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## Voegelin, Heidegger, and Arendt: Two's a Company, Three's a Crowd?

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## VOEGELIN, HEIDEGGER, AND ARENDT: TWO'S A COMPANY, THREE'S A CROWD?

Hannah Arendt's political theory seemingly lends itself to both a "premodern" coupling with Eric Voegelin and a "postmodern" coupling with Martin Heidegger. Closer comparisons between all three thinkers reveal not only that neither coupling is cogent, but that all three thinkers provide essential dimensions for a political theory which moves beyond such distinctions.

The provocative analyses of Hannah Arendt--from her seminal treatise on totalitarianism to her posthumous deliberations on "the life of the mind"--continue to be a staple topic for professional journals and secondary works. But both in this scholarly discourse and in college courses there are two Arendts.

The "premodern" Arendt is the favorite of political scientists who see the ideological experiments of the twentieth century as catastrophes which depart from the fundamental order of things, as imparted by a classical, medieval, or even a liberal framework with a high respect for natural law.[ 1] This political scientist uses Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in class to pinpoint the consequences of abandoning traditional values--Nazism and Stalinism.[ 2] In turn, Arendt's depiction in *The Human Condition* of the decline of the *vita contemplativa vis-a-vis* the *vita activa* and in turn the ascendancy of labor over action is seen as akin to Eric Voegelin's critique of the gnosticism which permeates modernity.[ 3]

The "postmodern" Arendt is the favorite of political scientists who see her as a precursor to the debate over the past decade concerning deconstruction and moving beyond political foundations. This political scientist elicits the existentialist and phenomenological bearings of Arendt's thought--the notions of natality and plurality in *The Human Condition* or her portrait in *Crisis of the Republic* of civil disobedience and power as examples of "acting in concert"[ 4]--and connects them to the critiques of modernity by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Martin Heidegger.[ 5]

Seemingly, either Voegelin and Arendt are a company or Heidegger and Arendt are a company, but

Voegelin, Heidegger, and Arendt are a crowd. This essay will argue that neither the "premodern" coupling of Voegelin and Arendt nor the "postmodern" coupling of Heidegger and Arendt are cogent. Instead, comparing these three thinkers reveals that their respective assessments of modernity remain incomplete until the standpoints of the other two are also incorporated.

The first three sections will explore each possible coupling. At the outset, I review Voegelin's critique of Arendt's conceptualization of totalitarianism to demonstrate to those who are fond of the "premodern Arendt" that there are significant differences in method between Voegelin and Arendt. Then for those enamored with the "postmodern Arendt," I show that although there are dimensions of Arendt's thought which parallel Heidegger, her unwillingness to engage what Heidegger terms the question of Being limits the contribution of her political theory to the pursuit of a participatory ontology. Continuing against the tide, I then do not only suggest that Heidegger's and Voegelin's projects are actually closer to each other than conventionally thought--an argument originated by Fred Dallmayr, but that Heidegger emerges as a bridge between Voegelin's transcendent and Arendt's "particularist" orientations.

To exemplify how Heidegger stands between the other two thinkers, the fourth section turns to Voegelin's and Arendt's critiques of Hegel, which reveals more about the respective standpoints of Voegelin and Arendt than they do about Hegel. Instead, I contend Hegel actually anticipates Heidegger's ontological concerns. Still, the final section shows how the distinct stances of Voegelin and Arendt in turn challenge Heidegger to be more explicit about the import of his thought for political theory. After comparing how each thinker would engage some contemporary political events, I conclude that these three thinkers complement, not "crowd" each other's contributions.

For those political scientists unfamiliar with Voegelin, Arendt, and Heidegger, each of these thinkers employ terminologies which do not easily translate into each another, let alone into the discourse of the general reader. Therefore, I would like to provide a bannister for "the uninitiated" by reviewing terms essential to the course of my presentation.

Transcendent as opposed to immanentist refers to the whether the ultimate meaning about life is to be found in a realm which lies beyond this life but to which we have partial access or is contained within earthly existence as we know it. Voegelin is particularly insistent that a genuine pursuit of the truth can never reduce the former into the latter. Those who claim they have a privileged insight in the truth which enables them to incarnate it in this life he terms gnostics, borrowing from the medieval spiritual movement which originally made this claim. Instead, he opts for a philosophical anthropology which recognizes that the human quest for truth is situated "in-between" the transcendent and earthly domains.

Universal as opposed to particular refers to whether the meaning of human affairs can be traced to an order which in an inclusive fashion unites specific events or whether the significance of these events is contained within themselves. Arendt is insistent on acknowledging the distinctiveness of each event and is particularly leery of subsuming such significance under overarching orders or models. A universal order need not be a transcendent one, but in Voegelin's case it is--hence my distinction between his transcendent as opposed to Arendt's "particularist" stances.

