, Pitkin too had seen in a certain Aristotle a worthy agonal partner to Arendt, whom she criticized: The pull of the overdrawn agon was virtually irresistible. Against these readings, Fred Dallmayr was an early proponent of a more positive view of agonism. Arendt herself was said to recognize as much. Benhabib also refigured the late-eighteenth-century Berlin salons, explored critically by Arendt in her Varnhagen biography, as modernist, women-friendly, associational spaces: This claim was challenged, to some degree, by Dana Villa: Villa accused contemporary theorists of agonistic democracy including Wolin and Bonnie Honig of unselectively promoting an agonism more Nietzschean than Arendtian: But if action needs limits, where should those limits come from? For Honig, agonism was a trait of feminism, not its necessary opponent. The salons in which Benhabib refounded an Arendtian public sphere may have been women-run spaces, but they were not sites of feminist empowerment *ibid*. This self is not, ever, one. There is some disagreement even among proponents of agonism regarding what forms of constraint are proper to agonism as such. Here Mouffe uncritically redeploys the binary terms that govern much of the Arendt literature on agonism e. His, he insists, does not degenerate into conflict and enmity. Hers transforms what she calls antagonism into a constrained form of conflict that claims for itself, against other agonistic theories, the capacity to sustain rather than undermine the necessary conditions of political action *ibid*. Arendt developed a uniquely agonistic conception of politics which she saw no need to ameliorate or tame. But attending to her mongrel concept of the agon we can see she tried to re-pose rather than replace questions of justice and community. And her agon brings together not only the various Greek elements discussed here but also Christian and Roman and Jewish motifs and practices of promising and forgiveness. The problem is that action, in contradistinction to making, may have a heavy, unforeseen impact or none at all. Throughout this section of *The Human Condition* Arendt builds her conception of agonistic politics drawing on examples from ancient Greek practices rather than theories. The practices she draws on, from Achilles to Pericles, are diverse and conflicting, from the pre-polis experience to that of polis-centered political life. She unifies them by calling them all agonal and by setting them against their critics: But even Pericles, whose famous Funeral Oration commemorates the dead without naming them, seems to betray rather than fulfill many elements of Homeric agonism. In particular, when Arendt emphasizes the fact that agonistic actors are in quest of immortality by way of stories to be told forevermore of their great actions, she seems to have in mind a Homeric rather than a Periclean mindset. So why does Arendt not simply reject Pericles and embrace the Homeric agon? The answer is that each of these moments, historically discrete but conceptually imbricated, provides Arendt with something she needs for her unique account of agonism. Arendt looks to the Periclean polis to soften, with its polis membership, equality, and law, the agonistic individualism of the Greek heroes, to supply their heirs with the material and social conditions needed for the sake of the memorialization they

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crave. In any case, there is for Arendt another option beyond those presented by the supposed binary choice between Homer and Pericles, agon and polis: If agonal action needs something more than Homer to establish its limited permanence, it also needs something less than polis walls and laws. What we are left with, what Arendt points us to, is a commitment to enacting agonistically a space of appearances that in modern times may come and go, but without which we lose grasp of reality itself. And this is part of the agonism Arendt crafts for late modernity, not opposed to it. Performance, exemplarity, appearance—all of these presuppose and require memory without which their meaning is undone. Thus agonism points not to a mere aesthetics or posturing that have nothing to do with politics or justice; instead it points to something that has taken center stage in the political world since Arendt wrote: Truth and reconciliation commissions are one of the institutional locations of such efforts today. They do not oppose agonism and justice. These commissions work in the hope that justice as memory and story-telling will bind people together and overcome their impulse in the face of conflict and violence to disperse themselves back home to their isolated homesteads.

