The University of Tampere
The School of Management

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POLITICS OF BOUNDARIES, BOUNDARIES OF POLITICS:
Examining Political Communities with Arendt and Rorty

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Due to the changes in the nature of world politics, recent years have witnessed a growing interest in questions concerning political communities. The present study contributes to the academic discussion that has sprung from the empirical perplexity about the apparent transition away from a strictly nation-state based order. Being a theoretical contribution, the study approaches the question through two political thinkers, namely, Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) and Richard Rorty (1931–2007). It examines the conceptualizations of ethical and political communities offered by Arendt and Rorty, focusing especially on the themes of democracy, humanitarianism, refugees and the functioning of the nation-state system.

The thesis builds on a methodological approach characterized by a combination of hermeneutics and interpretative eclecticism. It seeks to understand the general outlook of the writers examined by studying the central pieces of work and the reoccurring – politically relevant – themes of both writers and the secondary literature on their thinking. By focusing more on their *ethos* rather than the actual letter of their philosophical frameworks, it argues not only that both of the examined writers put forth an ethically and politically laudable position, but that we can perceive significant mutual elements between them. The study also engages critically with the prevailing interpretations of their works. Before proceeding to the interpretative and combinatorial parts of the work, however, it is first contextualized in the debates on community, nation-states and the world-order in the contemporary International Relations. Whereas the nation-state once was a natural starting point for research, communities and their boundaries are now seen more as genuine questions calling for a careful examination.

With regard to Rorty, central to his vision is a spatially limited, yet inclusive and democratic ethical-political community that seeks to constantly go beyond its current limitations by opening itself to outsiders. Arendt, on the other hand, provides us with an understanding of community as the locus of political action, a place in the world which makes opinions significant and enables the actor to disclose his or her identity. The study combines their insights into a common vision that presents a critical challenge to the existing IR literature on community in general and the emerging forms of post-national community in particular. The Arendtian-Rortian account presented in this study opens a way to go beyond the major positions in the prevailing literature. More than any of the existing positions, the Arendtian-Rortian vision calls for an experience-based, rather than purely theoretical, way of looking at things. It urges us to start from the existing communities, their practices, institutions, and underlying beliefs. Through a critical scrutiny of these elements, and guided by pluralistic ethical and political principles, it aims at ever deepening and widening democracy. It presents a strong ethical and political plea for communities that foster plurality and inclusion, especially in the sense of making their deliberative processes as inclusive as possible. It therefore has important practical bearings in the current global conjuncture, characterized by increasing global flows and elusive boundaries.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used for works by Richard Rorty. For bibliographic information, see references.

ABO	*Against Bosses, Against Oligarchies.*
AOC	*Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century America.*
CIS	*Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity.*
COP	*Consequences of Pragmatism.*
EHO	*Essays on Heidegger and Others. Philosophical Papers, Vol.2.*
FID	"Feminism, Ideology, and Deconstruction: A Pragmatist View".
IRR	"Interview with Richard Rorty" (*The Believer*).
ORT	*Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers, Vol.1.*
PCP	*Philosophy as Cultural Politics. Philosophical Papers, Vol.4.*
PMN	*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.*
PSH	*Philosophy and Social Hope.*
RRP	"Response to Randall Beerenboom".
RT	"Replies to…"
TaP	*Truth and Progress. Philosophical Papers, Vol.3.*
TT	"Thugs and Theorists: A Reply to Bernstein".
UAE	"The Unpredictable American Empire".
UT	"Universality and Truth".

Abbreviations used for works by Hannah Arendt. For bibliographic information, see references.

AJC	Arendt – Karl Jaspers: *Correspondence 1926-1969.*
BPF	*Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*
CR	*Crises of the Republic*
EJ	*Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.*
EU	*Essays in Understanding.*
HA	"Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt".
HC	*The Human Condition.*
JW	*The Jewish Writings.*
LKPP	*Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*
MDT	*Men in Dark Times.*
MH	*"Martin Heidegger at Eighty".*
OR	*On Revolution.*
OT	*Origins of Totalitarianism.*
PP	*The Promise of Politics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The thematic of the study

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in the bordering practices of political communities. The volume of global flows has increased significantly since the end of the Cold War years. This has called actors, especially but not solely nation-states, to loosen their borders for economic and other benefits. Also such phenomena as the rise of humanitarian world politics, environmental issues and international terrorism have contributed to a redefinition of the borders of sovereign states. Throughout different policy areas, borders – or the lack thereof – are paid more and more attention to. For instance, the 2003 European Security Strategy states that "the post-Cold War environment is one of increasingly open borders in which the internal and external aspects of security are indissolubly linked" [1].

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) approximately 43.7 million people were forcibly displaced in 2010[2], and a total of 214 million people were 'migrants', i.e. living outside their country of origin[3]. And given the increasing inability to distinguish between the two (forced and non-forced movement), we can conclude that the paradigmatic case of political belonging, citizenship in a national state ("the right to a nationality" is one of the human rights[4]) is anything but a self-evident fact to a remarkable number of people world-wide. At the same time, especially in the wealthy countries, an anxiety is felt over effectiveness of bordering practices. Hence, governments are trying to make the filtering practices more effective, while sentiments of insecurity and xenophobia become more common among citizenry, resulting in calls for more radical solutions, like fences at the borderlands. A poem from an U.S. vigilante organization's website promoting a fence at the southern border illustrates this mentality:

> "Take some bricks and build a wall/Make it solid, strong and tall […] / Build it wide from rim to rim / So terror-
> ists and smugglers can't sneak in; […] / Stop the drug trade in its tracks./ Keep us safe from terrorist attacks. /
> And let it stand the test of time / I pray, keep safe this land of mine. […] Consider this, that it's your job / To

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[1] European Security Strategy 2003.
[2] UNHCR 2011, 5.
[3] UN DESA (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) 2009.
[4] Articles 13–15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948) define the basic 'membership rights': Everyone has the right to move across borders, but not to immigrate (article 13), except in asylum cases (article 14). Moreover, everyone has the right to a nationality, of which he or she should be "arbitrarily" deprived of, nor denied "the right to change his [sic] nationality" (article 15).

keep those out who would rape and rob; […] If you'll keep us safe in the war on terror / An open border is a fatal error." [5]

Partly caused by the rise of this kind of mentality, and partly influenced by more long-term developments, recent years have seen a strong revival of questions concerning community in the theoretical field as well – in political theory and philosophy as well as in International Relations. World order is in transition and hence it is relevant to ask what conception of community and self the political developments at the international level reflect[6]. As a starting point, traditionally the international system has reflected a conception of political community based on a national citizenship as a mode of belonging. Recently, however, changes in the global architecture have resulted in different conceptualizations. As one of the leading political philosophers of today puts it, "[q]uestions of political boundaries and membership have become particularly salient because the Westphalian model of state sovereignty is in crisis"[7]. Given the vast amount of cross-community movements in today's world and the increasing weight of the power-structures defining whose movement is smoothened and who is rendered to immobility, a paradigm shift has occurred substituting the static terrains with flows and mobilities as the focus of study[8]. In addition, "the E-word"[9] (empire) has become, in academia and outside of it, a part of the discourse on international relations, together with frequent references to the community of humanity, world community, or cosmopolis.

Empirical puzzlement has also resulted in theoretical attempts to grasp with the issue. A diverse variety of writers from Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib to Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben have tried to articulate what it means to belong to a community and how to avoid the detrimental aspects of the sense of belonging (exclusion and aggression towards the outside). Within the academic discipline of International Relations (IR[10]), many commentators have also called for a careful consideration of community. According to Andrew Linklater, "the relationship between 'community' and 'cosmopolis' [is] one of the central ethical and political questions of the time"[11]. Ken Booth, in his *Theory of World Security,* argues that the concept of community is central to the idea of security. Hence, even if it evades

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[5] See http://weneedafence.blogspot.com/2006/05/open-border-poem-by-scott-rohter.html
[6] E.g. Douzinas 2007, 148.
[7] Benhabib 2004b, 4.
[8] See Sheller – Urry 2006.
[9] Douzinas 2007, 133.
[10] In a conventional manner, I'm using 'IR' to denote the academic discipline of International Relations and terms such as 'world politics' and 'international relations' when referring to the subject matter of the discipline.
[11] Linklater 2007, 1.

precise definition, "if the term did not exist, it would have to be invented".[12] Similarly, Vivienne Jabri argues that if feminism, or any critical account of political reality for that matter, is to be seen as a political project proper, in addition to a critique of the present a fully developed conception of political community and agency is needed[13].

The present study will consider the problem of community from the point of view of the nexus between political theory and IR. It will focus on two thinkers: Hannah Arendt and Richard Rorty. The reason for focusing on two thinkers instead of one is that by putting into a constellation and to certain extent also combining the ideas coming from two different directions, I hope to make a properly new contribution to the above mentioned discussion in the sense that could not be achieved if we were to concentrate to only one thinker. The reason for focusing on *these* two thinkers, in turn, is that, when put into discussion with each other, they provide an interesting combination of similarities and differences[14]. And, when contrasted to the other understandings of political community, they provide an important mutual understanding that encases a potential challenge for the underlying terms of the debate in its current stage. Moreover, the interest in community can be justified from the perspective of Arendt and Rorty studies as well. As argued by Chad Kautzer and Eduardo Mendieta, the concept of community is central to the tradition of American pragmatism (to which Rorty belonged) – equivalent to the meaning of dialectic for Hegelianism – yet, they also argue, it has "remained under-specified"[15]. In Arendt studies, in turn, a lot of emphasis is put on the concept of public space and Arendt's analysis of nation-states, but the concept of community as such is not paid enough attention to.

1.2. Research problem and research questions

This study deals with ethical and political boundaries of membership of democratically structured (political) communities[16]. In the context of ethical-political research in IR, we will be looking at questions of inclusion/exclusion, inside/outside, citizens/humans as they appear in Rorty's and Arendt's writings. The

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[12] See Booth 2007b, 134–148, 268–273.

[13] Jabri 2004, 276.

[14] Arendt and Rorty are briefly compared in Bernstein 1983. One reason why setting Arendt and Rorty in conversation may produce interesting results is that many commentators feel that Rorty is not critical enough, whereas Arendt is an often cited source of influence for critical thinking. This fact shows most concretely in the fact that in the question concerning liberalism, one of the major debates in political theory (and beyond) today, they are situated on the opposite sides of the division line, Rorty on the liberal, and Arendt on the non-liberal.

[15] Kautzer – Mendietta 2009, 4–5.

[16] Unlike much of the tradition, I conceive democracy as a crucial concept for modern day IR. In this I am following, among others, the contributors of a special issue on democracy and IR in *Millenium: Journal of International Studies, vol. 37 No.3.*

first objective of the study is to offer a fruitful perspective – indeed a perspective, or new way of setting the problem, not a solution – to the discussion on the matter by examining Arendtian and Rortian positions in search for complementing insights, blind spots and alternative ways of looking at things in the spirit of pluralist discussion ethics. At the same time I intend to enter into discussion with other similar kinds of perspectives, especially Habermasian, Agambenian, and Nancyan. My emphasis is therefore in Critical IR, widely understood.

My argument is that the "ethical-political horizons" offered by Arendt and Rorty can be shown to be mutually reinforcing, i.e. their positions can shed light on each other's blind spots and put together, they can offer a powerful vocabulary for coping with the political realities of today. Working with this argument, my main research questions are:

(1) How are ethical-political communities conceptualized in the thought of Arendt and Rorty?

(2) How can we gain a common ground between their perspectives?

Answering these primary questions and gathering evidence for my argument requires that we deepen our perspective with the following group of supporting questions concerning the thought of Arendt and Rorty:

(a) What kind of borders/boundaries does a democracy or a republic require?

(b) Given that the prevailing institutional form of political community is the nation-state, what can be said of the functioning of this specific community? How to engage politically with the groups that this form of community leaves outside the institutional structures of membership and democratic agency?

(c) What is to be said about the relationship between membership in a bounded community and the membership in 'humanity'? Can we put more emphasis on a community of humanity without falling into the trap of imperialist policies?

(d) Finally, is it possible to think otherwise about spaces, places, borders, boundaries, communities and belongings; how to engage politically with boundaries so that to bring about a positive change?

The questions are many, and they are intertwined. For example, not only the question (a), but all of the questions require a discussion on Arendt's and Rorty's views on democracy. This is because neither one attempts to justify institutions from philosophical premises. Instead, they give democratic politics a full priority over philosophical arguments. Or, in more detail, they agree with John Dewey's formulation on democracy. "Regarded as an idea," he wrote, "democracy is not an alternative to other principles of

associated life. It is the idea of community life itself" [17]. They take, in other words, their bearings from pluralistic democracy as a self-correcting ideal and from that perspective assess the realities of political existence (e.g. PP, 7-14; ORT, 219[18]). As this example manifests, all of the above questions are interrelated and point to the same direction. Our main emphasis will be on the first question, the meaning of community – everything else follows from there.

One could also talk of secondary aims in the study. First, my aim is naturally to contribute to the total lack of attention paid to the relationship between Arendt's and Rorty's thought. Arendt and pragmatism are sometimes mentioned together, but the Arendt-Rorty-interface is almost totally untouched. Second, my point is to raise interest within IR to both Arendt and Rorty. Given their 'classic' status in philosophy, they are paid relatively scarce attention in IR, even though they have a lot to say on the subject. Thirdly, especially in relation to Rorty, my aim is to provide a reading of him that is considerably different from most of the interpretations thus far presented. Namely, I suggest that we should emphasize his democratic, sometimes even radically democratic outlook, and read him as he read others: eclectically and by emphasizing the ideas that we find interesting and useful for our own purposes. This reading of Rorty (illuminating his interfaces with Arendt being a crucial part of it) can also be seen as an attempt to contribute to the wider "pragmatist turn" in IR[19]. While the main emphasis in much of the existing pragmatist works in IR has been on metatheoretical, methodological or otherwise philosophy-of-science-oriented issues[20], I hope to complement these contributions by discussing topics that are more closely related to political theory (and political theorist outside the pragmatist tradition – especially, of course, Arendt). This attempt is guided by the pragmatist emphasis – also shared by Arendt – "on our need to struggle with the concrete facts of worldly existence" by focusing on "the interplay of habituality and creativity […] as the means of responding to contingencies" of that existence[21]. But, before getting ahead of ourselves, let us have a look at the structure of the study.

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[17] Dewey 1991, 148.