Metaphysics is the tradition pursuit of the ultimate nature of things, usually in terms of a distinction between a real and an apparent world. Overcoming metaphysics in Heidegger is not the abandonment of this quest,

but the contention that it can only be pursued in terms of the relationship between particular beings and Being. By ontology then is meant the examination of this fundamental relationship which indeed takes over the traditional concerns of metaphysics. In turn, a participatory ontology means that the essence of human activity is not just a given, but that the ongoing interaction between human beings and Being is the basis for pursuing this essence. What I hope to show is that Heidegger's ontological inquiry combines Voegelin's concern for an order which we seek but never fully know in this life with Arendt's insistence on the dignity and freedom of particulars.

## APPROACHES TO POLITICS

The difference between Voegelin's and Arendt's approach to politics is made quite clear by Voegelin himself in his 1953 review of Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Voegelin accepts Arendt's argument that the decline of national societies leads to a mass of superfluous human beings susceptible to totalitarianism. However, he adds that her incisive institutional and socio-economic analysis focuses on the consequences, not the roots of "the spiritual disease of agnosticism" in the masses. [ 6]

Voegelin traces the origins of totalitarianism to the "rise of immanentist secularism of the high middle ages." [ 7] As developed in much greater detail in *The New Science of Politics*, gnosticism--"the redivinization of society"--arose in a thoroughgoing fashion with Joachim of Flora. [ 8] This attempt to locate "Christian transcendental fulfillment" in society, he states, underlies many subsequent perfectionist schemes in Western history. [ 9] By extension, no greater sacrifice of God to civilization can there then be than totalitarianism--"the existential rule of Gnostic activists." [ 10]

His critique of Arendt's work, though, goes on to suggest that her very approach has immanentist inclinations. When Arendt seems to suggest that the totalitarian attempt to transform human nature could not work without total control of the earth, Voegelin brands her as a liberal who in pragmatic fashion keeps an open mind on such evil possibilities. To him, the "true dividing line" in mid-twentieth century political world is not between liberals and totalitarians, "but between the religious and philosophical transcendentalists on the one side, and the liberal and totalitarian immanentist sectarians on the other side." [ 11]

When Arendt states "not even the nature of man, can any longer be considered to be the measure of all things" or ". . .the whole of nearly three thousand years of Western civilization . . . has broken down," this only fortifies Voegelin's belief that Arendt is willing to forget human nature and the human civilization founded upon it. [ 12] Despite this "nihilistic nightmare," he nevertheless finds that Arendt's treatise is "animated" by the concerns of traditional ethics. [ 13]

In turn, Arendt's reply to Voegelin does not resolve which thinker evaluates totalitarianism more accurately, but rather reinforces Voegelin's point that their approaches are different. Whereas Voegelin, according to Arendt, approaches "phenomenal differences" in politics as mere variations of an "essential sameness of a doctrinal nature"--for instance, his lack of discrimination between liberalism and totalitarianism--she sees such "differences of factuality" as precisely what distinguishes totalitarianism from other types of government. [ 14] Though she admits there may be some connections between totalitarianism and past Western history, such sweeping historical arguments for her miss the unique character of totalitarianism: "the event of totalitarian domination," which neither matches any previous type of tyranny and whose crimes cannot be adjudicated through traditional ethics. [ 15]

Reminiscent of phenomenology's call "to the things themselves," Arendt continues "what separates my approach from Voegelin's is that I proceed from facts and events instead of intellectual affinities and influences." [ 16] As much as she points to "elements," as far back as the 18th century, which help formulate totalitarianism, she doubts Voegelin's thesis that immanentist sectarianism from the Middle Ages culminates in totalitarianism. [ 17]

The plight of the modern masses, Arendt contends, is not due to some spiritual deformity, but in the fact that unlike past generations, there are no common interests to provide solidarity. Without this "inter-est" which both brings people together and distinguishes them as persons--the notion of plurality she will develop further in *The Human Condition*--the atomized masses are ripe for totalitarian consolidation. [ 18]

To Voegelin's charge that she is a liberal and thus by association totalitarian, Arendt admits there may be dimensions of liberalism which lend themselves to totalitarianism, but that this only pinpoints the need for precise distinctions--liberals are not totalitarians. This "growing incapacity for making distinctions" in modern political science, she adds leads to generalizations being applied indiscriminately to a wide variety of political developments. [ 19] Though she does not explicitly extend this criticism to Voegelin's argument, she could have; in any case, she maintains that she is neither a liberal, a positivist, or a pragmatist. [ 20]