New German Critique, no. Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative. Social Research 57, no. Models of Public Space: In Habermas and the Public Sphere, ed. The Democratic Moment and the Problem of Difference. In Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political, The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt. Modernity and Political Thought Series. Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox. University of Minnesota Press. Exercises in Contemporary Political Theory. The Recovery of the Political World, ed. On the Concept of Power. In Philosophical-Political Profiles, trans. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Money, Sex, and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism. Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics. The Politics of Agonism. Political Theory 21, no. Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity. In Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt, Pennsylvania State University Press. On Relating Private and Public. Political Theory 9, no. The Attack of the Blob: University of Chicago Press. Hannah Arendt and the classical republican tradition. Thinking, Judging, Freedom, ed. Kaplan and Clive S. Beyond Good and Evil: Arendt, Nietzsche, and the Aestheticization of Political Action. Political Theory 20, no. The Fate of the Political. Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt. Democracy and the Political. In The Realm of Humanitas: Responses to the Writings of Hannah Arendt, ed.

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Chapter 3 : Feminism and Republicanism | coromoto power febres - blog.quintoapp.com

Toward an agonistic feminism: Hannah Arendt and the politics of identity / B. Honig The abortion question and the death of man / Mary Poovey. "Shahbano" / Zakia Pathak and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan.

Courtesy of the artist. The political between antagonism and agonism What is the best way to envisage democratic politics? I will begin by presenting the main principles of the theoretical framework that informs my reflection. We find this distinction between the political and politics in the other agonistic theories, though not always with the same signification. There are those for whom the political refers to a space of liberty and common action, while others view it as a site of conflict and antagonism. It is from this second perspective that my work proceeds, and I will demonstrate how it is on this point that the fundamental divergence between the different agonistic theories rests. Politics and antagonism One of the principal theses that I have defended in my work is that properly political questions always involve decisions which require a choice between alternatives that are undecidable from a strictly rational point of view. This is something the liberal theory cannot admit due to the inadequate way it envisages pluralism. The liberal theory recognises that we live in a world where a multiplicity of perspectives and values coexist and, for reasons it believes to be empirical, accepts that it is impossible for each of us to adopt them all. But it imagines that these perspectives and values, brought together, constitute a harmonious and non-conflictual ensemble. I myself argue that only by taking account of the political in its dimension of antagonism can one grasp the challenge democratic politics must face. Public life will never be able to dispense with antagonism for it concerns public action and the formation of collective identities. Verso, and *On the Political* London: Routledge, , pluralist democracy is characterised by the introduction of a distinction between the categories of enemy and adversary. His ideas will be fought with vigour but his right to defend them will never be questioned. The category of enemy does not disappear, however, for it remains pertinent with regard to those who, by questioning the very principles of pluralist democracy, cannot form part of the agonistic space. Of course, democracy cannot survive without certain forms of consensus, relating to adherence to the ethico-political values that constitute its principles of legitimacy, and to the institutions in which these are inscribed. But it must also enable the expression of conflict, which requires that citizens genuinely have the possibility of choosing between real alternatives. Politics and hegemony It is necessary at this point to introduce the category of hegemony, which will enable us to identify the nature of the agonistic struggle. To understand the political as the ever present possibility of antagonism, the absence of a final foundation and the undecidability that pervades every order must be acknowledged. It is precisely to this that the category of hegemony refers, and it indicates that every society is the product of practices that seek to institute an order in a context of contingency. Every social order is therefore hegemonic in nature, and its origin political. The social is thus constituted by sedimented hegemonic practices, that is, practices that conceal the originary acts of their contingent political institution and that appear to proceed from a natural order. This perspective reveals that every order results from the temporary and precarious articulation of contingent practices. Things could always have been different and every order is established through the exclusion of other possibilities. What is at stake in the agonistic struggle is the very configuration of the power relations that structure a social order and the type of hegemony they construct. It is a confrontation between opposing hegemonic projects that can never be reconciled rationally. The antagonistic dimension is therefore always present but it is enacted by means of a confrontation, the procedures for which are accepted by the adversaries. The agonistic model that I propose acknowledges the contingent character of the hegemonic articulations that determine the specific configuration of a society at a given moment; as pragmatic and contingent constructions, they can always be disarticulated and transformed by the agonistic struggle. Unlike the liberal models, such an agonistic perspective takes account of the fact that every social order is politically instituted and that the ground on which hegemonic interventions occur is never neutral for always the product of previous hegemonic practices. Far from envisaging the public sphere, as for example