[18] When referring to Arendt and Rorty, I am using in-text references with abbreviations of the titles of their works (see the list of abbreviations in the beginning of the present work). Other sources are referred to in footnotes by name of the author, year, and page number.

[19] See e.g. 'Special Issue on Pragmatism in International Relations Theory' in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies 31, no. 3 (2002)*; 'The Forum: Pragmatism and International Relations' in *International Studies Review 11, no.3*; Bauer – Brighi 2009; Kangas 2009; Kratochwill 2007; Käpylä – Mikkola 2011; Rytövuori-Apunen 2005.

[20] Exceptions include, *inter alia,* Cochran (1996, 1999), Brassett – Bulley (2007), and Parker – Brasset (2005).

[21] Kangas 2007b, 38.

1.3. Outline of the study

The study will begin, in the following chapter (2), by introducing the methodological outlook of the study. Due to the theoretical nature of the thesis, the methodology deals with accounts of interpretation and understanding of texts, accompanied with strategies for applying the studied texts. In more detail, we will first discuss the nature of interpretation, i.e. hermeneutics. After presenting the strengths and weaknesses of the Gadamerian strand of hermeneutics from the present works point of view, we will move on to discuss ways of using texts so that we can depart from the actualized horizon of the original author, and yet remain in some sense loyal to his or her *ethos*. At the end of the second chapter we will also discuss the combinatorial character of the study and elucidate what it means to perceive similarities in two different ethical-political horizons. Having clarified this, I then proceed to contextualize the present study in contemporary IR theory. This is done in chapter 3.

First, a short account is given on how ethical-political and political-theory-related questions have become a part of IR as a discipline (section 3.1.). A discussion on community, especially questions of humanity versus nation-state, has been an important part of this strand of IR ever since its emergence. The sections 3.2.1., 3.2.2., and 3.2.3. will provide a background for my own study through a *tour d'horizon* of debates on and around cosmopolitanism from 1980s up until today, as well as introducing the various perspectives on the functioning and general logics of nation-states and the present world-order. In the present day IR, discussed especially in section 3.2.4., special attention is paid to the two competing forms of what could be widely labeled Critical IR, that is, Kantian-Habermasian Critical Theory and cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and various forms of 'post-structuralism' on the other. Of the latter, Giorgio Agamben and his followers in IR will be discussed in much detail since his critical analyses on nation-state are in the center of much of the discussion on community and especially refugees in present day IR.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with Rorty's and Arendt's thought respectively. With Rorty, our attention will be on the critical and radically democratic potential, often unnoticed in his thought. I will begin by discussing his general *ethos*, in short, meliorism. This will serve as a springboard to the rest of the chapter, which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of Rorty's articulations of ethnocentrism, human rights, democracy and political change. On the basis of these discussions, we will summarize Rorty's understanding of ethical-political communities in the final section of chapter 4, arguing that his potential has

been largely undermined in IR literature thus far. Chapter 5 then moves to Arendt. Attention will be paid to the very basics of her thinking: plurality, action, and the concept of the 'world', as well as on her analysis of the aporias of the nation-state system and the "right to have rights". I will conclude that Arendt provides us with an understanding of local political units guided by cosmopolitan spirit. Further, in chapter 6 the Arendtian and Rortian positions on political community will be combined by perceiving their similarities and using their differences as resources for spotting weaknesses. It will be argued that they share an idea of constantly reforming democratic communities that are characterized by openness towards outsiders as well as towards the future possibilities.

After presenting the "common vision" of Arendt and Rorty, we will enter into a discussion with the accounts presented in chapter 3. My aim, in sections 6.5. and 6.6., is to criticize them from the Arendtian-Rortian perspective, but not in order to debunk. Quite contrary, I attempt to shed light on both blindnesses and insights, strengths and weaknesses, in order to create possibilities for communication and debate between the positions. While criticizing, then, I attempt to build bridges. Following the hermeneutic metaphors introduced in the following section, the study as a whole could be understood as a simulated discussions, in which the horizons of Arendt and Rorty are put into dialogue with each other and with the horizon of Critical IR. Since none of these can speak for themselves, my role, ultimately, is to work as the domain through which these diverse perspectives can have a voice, as well as a chairman and initiator, as the one who makes the judgments. My approach is built on the assumption that different angles, approaches and ethical-political visions can learn important lessons from each other and benefit substantially from entering into discussion. Pluralities and multiplicities are the stuff of politics. Hence, also our frameworks for understanding and judging politics need to cultivate plurality.

2. INTERPRETATION, UNDERSTANDING, AND ECLECTICISM: THE METHODOLOGY

Before going into the substantial parts of the study, the employed methodology needs to be introduced. Since the subject matter of the present study consists of the written works of two theorists, the methodological framework quite naturally concerns interpretation of texts. The methodology used can be loosely defined as 'hermeneutic', as far as all interpretation of texts is a branch of hermeneutics[22]. Rather than

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[22] See, e.g., Palonen 1987, 5. It is largely irrelevant for our purposes to go too deeply into the rich history of hermeneutic philosophy. In short, hermeneutics originates from the Greek antiquity, was preserved by the legal and biblical traditions,

being a straightforward method, hermeneutics could be loosely defined as an ethics of reading. One should keep in mind, however, that the practice and theory of interpretation can never be strictly separated[23]. Hence, to a certain extent the interpretations of Arendt and Rorty in subsequent chapters will have to talk for themselves.

The intention is to approach the writings of Arendt and Rorty from an argumentative-philosophical, rather than purely historical, point of view. In other words, the point is not to reconstruct the full context and motives of their texts, but to ask what they said – or rather, more radically, what they can be made to say – on certain topics. In defining the type of hermeneutics I will be relying on, I will draw from a variety of sources. Firstly, the basic principles and concepts of Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics will be introduced. Especially such Gadamerian concepts as horizon, situation, dialogue, and hermeneutic circle play an important role in the methodology of the work. But there are also certain shortcomings, from our point of view, in Gadamer's hermeneutics. Through pragmatic lenses of Richard Bernstein Gadamer's overall position will be reconsidered, hence moving towards more radically eclectic vision of interpretation, characterized by concepts such as decontextualization and repetition. This eclectism will provide us with more tools as well as a justification for the re-readings of Rorty and Arendt in chapters 4 and 5, and especially for the combinatorial reading (i.e. building my own argument) in the sixth chapter.

2.1. Horizons, dialogue, and understanding: lessons from the hermeneutic tradition

In the heart of Gadamer's hermeneutics is a recognition of our finitude. It is neither possible nor desirable to break free from all prejudices. Prejudices and fore-conceptions are not "false judgments" but can have either positive or negative value – in any case they are constitutive of any understanding. Every interpreter has certain particular standpoint that limits the possibilities of vision, a certain "situation". What can be seen from any particular standpoint, the "horizon" of the interpreter, is constituted by these

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and revitalized by such writers as Scleiermacher and Dilthey in the 19th century. In Being and Time Martin Heidegger transformed hermeneutics from a method of interpretation to an ontological character of Dasein's being-in-the-world (see, e.g. Gadamer 1985, 171–265). From 19th century onwards, hermeneutics has been characterized by a strong historical consciousness. The key thinkers of the hermeneutic tradition would thus agree with Quentin Skinner, who argues that in the history of ideas, the relevance of an author (for example, Arendt or Rorty) does not derive from her contribution to "perennial issues" (there are no such things). Nor do the authors provide us with any readily applicable "lessons" (Skinner 2002, 85, 88). Rather, seeing how they dealt with their problems may help us to deal with ours, or more widely put, seeing how they thought may provoke and inspire us to think for ourselves.

[23] See e.g. Stout 1982, 7.

prejudices.[24] In our context, the prejudices are constituted, for instance, by our understanding of IR and world politics, as well as – for example – the secondary sources we rely on when reading Arendt and Rorty. The dynamics of interpretation, in turn, consists of placing one's prejudices under scrutiny by testing them against the "otherness" of the text, by placing oneself in a to-and-fro play of dialogue with the text, asking questions from it, thereby expanding one's own horizon and hopefully achieving a "fusion of horizons"[25]. This dialogical play, this to-and-fro between prejudices and otherness, further, constitutes a hermeneutic circle (or a spiral), i.e. gradually deepens our understanding.[26] We are not prisoners of our fore-conceptions or the circular nature of understanding.

Concerning these last points, however, I share the reservations put forth by Bernstein. First, while certainly fruitful, the metaphor of dialogue can also be misleading, for it is never a lively conversation we are engaged in. The text as such is mute and we as interpreters give a voice to it[27]. Even though the text does not let us say anything we want, and all interpretation involves what Umberto Eco calls "the dialectics between the rights of texts and the rights of their interpreters"[28], it nevertheless seems that Gadamer is not always sufficiently clear about the one-sidedness in the *activity* of interpretation and its consequences. This takes us to the second problem, which is that the term "fusion of horizons" does not, as Bernstein puts it, "do adequate justice to those ruptures that disturb our attempts to reconcile different ethical-political horizons"[29]. This is not to say that we should not attempt to reconcile between them, but merely that a fusion is not something that we can realistically strive for.

These problems aside, the Gadamerian metaphors of horizon, dialogue, situation, and hermeneutic circle play an important role in my understanding of interpretative activity. Indeed, the whole structure of the present work could be seen as a version of the hermeneutic circle. The third chapter of the work, which looks at the context of my study in the discipline of IR, is also an explication of the prejudices and fore-

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[24] Gadamer 1985, 270, 302, 306; Gadamer 2004, 33–34. See also Bernstein 2002, 273.

[25] Gadamer 1985, 269, 299, 302, 306, 369; Bernstein 1991, 4.

[26] Gadamer 2004, 29-39; Gadamer 1985, 190–192, *passim*. It must be noted that while the concept of hermeneutic circle as such is a part of the classical hermeneutics, it was Heidegger who first gave it the meaning implicated here. Before that, the circle was understood as a play between the whole and its parts (Gadamer 2004, 29). It could also be said, though, that this earlier understanding is incorporated into the Heideggerian version, rather than substituted by it. This earlier conceptualization of the hermeneutic circle is relevant to our context as well. In chapters 4 and 5 there is a to-and-fro play not only between our pre-conceptions of Arendt and Rorty and their actual texts, but also between the oeuvre's of Arendt and Rorty as wholes and the individual writings we are interpreting.

[27] Bernstein 2002, 278.

[28] Eco 1992, 23. See also Gadamer 1985, 266–267. Hence interpretation needs to explain why we are able to do these specific things (and not others) with *these words*, and not *others* (Eco 1992, 24, 26).

[29] Bernstein 1991, 10.

conceptions created by the IR tradition. The tradition also directs our attention to *certain* questions instead of others[30], i.e. has a direct influence on the questions we ask from Arendt and Rorty in chapters 4 and 5[31]. The interpretations of the two writers achieved from this basis, further, help us to critically evaluate and question the very tradition which guided our interpretation and hence to deepen our understanding of both IR and the two writers. This deepened understanding, furthermore, provides us with the means of critically evaluating other voices and positions in the debate introduced in the third chapter. However, to get a proper grip on the activity of asking questions that the interpreted authors did not ask, perceiving and eclectically utilizing insights, we need to look for additional sources.

In trying to find methodological tools for building my argument, I supplement the Gadamerian understanding of hermeneutics with more eclectic methods of reading[32]. What I am aiming at is a way of reading that results in what Richard Bernstein calls 'profiles'. A 'profile' is a view on the subject that is selective, yet focuses on what are considered the essential characteristics. Far from arbitrary, a profile is a product of movement on a hermeneutic circle, a movement where the "otherness" of the text is constantly allowed to question the interpreter's beliefs and objectives.[33] In producing profiles of Arendt and Rorty, I follow – in addition to the hermeneutical principles – two 'moves' that can be summarized as directives: 'decontextualize,' and 'repeat' the author. The first directive is derived from Kari Palonen, and the second from Slavoj Žižek's interpretations of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. These two, together with some outlines for eclectic and combinatorial readings, will be discussed in the following section.

2.2. Decontextualization, repetition and combination: supplementing hermeneutics

 "Decontextualizing" reading, as it is articulated by Palonen does not refer to the omission of the context, i.e. the original factual connections, the "implicit part" of the text. The original contextual-index can only be overcome if the interpreter is aware of it (hence the difference to "fundamentalist" and allegorical ways of reading). In decontextualizing reading, the original context is taken into account, but certain aspects of the text are emphasized over others, some alien element is introduced to it, thereby going

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[30] Gadamer 2004, 29–39; Gadamer 1985, 190–192, *passim.*; Kangas 2007a, 69, 73.

[31] These two chapters, of course, also constitute hermeneutic circles of their own.

[32] Whereas hermeneutics is not a method or even methodology, the eclecticism presented here could be thought at least as a methodology, of not a forthright method. Also, even though I am articulating this eclectism through sources other than Gadamer, it must be noted that also he considers the task of hermeneutics to be the "thoughtful mediation [of the interpreted texts] with contemporary life" (Gadamer 1985, 164–169, 309).

[33] Bernstein 1986, ix–x.

beyond the original problematique. For Palonen, the central manifestation of the hermeneutic circle is between the text and its con-text – a conclusive distinction between the two is unattainable, but aiming at this distinction is a central objective of the interpretation.[34] In the case of this study, the contextual aspects are taken into account in both Rortian and Arendtian cases, but in both cases they are also eventually left on the background. The alien elements that are introduced include asking questions that neither of the writers explicitly dealt with, introducing alien concepts, and, naturally, putting the two writers in discussion with each other thereby creating a whole cluster of conceptual connections where they did not exist. One form of decontextualization employed in this study is setting one parts of the author's oeuvre against other parts that seem to betray his or her general ethos.

This takes us to Slavoj Žižek, who utilizes the classical distinction between the spirit and the letter[35] to make a point that we can only remain faithful to an author by betraying her (or the actual letter of her thought). Žižek's term – adopted from Kierkegaard – for this faithful betrayal is 'repetition'. Repeating, say, Kant, can be done in two distinct ways. One can either stick to the letter of his thought and further elaborate his system or, one can try to "regain the creative impulse that Kant himself betrayed in the actualization of his system". Thus, repeating an author does not mean reproducing her arguments; it means that we try to grasp the spirit, the *ethos*, of the author and connect to what was already in her more than she herself, the "excessive core" of her explicit system. By remaining faithful to the letter of an author, one betrays the creative impulse underlying it. To repeat, then, is to remain faithful to the part that matters the most.[36] Now Žižek says that the thing that matters the most, is the "core" of the authors thought. I would argue that our interpretative activity would benefit from dropping this idea of *the* core and substitute it with the idea of an ethos – something equal to Žižek's "underlying creative impulse". Neither Arendt's nor Rorty's thought had a single core in any unambiguous sense. Both were essayist, not system-builders in traditional sense. The whole of their "exercises in (political) thought" – to use an Arendtian turn of phrase – constitutes a conceptual net, which springs from the same *ethos*, yet does not gravitate around any single core.