Arendt concludes by reaffirming that totalitarianism entails "a much more radical liquidation of freedom as a political and as a human reality than anything we have ever witnessed before." [ 21] It was in view of this startling, particular event that she raised the issue of human nature. Although she does not propose changing human nature, she does distance herself from Voegelin when stressing that "Historically we know of man's nature only as it has existence, and no realm of eternal essences will ever console us if man loses his essential capacities." [ 22]

Without regarding that he undertakes political science from a "realm of eternal essences," Voegelin, in a final rejoinder, assents that Arendt sticks to historical facts in her analysis. But to him the essence of these facts remains murky without being examined through a philosophical anthropology. Otherwise, he cautions, "political movements, which on the scene of history are bitterly opposed to one another, will prove to be closely related on the level of essence." [ 23]

My point is reviewing these clear-cut differences of method between Voegelin and Arendt is not to resolve which one is correct, but rather to demonstrate that those political scientists who consider Voegelin and Arendt "a company" should look again. Both are certainly concerned with political and ethical implications of totalitarianism, but Arendt's insistence of focusing solely on historical phenomena and considering human nature as existence as well as essence distances her from Voegelin. As much as Arendt fears for human freedom and the future of politics in the wake of totalitarianism, she is not calling for a return to antiquity. Neither does Voegelin necessarily, but he does analyze totalitarianism with a concern for a fundamental order irreducible to historical phenomena.

## **CONNECTION TO POSTMODERNISM**

Arendt's connection to the postmodern camp is more plausible. In contrast to the prevailing politics of sovereignty, in which freedom is relegated to the pursuit of private self-interests shielded from government tyranny, Arendt argues that freedom is the public interaction between citizens through speech and action which discloses both personal distinctiveness and an "inter-est, which lies between people and therefore

can relate and bind them together." [24] This non-sovereign, intersubjective politics is congenial to the ongoing concerns in political theory for decentering authority and engendering alternative forms of political association.

At the same time, there are aspects of Arendt's political theory which either pine for the politics of antiquity or critique ongoing politics from an elitist, inegalitarian stance. In *The Human Condition*, her sketch of how the *vita contemplativa* has given way to the *vita activa* and in turn how labor has gained ascendancy over action within the *vita activa* not only is a pessimistic evaluation of contemporary life, but conveys that past virtues have been lost. In *On Revolution* her praise for the American Revolution as opposed to the French Revolution because the former focuses on the political realm whereas the latter reduces human activity to the social realm does not endear her to radical democratic theorists. [25] In "The Crisis in Culture," her identification of judgment with artistic taste makes one wonder how inclusive is her space of political interaction? [26] Finally, in *The Life of the Mind*, she detaches the reflective life from the intersubjective character of politics, as if to resurrect the priority of the former. [27]

I do not doubt that any of these examples can be "worked on" in order to become more consistent with her vision of a non-sovereign politics. But these examples do suggest why political scientists whose orientation comes from ancient, medieval, or even conservative theory might find Arendt attractive.

Nevertheless, in *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt states that she "has clearly joined the ranks of those who for some time now have been attempting to dismantle metaphysics, and philosophy with all its categories, as we have known them from their beginning in Greece until today." [28] The breakdown of reality into a sensory and a super sensory world by metaphysics she finds no longer plausible. [29] This dismantling is not an vendetta against metaphysics, but simply a recognition that the loss of this tradition is a fact of our history--its legacy can only be engaged in a post-metaphysical way.

No thinker in the twentieth century has wrestled with this challenge of "overcoming" metaphysics more than Heidegger. In turn, given that Arendt was a student of Heidegger's before finishing her studies with Karl Jaspers, it is not surprising that Heideggerean themes emerge in Arendt's works. [30] His depiction of "being-in-the-world" in *Being and Time* reverberates in her portrait of action in *The Human Condition*. [31] His articulation of temporality as ontologically geared to the future suggests Arendt's stress on natality. And they both critique the impact of scientific and technological thinking in the contemporary age. But it is Arendt's ontological depiction of the world of appearances in *The Life of the Mind* that especially shows her indebtedness to Heidegger. If Heidegger speaks of Being as simultaneously revealed and concealed through the presence of beings, Arendt maintains "Being and Appearing coincide" for one's own existence is constituted through being perceived by other persons and creatures just as their existence in turn is acknowledged by one. [32] This worldliness of living things recalls Heidegger's insistence that we are "beings-in-the-world." [33]

Still, Arendt focuses on Being simply in terms of the "appearingness" of beings, whereas Heidegger dwells on the relationship of beings to Being as an order which is larger than yet sustains beings. Arendt captures how our individual being is disclosed in the company of others, but is reluctant to pursue how this disclosure of one's being is related to an overarching sense of Being. This subtle distinction between Arendt and Heidegger at first glance may seem like nitpicking, but it explains why Arendt focuses so much on particulars, as evidenced earlier in response to Voegelin. In turn, if Heidegger moves beyond metaphysics

by raising the relation of beings to Being, can Arendt truly claim she is dismantling metaphysics if she focuses solely on particular appearances of Being?