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Habermas does, as fertile ground in the search for consensus, my agonistic approach conceives it as the battlefield on which hegemonic projects confront one another, with no possibility whatsoever of a final reconciliation. But I would now like to examine the differences that exist between my approach and the one found within a certain number of conceptions that also adopt an agonistic perspective. I will begin with the case of Hannah Arendt. Arendt is often considered a representative of agonism, and her references to the Greek Agon can justify such a reading. But the conception of agonism that can be derived from her work is very different to the one I defend. By this I mean that, although she insists a good deal on human plurality and conceives politics as dealing with the community and with reciprocity between different beings, she never recognises that this plurality is at the origin of antagonistic conflicts. According to Arendt, to think politically consists in developing the ability to see things from a multiplicity of perspectives. Despite the differences in their respective approaches, I therefore believe that Arendt, like Habermas, envisages the public sphere as a place where consensus can be established. Obviously, in her case, this consensus will be the result of an exchange of voices and opinions in the Greek sense of *doxa*, rather than the rational *Diskurs* found in Habermas. The University of Chicago Press, , while for Habermas consensus emerges through what Kant calls *disputieren*, an exchange of arguments bound by logical rules, for Arendt it is a matter of *streiten*, where agreement is produced by persuasion and not based on irrefutable proofs. Cornell University Press, , Honig criticises liberal conceptions for being too consensual and she advances the emancipatory potential of political contestation, which enables established practices to be questioned. While acknowledging that Arendt never identified with feminism, Honig asserts that her agonistic politics of performativity is crucial for a feminist politics because it enables feminism to be envisaged as a site of contestation over the meaning, practice and politics of gender and sexuality. The idea of an identity suitable for women and that would serve as a starting point for a feminist politics is replaced by a multiplicity of identities constantly produced in an agonistic space, opening the way for feminist emancipation. We can observe that the agonistic struggle is, according to Honig, reduced to the moment of contestation. It is important for her to guarantee the expression of plurality and to prevent the closure of the questioning process. However, I myself consider that this is but one of the dimensions of the agonistic struggle, which cannot be limited to contestation. The second moment, involving the construction of new hegemonic articulations, is fundamental in politics. I have a similar problem with the conception of William Connolly, another theorist of agonism. Connolly is influenced by Nietzsche rather than Arendt, and he has endeavoured to render his Nietzschean conception of the Agon compatible with democratic politics. In his book *Pluralism* Durham: Duke University Press, he argues for a radicalisation of democracy through the development of a new democratic ethos among citizens. He conceives this ethos as one of permanent engagement in agonistic contestation that would make all attempts to bring closure to debate impossible. Agonistic respect constitutes for him the cardinal virtue of the type of pluralism he advocates and he considers it the most important political virtue in the pluralist world we live in today. Of course, I agree with Connolly when he insists on the role respect must play between adversaries engaged in an agonistic struggle. But I believe it is necessary to question the limits of this agonistic respect. Can all antagonisms be transformed into agonism? In other words, must all positions be considered legitimate and must they be granted a place inside the agonistic public sphere? Or must certain claims be excluded because they undermine the conflictual consensus that constitutes the symbolic framework in which opponents recognise themselves as legitimate adversaries? Any perspective that evades this moment renders itself incapable of transforming the structure of power relations and of instituting a new hegemony. I certainly do not intend to deny the importance of a democratic ethos but I think it would be a mistake to reduce democratic politics to the promotion of an ethics of agonistic respect. Yet this appears to be what Connolly proposes and, rather than a new conception of democratic politics, what we find in his work is a new form of pluralist ethics. It undoubtedly has its merits but is not sufficient to envisage the nature of a hegemonic democratic politics and the limits the latter must impose on pluralism. The fundamental difference between my conception of agonism and those that I have just examined resides in the absence in the cases of Arendt, Honig and Connolly of the