The lack of a single core is related to Jeffrey Stout's pragmatic take on "the meaning" of a text. He suggests that we bracket the question of the real meaning of a text, in a similar manner as pragmatists

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[34] Palonen 1987, 81–89, 116–118.
[35] Žižek also refers to Gilles Deleuze's distinction between the Virtual and the Actual, which, he claim, is approximately synonymous with the distinction of the spirit and the letter (Žižek 2007, 31).
[36] Žižek 2007, 31–32.

have bracketed the question of *the* Truth as a "bad" question. What matters is whether we can tell something interesting *about* the text being studied and whether, furthermore, we can *do* something relevant *with* the text.[37] Any interpretations will be assessed by the twin-criterions of justifiability (whether it is "true") and attractiveness. Whether the reading will strike us as "true" will depend on "quality of scholarship, powers of persuasion, and our own ability to assess". Whether we find it interesting will sometimes depend on the extent that we share (or can be persuaded to share) the interpreter's interests and purposes, but other times neither sharing the interests of the interpreter nor the justifiability of the interpretation count, given that the interpreter is able to do something original enough with the text.[38] Like Žižek, then, Stout calls for a radical overcoming of the original author, teasing forth her non-realized potentials, and learning from her mistakes. This kind of reading has the potential of producing something more interesting than mere reconstruction or criticism. "If one does not repeat an author," Žižek writes, "but merely 'criticizes' him, moves elsewhere, turns him around, etc., this effectively means that one unknowingly remains within his horizon, his conceptual field"[39]. Because of the combinatorial nature (in relation to Arendt and Rorty) of the study, it is exactly their original conceptual fields that we eventually try to surpass.

Relatedly, as Quentin Skinner argues, we should be wary of the "mythology of coherence", that is, the attempt to force coherence on the text we are trying to understand[40]. Indeed, I believe that Habermas is correct in claiming that the power and influence of many great writers (his examples are Kant and Foucault) is not least due to the "productive contradictions" they entangle themselves in. "Only complex thinking produces instructive contradictions"[41]. The same point is also made by Arendt (BPF, 24; HC, 104–105). For this reason, also, we need to break ourselves free from the author's original conceptual fields. Both Arendt and Rorty also encouraged this kind of readings, Arendt's term for it being "pearl diving" and Rorty's "strong misreading". Especially in Rorty's case, it is possible to emphasize the paradox facing every interpretation of his texts. If we do not read him eclectically, we are already ignoring one aspect of his thought, the aspect that called for eclectic misreadings.

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[37] Stout 1982, 1–8. Stout (1982, 7) goes as far as to claim that "[m]eanings, if they exist, could turn out to be the least interesting thing about texts".
[38] Stout 1982, 7.
[39] Žižek 2007, 32. Žižek also argues that "the new can *only* emerge through repetition" (Žižek 2007, 31).
[40] Skinner 2002, 67.
[41] Habermas 1986, 107–108.

Understanding and critically evaluating the text under scrutiny is a first step in every interpretation, and this must be done holistically. After this is 'done', we can adopt a more eclectic attitude in trying to repeat the author in the Žižekian sense. Certain eclectism is also inbuilt in to the combinatorial character of the work. Taking my stance from the theoretical perspectives of the present day IR I set out to perceive (rather than to merely recognize) similarities and productive differences between Arendt and Rorty. Perception, according to Dewey, implies a combination that deepens and widens the meaning of the combined elements[42]. By picking up the most fruitful ideas – that is, most fruitful from the specific perspective provided by the IR debates – and placing them as parts of the same force-field, we can produce something genuinely new. I am not comparing them on a neutral scale, but engaging in what Rorty would refer to as hermeneutics and edification. The former, in Rorty's sense, means seeing different discourses as possible participants in same conversation – conversation that does not presuppose any matrix that would unite the speakers, yet does not lose hope for a possible agreement (PMN, 318). The latter, to put it shortly, means finding and making connections where they did not exist before (PMN, 360). It therefore widens the scope of the "analytic eclecticism" that has been recently suggested in IR, and that features "the extraction, adaption, and integration (but *not* synthesis) of discrete concepts, mechanisms, logical principles, and interpretive moves"[43]. Eclecticism in this sense does not mean forcing our will on the text, but a rigid and controlled way of making a point – based on textual evidence – through the text. In other words, in a pragmatist manner (following mainly Peirce and Dewey here), the only thing an interpretation can crave for is warranted assertability evaluated by a community of interpreters.

3. CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY IN THE CONTEMPORARY IR

In this chapter, the present study will be situated within the horizon of contemporary International Relations theory. We will begin by examining the changes in the structure of the discipline that have resulted in an expansion of topics, questions and approaches considered relevant for IR. Special attention will be paid to ethical-political[44] questions, that is, an array of separate fields of inquiry within IR gravitating around questions traditionally associated with political theory. After examining the rise of ethical-political questions to the agenda of IR studies, we will turn our gaze towards practices and theories of political belonging. The force of the modern-nation state as a political community will be discussed, as

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[42] Dewey 1980, 24. Dewey emphasizes that perceiving is active, not passive. In the context of art, for instance, the activities of the creator and the perceiver are close to each other (Dewey 1980, 24, *passim.)*.
[43] Sil 2009, 649.
[44] A definition for this hyphenated term 'ethical-political' will be given at the end of the section 3.1.

well as recent challenges to and changes in its functioning such as humanitarianism and cosmopolitanism. Together and alongside this empirical side of the issue, IR theory's engagement with the problems of belonging and community will be discussed, starting from the communitarian-cosmopolitan debate of the 1980s and 1990s and ending with an overview of recent positions such as Kantian/Habermasian cosmopolitanism and 'post-structuralist' – we will discuss especially Agamben and Nancy – attempts to go beyond through notions of "singularity" or "whatever being". This discussion on different theoretical positions will serve as our point of reference in chapter 6, where we will deploy Arendt's and Rorty's ethical-political perspectives as fruitful voices to this debate. To prepare ground for this engagement, the present chapter will close with a re-articulation of the research questions on the basis of our discussion of the theoretical debate in today's IR.

3.1. The Political Theory – International Relations nexus

It is often noted that since the mid-1980s, especially as a result of the so called "fourth debate," the nature of International Relations (IR) has undergone a notable change[45]. Already the third debate – especially the critical and reflective approaches – opened the central concepts of the discipline – such as the state, sovereignty, and security – for a critical scrutiny. However, it was the fourth debate that launched a full-blown philosophico-theoretical discussion(s) on the underlying presuppositions concerning the philosophy of science and the nature and dynamics of society, politics, individuals, gender, masculinity and femininity, language, and practices[46]. As a consequence, the number of themes considered relevant, as well as the array of methodological and theoretical approaches has exploded to the point where, according to Christine Sylvester, the discipline has converted into a constellation of different 'camps' knowing little of, and understanding even less, the doings of the other camps[47]. As a part of this wider development, questions of ethical-political nature have become an important part of the disciplinary

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[45] The appropriate name for the 1980s debate is an object of a debate of its own among IR scholars. Originally, based on Yosef Lapid's (1989) article with the same name, it was called the "third debate". Later on among others Ole Wæver (1996) and Milja Kurki and Colin Wight (2007) have questioned Lapid's understanding of the debate's substance as well as the number of previous debates. It is the latter I am following here with the term "fourth debate".

[46] Wæver 1996, 156-157, 164–165, *passim*. At this point the discussion concerning the actor ontology of international relations started to be accompanied by and intertwine with more strictly philosophical approaches to ontology (Wæver 1996, 177n7). Accordingly, a debate on metatheoretical issues evolved during the 1990s (foundationalism versus antifoundationalism, positivism versus post-positivism). In the 2000s the debate has revolved around Critical Realist such as Patomäki and Wight (2000) and their critics from various other perspectives such as instrumentalism, pragmatism, and phenomenology (on the discussions see e.g. Brown 1994; Käpylä-Mikkola 2011; Rytövuori-Apunen 2005). Inspite of the philosophical nature of the present study, I will not enter this debate in depth. It should be clear from the following chapters, however, that my sympathies are with the pragmatist positions in the debate.

[47] Sylvester 2007, 552–555; Wæver 1996, 157.

matrix, and especially the critical approaches eagerly recognize the irrefutable ethical-political character of all research.

There are multiple ways of proceeding with this kind of problematic. On the one hand, there is a wide array of approaches asking explicitly normative questions: what kind of normative presuppositions world politics reflect, what role human rights can or should have in international relations, can humanitarian interventions be justified and so on[48]. As these questions bring forth, the questions and problems faced by the discipline are in no way separable or independent from the concrete developments of political practices (for instance, the increasing influence of humanitarianism in the post-Cold War world, the role of United Nations and so on)[49]. When it comes to these kinds of normative questions, one should be wary of over-emphasizing the change that has taken place after the fourth debate. For there is also an altogether different story to be told, one that emphasizes how normative questions and aspiration have been present since the birth of the discipline after the first world war[50].

The rise of ethical-political research as we currently know it, however, took place from 1980s onwards, with contributions of Terry Nardin and R.J.Vincent re-raising many of the somewhat ignored normative questions[51] and Charles Beitz arguing against a strict separation between IR and political theory[52]. The end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s saw the emergence of a distinct normative school of IR, machi-

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[48] To give some examples, necessarily just a scratch on the surface, in the 1990s and 2000s human rights have been the topic for the volume edited by Dunne and Wheeler (1999), humanitarianism and humanitarian interventions are dealt with in Wheeler's (2002) monograph as well as the edited volume by Welsh (2006). Norms have been studied from a variety of perspectives. In a classic study, Mervyn Frost (1996) attempts to explain the emergence of norms starting from certain philosophical presumptions. The representatives of the English School and moderate constructivist, for instance, have mostly focused on the empirical verification of existing norms while often simultaneously attempting to promote human rights (see, e.g., Dunne 1998, 98–104). Neumann and Sending (2007), on the contrary, treat existing norms of the international system as instruments of power.

[49] On the development see e.g. Nyers 1999, 2, 5.

[50] Even though it is not strictly incorrect to claim that the hegemony of political realism and the so called 'neo'-approaches narrowed the space of normative approaches, in certain sense these questions have always been present, at least in the marginalia and about the discipline's core, even if the emphasis was traditionally state-centrically limited to the study of the normative aspects of war, peace and diplomacy. For instance, the knowledge-interest guiding the establishment of the first academic chair for IR was the prevention of a new war (a normative goal), and the vision of David Davies, the founder of the first-ever International Politics department in Aberystwyth was in many ways similar to the critical-normative approaches of today (Booth 2007a, 360). In addition, there has always been a lot of interaction between IR and peace research. For instance, Galtung (1969, 12–13) defines peace research in explicitly normative terms as a field of study that has to deal with questions of how things should be. Moreover, his idea of "positive peace" (Galtung 1969, 12) as the unification of mankind bears close resemblance to certain normative (cosmopolitan) approaches that were developed in IR in 1990s.

[51] Nardin 1983; Vincent 1986. Hedley Bull's classic, *The Anarchical Society*, published already in 1977, can arguably be read as an important forerunner for this kind of approaches. See especially his discussion on cosmopolitanism (Bull 1977, 84–86, 316–317, *passim*.)

[52] Beitz 1979.

nated especially by Chris Brown, Mark Hoffman, Janna Thompson, and Mervyn Frost[53]. At the same time, as a parallel development, emerged the critical, feminist, pragmatist, and post-structuralist approaches, sharing with normative theory the interest in ethical-political issues and to the IR-political theory nexus, yet often critical of the normative character of the approaches of Brown et al., as well as the specific way they conduct their studies. In a (only) somewhat altered form, this constellation forms the basis for ethical-political research in present day IR as well. The debate concerns, for example, the emphasis put on the classics of political theory and the 'international' aspects of their thought. Especially the early pioneers (Brown, Nardin, Williams) were somewhat more interested in the 'perennial questions' and classical debates, say, between Kantianism and Hegelianism, whereas majority of the 'critical' approaches seek to understand and criticize the empirical reality of today's world from a certain philosophically-oriented framework they consider valuable. The locus of the present work is somewhere in between these two rough characters, on the one hand sharing more with the approaches emphasizing the historical and empirically affiliated character of international political thought, but on the other being a theoretical work on the thought of two 'classics'.

These different ethical-political approaches, engaged in an "ethical, historical and philosophical reflection on the manner and matter of international politics"[54], vary significantly in their styles, objectives and influences. In spite of this, there is a common domain to which these approaches are related to, that is, the interface between IR and political theory[55]. In the beginning of 2000s, this interface has attracted more and more attention from IR scholars as can be observed for example from the growing literature on the matter[56]. Painting with a broad brush, some underlying commonalities can be teased out from the literature. Two points are of special interest and importance from the point of view of the study at hand.

Firstly, ethics and world politics are seen as co-constitutive and interdependent in such a way that ethics cannot be conceived as something that is merely 'applied' to world political questions, or, worse yet, seen as something that does not belong to world politics or international relations. However, even if most writers pay at least a lip service to this point, the ways of proceeding forwards vary according to philosophical orientations. More transcendentally oriented writers defend the independence of the ethical-

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[53] Frost 1986; Frost 1996; Thompson 1992; Brown 1987; Brown 1992; Hoffman 1988. See also Patomäki 1992.

[54] Rengger 2005, 361.

[55] Brown (2007) refers to "International Political Theory (IPT)", Simon Caney criticizes Brown's term for being state-centric and suggests "Global Political Theory" as an alternative (Caney 2005, 2), Jackson (2005, ix, *passim*.) talks simply of "international thought," and Rob Walker (1993) of "International Relations *as* Political Theory" (my emphasis). See also Williams 1994.

[56] Brown – Nardin – Rengger 2002; Jackson 2005; Edkins – Vaughan-Williams 2009; Moore – Farrands 2010.

moral sphere from politics, using the former as a yardstick for evaluating the latter. Others focus on the (power) politics behind all forms of "ethics" or the ethics implied in all politics, and the particular empirical manifestations of these relationships. Secondly, special attention is paid to the status of the nation-state and to the problematizations of the state/humanity, citizen/humankind, and particularity/universality dichotomies[57]. We will get to this point in the next section, but first it is time to shortly clarify the terminology of the study.