In *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt's steadfast fascination with particulars leads her to render mental activities in an anti-rather than post-metaphysical way. "Thinking" is comprised of distinct thought-trains which never culminate in an ultimate reality nor can be reduced into cognitive knowledge in the manner of science. "Willing" deals with contingent projects which cannot be weaved into a teleology or a determinism. "Judging" reviews specific deeds and events rather than providing a philosophy of history.[ 34]

Arendt's framework is derived more from Kant and Jaspers than Heidegger. "Judging" is drawn directly from Kant's aesthetic judgment. Both "thinking's" endless speculations and "willing's" contingent projects reflect the spontaneous freedom of Kant's pure reason. "Thinking" (*Vernunft* in Kant) is concerned with meaning while cognition (*Verstand* in Kant) is concerned with truth.[ 35] Akin to Jaspers' notion of *Existenz*, "thinking" "transcends" the limitations of cognitive knowledge to engage the issues previously considered by metaphysics. Indeed, Jaspers insists that it is our inability to grasp a metaphysical order that ensures human freedom.[ 36]

The shortcoming of metaphysics, thus for Arendt, is that it interprets "meaning on the model of truth." [ 37] Especially Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling, she claims, make this mistaken when, contrary to Kant, they create cognitive, speculative systems. Their "rainbow bridge of concepts" replaces historical particulars with radical abstractions.<sup>38</sup> This confusion supposedly culminates with Friedrich Nietzsche's eternal recurrence and Heidegger's "Will-not-to-will," which reject the spontaneity of "thinking" or "willing." [ 39]

As insightful as Arendt's focus on particulars is when distinguishing between political phenomena, it prevents her from engaging the full implications of trying to move beyond metaphysics in philosophy. Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche, for instance, criticizes Jaspers' (and by extension Arendt's) aversion to metaphysics. Jaspers, he argues, cannot make the link between eternal recurrence and the will-to-power in Nietzsche because Jaspers denies that there can be any conceptual truth or knowledge in philosophy. no Arendt's caricatures of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger stem from this same denial.

One does not avoid what were the issues of metaphysics simply by rejecting them. Arendt may claim she has joined the ranks of those dismantling metaphysics, but her tripartite "life of the mind" remains "unknowingly" bound to metaphysics because she refuses to probe the question of Being in manner of a Nietzsche or a Heidegger. This preoccupation with particulars distances her from any approach to human affairs which invokes a universal stance--such identification of the mind with Being supposedly robs human freedom.

If Arendt's "particular" approach to totalitarianism revealed the extent which her method did not accord with Voegelin's philosophical anthropology, her "particular" approach to the "life of the mind" differentiates her as well from Heidegger's "ontology of freedom." [ 41] Her steadfast adherence to particulars prevents her from fully developing the participatory ontology contained within her very dynamic vision of politics. If in comparison to Voegelin, the priority Arendt places on the particular is a strength, in comparison to Heidegger, this same emphasis becomes a weakness.

However, the fact that in *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt elicits the dynamism of the world of appearances (the

space for political action), the contingency intrinsic to human beings, and the intersubjective basis of judging suggests that her outlook could be reworked in a Heideggerian direction. In this fashion, Arendt could address the meaning of Being without abandoning human freedom. Ironically, this Heideggerian renovation would also bring Arendt closer to Voegelin's philosophical anthropology because Heidegger is willing to consider the issue of a universal or fundamental order. The unanswered question then becomes the extent to which Heidegger and Voegelin are "a company."

## HEIDEGGER AND VOEGELIN

On the surface, a coupling of Heidegger and Voegelin is more startling than convincing. But there are parallels between Heidegger's raising of the question of the meaning of Being and Voegelin's quest for a transcendental order which frames the parameters of existence.

In the "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger makes it clear that Being is not just created by human beings, as the existentialist literature then in vogue intimated. Rather, reiterating his statement from *Being and Time*, "Being is the transcendent pure and simple."<sup>[ 42]</sup> The homelessness which characterizes contemporary existence--an ontological analogue to Arendt's depiction of the rise of mass society--is a consequence of human beings forgetting Being. The ontological task then is not to make one's existence in a Sartrean fashion, but to pursue the relationship of humanity to the truth of Being.