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two dimensions central to my approach and which I believe are indispensable to think the political: The principal objective of these authors is to prevent the closure of debate and to give free rein to the expression of plurality. However, it is not enough to disturb the dominant procedures and disrupt existing arrangements to radicalise democracy. Once we accept that antagonism can never be definitively eliminated and that every order is hegemonic in nature, we cannot avoid the central question in politics: This requires the moment of decision to be confronted and necessarily implies a form of closure. It is the price to pay for acting politically. To finish, I would like to suggest that this inability to account for the nature of the political decision in the authors I have just examined is linked to the way they conceive the political as common action and envisage pluralism on the mode of the valorisation of multiplicity. This is what leads them to elude the constitutive role of conflict and antagonism. On the contrary, the other vision of the political, the one from which my work proceeds, recognises the constitutive character of social division and the impossibility of a final reconciliation. The thesis I defend is that only once the ineradicable character of division and antagonism is recognised does it become possible to think in a properly political manner. Her latest work is *On the Political* published by Routledge in

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Chapter 4 : Project MUSE - The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt (review)

Honig, B. () *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. Honig, B. () 'Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity ' in Bonnie Honig (ed.) *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*.

Maria Pia Lara bio and Joan B. Today she is widely recognized as one of the central thinkers of our age. The reasons for her growing prestige are not easily discerned. Her writings were often contentious and internally contradictory. She was too much of an independent and polemical thinker to win universal acceptance from her contemporaries. Regarding her as a political philosopher of nostalgia see Kateb , an antimodernist admirer of the Greek polis, critics challenged the relevance of her most brilliant insights for understanding the contemporary world. *Feminist Narratives in the Public Sphere* They have revalued her notion of storytelling as a critical linguistic disclosure of great importance for political life. Instead, she offers a compelling case for rereading and discussing Arendt, and for pursuing the political and intellectual horizons that her work raises. Hannah Arendt was a reluctant modernist, but a modernist nonetheless; who celebrated the universal declaration of the rights of man and citizen; who took it for granted that women were entitled to the same political and civic rights as men; who denounced imperialist ventures in Egypt, India, South Africa, and Palestine; who did not mince her words in her critique of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism or in her condemnation of modern nationalist movements. Furthermore, Arendt celebrated the revolutionary tradition, which she likened to a *fata morgana* that appears and disappears at unexpected moments in history. Like other feminist critics of Western political thought as, for example, Hannah F. Pitkin , Benhabib has little patience with such universalizing dichotomies of gender. Yet she sides with Arendt on the need to define some kind of boundary between the public and the private. What remains in dispute, she believes, is where, by whom, and to what effect that line will be drawn. Without rejecting the need for a robust public sphere, we might fulfill the needs for intimacy, domesticity, and individuality that Arendt so appreciated. Without losing sight of the need to value domestic life, it is necessary to make private life like public arrangements a matter of justice. By elaborating on the feminist insight into how cultural understandings of the public and private domains are social and political constructs, Benhabib suggests that instead of a liability, the public-private distinction [End Page] may become a useful resource for reconceptualizing all arenas of social life. Thus, she redefines the public sphere as a filter, a space that allows for creative testing of where to draw these boundaries. In this context, Benhabib develops her most innovative interpretation of Arendt, presenting her as the creator of an original political philosophy, directly relevant to the demands of present-day democratic and pluralistic societies. She imaginatively takes up and repose the most contested issues in Arendt scholarship, such as her conception of gender, ethnicity, and the role and definition of the public sphere. Most importantly, Benhabib draws from the Varnhagen book a new definition of the public sphere, one in which women introduced a noncompetitive outlook on social and political interactions. In addition, the Varnhagen biography suggests an alternative genealogy of modernity, as more than the spread of commodity exchange relations, capitalism, and the growth of mass society Benhabib , Benhabib has creatively constructed a method to recover Arendt through a hermeneutic interpretation, which allows for a more careful consideration of her appropriation of the biography of Rahel Varnhagen. Both were German-Jewesses, each struggled to become conscious of herself as a woman and a Jew. Thus, Benhabib exemplifies how rereading Arendt constitutes a new version of our past and her legacy. In addition, Benhabib draws some creative political considerations from the historical institution of the salon, a site where public and private concerns intermingled. Here bonds of sociability and intimacy were forged between male and female members of different classes and religious groups, and individual differences and distinctions were appreciated. Yet as Benhabib admits, the enlightenment salon was flawed. It was overly intimate and introspective, highly restricted, and an ultimately failed experiment in achieving the goals of equality and freedom. We agree with Benhabib that the associational model of the