I have been using, and will be using throughout the study, the hyphenated 'ethical-political'. The term is indebted to Richard Bernstein, who uses it to denote the classical (Greek) understanding of the symbiosis between ethics and politics. Even though most approaches to political thought in IR to some extent acknowledge this interconnectedness, many of them – too easily in my mind – slip into either thinking politics as a kind of a subfield of ethics or formulating something like "political ethics" as a set of principles that justifies things that every day morality would not approve of[58]. What I seek to denote with 'ethical-political', is something of a more reciprocal and intimate connection between the two fields, seeing ethics and politics as two sides of the same coin, but not identical. If ethics is understood as habits, customs and modes of response that shape our *praxis*, and politics as concern with our public lives, then they are practically inseparable. There is no ethics that does not take into account political responsibilities and commitments, or an understanding of politics that does not bring us back to ethics. These are the two aspects of a unified practical philosophy.[59]

It is the above mentioned understanding of practical philosophy that guides this study when it engages with the ethical-political horizons of Rorty and Arendt. When it comes to other central concepts used, such as community and belonging, too strict definitions at this point would be counterproductive. As we will see, Rorty and Arendt share the idea that communities exist at different levels and the meaning of the term varies along with the level. So the working definition for 'community' must remain, at this point, a sense of being-with or being-together of a group of people that has some kind of effects on the actions of its members. But, to get back on the track, we will next look how the problematic(s) of community, belonging and exclusion have been formulated in IR literature. We will first discuss the emergence of communities as questions and look at the logics and history of the nation-state system. After

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[57] See, e.g., Booth 1995, 109–112; Brassett – Bulley 2007, 1-2, 11; Brown 1992, 3–8; Cochran 1999, 1–18, *passim.*; Robinson 1997, 114–115; Walker 1993.

[58] Both approaches are discussed in Jackson (2005), who himself seems to buy into a way of thinking politics as a subfield of ethics, or something to which ethics is applied (Jackson, ix, 4).

[59] Bernstein 1991, 9.

doing this, the debate between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, prevalent in the 1980s and early 1990s, will be introduced. It will provide the basic concepts of the later discussion in this and subsequent chapters. This being done, a short discussion in the section 3.2.3 on the contemporary global architecture will make ground for the up-to-date theoretical debate, which is discussed in the section 3.2.4.

3.2. IR, community, cosmopolis: the thematic background of the work

3.2.1. From nation-statism to communities and boundaries as problems

This study deals with the scope and boundaries of political communities from an ethical-political point of view. Traditionally, International Relations as a discipline has not asked questions about communities in this way. The reason has been the taken-for-granted status of the Westphalian sovereign nation-state. And this status is by no means with no foundations. There is, indeed, something almost sublime about the nation-state as a historically conditioned practice. As Rob Walker, one of the pioneers in this area of study, puts it, the sovereign nation-state is an elegant answer "to the deeply provocative question as to how political life is possible at all"[60]. It is an eloquent resolution to the conflict between universality and particularity[61], a symbiosis of highly sophisticated political-institutional structure – the modern state – and a strong sentiment of (exclusive) belonging, a "full attachment"[62] – nationalism[63]. The novelty of the modern nation-state in comparison with earlier forms of political organization, in other words, is the combination of the modern technologies of governance (censuses, maps, statistics) and a sense of be-longing together of a huge mass of people based on quasi-biological-cum-mythological criteria. There-fore the nation-state, by definition, not only sees all strangers and foreigners (citizens of another country) as outsiders, but is also able to keep score on how many of 'them' is among 'us'[64]. Three presupposi-tions, hence, lurk behind nation-statism. Firstly, every state is supposed to consists mainly of single nation, thereby fusing the meanings of *ethnos* and *demos*[65]. Secondly, every individual is supposed to have a natural place within this order, one nation-state where he or she belongs. And thirdly, nation-states as units have been pictured as 'sovereign', i.e. the borders between them have been supposed to be relatively thick.

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[60] Walker 1993, 64.
[61] The fact that the nation-state incorporates into itself universal values, on the one hand, and particular civil society, on the other, makes the nation-state, according to Habermas, Janus-faced (Habermas 1998, 405).
[62] Appadurai 1998.
[63] Habermas 1998, 402–404; Walker 1993
[64] See Appadurai 2007, 5, 41–42; Savic 2005, 73.
[65] Appadurai 2007, 3.

This image, like any other, has never been a purely neutral description of things as they stand. It can be argued that, historically speaking, the leading 'ideology' of world politics has been 'statism', a presupposition according to which the sovereign national state is the natural and legitimate form of political community that enables a *justifiable* separation of insiders and outsiders, as well as the distinctions between politics and international relations, humans and citizens, and IR and political theory[66]. However, pure *ethnos* has always been more a fiction than a fact in most states. Almost every state has had some kind of minority population, and their rights have been a constant dilemma at the international level. For this, and various other reasons, there have always been masses of people that are somehow outside of the statist settings, what Liisa Malkki calls "the national order of things"[67]: refugees and stateless people. These groups (or the phenomenon of forced migration more generally[68]), many argue, exemplify a conceptual and empirical break between humanity and citizenship[69]. Moreover, 'Westphalian sovereignty' – a hopelessly anachronistic notion – has always, as Stephen Krasner has argued, been a norm both widely accepted and often violated, and hence "organized hypocrisy"[70]. The various violations, or rather conflicting "settled norms,[71]" include minority rights, human rights, and sovereign lending[72]. None of the abovementioned presuppositions, then, can stand a critical scrutiny. This, nonetheless, is not to say that the nation-state system would not continue to be a strong framework for organizing political life. It is, and it also continues to have a strong hold on both popular imagination and the presuppositions of majority of scientific studies.

However, the problematic nature of sovereignty and nation-statism became a bit more widely noted in the disciplinary matrix of IR in the 1980s. Nation-states, their borders and practices of inclusion/exclusion, were increasingly conceived as *questions* as well as answers. The nation-state was no longer self-evidently conceived as *the* political community. Instead, through the entry of classical philosophical debate in IR in 1980s, many cosmopolitans argued that humanity is the primary site of community. In the next section we will have a look at this early debate between cosmopolitans and the defend-

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[66] Booth 2007b, 23–24, *passim*.; Nyers 1999, 10, 15–16; Parker – Brassett 2005, 234, 239; Walker 1993, ix, 62, 77, 152–153, 174. On the development and history of the contemporary state-system, see Watson 1992, 182-325 and Walker 1993, 90. The use of the term 'ideology' here is intended to denote merely the fact that something that is contingent and political is set forth as something neutral, mere description of 'the facts'.
[67] Malkki 1995.
[68] Even forced migration is an insufficient category since the distinction between forced and voluntary migration is, in the end of the day, implausible (Betts 2009, 4).
[69] Nyers 1999, 22; Owens 2009, 568.
[70] Krasner 1999, 8–9. On the anachronism of the term, see Krasner 1999, 20. On different conceptions of sovereignty, see Krasner 1999, 1–20 and Walker 1993, 165.
[71] Frost 1996.
[72] Krasner 1999, 73–75, 105–126, 127–151.

ers of nation-state system, or more widely, communitarians. Even if the debate as such has been more or less buried by now, it provides a valuable introduction to the concepts of the discussion as it is commerced today as well as to its history.

3.2.2. The communitarian-cosmopolitan debate of the 1980s and 1990s

The debate between the two broad schools, the 'cosmopolitans' and the 'communitarians', first entered IR through the exchange between Chris Brown and Mark Hoffmann in the late 1980s[73]. The substance matter of the debate, however, originates to Immanuel Kant's cosmopolitanism (even though cosmopolitanism as such originates to Zeno[74]) and Georg W.F. Hegel's "communitarianism", and circles around questions concerning the source and object of ultimate moral values, on the one hand, and the ontological primacy of individual or community, on the other[75]. The communitarians emphasize the role of particular political community either as a source of moral values or as a necessary locus where the universal values gain concreteness, and therefore defend political identifications to particular communities, especially modern nation-states (and their exclusive policies). The cosmopolitans argue that humanity, either as whole or through each individual subject – has an independent moral standing and functions both as the source of and as the ultimate *telos* of moral values, and therefore all particularistic moral sympathies are somewhat suspect.[76] Martha Nussbaum, one of the most prominent contemporary cosmopolitans, argues that we should give "our first allegiance and respect" to the "fundamental ingredients" of humanity, reason and moral capacity[77]. Cosmopolitanism, in other words, envisages "a solidarist community or cosmopolis of humankind, where ethics are truly universal, in the sense of applying to every man and woman on earth"[78], which, however, does not necessarily imply a plea for a world state or world government[79].

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[73] Brown 1987 and Hoffmann 1988.
[74] See e.g. Douzinas 2007, 153.
[75] Brown 1992, 12–14, *passim*. Cochran (1999, 6) sees the subject of justice (state vs. individual) as the central disagreement. It should also be noted that (naturally) not all cosmopolitans are Kantians and communitarians Hegelians. Of the classical positions in political theory, for example, Brown (1992, 44, 59, 71) names Marxists and utilitarianists as cosmopolitans, and Johan von Herder as a communitarian (and hence nationalism as the most important non-Hegelian contribution to communitarianism). Furthermore, the division lines have become increasingly blurred since some 20th century Kantian liberals such as John Rawls have, in their 'international thought', taken sides with communitarians such as Michael Walzer, who in turn share more with the liberals than with, say, extreme nationalist (Rawls 1999, 119–120, *passim;* Walzer 1996).
[76] Brown 1992, 12–14, *passim.* See also Cochran 1999, 6–10, *passim.*
[77] Nussbaum 1996, 7.
[78] Jackson 2005, x.
[79] Brown 1992, 24.

Even though the debate was taken as a starting point for the early normative theories in the early 1990s[80], this framing of the issue had its critics straight from the beginning as well. Heikki Patomäki, for instance, criticized both 'positions' as unhelpful, utopian, theoretical constructions[81]. Both positions can also easily be taken to perverted extremes. As Walzer has it: "[t]he crimes of the twentieth century have been committed alternately, as it were, by perverted patriots and perverted cosmopolitans"[82]. Towards the latter half of the 1990s these assessments gained popularity as more and more scholars attempted to move beyond the impasse towards a more contextual, pragmatic, and critical ethical-political positions, noting that cosmopolitanism and communitarianism share too much with each other to produce fruitful conversation[83]. Moreover, we are dealing here with a continuum. Liberal nationalist like Walzer are relatively close to conservative-communitarian Huntington in some bits, arguing that a community can justifiably execute an exclusive and restrictive immigration policy if immigration may betray the moral obligations of settled population towards each other[84]. Liberal cosmopolitans, Habermas and Benhabib, on the other hand, argue for self-referential and discoursively contestable practices of exclusion[85].

Even though a strand of "conservative communitarianism," what Aaltola calls 'declinism'[86], is well represented in the popular imaginary, it is only a minor voice in the disciplinary debate today. Many do not agree with Samuel Huntington, who has expressed his worries that the flow of migration from Mexico will corrupt the traditional Anglo-Protestant culture of the USA and, like African immigration to Europe, result in "schizophrenic torn countries"[87]. One could then say that in today's IR *this* set of questions has been replaced with *another* set of questions[88], or, at least, that even if the earlier debate has not entirely been swept off from the table, it has been accompanied by so many new questions, that the center of the debate has moved elsewhere. The lasting element in the communitarian/cosmopolitan debate was the question of cosmopolitanism and its critiques, or in other words questions concerning whether or not 'humanity' can be seen as a relevant political community. Since the questions concerning

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[80] Most explicitly so in Brown 1992 and Thompson 1992.

[81] Patomäki 1992, 53.

[82] Walzer 1996, 126.

[83] See e.g. Cochran 1999, 17, passim.; Robinson 1997, 117–118.

[84] See Exdell 2010, 218–221 and Benhabib 2004b, 138–139, *passim.*

[85] Habermas and Benhabib will be discussed later on in this section. What this continuum is supposed to highlight, in the first place, is that the cosmopolitan-communitarian divide introduced earlier, is extremely hard to keep up. It might therefore be worthwhile, if one wishes to keep on working with these concepts, to follow Simon Caney's lead and break down communitarianism to realism, nationalism, and the society of states approaches (Caney 2005, 15–16).

[86] Aaltola 2009, 73–74, 85, 115–117.

[87] Huntington 2004; Huntington 1996, 204, 306. Exdell's (2010, 218–230) empirical case study on Latino immigration shows, against Walzer and Huntington, that immigration has actually strengthened solidarity and active political atmosphere, not weakened them.

[88] Brassett – Bulley 2007, 2–3.

the meaning of borders and boundaries, identity and difference, particularity and universality, are highly dependent on the characterization of international system, they are becoming ever more pressing due to empirical developments in the world since 1990s and the increasing difficulty to pin down the exact character of the world order. The next section will look at the changes in the world order, and its implications to our conceptions of community and boundaries. This is done in order to prepare ground for the debate between Kantian cosmopolitans and 'posts-structuralist', discussed in section 3.2.4.

3.2.3. The changing plausibility of borders and boundaries

Perhaps the key frame through which the contemporary reality is approached is globalization. After the Cold War, the world has witnessed an increment of cross-border and cross-boundary movements and global flows. Arjun Appadurai has identified five dimensions of global cultural flows as movements of people, technology, capital, information/images, and ideas/ideologies[89]. Different non-state actors are becoming more and more powerful, and humanitarianism has become an important frame through which actors evaluate each other's legitimacy[90]. Some would conclude, thus, that universal humanity is slowly taking the place of parochial groupings, especially nation-states, as the central political ideal. For Ulrich Beck, "the human condition has itself become cosmopolitan", characterized by a global sense, "a sense [though not facticity] of boundarylessness"[91]. While not everyone shares Beck's ideas, there is a wide consensus that the nature of communal borders and boundaries has changed.

The indisputable strengths of nation-states notwithstanding, then, the naturalness of this specific articulation of political community is becoming more and more problematic. Purely empirical developments – globalization, regionalism, humanitarianism and refugee flows to name only few – have forced scholars to rethink the ways we have framed questions of democracy, justice and membership. Democratic theory, for one, has awoken to its "embarrassing impotence" when faced with the questions concerning its own scope and units of analysis. There is a chicken-and-egg paradox involved: boundaries seem to precede democratic decisions; yet, if the boundaries are not decided on democratically, can the decisions of this community be really democratic in genuine sense?[92] Borders and boundaries have emerged into the

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[89] Appadurai (1996, 33–36) refers to these flows as ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes. There are also, of course, those who make the empirical case for the argument that no drastic changes have taken place (see, e.g., Hirst – Thompson - Bromley 2009; Weiss 1997).