As opposed to a humanism which treats humanity as "the measure of all things," Heidegger elicits a *humanitas* "that thinks the humanity of man from nearness to Being."<sup>43</sup> The focus shifts from humanity to its essence in relation to being. Admittedly, this *humanitas*, to Heidegger, moves beyond humanisms which were grounded in past metaphysics, but he is not so much rejecting metaphysics as he is indicating that every quest into Being begins as a metaphysical issue. Any overcoming of metaphysics must engage the relation to Being in "the primordial dimension of [humanity's] historical abode."<sup>[ 44]</sup>

Heidegger's ontological concerns are similar to Voegelin's focus on ontology as a science that was lost.<sup>[ 45]</sup> If Heidegger speaks of the forgetfulness of Being by human beings, Voegelin undertakes the "anamnetic venture" of recalling "what has been discovered but what is perpetually in danger of being forgotten."<sup>[ 46]</sup> Just as Heidegger stresses that thinking into the truth of Being happens in and through historicity, the pursuit of restoring an ontological order for Voegelin ensues through "the consciousness of existence itself as historical."<sup>[ 47]</sup>

Fred Dallmayr's exegesis of Voegelin's *In Search of Order*, in particular, evokes a Voegelin whose articulation of "the quest for truth" comes very close to the Heideggerian "question of Being."<sup>[ 48]</sup> Initially, Dallmayr reviews, in a sensitive but standard fashion, Voegelin's emphasis on the centrality of the *metaxu*, "the tensional balance between human and divine reality and also between ordinary temporality and eternity," and conversely, the danger of "forcing the order of the Beyond into reality."<sup>[ 49]</sup> For Voegelin, if the genuine quest involves anamnesis, "the attitude of reflectively distancing remembrance," the resistance of truth is *anoia*, "forgetfulness or oblivion of being."<sup>[ 50]</sup>

German Idealism, Dallmayr continues, draws Voegelin's ire--reminiscent of Arendt. As much as it tries to respond to the naturalist reduction of reality to the world of things, its stress on transcendental self-constitution culminates in Hegel's philosophy, which for Voegelin "obscured the role of remembrance and reflective distance by seeking to bring everything into actual cognitive grasp."<sup>[ 51]</sup> By contrast, Voegelin's



quest for truth takes place at the point that one realizes that one's consciousness both moves "in the thingly tensions of order-disorder" and "toward a unflawed order beyond the order that is flawed by the disorder of things." [ 52]

Dallmayr's contribution is that he shows how much of Voegelin's perspective resonates in contemporary political theory. Voegelin's claim that the experiencing of the creation story is a continuing event suggests a participatory ontology. His thought is anti-foundational to the extent that his "tensional structure" is not rooted in a "constitutive subjectivity." [ 53] And Voegelin's deliberation on transcendence at times resembles "contemporary counter-discourses stressing rupture, radical decentering, and alterity or heterology." [ 54]

In terms of specific parallels between Heidegger and Voegelin, Dallmayr accents the latter's critique of "subjective intentionality," portrait of "human existence as participant in the disclosure of being," destructive reading of traditional doctrines so as to realize their underlying experience anew, and emphasis upon the non-instrumental, revelatory character of language. [ 55] Finally, Voegelin's critique of the shift in Western metaphysics from participation to self-assertion mirrors the later Heidegger's "focus on the growing prominence of subjectivity and technological mastery over nature." [ 56]

Despite these parallels, Dallmayr's concluding critique pinpoints Voegelin's emphasis on transcendence and order over immanence and disorder. Though Voegelin dwells on the centrality of the metaxu for the quest for truth, Dallmayr argues he distends this tension toward "self-contained polarities:" the opposites command attention rather than the existential situation of the "in-between." [ 57] Voegelin divides transcendence too sharply from immanence, especially when he renders gnosticism as the "immanentization of the eschaton." [ 58]

However, if we are to deal with a divine which has a "formative presence in the world," Dallmayr contends this "can only happen on the level of immanence--where the latter is no longer simply the opposite of transcendence." [ 59] The "in-between" must not be weighted one-way. But for Voegelin, order takes priority over "disorder, chaos, or anarchy." [ 60]

Dallmayr's presentation substantiates that Heidegger and Voegelin are each concerned with "the forgetfulness of Being" in contemporary times and look toward a reflective consciousness situated in historical experience to readdress this ontological lacuna. But more importantly, Dallmayr's review of the dualism in Voegelin suggests a framework in which Voegelin, Heidegger, and Arendt can become "a company." If Arendt's depiction of the plurality of the world of appearances can be recast through Heidegger toward a more fundamental consideration of Being, Voegelin's existential rendering of "the quest for truth" can be recast through Heidegger so as to balance the scales of truth between transcendence and immanence, order and disorder.