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public sphere prefigured in the female-led German salons suggests an alternative model of modern society as the locus of concerted, positive action. It does not, however, sufficiently address the other side of political life, that is, how a different, agonistic kind of action provides the possibility for individuals to appear in public, to challenge traditions and prejudices, and to claim recognition for marginal groups. Without such agonal interventions, it is difficult to picture how we can make public claims about the need to transform institutions. According to Benhabib, Arendt proposed to resolve the tension by recourse to an associational model of the public sphere, derived from eighteenth-century salon culture and early modern civil society. The former is often cast as a recovery of an Aristotelian version of the Greek polis and a portrayal of political actors as literary heroes; the latter is often cast as a Nietzschean model of agonistic action. Political actors resist domination and reconfigure their own identities by appearing and performing in the public view of others, while at the same time, transforming their understandings about the symbolic and social order. Insisting on an associational model, Benhabib is reluctant to endorse such a possibility, that is, that Arendt is also concerned with the display of political action as something valuable per se. This agonistic side of action, moreover, is linked to the aesthetic dimension. Arendt believed that the aesthetic domain provided a precious space for expressing individuality, our uniqueness, and our contributions to the world of plurality. Why Benhabib stresses the importance of one dimension of action over the other one is related to how she understands democracy as a space for building a noncompetitive egalitarian political community, for building up collective agreements about institutional transformation. In building up a common project, groups need spaces for possible agreements. Yet, to ignore agonism altogether is to overlook not only the role of conflict but also of symbolic action. Thus, while we understand the reasons why Benhabib fears agonism, we see association and performance as two necessary moments in the transformation of the public sphere. We need both to produce compelling claims for both justice and recognition. An understanding of alternative public spheres or associations enhances our appreciation of the transition to democracy in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, and underscores the potential contribution of feminism and other social movements to the process of democratization. Storytelling, as feminist historians and political theorists know, becomes a tool for struggling against oblivion and nothingness, for narratives can bring new perspectives to the fore. We might say, indeed, that Benhabib has clarified our understanding of contemporary society by telling us a series of new stories about Hannah Arendt. She has created a new narrative and told it well. Her most recent book is: *For an astute contribution and a fine overview of early feminist engagements with Arendt, see Dietz* Thus, feminist studies have insisted on the need to recover biographical accounts of women to redress the way our history was understood. Similarly, political theorists have fought to re-narrate our oppression and exclusion through a new reading of classical, liberal, and supposedly democratic categories.

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Chapter 5 : Feminism, the public and the private in SearchWorks catalog

Thus, in an article titled "Towards an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity" (Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt, edited by Bonnie Honig, The Pennsylvania State University Press,), she declares that the importance of Hannah Arendt's work for feminists is to provide them with an agonistic politics of.