[90] Aaltola 2009, 1–15.

[91] Beck 2006, 2–3. It must be emphasized that we are talking of a *sense* of boundarylessness; even Beck would not claim that borders and boundaries have lost their meaning, quite the contrary (see, e.g. Beck 2006, 110).

[92] Shapiro - Hacker-Cordón 1999, 1.

spotlights of study of world politics[93]. For Matthew Festenstein, *the* central question of international political theory is the status and justification of boundaries between states, cultures and nations[94]. And Festenstein is far from alone in calling more attention to boundaries[95]. Many share Walker's assessment that

> "Our political futures, and the most interesting forms of political analysis, will necessarily become more and more obsessed with boundaries, borders and limits, though not only of the kind we recognize with our experience of the modern state and states system"[96]

One development that calls attention to boundaries is the rapidly decreasing isomorphism of borders. In the new diverged constellation of border practices, the meaning of borders between different layers of world hierarchy – like the southern borders of the EU and the U.S – has increased vis-à-vis the borders of nation-states[97]; in other words, borders converging with boundaries of political communities larger than nation-states are of gaining relevance, partly because borders are a site where the legitimacy of different political bodies – from individual/somatic to communal to hegemonic – is evaluated. For instance, the European Union utilizes its southern borders in building its identity and legitimacy by blocking illegal migration, and the U.S. border practices build the hegemon's legitimacy through highly sophisticated technologies (background checks, name profiling, biometric authentication) attempting at secure flow of people and goods while creating a zone of confidence against terrorism.[98] From the reverse side, these practices heighten the hierarchy between different cultural backgrounds: for example, typical Arabic names like Ahmed or Mohammed may result in additional troubles at the airport. Thus, "when it comes to the citizenship of the world, not everybody is treated as equal"[99].

In the modern networked borderlands[100] the age-old theme where foreign elements and loose borders are seen as an indicator of the corruption of civil religion has taken a new form in 'profiling' practices. By making use of the 'rogue' imaginary borders are framed as stages of efficient governance by controlling the movements of 'unwanted' elements – illegal immigrants, economic opportunist, 'bogus' asylum

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[93] The difference between borders and boundaries is that borders can be understood as physical, territorial, and institutional lines of separation, whereas boundaries are more deterritorialized, psychological divisions. Sometimes they overlap with each other, and other times they are relatively independent from each other.

[94] Festenstein 2002, 549–550.

[95] See, e.g., Brassett – Bulley 2007, 2; Brown 2000, Linklater 1992, 78; Parker – Brassett 2005, 234; Rumford 2006; Walker 2010, 2, 11.

[96] Walker 2010, 34.

[97] Aaltola 2009, 66–67. In the European case, similar weight is laid on the eastern boundaries (Brown 2010, 31).

[98] Aaltola 2009, 66, 86-96; Brown 2010, 94.

[99] Aaltola 2009, 101–105, 119. See also Dillon – Reid 2009, 144.

[100] Rumford (2006, 157–161) makes the point that, when studying and theorizing about borders, it is useful to see borders not as lines on the map, but as networked borderlands, whereby it becomes possible to see, for example, the motorway as part of the border-system.

seekers, drug smugglers, suicide bombers, and Islamic extremist – while encouraging the movements of others – businessmen, frequent flyers, exchange students and so on[101]. Profiling is a central practice in defining and limiting the membership of political community: who is allowed to cross the border, who is a well-behaving member, and how are different groups of people hierarchically related to each other. "The primary aim of developing profiling policies," Aaltola argues, "is to establish conditions that ensure healthy political communities in a specific culturally constructed sense of the word". Therefore, the functioning of border practices also reveals the underlying ideal conceptualization concerning a well-ordered political community.[102]

At the same time, a similar development, although with a different functional logic is perceptible. The detachment of sovereignty from the nation-states seems to produce an increasing popular demand in countries like the U.S. and Israel for walling the borders, building fences, not so much against international threats, but against transnational flows such as refugees (that are, empirically falsely, linked to terrorist threats). As Wendy Brown has argued, these theatrical walls at the national borders, far from being manifestations of state sovereignty, are to be read as icons of its erosion.[103] The walls may also be seen as expressions of larger phenomena launched by global flows and the consequential insecurity in personal lives. This anxiety expresses itself in a greater emphasis on the national community as a cultural resource. In this frame, all strangers easily become seen as embodiments of abstract threats and reminders of the failure of the classical nationalist project.[104] The combination of treating minorities as cultural or civilizational category, instead of procedural one (as their genealogy would suggest), and the global flows of people easily causes anxiety among majorities that they will become minor themselves[105].

In the theoretical field, many scholars have noted the enormous relevance of questions concerning movement of peoples, especially refugees and asylum seekers, to IR despite the neglect of these issues until recently[106]. As Patricia Owens – an Arendtian scholar – puts it:

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[101] Aaltola 2009, 71; Rumford 2006, 157. These filtering practices are especially accentuated at the time of crisis, like pandemic scares or terrorist threats, when processes of filtering movements and securing the borders are paid extra attention to (Aaltola 2009, 73, 138). On the etymology of the 'rogue' see also Derrida 2005 and Dillon – Reid 2009, 141–146.
[102] Aaltola 2009, 86.
[103] Brown 2010, 24–32, 81, 116. None of the "new walls", furthermore, actually succeed in doing what they are supposed to do – quite the contrary, sometimes they even result in professionalization of human trafficking and drug smuggling, hence making the problem even more severe (Brown 2010, 27, 112). In addition, far from reinforcing state sovereignty, because of the vigilante character of wall-builders and voluntary 'border-patrols', the phenomenon actually blurs the line between inside and outside, police and military, and internal and external security (e.g. Brown 2010, 87).
[104] Appadurai 2007, 22–23, 43–45. See also Brown 2010, 125.
[105] Appadurai 2007, 52–64, 83.
[106] See, e.g., Betts 2009; Parker-Brassett 2005; Nyers 1999; Owens 2009.

"Although it is the institution of sovereignty, one of the central preoccupations of International Relations (IR), that produces the legal and territorial category of the refugee, the field has paid relatively little attention to forced migration."[107]

At the level of political practices, however, questions of forced movement are usually dealt in such a manner to avoid any disturbances to the functioning of the world-order. The "refugee problem" is usually dealt with following the logic of 'emergency' discourse, emphasizing the humanitarian aspects of these 'complex emergencies'. Consequently, it is argued, the problem is depoliticized and refugees are emptied of agency and personal history, regarded as "bare humans", subjected to myriad forms of disciplinary and regulatory practices, and attempted to return to the 'normal' order as quickly and smoothly as possible, without interrupting the functioning of the state system.[108] The possible solutions, repatriation or assimilation, work as to direct attention away from the problems of political order, order that Arendt once referred to as the "old trinity of state-people-territory" (OT, 282). This is in line with the arguments of Barry Hindess, who has further developed Foucault's analyses on how modern politics has become a 'biopolitics' of governing populations (understood as biological entities)[109]. Hindess argues that the very system of modern citizenship, developed from the 17th century onwards, is a product of supranational regime of governance in which each state is responsible for the governance of its own population, thereby making possible the international management of the global population, that is, the human species.[110] Also other (loosely) Foucauldian scholars have sought to expose how the processes of liberal governance work beyond the limits of nation-states yet transform or even fortify, rather than weaken, border controls and transform or globalize, rather than transgress, national form of citizenship[111].

This section has identified empirical changes in the nature of the world political realities in the recent decades, especially post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods. We have seen a transition from a world in which the 'Westphalian' sovereignty was still a relatively settled norm to a world characterized by continuous flux, in which different communities overlap with each other, and the dispositifs of power at

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[107] Owens 2009, 567. See also Parker and Brassett (2005, 234–235) who make the same kind of point from a Rortian perspective.

[108] Nyers 1999, 11, 15-16, 20–21, 23; Owens 2009, 570; Lui 2004, 117, 121, 131. It is historically important to remember that for a long time refugees were not a humanitarian problem, but a military one (Malkki 1995, 499).

[109] See, e.g. Foucault 2003, 243–246; Foucault 2007, 65, 106.

[110] Hindess 2000, 1493–1494. See also Lui (2004, 116–117) who argues that the 'refugee problem' as it is currently understood, is a product of co-operation of bio- and geopolitics and Arneil (2007, 306–307) who argues that a global citizenship, promoted by the U.S. is based on a model in which people should be governed through their individual nation-states working by the logic of 'universal' liberal values.

[111] See, e.g. Larner – Walters 2004, 2–8; Jayasuriya 2005, 14, 133-134; Arneil 2007, 302.

their borders are increasingly complex. The nation-state is still arguably the most powerful frame for organizing political life, but its plausibility is continuously contested. This has also had its effects on the theoretical debate, in which most of the voices today are looking for something beyond nation-statism. The following section will introduce the reader to this debate. Special attention is paid to the representatives of a Kantian cosmopolitan lineage and Habermasian Critical Theorists, on the one hand, and 'poststructuralist' writers such as Agamben and Nancy, on the other. These two groups constitute the main participants in the debate on political communities in contemporary political theory and IR. They are therefore also the main theoretical positions that will be engaged in the latter parts of the present study.

3.2.4. "Where to?": Cosmopolitanism, singularity, and the politics to come

A majority of the commentators agree that we are moving beyond a simple Westphalian sovereignty, but – in crude terms – disagree whether the emerging order is a cosmopolitan community of humanity, a hierarchical empire, or something more complex than either of these options. It can be said that the world today is in a 'post-international', 'post-Westphalian' or 'post-national' stage; yet what this positively means is highly debatable[112]. The character of this debate is ethical-political (or normative) as much as it is empirical. Roughly put, the debate is split between different variants of, let us call it, 'classical' cosmopolitanism and variants of 'post-structuralist' thought that try to go beyond the assumption of modern politics or 'ontopolitics'. The latter often agree with the analysis of globalizing world, but interpret the political nature of the emerging order in a vastly different manner, arguing that the global flow of ideas is often unidirectional universalization of Western values and 'governmentality', as the Foucauldians call it. Also the positive suggestions for future politics are highly differentiated. In this kind of situation, more than ever, empirical descriptions, ethical-political theories and political practices are not easily distinguished. And exactly because of the elusiveness and volatility of the situation, new and fruitful articulations of communities and boundaries are urgently needed. These questions are indeed, as we already saw above, winning ground in the discipline. In order to position my own study, the rest of this chapter is devoted to a *tour d'horizon* of different positions in this debate. I will begin by discussing forms of Kantian cosmopolitanism and Critical Theory, then move to the criticism they – and humanity as a form of political community in more general terms – have received. After that, we will have a look at the 'post-structuralist' positions in the debate. Special attention is paid to Jean-Luc Nancy

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[112] Parker 2009, 18; Brown 2010, 21; Benhabib 2007; Cf. Edkins – Zehfuss 2005, 451.

and Giorgio Agamben and their followers in IR, because these two writers have most clearly articulated new possibilities for framing political community and belonging.

In the liberal-cum-cosmopolitan end of the spectrum are the scholars identifying with the tradition of Critical Theory and the Kantian legacy in philosophy. Often, but not always, they are in some sense followers of *Jürgen Habermas* and his articulations of communicative action and discourse ethics. Communicative action (as opposed to instrumental action), shortly put, is a deliberative process in which the participants coordinate their action through reciprocally and rationally evaluating their validity claims. Rationality, for Habermas, is a capacity inherent in language and communication, if they are allowed to function without distortions (that is, in absence of use of force and in a shared spirit of "let the best argument win"). This kind of communication, according to Habermas, implicates an attempt to consensus, and therefore, through its application to ethics, also the possibility of universal ethics applicable to, and relevant for, the whole of humanity.[113] Habermas and Habermasians – such as Seyla Benhabib – can thus be counted as defenders of a Kantian cosmopolitanism, reformulated as republicanism without nationalism, i.e. constitutional patriotism[114], and coupled with a cosmopolitan federalism.

For Benhabib, this means that we have to pay extra attention to the politics of membership and boundaries. She argues that a cosmopolitan federalism should be a community of humanity, divided into smaller political units with porous (albeit not radically open) borders, and guided by a principle of "democratic iterations", complex processes of public argument and deliberation through which universalist claims are contextualized and contested in their encounters with individual legislatures.[115] Her ethical-political position leaves many exclusive criteria available to political communities, but rules out exclusion based on non-eclectic qualities such as nationality (understood as *ethnos*), because from the perspective of discourse ethics, the principles of exclusion have to be such that they could be reciprocally accepted[116].

In the social scientific debate on cosmopolitanism, sociologist Ulrich Beck, also akin to Habermas, stands out as a defender of Kantian cosmopolitan heritage. Beck's approach is two-fold, combining

[113] Habermas is discussed, *inter alia*, by Bernstein 1991, 202-208 and Benhabib 2004b, 13.
[114] See Habermas 1998, 408.
[115] Benhabib 2004b, 176–180, 221.
[116] Benhabib 2004b, 17–21, 138–131, 174–179, 206. Benhabib also argues that cross-boundary movements (refugees, (im)migrants, etc.) repeatedly impugn the statist models which still have their hold on our political imaginations (Benhabib 2004a, 174). These processes call for rethinking the state-centric modalities of political membership and agency. See also Habermas (1998, 398), who argues that the current political trend necessitates the development of supranational political institutions, sooner or later.

normative and methodological aspects. As with Benhabib, his starting point is the fact that the world is changing, whether we want it or not, and out scientific outlooks should change with it[117]. The main target of criticism is methodological nationalism, i.e. a hidden bias towards nation-statism on the research agenda, naturalizing the inside/outside dichotomy in social research[118]. Beck, like many other modern cosmopolitans, does not aim at replacing nationalism, but incorporating it into his cosmopolitanism[119]. Beck seeks to transgress the choice between the Scylla of universalism (forcing one's standpoint on others, but taking everyone's fate with the same seriousness) and Charybdis of relativism (rejecting the change of opinions, but respecting others). Beck's option is a contextualist universalism that seeks to affirm universal norms while neutralizing their imperialistic edge. This is to be done, argues Beck, through a universalistic minimum, a "cosmopolitan common sense," certain substantive norms to be upheld at all costs accompanied by a procedural settlement of global disagreements.[120] This, like the more institutionally oriented cosmopolitanism of Held et al.[121], even if vary of imperialism, eventually gets back to what Beck understands as Kantian cosmopolitanism, i.e. an active task of "imposing an order on the world"[122].