## HEGEL REDUX

The case of Hegel shows that Heidegger stands between Voegelin and Arendt. As we have seen, Voegelin criticizes Hegel for trying to immanentize and at the same time absolutize knowledge whereas Arendt criticizes him for subsuming historical events under a universal philosophy of history.

In Voegelin's case, as relayed by Dallmayr, Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* replaces the existential tension of the metaxu with the endeavor to realize absolute knowledge. When it comes to Plato's allegory of

the cave, Hegel supposedly makes the light from the Beyond a mere external compulsion which leads the prisoner on the basis of "self-assertive action" toward "deformed, intentionalist" shadows, not the existential drama of the philosopher's quest.[ 61] Hegel's "idealist deformation," is characterized by the notions of placing the entire realm of the intellect into one's own mind and achieving "the salvational Parousia of the beyond in this world." [ 62] Thus, the role of remembrance and reflective distance is displaced once truth is brought "into actual cognitive grasp." [ 63]

In Arendt's case, Hegel is the "universal" foil to her "particular" rendering of mental activities and history. Supposedly Hegel manifests the Epictetian tendency to absorb the world of experiences into the mind and the German Idealist tendency to reduce thinking (Vernunft) into cognition (Verstand). Although Arendt acknowledges that Hegel appreciates the contingency of human events, she quickly adds that he purifies history of the accidental through the laws of the Absolute Mind. Hegel's metaphysical World Spirit abandons human freedom and finitude: universal History displaces what for Arendt are human histories.[ 64]

Starting from opposite directions, Voegelin and Arendt both end up chastising Hegel for absolutizing human experience and knowledge. Hegel supposedly reduces reflection into cognition and eradicates pivotal existential situations: the philosopher's quest from the metaxu in Voegelin and human freedom in a world of particulars in Arendt.

By contrast, Dallmayr's rendering of Hegel reveals a much more existential and ontologically indeterminate figure. Although he grants that Hegel's notion of an absolute knowledge "in which every context or horizon would become rationally transparent" is excessive, he finds Hegel "too richly nuanced and circumspect" to be susceptible to polemical critiques.[ 65] Dallmayr especially rejects Voegelin's charge that Hegel reduces the philosopher's quest to "self-assertive action" within natural consciousness as instigated by an external, necessary compulsion. Actually, Hegel depicts human experience as moving from "natural" to "real" or "absolute" consciousness, an undertaking full of rupture which consequently undermines the self-certainty of natural consciousness.[ 66] As Heidegger accents, according to Dallmayr, Hegel's "reversal of consciousness" does not culminate in self-assertive cognition, but "restores us to our nature or being which consists in our standing in the parousia of the absolute." [ 67]

Arendt's Hegel likewise lacks the complexity found in Dallmayr's portrait. In *The Life of the Mind*, there is a striking resemblance between Arendt's discussions of Augustine's and Hegel's approaches to temporality. She notes that both thinkers put emphasis on the future when it comes to time speculations. Her insistence that Hegel's Will leads to the identification of man and time mirrors her contention that Augustine considers man as Time's essence. And both thinkers focus on human finitude when they emphasize willing's direction of the mind toward reality as opposed to the Epictetian reduction of reality in the mind.[ 68] Yet Arendt extols Augustine's notion of natality, the human capacity for new beginnings, and chides Hegel's for personifying the human will as the World Spirit.

Had Arendt kept with the parallel to Augustine, she might have seen that Hegel's philosophy of history, rather than subjugating freedom to an overarching necessity, enables contingent, subjective freedom to become rational, objective freedom.[ 69] If anything, Hegel's dialectic between infinity and temporality, spirit and matter, and the universal and the particular engages the human condition between the two poles from which Voegelin and Arendt assail him. They cling so tenaciously to their points of embarkation that Voegelin overlooks how disorder may be just as integral to the metaxu as order and Arendt denies any order or truth

which may be integral to particular appearances. Their respective critiques of Hegel exemplify their own orientations, not Hegel's.

By contrast, for Heidegger, Hegel's situating of our nature in "the parousia of the absolute" is a thinking which is neither theoretical or practical, has no tangible results, but whose essence comes forth when "it lets Being be." [70] Hegel, more so than Voegelin or Arendt, captures what Heidegger means by the ontological relationship between beings and Being.

### **DISTINCT OUTLOOKS OF VOEGELIN AND ARENDT**

Though neither Voegelin and Arendt (except in terms of a common foil), Heidegger and Arendt, or Voegelin and Heidegger per se are a "a couple," Heidegger's thought tempers on the one hand, Arendt's disavowal of universal schemes, and Voegelin's penchant for branding the diversity of human experience in contemporary times gnostic on the other. At the same time, this does not mean that Voegelin's or Arendt's approaches should be collapsed into his framework. To the contrary, their distinct outlooks challenge Heidegger be more explicit about what he sees as a transcendent or universal order on the one hand and its implications for politics on the other.