Power Febres Feminism and Republicanism Feminism has often associated itself with liberalism. Liberalism is regarded as an influential ideology feeding into feminist thought, and liberal arguments in favour of neutrality towards conceptions of the good are perceived as facilitating the acceptance of feminist ideals. I argue, though, that feminists should, rather than seek an alignment with liberalism, seek an alignment with republicanism. I focus particularly on the case of the anti-pornography radical feminists. Feminists have often been extremely critical of the republican position. The distinction between the private and public domains is central to republican theory; with citizens not only being present in the public realm but it also being the space within which they become citizens. Thus, from a republican perspective, the public, when contrasted to the private arena, is granted greater importance. It is this rigid distinction between public and private which feminists have generally found problematic. Feminists argue that within this distinction there is no room for women to enter the public world, there is thus no room for women to become citizens and hence their value in society is lesser than that of men. According to such feminist critiques, due to the public sphere having been historically delineated and dominated by men, the attributes that are considered as necessary to participate in it are what are regarded as male attributes. In accordance with neo-Athenian republicanism, virtuous acts lead to the citizen being born. Women, it has been argued, were banished into the private realm of motherhood,¹ only those acts that were associated with men were considered as virtuous or worthy. The public realm is that which has been stripped of necessity, it is a higher realm where labour is absent and thus citizens can perform their citizenship duties. Not only is the public realm idealised, though, there is also a fear that the private realm will encroach upon it, hence the rigid distinction between public and private being in place. Republicanism sees it as necessary to protect the public realm from the polluting influence of the private realm; the placing of women within the private realm puts them in the realm of the polluters, against which the virtuous man must be protected. Part of this realignment seems to be spurred by a critique of liberalism. In the instance of women, some of the differences between them and men would have to be denied in order for equality to be achieved. This social imbalance must be redressed before equal citizenship can be achieved. A way of redressing this imbalance is to focus on a republican style of participatory democracy, rather than voting alone. Virago, , p. Is This a Plausible Alliance?. The Journal of Political Philosophy. Basil Blackwell, , p. Destabilizing Theory "Contemporary Feminist Debates. Polity Press, , pp. Polity Press, , p. The representation of oppressed groups through a politics of recognition, as argued for by Young, relies on a public or civic sphere, as it would be here that groups would recognise each other as worthy of equal respect. Critics arguing that this separation places women solely within the private sphere. Honig believes that what is important in becoming and performing citizenship is who, rather than what, we are; with actors acting due to a search for self-realization. She aligns this view with the fact that at no point did Arendt specify which class or gender was to be found within the public realm. Oxford University Press, , p. Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory. Rather than merely countering feminist critiques of the republican tradition, though, I seek an alignment between the stances; focusing particularly on an alignment with anti-pornography radical feminism and republicanism. Despite their differences, the influence of liberal theory is clearly apparent in both the pro and anti-pornography feminist positions. Neither side has been able to move away from a liberal framework. The radical feminists, meanwhile, interpreted sexual freedom as freedom from oppressive sexual relations. Although considerably different, both take up a liberal conception of freedom. A negative conception of freedom is implicit as both the positions regard freedom as freedom from repressive sexual norms. As a result, radical feminists have been placed in position whereby they must demonstrate the harms of pornography.

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Hence, they have been eager to present pornography as violence, violence being the sort of harm that is recognised by liberalism as sufficient grounds to restrict freedom. Towards an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity. *Feminists Theorizing the Political*. Routledge, , p. Disciplining Foucault