More strictly within IR, Andrew Linklater, Ken Booth and others have taken steps on a similar kind of path as Beck, Habermas and Benhabib, trying to locate signs of emerging post-Westphalian citizenship practices and a slowly developing global community. For Linklater, inclusion/exclusion is the key question of world politics and he is, in his own words, an "unapologetic" universalist and a defender of inclusive membership practices[123]. Like Habermas, Linklater is an advocate for a "thin universalism" that emphasizes discourse and dialogue instead of individual reason as the source of cosmopolitan values[124]. Linklater is also somewhat hopeful that recent developments in Europe can be read as manifestations of post-Westphalian citizenship and democracy (as a movement from national citizenship to citizenship of residency), while also noting the European failure to treat third country nationals in a manner that would

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[117] Beck 2006, 2, 19.
[118] Beck 2006, 2, 17, 27–29. Beck's methodological cosmopolitanism, by contrast, actively questions the old dichotomies and looks at thing from a post-international perspective. It pays special attention to global risks and their global-public-opinion-creating character, global inequality, global side effects of local politics, and to the cosmopolitanization (not only globalization) of everyday life, i.e. "banal cosmopolitanism," which has started to accompany banal nationalism.
[119] Beck 2006, 31, 44, 49. In this, he his agreeing with a variety of writers from Kwame Anthony Appiah (1996) to Julia Kristeva (1993, 32-33, 50.
[120] Beck 2006, 49–59.
[121] See e.g. Held 2007.
[122] Beck 2006, 20.
[123] Linklater 1998, 2.
[124] Linklater 1998, 48–50.

somehow differ from traditional national exclusion[125]. Linklater, like many other Critical Theorists, is also hopeful on the prospects of emerging transnational or global civil society in promoting a cosmopolitan version of discourse ethics, framed as something that happens at the level of humanity as well as within individual republics[126].

Seen from the other side of the theoretical fences, the abovementioned cosmopolitans run the risk of not heeding that in some respects, "cosmopolitanism must be read as a constitutive aspect of the problems that many of those attracted to cosmopolitanism seek to address"[127]. That is, cosmopolitanism easily slips into thinking in statist terms, just on a larger scale (a world state is a good example of this). Furthermore, and here we enter into more philosophical waters, cosmopolitans, especially of the Kantian strand, are often accused of being content to wish politics away, to escape into an idealistic ethical discourse. If this is what cosmopolitanism is, says Walker, then it is not a way to think hard about the possibilities of agency and community, and we can "leave it to those moralists who already know where we must be going".[128] And there is a further problem in this "where": for many, it seems to imply a logic of progress where non-Westerners continue to trail behind[129]. That is, even though their universalism is "light", it still may turn out to be overemphasized, at the price of failing to pay sufficient attention to the complex relationship between particular and the universal[130].

The most concrete example of universalism is of course the talk about humanity as a political community, which has increased its semantic power in the post-Cold War world political environment. For the cosmopolitans, this is mainly a positive thing. Others see things differently and provide what Rorty would call a "redescription" of the matter. Many have revived Carl Schmitt's notion according which action (especially war) in the name of humanity is never *for* humanity[131]. Lately, "the interest of humanity" has been used, for instance, to legitimate the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq[132]. In these cases, a 'cheat' is always included, since, logically speaking, humanity cannot have enemies on this planet – a war 'for' humanity is always also a war *on* humanity, implying therefore a kind of "global

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[125] See Habermas 1998; Linklater 1998, 196–199, 203–204; Benhabib 2004b, 129–170; Benhabib 2007, 20–22.
[126] Linklater 1998, 181; Benhabib 2007, 30–33; Devetak 2007, 171, *passim.*
[127] Walker 2003, 268.
[128] Walker 2003, 284–285.
[129] Vaughan-Williams 2007, 113.
[130] See e.g. Walker 2003, 279.
[131] See, e.g. Douzinas 2007, 172. As Walker (2010, 34) puts it: "modern accounts of political possibility have not found a way of speaking about humanity without excluding rather a lot of human beings".
[132] Dillon – Reid 2009, 6.

triage"[133]. Even beyond military humanitarianism, this global community of mankind has been severely criticized. A hierarchical order often legitimizes itself through its role of being a protagonist for humanity. In the current world order, humanitarianism – by alleviating the sense of injustice created by the hierarchy – contributes to the preservation of the status quo rather than being a radical transformer of it.[134]

Humanitarianism, implicating the existence of a community comprising of the whole of humanity, is usually represented as somehow beyond politics (Kantian cosmopolitanism, many argue, is dangerously close to this presupposition). Yet this transposition from politics to morality produces a smokescreen that occults the connections between humanitarians and power politics[135]. Since humanitarian action is moral, doubting the appropriateness of the solution is out of question[136]. Relatedly, Costas Douzinas argues that "new humanitarianism" is characterized by "hubristic self-confidence" of do-gooders, who have become part of the leading elite. In their humanitarian action, humanity is often implicitly split into a (typically Western) "rescuer" and, (typically non-Western) Others: evil-doers and (faceless, nameless) victims.[137] Because of these problems, many commentators have argued that we have to look beyond *both* nation-statism *and* cosmopolitanism towards more radically new articulations of community.

For instance, *Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri* have analyzed the manner in which the Western logic of rule is slowly expanding into a global horizontal Empire, a planet-wide (but deterritorialized) community with a single political and economic logic. They also argue, and here it becomes clear that they differ from the cosmopolitans, that the building block of the Empire – a global multitude – is also a key to its dissolution. According to Hardt and Negri the self-organization and creative movements of this multitude (which is a kind of immanent force in the social realm), are directed against the state as well as the Empire. Multitude's self-organization produces a form of democratic legitimacy that refuses any institutional outlook, unity, and especially any form of sovereignty.[138] Hardt's and Negri's approach is oft-cited, but also often criticized[139]. They will provide a point of reference for our discussion, and will be

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[133] Douzinas 2007, 172; Dillon – Reid 2009, 20, 81–105.
[134] Aaltola 2009, 9, 171. See also Douzinas 2007, 79.
[135] Aaltola 2009, 8–9.
[136] Douzinas 2007, 79.
[137] Douzinas 2007, 4, 33, 60–79.
[138] Hardt – Negri 2000, xi–xiv, 61, 162, *passim.*It is also important to note, that according to Hardt and Negri, the new world order is not led by the U.S. (even though it does have an privileged position in it) or any other single actor, but simply by its logic of rule.
[139] See *inter alia,* Reid 2010 and Prozorov 2010.

engaged with in chapter 6, but are not in the focal point of our critical scrutiny because of the wide array of already existing critical literature.

In what follows, I will pay special attention to ethical-political viewpoints of *Jean-Luc Nancy* (together with Jacques Derrida[140]) and *Giorgio Agamben*. Their positions are the most clearly articulated versions of what a new kind of politics of belonging would look like. Their approach is radically different from Habermasian Critical Theory and its proponents in IR. Nevertheless, they can be seen as taking part in the same discourse, despite the terminological and other differences. By focusing mostly on Nancy and Agamben as representatives of the 'post-structuralist' camp, I am knowingly excluding other major figures, such as Gilles Deleuze[141], whose innovative concepts – such as rhizome and deterritorialization[142] – could be seen as highly relevant for the thematic of the present study. His approach will not be discussed in detail, nevertheless, because the evaluation of his thinking and its implications for IR[143] would demand more comprehensive an approach than we, because of the lack of space, can afford. His distinction between smooth (rhizomatic, open) and striated (enclosed, characterized by rigid divisions) spaces will, nevertheless, be referred to later on in the work[144]. But for now, we shall focus our attention to Nancy and Agamben and their conceptions of political community and the problems of nation-states.

Giorgio Agamben is one of the most widely cited contemporary political philosophers. His understanding of modern politics is an original combination of Foucauldian biopolitics and Schmittian sovereign

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[140] Derrida will also be discussed elsewhere in the study, in the chapter on Rorty as well as in chapter 6.

[141] Gilles Deleuze, one of the most original thinkers of the late 20th century, created a wide array of concepts such as rhizomes, multiplicity, difference and repetition, desire, becoming, nomads and war machines, through which he attempted at an up-to-date (scientifically, culturally and politically) version of metaphysics – a version many have found highly resonating with the problems of the political sciences today. At the first glance (and not entirely erroneously), Deleuze's is a philosophy of anti-hierarchy par excellence. His emphasis is on immanence (as opposed to transcendence) and becoming (as opposed to being) and he asks for us to look at the world as a 'rhizome', where any point can be connected to anything other, rather than as a 'tree', where the order is fixed (Deleuze – Guattari 2004, 23; Durie 2009, 126).

[142] Rhizomatic systems are multiplicities, lacking an external (transcendental) principle of organization, connected to other multiplicities through their 'lines of flight' or deterritorialization according to which they change their nature. A rhizome is a map of non-rule-determined connections, circumstances and situations; an open system. (Deleuze 1995, 25, 32.) In some senses, then, the globalized world of today could well be seen as a rhizome – a multiplicity of actors, multiplicity of connections between them, no transcendental principles, and so on (this does not rule out hierarchies and strict rules within the rhizome).

[143] For Deleuze and IR, see e.g. Reid 2010; Durie 2009; Parker 2009.

[144] As said, striated space imply a space with rigid divisions and strict rules and roles, while smooth space brings forth the notions of 'nomadism' and 'war machine', directed against the State; it is a space corresponding to rhizomes, one that does not "count" and can "be explored only by legwork". While sedentary (striated) space is enclosed and bordered, smooth (nomad) space is open. The point about nomadism is not movement (nomads are not migrants), but the relation to space: nomads invent 'war machines', innovative modes of organization, 'lines of flight' or deterritorialization as events of transformation. (Durie 2009, 135–136; Deleuze – Guattari 2004, 409, 420) The distinction between smooth and striated spaces is not intended as absolute. The two forms exist only in mixtures. The lines of flight, moreover, are not necessarily 'good' or liberating, but contain their own dangers of corruption with them.

exception. The Foucauldian thesis, Agamben argues, according to which modernity has politicized bio-logical life, has to be corrected. The inclusion (or, to be precise, the inclusion through exclusion) of *zoe* (biological life) in *polis* is the original activity of sovereign power ever since the beginning of metaphys-ical-political tradition in Greece. *Pace* Foucault, the political realm is originally biopolitical. The deci-sive fact with modern politics, by contrast, is that the exception becomes the rule, and, accordingly, *bios* (qualified, political life) and *zoe* enter into "a zone of irreducible indistinction", where sovereign power (understood, following Schmitt, as the one who decides on the exception) produces bare life, or *homo sacer (*or *femina sacra*[145]*)*, a life that is exposed to death, that can be killed without committing a homi-cide, yet not sacrificed.[146] For Agamben, the paradigmatic example of bare life – and simultaneously a paradigmatic example of modern politics, since "we are all virtually *homines sacri"*[147] – is the position of Jews in the concentration camps[148]. More up-to-date examples would include various detainment camps for refugees and prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay – both examples of camps that blur the in-side/outside distinction of legal system, that is, acknowledged exceptions[149]. In addition, however, the state of exception has also been generalized so as to cover the whole of political realm.

From our point of view, it is of special interest that many IR writers have emphasized the spatial charac-ter of Agamben's thought, so that the central concept is not so much the camp, but either borders or refugees[150]. Nick Vaughan-Williams has argued that Agamben's thought calls us to re-conceptualize borders, not as outer edges of territory, but as decision about whether certain life is worthy of living; this decision produces the borders of (sovereign) community by distinguishing the politically qualified life of citizens from bare life of the excluded[151]. Similarly, yet an inch closer to a classical view on the func-tioning of border, Mark Salter argues that the border is a permanent state of exception, making possible the 'normal' functioning of biopolitics within the sovereign territory. Border is understood as a function (as with Vaughan-Williams), where everyone, the "kinetic elite" as well as the refugees and asylum claimants, pass through a biopolitical filter where normality and obedience are rewarded.[152] Tuija Par-vikko suggests that the same logic that Agamben finds from the camps is functioning in relation to refu-

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[145] Edkins-Pin-Fat 2005, 7n29.
[146] Agamben 1998, 6–9; Vaughan-Williams 2009a, 22; Vaughan-Williams 2009b, 734. The figure of *homines sacri* is drawn from the Roman legislature (Agamben 1998, 6–9).
[147] Agamben 1998, 115.
[148] Agamben 1998, 114. For argument that the camp is a paradigm of modern politics, see Agamben 1998, 171-181.
[149] Edkins-Pin-Fat 2005; Vaughan-Williams 2009a, 25; Vaughan-Williams 2009b, 738–739.
[150] See, e.g., Edkins-Pin-Fat 2005; Vaughan-Williams 2009a; Vaughan-Williams 2009b; Salter 2008; Parvikko 2002.
[151] Vaughan-Williams 2009b, 746. A prime example of what Vaughan-Williams calls "generalized bio-political border" is the shooting of innocent Brazilian citizen, Jean Charles de Menezes, by British anti-terrorist officers, which took place with-in 'normal' space of society, namely the Stockwell tube station (Ibid., 747).
[152] Salter 2008, 365–366, 371.

gees[153]. And indeed, Agamben himself sees the refugee as a concept that radically calls into question the categories of the nation-state such as the nation as something one is born into, and "thereby makes it possible to clear the way for a long-overdue renewal of categories in the service of a politics in which bare life is no longer separated and excepted"[154].

However, the transformation to politics without sovereign exception is not an easy one. Agamben, and his followers, rule out the possibility of solution through the state order, human rights or a return to classical political categories; the first cannot be purged from sovereignty, the second is entangled with bio-politics and the figure of *homo sacer* (through the notion of "sacredness of life"), and as to the third, "we no longer know anything of the classical distinction between *zoē* and *bios*"[155]. Despite this, there is something to be done. Agamben can even be read as an optimist, as Sergei Prozorov demonstrates, giving three reasons for this: (1) the intensification of the contemporary global state of exception entails that we have nothing to lose from a radical disruption of the existing political order (in other words, the system is in total crisis) (2) the contemporary "biopolitical machine" does all the work of emptying out positive forms-of-life, and therefore we don't have to do much "to attain what Agamben calls a 'happy life' that is wholly contained in existence as such, devoid of positive predicates" (3) the new form-of-life does not require a revolutionary break, but "merely calls for the subtraction of the subjects from the existing apparatuses," reappropriating their own potentiality for 'whatever being'[156]. In short, then, Agamben's solution is not to look up to a cosmopolis, but a radical subtraction from the existing frame-work of power. In a similar manner, Edkins and Pin-Fat call for (1) a refusal to draw any lines between different forms of life and (2) assumption of bare life, that is, transformation of bare life into a form of life, exemplified for instance in a case of refugees who protest against their treatment by sewing together their lips.[157] This, also, adds up to "whatever being" referred above and theorized by Agamben in *The Coming Community*[158]. The thematic is also related to Nancy's discussion of singularity, and will be explicated in that context below.