Voegelin's undisputed commitment to the transcendent, especially in terms of the classical and Christian heritages, should not be blithely dismissed. Tempering his outlook more toward Arendt's focus on particulars does not mean abandoning the ultimate focus of these rich traditions. By contrast, Heidegger maintains that what he means by Being is not God nor a common ground. Well, then what becomes of the transcendent in his framework, without making recourse to a theology like Karl Rahner's which employs a lot of Heideggerean concepts? When Voegelin alludes to God or the transcendent, although he shares Heidegger's penchant for elusive terminology, one has a much more precise idea of who or what he means.

Arendt's strength remains her political pulse. When it comes to elucidating the distinctive, particular traits of a political event--as in her study of totalitarianism--there are few that are her equal. Heidegger may formulate a participatory ontology, but it is Arendt who shows how the human capacity for freedom is intrinsic to the political sphere--be it in terms of her articulation of natality, plurality, the "inter-est" which both binds and distinguishes citizens in the public realm, and the power of "acting in concert." The translucent character of Heidegger's exploration of the transcendent is just as evident in his consideration of particular events.

What we are left with are three thinkers whose respective analyses remain incomplete without consideration of the concerns raised by the other two. Applying their approaches to contemporary issues further bears this out.

Voegelin's insistence upon a philosophical anthropology prevents his disciples from focusing on significant differences in the political world--say the differences between liberal democracy in the United States and liberal democracy in Canada, or on the other hand Marxism in Cuba and that in China. For that matter, going back to his review of Arendt's *Origins*, when he draws the line between "religious and philosophical transcendentalists" on the one hand and "liberal and totalitarian immanentist sectarians" on the other, he cannot even distinguish between liberal democracy and Marxism. All too often, his disciples render thinkers as different as Stalin and B.F. Skinner as examples of gnosticism. The differences between these thinkers and such systems for political science should be drawn.

Arendt, on the other hand, is adept at capturing the differences between political figures, cultures, and events--for instance, her claim that totalitarianism is a system of government which does not fit previous categories of political science. Her shortcomings remain her unwillingness to integrate particular events into a universal framework and to stress that transcendental values are at stake in politics. She would have a hard time seeking that there are some commonalities which underly the collapse of Marxist schemes throughout the globe or that we can meaningfully speak of a North-South confrontation between developed and developing nations. And what becomes of the dignity of the human person if moral judgement is relegated just to the dynamics of particular situations--an ethics of consequences as suggested in her treatment of Adolf Eichmann?[ 71]

With Heidegger, interpretations of his political thought end up either claiming he is a fascist, based on his role as rector of the University of Freiburg in Nazi Germany from 1933-1934 or that his participatory ontology is the very antithesis of fascism. Engaging such a complicated and passionate controversy is worthy of a paper in itself.[ 72] In any case, his philosophical treatises do not address specific political events, nor do they lend themselves to such applications. When Heidegger evokes a thinking that "lets Being be," its implications for say the demise of the Soviet Union are hardly straightforward. At least with Voegelin, one might get the argument that the gnostic orientations of that political system could not be sustained or with Arendt, the argument both the longstanding differences of cultures within the Soviet Union as well as the power of human association finally eroded the system.

In conclusion, neither the premodern coupling of Voegelin and Arendt or the postmodern coupling of Heidegger and Arendt are compelling. Voegelin, Heidegger, and Arendt share a concern for the "in-between" of human life. For Voegelin, this is the metaxu, in which the thinkers stands between their earthly and transcendental existences. For Heidegger, this space is where Being both simultaneously reveals and conceals itself. And for Arendt, this "in-between" is the space of public interaction. And although Heidegger's exposition of the question of Being balances Voegelin's transcendent account against Arendt's "particularist" account of this "in-between," Voegelin and Arendt in turn challenge Heidegger to be specific about the implications of his participatory ontology for politics. Instead of being "a crowd," Voegelin, Heidegger, and Arendt each elicit an integral facet of the human condition. Reliance on any two out of the three culminates in polemical positions, not political theory.

## NOTES

1. For instance, James Schall captures the "premodern" Arendt when he suggests that Leo Strauss, Arendt, and Voegelin "have forcefully raised the question about the relation of reason and revelation, of modern and classical philosophy to each other. They have challenged the very philosophy upon which the modern state has rested, since it seems based in certain fundamental aspects on a deviation from what is." James Schall, *Reason, Revelation, and the Foundations of Political Philosophy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 12.
2. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973).
3. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).
4. See especially "Civil Disobedience" and "On Violence" in Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), pp. 49-102, 103-184.