â€” *Feminism, Power, and the Body*. Routledge, , pp. By aligning the anti-pornography radical feminist position with a republican conception of freedom as non-domination, though, this burden of proof is removed. Pettit does not believe that a lack of interference is sufficient to secure freedom, as one may still be dominated yet not interfered with, as in the case of a non-interfering master. If an individual is dominated yet not being interfered with, this individual has no security over her freedom, as her freedom may be curtailed at any point. This lack of security, in turn, may lead the individual to self-limit her options in an attempt to placate the non-interfering master, in an attempt to gain security. This argument results in Pettit believing that it is the capacity to interfere with the individual that is a concern. Thus, from a republican perspective it becomes irrelevant whether women are actually harmed as a result of pornography. In the case of pornography being accepted as an instance of domination, the capacity for men to interfere with women would be in place. As with the sleeping master, the result would be women reacting in submissive ways. Thus, even if it were accepted that no direct harm was caused to women either in the production of pornography or as a result of attacks on women 18 Pettit, P. *A theory of Freedom and Government*. Clarendon Press, , p. Pornography would still be producing an environment where women think of themselves as subordinate. The reality of society has historically been that men are in a stronger position to women. As a regular rule, men have held the vast majority of positions of power. Hence, the conditions for arbitrary interference by men over women are already in place. The promotion of this hierarchy through images of women as subordinate in pornography would therefore appear to allow for it to be legitimately labelled as an instance of domination. As an example, she identifies sexism; arguing how despite women having an equal status as citizens, they are socially dominated by unfair labour markets, unequal pay and objectification. Oxford University Press, , pp. *Republicanism and Political Theory*. Blackwell Publishing, , p. A recognition of women as a group also aids the alignment between feminism and republicanism; as opposed to liberalism, which is heavily focused on the individual. Performative speech acts are recognised within the republican tradition. Arendt, though, goes further in her acceptance than other republicans such as Sunstein. Performative speech acts are crucial in the radical feminist conception of harm and in their theorizing as to why pornography constitutes a harm. Although an alignment with freedom as non- domination removes the burden of proof with regards to the harm caused by pornography; there remains a need for the recognition of the potency of the speech. Like the liberal tradition, the republican tradition also advocates freedom of speech. Serious and direct harm is considered as sufficient grounds for restricting freedom from a republican as well as a liberal perspective. Harms that are recognised as derived from speech can, again, be aligned with a concept of domination to a greater extent than to a concept of interference, which generally refers to physical interference.

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Chapter 6 : SAGE Books - Feminist Imagination: Genealogies in Feminist Theory

edited, Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt (Penn State University Press,), features her essay "Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity" (a revised and expanded.

Research Overview I work at the intersection of political theory and cultural studies, focusing on received scripts that limit or launch collective action in democratic settings. What are the necessary conditions of action in concert? Currently of interest to me are and orienting my work going forward -- are theoretical works by Deleuze and Guattari, Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben and Adriana Cavarero. Research Statement Public Things I am interested in thinking about things and their role in politics and public life. This interest is occasioned by the contemporary neoliberal impulse to privatize everything and the difficulty, in such a context, of preserving public things and of articulating the importance of public things to democratic life. Where so many democratic theorists focus on the importance of the demos to democracy, theorizing the terms of inclusion, identity, or nation, I am drawn more to the idea of the importance of objects to democracy. AS we know from D. Winnicott, subjectivity itself postulates objects, it emerges in relation to objects which enable the transition from one developmental stage to another, from private to public and from self to other. What if democracy is rooted in common love for, and contestation of, shared objects? This book intervenes in contemporary debates about the threat posed to democratic life by political emergencies. Must emergency necessarily enhance and centralize top-down forms of sovereignty? Those who oppose executive branch enhancement often turn instead to law, insisting on the sovereignty of the rule of law or demanding that law rather than force be used to resolve conflicts with enemies. But are these the only options? Or are there more democratic ways to respond to invocations of emergency politics? Emphasizing the connections between mere life and more life, emergence and emergency, Honig argues that emergencies call us to attend anew to a neglected paradox of democratic politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy Honig takes a broad approach to emergency, considering immigration politics, new rights claims, contemporary food politics and the infrastructure of consumption, and the limits of law during the Red Scare of the early twentieth century. Taking its bearings from Moses Mendelssohn, Franz Rosenzweig, and other Jewish thinkers, this is a major contribution to modern thought about the challenges and risks of democratic orientation and action in response to emergency. Democracy and the Foreigner What should we do about foreigners? Should we try to make them more like us or keep them at bay to protect our democracy, our culture, our well-being? This dilemma underlies age-old debates about immigration, citizenship, and national identity that are strikingly relevant today. In "Democracy and the Foreigner, Bonnie Honig reverses the question: What problems might foreigners solve for us? Hers is not a conventional approach. Instead of lauding the achievements of individual foreigners, she probes a much larger issue--the symbolic politics of foreignness. In doing so she shows not only how our debates over foreignness help shore up our national or democratic identities, but how anxieties endemic to liberal democracy themselves animate ambivalence toward foreignness. From such popular movies as "The Wizard of Oz, Shane, and "Strictly Ballroom to the biblical stories of Moses and Ruth to the myth of an immigrant America, from Rousseau to Freud, foreignness is represented not just as a threat but as a supplement for communities periodically requiring renewal. Why do people tell stories in which their societies are dependent on strangers? For example, in America, nationalists see one archetypal foreign-founder--the naturalized immigrant--as reconfirming the allure of deeply held American values, whereas to cosmopolitansthis immigrant represents the deeply transnational character of American democracy. Scholars and students of political theory, and all those concerned with the dilemmas democracy faces in accommodating difference, will find this book rich with valuable and stimulating insights. Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics In this book, Bonnie Honig rethinks that established relation between politics and political theory. From liberal to communitarian to republican, political theorists of opposing positions often treat political theory less as an exploration of politics than as a series of devices of its displacement.