Jean-Luc Nancy's articulations on community and politics encapsulate many of themes that are typical of the late 20th century and early 21st century continental thought. One of these themes is the distinction

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[153] Parvikko 2002.
[154] Agamben 1998, 134.
[155] Agamben 1998, 134, 187–188.
[156] Prozorov 2010.
[157] Edkins-Pin-Fat 2005.
[158] Agamben 1995, 17, *passim*.

between "politics" and "the political", that is, between the interplay of different interests/powers and the pure experience of being-in-common, of an open space[159]. Related claim is that "the political" has retreated, i.e. it has become ubiquitous and therefore cannot be experienced specifically – as exemplified in human rights, in which every aspect of human existence has been politicized[160]. In trying to revive the political, Nancy has attempted to rethink community, because "the political is the place where community as such is brought into play"[161]. For him, a community is neither an agreement between individuals (as liberalism represents it) nor a homogenous corporate entity (as nationalism would have it) [162]. Imagining community as a shared essence ("common being") would mean the closure of "the political" and is thus not advisable. Instead, community means "being-*in*-common" with Others, an aspect of existence co-originary and coexistent with "being-self". This, Nancy argues, leads into an affirmation of the lack of identities: if community's "work" is understood as the fulfillment of an identity, the community must become "inoperative," it must retreat from its "work".[163]

In the Nancyan ontology, the relation (or *clinamen[164])* is primary, and relates to the *singularity* of those who are part of the relation or rather constituted by it[165]. This is also the starting point of Nancy's account of globalization, which he considers as a creation of unitotality, i.e. ordering of life according to a single principle – in this case the exchange value of commodities in global capitalist economy – and thereby destroying singular ways of being. His option is what he refers to as "*mondalisation*," a creation of worlds in existential sense; worlds that are, even if highly relational, also singular – my world is distinctively mine. "Mondalisation" refers, then, to a kind of "many globalizations" argument.[166] It also calls for the possible future formation of a world that properly and justly recognizes singularity. For an example, Eeva Puumala and Samu Pehkonen develop a Nancyan position of corporeal politics, where political community is understood as a "bodyspace of being-with". This conceptualization, they claim,

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[159] See, e.g. Puumala – Pehkonen 2010, 53. Among others, Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Ranciére have made similar kind of distinctions between "the political" and "politics" (Mouffe 2009, 505), or "routine politics"/"policing" and politics proper (see Douzinas 2007, 103–109). Following these writers, we could in the context of this study differentiate "border politics" and the political at the border, i.e. the border as a site of "the political".

[160] Coward 2009, 252–253.

[161] Nancy 1991, xxxvii.

[162] Coward 2009, 254–255.

[163] Nancy 1991, xxxvii-xxxix. See also Coward 2009, 254–255. This articulation of community is highly indebted to Heidegger's analyses of being-in-the-world and being-with, especially in *Being and Time.*

[164] Clinamen is a concept originating in Epicurus' atomism. Nancy uses it to refer to the impossibility of conceiving any entity as isolated.

[165] Nancy 1991, 6–7, 25.

[166] Coward 2009, 259

enables us to consider failed asylees, for instance, as political actors who, by telling their stories, (re)discover their "singular plurality"[167].

The idea of singularities is also used by *Jacques Derrida* in his discussion on the democracy to come, hospitality and cosmopolitanism. Vaughan-Williams has attempted to think "beyond a cosmopolitan ideal" (understood in a Kantian sense) through Derridean-Nancyan "politics of singularity," that emphasizes "our ability to act responsibly to every other as a singularity"[168]. This is related to the aporia that Derrida points out in the tradition of cosmopolitan hospitality originating in Kant: on the one hand, there is the generous right to asylum, an unconditional Law of hospitality, "offered a priori to every other, to all newcomers, whoever they may be," and on the other, there are the conditional laws of hospitality, placing the principle under the demographic-economic interest of the nation-state, yet without which the ideal would remain unrealizable and or even in risk of being perverted[169]. This double-bind is, for Derrida, the key to a "democracy to come"[170] and, for Douzinas, to a "cosmopolitanism to come," being together of and encounters with unique worlds of singular beings[171]. Even if maintaining the name 'cosmopolitanism', then, this position – in opposition to the Kantian cosmopolitans – is more about the promises inherent in the idea of cosmopolitanism, rather than any of its institutional embodiments thus far. This, together with its emphasis on singularities, sets both Derrida and (especially) Nancy apart from the Habermasian and Kantian strands of political thought.

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Having now established the base for the study by contextualizing it into the ethical-political debates of present day IR, it is time to shortly re-examine the research questions that were enunciated in the introduction. The primary task we set to ourselves was to examine how Arendt and Rorty conceptualize ethical-political communities, and whether these understandings can be seen as mutually enforcing. This chapter has sought to establish the context for these questions in the discipline of International Relations. The substance of the questions is a matter to be dealt in the three following chapters. The secondary, or supportive, questions we set in the introduction inquired about the boundary requirements of democracies, the workings of the nation-state, the relationship between bounded communities and humanity, and the possibilities of moving towards a new, more ethical, kind of politics.

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[167] Puumala – Pehkonen 2010, 63.
[168] Vaughan-Williams 2007, 119.
[169] Derrida 2001, 11–12, 22–23.
[170] E.g. Derrida 2005, 1–5, *passim.*
[171] Douzinas 2007, 57, 298.

Having gone through the array of different vocabularies in the market at the moment, we are now able to make a few adjustments and additions to the supportive questions. For instance, the question concerning democracy's boundaries can now be formulated as a 'democratic chicken-and-egg paradox' (see page 22). Our short discussion on the history and practical functioning of the nation-state system provides a background for Arendtian and Rortian assessments on the matter. The problem of humanity versus national membership has been a persistent theme in the present chapter, sharpening the formulation of the problem in the introduction. Given the harsh criticism of humanitarianism, is it possible to use 'humanity' as a political category without falling in the distinction between right and wrong kinds of human beings, and hence risking the possibility of imperialist policy? Moreover, what kind of possibilities are there to think beyond the twofold possibilities of nation-statism versus humanity? Is it possible to avoid the pitfalls of both particularistic nationalism and the imperialistically-universalist humanitarians? These questions are effectively dealt in the three chapters that follow. Finally, if a common ground can be found between Arendt and Rorty, can this common ground serve as a stepping stone beyond the impasse between Critical Theory/Kantian cosmopolitanism and the various post-structuralist perspectives? My argument is that it can. The next three chapters will make this argument more explicit. The themes of the present chapter – and especially this final section – are relevant not only for chapter 6, but to the interpretative chapters on Arendt and Rorty as well, since they provide the horizon and the basic conceptual matrix from which I approach their writings.

4. COMMUNITY IN RORTY'S PRAGMATISM

4.1. Introduction to Rorty

Richard Rorty is probably *the* most controversial figure among the late twentieth century philosophers. Reading his critics sometimes gives you the impression that he is like blue cheese to philosophers and social theorists: you either love him or hate him. Some have found his critique of traditional metaphysics and epistemology impressive and his defense of human rights inspirational. A clear majority of commentators, however, have been quite outraged by the things he said. He has been called a postmodern "bullshitter" whose ideas have nothing to do with concrete reality[172]. These harsh reactions were, especially in the 1980s and early 1990s, so great in number that they almost constituted what Richard Bernstein

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[172] See, e.g., Frankfurt 2005, 46–47, 56; Niiniluoto 2002, 154.

calls "a culture industry of Rorty-bashing"[173]. A quote from Roy Bhaskar's contribution to this industry is illustrating. After using almost 140 pages of his *Philosophy and the Idea of Freedom* to harsh criticism of Rorty, he asks: "why Rorty?", and answers his own question by stating the following: "Rorty provides an ideology for a leisured elite - intellectual yuppies - neither racked by pain nor immersed in toil - whose lives may be devoted to the practice of aesthetic enchantment"[174].

My intention in this chapter is to provide a more positive interpretation of Rorty while keeping in mind his shortcomings (thus 'repeating' him in the Žižekian sense). I will argue that he should be read in the wider context of pragmatist tradition in philosophy and political theory. In more detail, I attempt to make a step beyond Rorty's own horizon by reading him from the perspective of the emerging "third wave" of pragmatism[175]. Rorty's controversial claims concerning politics should be seen as reconsideration, revision, and re-articulation of the themes derived from the classical pragmatists such as Emerson, Peirce, James and Dewey[176]. These themes include democracy, fallibilism[177], and meliorism. By focusing on these themes and their role in Rorty's thinking I intend to show, firstly, that his philosophy can be used as a framework for social criticism – that it is not the kind of apologia for status quo that Bhaskar and others have claimed. Secondly, I will also argue that the reading of Rorty I am offering here would be useful for the purposes of critical IR, especially when it comes to questions of statism, refugees, and the boundaries of political community.

My interpretative strategy is based on the refusal of what I like to call a "take it or leave it" approach. It can be plausibly claimed that Rorty is open to a variety of different interpretations – even more so than some other writers. As already stated, the assessments of his arguments vary from one end of the spectrum to the other. My point, however, is that there are unresolved tensions in Rorty's thinking – he never seemed to be able to find the proper balance between, for example, the democratic and technocratic

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[173] Bernstein 1991, 260.
[174] Bhaskar 1991, 134–135.
[175] On the "waves" of pragmatism, consult Koopman 2009. Attitude-wise my interpretation is similar to Koopman's and Christopher J. Voparil's (2006). This interpretative attitude could be described as "saving Rorty's *ethos* from himself".
[176] Ralph Waldo Emerson was an American essayist-poet-philosopher who is usually considered as the first American philosopher. He started to articulate most of the themes that the pragmatists (Peirce, James, Dewey) later developed – while also heavily influencing Nietzsche on the other side of the Atlantic. There are, however, some debates over whether he should be counted as a pragmatist before the name or not. William James and John Dewey, on the other hand, are usually taken to be the founders of the tradition together with Charles Sanders Peirce, who later renamed his approach "pragmaticism" ("a name ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers") (See e.g. Bernstein 2010, 4). On pragmatism's history, consult West (1989).
[177] Fallibilism refers to the doctrine that in principle any one of our beliefs could be mistaken – that there can never be absolute epistemic certainty about anything – coupled with the notion that everything cannot be doubted at the same time.

strands of thought. There is not much sense in claiming that one strain eventually fades out and the other prevails. The fact that he never found the balance is exactly the point. We are left with conflicting strands and changing opinions. The question then becomes from which standpoint we should approach Rorty. My claim is that the problems and dangers are already well-known and widely discussed; therefore we get most out of him by reading him through a positive spectrum and shedding light on the positive and constructive side of his thinking – that is, by acknowledging that there is an "other" Rorty as well.

I will provide one possible way of understanding his standpoint as an ethical-political thinker – an understanding based on a sympathetic, yet somewhat eclectic, way of reading him. It would, on the one hand, even be quite fair to say that I am 'misreading' Rorty, to use his own turn of phrase, but on the other hand, there is (as I hope to show) plenty of textual evidence for my interpretation. Hence, the result is what Richard Bernstein calls a 'profile': a selective view of the subject that still focuses on essential characteristics. A profile, like all interpretation, is a product of movement on a hermeneutic circle, a movement where the "otherness" of the text is constantly allowed to question the interpretation and the prejudices of the interpreter.[178] I will try to place Rorty into a wider intellectual context and grasp the crucial parts of his arguments (in relation to the subject at hand), supporting my claims with textual evidence, and in critical dialogue with the criticisms his texts have aroused.

I take my point of departure from Richard Bernstein's commendable notion that there is a persistent humanistic theme that repeatedly emerges in Rorty's writings: "[t]*here is nothing that we can rely on but ourselves and our fellow human beings*"[179] coupled with a "profound moral-political vision that informs his work and suggests what our society and culture may *yet* become"[180]. My claim is that this is an important notion for the purposes of understanding Rorty. It can be used to see beyond the rhetorical polemics, hyperboles, over-simplifications, caricatures, and provocations he sometimes employs. It should also be noted that we cannot ask from Rorty what he, or pragmatism in general, is not claiming to pro-

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[178] Bernstein 1986, ix–x. Rorty's own vision of interpretation is even more radical than the stance adopted here. He speaks of "strong misreading"(CoP, 151–152) and claims that there is no difference whatsoever between "the right interpretation of the text" and "good interpretation for certain purposes", viz. between interpretation and use (ORT, 89; PSH, 134). Bernstein notes that, because of this, some might claim that Rorty's pragmatism is based on his "readings" of "two fictional characters which he calls 'James' and 'Dewey'" (Bernstein 2005a, 62). I hope the things said above make clear that my position is not identical to that of Rorty.

[179] Bernstein 2010, 211. Emphasis in original. See also Bernstein 2010, 101. Bernstein (1986, 90) also argues that there is a common project of "nonfoundational pragmatic humanism" behind the writings of Rorty, Habermas, and Gadamer.

[180] Bernstein 1986, 86–87.

vide: detailed guidelines or blueprints for future policy[181]. This is also true of the research questions and problematiques of the study at hand. Rorty gives us no direct answer to the questions concerning the boundaries of political communities, or the relation between humanity and citizenship, not to speak of the groups that are left on the margins of the state-centric matrix of world politics. It is therefore necessary to approach – in line with the basic hermeneutical principles – the problem-field from the perspective of Rorty's oeuvre as a whole – although there is an inevitable to-and-fro between the whole and the parts, i.e. neither can be understood without the other. Thus, I beg the reader to bear with me through the semi-general discussions of democracy, pluralism, hope, critique and social change in sections 4-6 of the present chapter. The unitary web that these separate strands make up begins to emerge in the last section of this chapter and will be put to work in chapter 6.