5. For instance, see B. Honig's, "Declarations of Independence: Arendt and Derrida on the Problem of Founding a Republic," *American Political Science Review*, 85 (March 1991): 97-113. Honig's essay is just one example of the recent articles which situate Arendt within the debates of "postmodern" political theory. In fairness to Honig, she characterizes Arendt as "theorizing a powerful and suggestive practice of political authority for modernity," and she does not in a polemical fashion try to distinguish Arendt from a "premodern" stance. *Ibid.*, p. 97. My point remains that the Arendt which emerges from articles such as this is quite distinct from the Arendt depicted in the previously cited work by Schall.
6. Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," *The Review of Politics*, 15 (January 1953): 73.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
8. Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 110.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
11. Voegelin, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," p. 75.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
14. Hannah Arendt, "The Origins of Totalitarianism: A Reply," *The Review of Politics*, 15 (January 1953): 80.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
23. Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Totalitarianism: Concluding Remark," *The Review of Politics*, 15 (January 1953): 85.
24. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 182.
25. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1981).

26. Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Political Significance," *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), pp. 197-226.
27. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind: One/Thinking & Two/Willing*, edited by Mary McCarthy (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978). Henceforth, the first volume will be cited as *Thinking* and the second volume will be cited as *Willing*.
28. Arendt, *Thinking*, p. 211.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
30. In terms of how Heidegger's teaching captivated a whole generation of German students see Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, edited by Michael Murray, translated by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 294.
31. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). Fred Dallmayr, in turn, suggests that Heidegger's distinctions between thing, equipment, and art-work in his 1935-1936 lectures--most notably "The Origin of the Work of Art"--loosely parallels Arendt's distinctions between labor, work, and action in *The Human Condition*. Fred Dallmayr, "Heidegger's Ontology of Freedom," *Polis and Praxis: Exercises in Contemporary Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), p. 111.
32. Arendt, *Thinking*, p. 19.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Due to Arendt's untimely death, her work on "judging" remains a torso. See Hannah Arendt, "Appendix: Judging" in *The Life of the Mind: Two/Willing*, edited by Mary McCarthy (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), pp. 255-272; Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, edited by Ronald Beiner (University of Chicago Press, 1982); and Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Political Significance."
35. Arendt, *Thinking*, p. 15.
36. Jaspers derives his critique of metaphysics from 1) Kierkegaard's defense of individual dignity against Hegel's system and 2) Nietzsche's undermining of two-world theories. Karl Jaspers, "Origin of the Contemporary Philosophic Situation (*The Historical Meaning of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche*)," in *Reason and Existenz*, translated by William Earle (n.p.: Noonday Press, 1955), pp. 19-50 and Karl Jaspers, "Man as His Own Creator," in *Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Robert Solomon (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), p. 141.
37. Arendt, *Thinking*, p. 15.
38. Arendt, *Willing*, pp. 149-158.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-194.

40. Martin Heidegger, *The Will to Power as Art -- Vol. I of Nietzsche*, translated and edited by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 23.
41. Dallmayr, "Heidegger's Ontology of Freedom," p. 104.
42. Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 216.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
45. Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, p. 12.
46. Dante Germino, "Eric Voegelin: The In-Between of Human Life," in *Contemporary Political Philosophers*, edited by Anthony de Crespigny and Kenneth Minogue (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1975), p. 119.
47. Dante Germino, *Machiavelli to Marx: Modern Western Political Thought* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 2.
48. Fred Dallmayr, "Voegelin's Search For Order," *Margins of Political Discourse* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 77.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 79.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87. Voegelin, Heidegger, and Arendt 97
56. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

64. Arendt, *Willing*, pp. 14, 40, 43-49.

65. Dallmayr, "Voegelin's Search For Order," p. 93. Dante Germino, though intellectually indebted to Voegelin, also expresses reservations about the "sweeping brush" with which Voegelin treats modernity and in particular Hegel. Germino, "Eric Voegelin: The In-Between of Human Life," p. 118 and Germino, *Machiavelli to Marx: Modern Western Political Thought*, pp. 15, 320-343.

66. Dallmayr, "Voegelin's Search For Order," p. 94.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Arendt, *Willing*, pp. 42, 109.

69. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree (New York: The Colonial Press, 1899), p. 456.

70. Dallmayr, "Voegelin's Search For Order," p. 94 and Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," p. 236.

71. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1969), pp. 277-279.

72. For a closer examination of this controversy, see Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, edited by Joseph Margois and Tom Rockmore, translated by Paul Burrell and Gabriel Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), and Dallmayr, "Heidegger's Ontology of Freedom," pp. 104-107.

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