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Honig characterizes Kant, Rawls, and Sandel as virtue theorists of politics, arguing that they rely on principles of right, rationality, community, and law to protect their political theories from the conflict and uncertainty of political reality.

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Chapter 7 : Hannah Arendt: Critical Assessments - suggested items for inclusion

B. Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan Scott (New York: Routledge,),

Includes bibliographical references and index. Contents Notes on Contributors. Feminism and Theories of Citizenship. Models of Public Space: Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity. Gender in the Modern Liberal Public Sphere. The Public and the Private Sphere: Public and Private in Feminist History. Gender and Public Access: Feminist Conceptions of Citizenship in Australia. The Patriarchal Welfare State. Live Sex Acts Parental Advisory: Interview with Barbara Kruger. Sex, Lies, and the Public Sphere: Reflections on the Confirmation of Clarence Thomas. On Being the Object of Property. Materialist Feminism and the Culture of Celebrity. The Clinton Marriage of Politics and Power. Public and Private Identity: Questions for a Feminist Public Sphere. Impartiality and the Civic Public: Late Modern Oppositional Formations. A Politics of Ideas or a Politics of Presence?. Feminism and Theories of Citizenship-- 3. A Feminist Reconsideration-- 6. Public and Private in Feminist History-- 7. Feminist Conceptions of Citizenship in Australia-- 9. Explicit Material -- Interview with Barbara Kruger-- Reflections on the Confirmation of Clarence Thomas-- On Being the Object of Property-- Materialist Feminism and the Culture of Celebrity-- Late Modern Oppositional Formations-- A Politics of Ideas or a Politics of Presence? Focusing on the gendered relations of sexuality and the body, family life and democratic citizenship, feminists have redirected public debate on questions of privacy and publicity. This volume presents the results of this multi-disciplinary feminist exploration. Nielsen Book Data Series Blurb Oxford Readings in Feminism provide accessible, one-volume guides to the very best in contemporary feminist thinking, assessing its impact and importance in key areas of study. Collected together by scholars of outstanding reputation in their field, the articles chosen represent the most important work on feminist issues, and concise, lively introductions to each volume crystallize the main line of debate in the field. The categories of public and private have been at the centre of feminist theory for the past three decades. Nielsen Book Data Subjects.

Chapter 8 : Chantal Mouffe: Agonistic Democracy and Radical Politics | Pavilion Journal

BONNIE HONIG. Nancy Duke Lewis Professor of Modern Culture and Media (MCM) and Political Science (and, by courtesy, Dept. of Religion and Graduate Field Faculty, Theater and.

Chapter 9 : Project MUSE - Feminism as Agonistic Sorority: An Interview with Bonnie Honig

Preface / Nancy Tuana --Introduction: The Arendt question in feminism / Bonnie Honig --Feminist receptions of Hannah Arendt / Mary G. Dietz --Conformism, housekeeping, and the attack of the blob: the origins of Hannah Arendt's concept of the social / Hanna Fenichel Pitkin --The pariah and her shadow: Hannah Arendt's biography of Rachel.