Perhaps a short summary of the position I will be sketching throughout the chapter will help the reader to navigate through the separate strands that will be introduced. This chapter focuses on the meaning of political community for Rorty and the position of outsiders in this scheme. It will be argued that Rorty's conception of political community is tightly tied up with a vision of democratic movement towards better societies yet to come. He is strongly influenced by both Habermasian theory of communicative action and deliberative democracy *and* Derridean articulations of democracy that is always "to come". Hence, there is a strong ethical appeal to keep communal boundaries as open as possible, because outsiders may be the best hope there is for renewing our conceptions of politics. This position will be worked out by starting with a general introduction to Rorty's ethical-political position together with a sketch of the philosophical background and criticisms of that position (section 2 of the present chapter); his views on ethnocentrism and human rights (two of the most commentated topics in the field of IR) shall be discussed in section 3 before the themes of democracy and change are taken up in sections 4, 5, and 6. The last section pulls the strings together and explicates the implications of Rorty's position for IR theory and the problem field of this study in particular.

4.2. Rorty's politics in context

In order to understand Rorty's ethical-political horizon, one has to have an idea of what he was up to in more general terms – what was his intellectual *ethos,* and from which context he said the things he said. There is a strong interaction between his philosophical-theoretical views and his political opinions. It is

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[181] On this point, see Festentein 2002, 551.

easy to read his politics as explicating the consequences of his critique of epistemology-centered philosophy but, as Guignon and Hiley point out, it is actually more plausible to see his political views as a background for his earlier criticism of epistemology[182]. Rorty's utopia, both in political and in theoretical terms, was a properly non-foundational culture, where people would not ask for secure, ahistorical, foundations for any of their beliefs. This culture would treat nothing as a quasi-divinity, and would agree with Nietzsche that "God is dead", meaning that "we serve no higher purposes" (CIS, 20–22). Human beings would no longer be

> "able to see any use for the notion that finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings might derive the meanings of their lives from anything except other finite, mortal, contingently existing human beings." (CIS, 45)

The heaviest obstacle on the road to this utopia is the dominant strand in Western philosophy – a strand Rorty originates to Plato and, in modern times, Kant – Rorty's *bête noire*[183]. The Plato-Kant tradition, especially its habit of dividing the world into "real" and "apparent" parts, and its distinctions between, for example, reason/emotion and morality/prudence, represent for Rorty, in the words of Bernstein, "the search for 'metaphysical comfort' […] that will alleviate our deepest anxieties"[184]. Rorty speaks of this search for metaphysical comfort from philosophical and moral absolutes from personal experience, since he too was once a devoted "Platonist" (PSH, 6–9)[185]. It can be argued that Rorty suffered from a "God that failed" syndrome – he was a former true believer who had lost his faith[186]. This is important to comprehend if one wishes to see beyond Rorty's rhetorical excesses, hyperboles, and his habit of "shadow boxing metaphysical phantoms" (RRP, 90) – that is, if one wishes to decontextualize Rorty in the Palonenian manner and connect to his underlying *ethos*. These habits, rising from Rorty's intellectual context, he never shook off even after his turn towards analytic philosophy and the subsequent rejection of traditional professional philosophy altogether in the 1980s. As Cornel West puts it, Rorty's position "remains polemical (principally against other professional academics) and hence barren. It refuses to give birth to the offspring it conceives"[187]. It is this offspring we, in a way, are interested here.

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[182] Guignon – Hiley 1990, 339.
[183] Bernstein 2005a, 62.
[184] Bernstein 1991, 251.
[185] In an autobiographical piece "Trotsky and Wild Orchids" Rorty tells us that when he started his studies in philosophy, he wanted to find an all-embracing philosophical framework that would hold together his private interests in orchids (an allegory for all snobbish, incommunicable interests) and his public interest in social justice. After hesitating between religion and philosophy for a while, he chose philosophy, and became a "Platonist" for a relatively short period of time (PSH, 6–9).
[186] Bernstein 1991, 251; Bernstein 2010, 214.
[187] West 1989, 207.

The Rorty we focus our attention to is the Rorty of post-1979 period. Even though he never settled for a fixed intellectual position[188], his general stance has been relatively stable since the publication of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in 1979. Minor changes – most interestingly for our purposes, a more fully articulated vision of prospects of political agency – beside, he has championed for a conception of, to quote the title of his last collection of papers, philosophy as cultural politics. This conception means, in short, that – *pace* Plato and Kant – we are never going to be able to see things under the aspect of eternity. The focus should be, instead, in "humanity's ongoing conversation about what to do with itself", where philosophy or social theory are only voices among others – sporadically intervening in cultural politics by suggesting further novelties to the vocabularies used in moral and political deliberation. (PCP, ix) Most of what Rorty wrote can be interpreted as an attempt to make this kind of conversation as effective, smooth, open, and unpredictable as possible. What he is most afraid of is "freezing over of culture [and, *a fortiori*] the dehumanization of human beings" (PMN, 377).

Rorty backs up his vision of cultural conversation with a conception of language that he draws from the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Donald Davidson. According to this position, languages – or, to be precise, different vocabularies[189] – are analogous to tools: they are means of doing something. Nevertheless, while tools are strictly means to pre-existing ends, vocabularies usually bring forth their own ends in the process of their emergence. So even though they are means, vocabularies do not presuppose the means/ends dichotomy (save perhaps in a wide sense of "coping with the world"). (CIS, 11–13) Hence, given the vast amount of different vocabularies used by different people around the globe, even at the same historical period, there are also a lot of different ends people are pursuing, and no ahistorical, transcultural vocabulary to reconcile between them.

In this scheme, what would the freezing-over of culture mean? At this point, Rorty makes a distinction between normal and abnormal discourse, non-metaphoric and metaphoric speech. Normal discourse is an established way of speaking, a language-game with agreed-upon criteria and conventions (PMN, 11, 319–320)[190]. It is a collection of old metaphors that have died into literalness, i.e. we have ceased seeing them as metaphors (CIS, 15–18). We can say for example that statism is – or at least use to be – a normal

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[188] Rorty, for example, hardly ever re-used to the conceptual tools (for instance, normal and abnormal discourse in PMN) he developed. Reasons for this were his attempt to make academic discourse more "banal" and the fact that he mainly wrote essays, i.e. experiments or exercises in thinking.

[189] Rorty's conception of vocabulary is rather similar to Wittgensteinian concepts of 'language game' and 'form of life': it is a way of describing, assessing, judging, and acting. (See, e.g., Bernstein 1991, 262).

[190] Rorty's concepts of normal and abnormal discourses are generalizations of Thomas Kuhn's famous notion of paradigmatic normal science (Ibid.)

discourse in global politics and parliamentary democracy is such in domestic politics in most Western countries. Freezing-over of culture would mean that some normal discourse would achieve a status so hegemonic that it would tempt people to think that it is possible to have a language with nothing but normal discourse. For Rorty, this would be nothing but self-deceptive eternalization of certain time-bound language game or social practice (PMN, 9–10, 377). If eternalization of certain normal discourse is the problem then naturally abnormal discourse (in his later writings he speaks of metaphorical use of language) is the answer. By abnormal discourse Rorty means a discussion where one or more partici-pants either sets aside or is ignorant of the conventions of normal discourse (PMN, 11, 320).

Hence, the primary instrument of social change is (as we shall see in more detail in section 6) a talent of speaking differently, that is to say metaphorically, and therefore developing a new vocabulary, a whole new way of thinking, acting, and judging (CIS, 7, 12, 17):

> "[T]he method of utopian politics or revolutionary science (as opposed to parliamentary politics, or normal sci-ence) […] is to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways, until you have created a pattern of linguistic be-havior which will tempt the rising generation to adopt it, thereby causing them to look for appropriate new forms of nonlinguistic behavior, for example, the adoption of new scientific equipment or new social institu-tions." (CIS, 9)

Social progress is not, then, a matter of approximation to the Moral Truth. New social practices are hopefully "better" than the old ones, but the criteria for superiority is not pre-existent since that would presuppose an ahistorical normal discourse as the point of reference.

Rorty's ideal community would seize this lesson by heart. It would not ask for philosophical justification for its institutions, and it would see its current practices as outcomes of contingent events of history rather than as embodiments of abstract principles. In other words, the common sense in a community of this sort would be thoroughly nominalist and historicist (CIS, 87). Especially Rorty suggests this kind of self-image for the contemporary liberal society. While he agrees with Foucault against Habermas that liberal institutions are products of contingent power struggles, he sides with Habermas on the matter of desirability of these institutions in comparison with any other institutions so far developed – although at the same time crediting Foucault for showing how contemporary societies impose on their members the kind of constraints older societies had not even dreamed of. (CIS, 61–63)

At this point, Rorty introduces the character of liberal ironist, the inhabitant of his historicist and nomi-nalist liberal utopia. The "liberal" part of these people consists of the idea that "cruelty is the worst thing we do", whereas the ironist is someone who agrees with the abovementioned historicist arguments; she

is someone who has continuous doubts about the vocabulary/ies she currently uses because, firstly, she does not believe that her current vocabulary refers to anything beyond time and chance and secondly, is painfully aware of other possible vocabularies. (CIS, xv, 73) Whereas Habermas (along with Bernstein, Charles Taylor and John Rawls[191]) is on the liberal side, Foucault (along with Derrida, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Heidegger[192]) is on the ironist side. Now the question of course arises: is it possible to have it both ways like Rorty claims? Especially problematic is the special type of ironist, what Rorty calls an ironist theorist, or more widely a "strong poet" whose main interest is to achieve as much personal autonomy as possible through the act of self-creation (CIS, 24–27, 65). The danger here is, that this quest for autonomy may threaten one's commitment to the social goal of reducing cruelty – it may even lead to redescriptions that are, indeed, cruel. For this reason, Rorty takes the single most criticized step in his thinking and suggests the privatization of the Nietzschean-Sartrean-Foucauldian attempt at radical autonomy in order to preventing "yourself from slipping into a political attitude which will lead you to think that there is some social goal more important than avoiding cruelty." (CIS, 65)

In other words, Rorty came to advocate the belief that irony is best served private, while liberalism's place is at the public discourse (CIS, 65, 84–85). The public discourse may become nominalist and historicist, but ironist it cannot be (CIS, 87). Most commentators, both sympathetic and unsympathetic, have their doubts about this distinction – both justified and unjustified. To start with the latter, we can note that – contra such critics as Fraser and Bhaskar, the distinction is neither essentialist nor does it refer to the distinction between *polis* and *oikos* (political sphere and the household)[193]. Simply, an idea is private if it does not affect your responsibilities to other people. If it does, it is public. And not everyone needs the distinction. Some people can attain full self-actualization through public activities, others in the privacy, and most people need both. (RT, 202; Tap, 307–308n2; ABO, 64–65) Accordingly, the

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[191] Rorty's list differs from one text to another. The names mentioned above are from TT, 567.

[192] Also this list varies. Moreover, Rorty did see Foucault and Derrida as politically useful writers, but in a different manner than Habermas and Rawls, for example. The list of ironist writers above is from CIS, *passim.*

[193] See Bhaskar's claim that "[r]elationships between men and women, or the employed and the unemployed, presumably fall within Rorty's private sector" (1991, 90) and Fraser's notion that many things that were seen as private before are now considered political (e.g. economy and the domestic life, everything Arendt calls "social") (Fraser 1990, 312–313). On the essentialism accusation see Neil Gascoigne's brilliant dismissal of the claim that the public/private is "some metaphysical caesura, a split in our Being that will render us forever alienated from ourselves" (Gascoigne 2008, 175). On Fraser's interpretation of the public/private split Rorty said that "the original misinterpretation" came from her (ABO, 61). Moreover, Rorty argues that his point was not to present an "explanation of what every human life is like" nor to make an recommendation about how everybody should behave, but rather to make a negative, therapeutic, point that there is nothing wrong with dividing one's life along this line (ABO, 61–63). I believe Brassett is on the right track when he further develops this point to a direction more relevant to political theory by saying that we may justifiably find both Habermas and Derrida useful for our analyses, and we should not get stuck to their disagreements or abandon the other complete because of some singular short-comings or failures (Brassett 2009, 286–287).

distinction is constantly challenged by the interpenetration of the two spheres – it is a fuzzy yet some-times useful distinction (RT, 202). More justified doubts, in turn, concern the substance of these two spheres, even when rightly understood. It seems that Rorty (at least at the 1980s) had a tendency to over-pragmatize politics and reserve theory only for private use. Fraser sums this tendency by arguing that for Rorty "theory is hyperindividualized and depoliticized, [whereas] politics is hypercommunilized and detheoreticized. As theory becomes pure *poesis*, then politics approaches pure *techne*."[194] He seems to assume that the society is integrated by a single monolithic solidarity between like-minded individuals[195]. In slightly other words, Bhaskar accuses Rorty of "over-normalization of normal discourse", that is, assuming that normal discourse is a *fully coherent* set of beliefs and habits[196]. The following sections, especially section 4 will, however, show that even if this was the case in the 1980s, Rorty later on moved towards a more thoroughly pluralistic ethos in politics.

Rorty's liberalism is a common focus of his critics too. This is too wide an issue to be dealt as a whole in here, but a few words about the relationship between democracy and liberalism are in place. As seen above, Rorty's definition of liberalism is extremely vague, and things are not made easier by the long list of "fellow liberals" that he provides. Bernstein pretty much hits the mark when he criticizes Rorty for the lack of "pragmatic toughness". Despite being a healthy antidote to legalistic liberalism and theoretical cultural criticism, Rorty's liberalism is too "inspirational", empty rhetorics: "where's the beef?"[197] In addition, it can be claimed that Rorty's liberalism effectively undermines his democratic aspirations since it to a considerable extent hides all serious political conflicts not to speak of negative consequences of liberalism[198]. Further, and consequently, Rorty over-simplifies issues when he claims that democracy does not need philosophical grounding. Probably as a consequence of his anti-oedipal anti-Platonism, Rorty's argument seems to be based on too stark a contrast between *either* having a philosophical grounding in the sense of deduction of social policy from ahistorical presuppositions *or* having nothing to fall back on but "storytelling" about "our practices" – either absolute necessity or total randomness[199]. Even though Rorty is quick to dismiss the epistemological "myth of the given", he seems to replace it with a "historical myth of the given" and speaks of "our practices" as if it would be clear what these

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[194] Fraser 1990, 315. Same kind of criticism is made by McCarthy 1991, 26.
[195] Fraser 1990, 308; Guignon – Hiley 1990, 359; Turner 2004, 284.
[196] Bhaskar 1991, 29.
[197] Bernstein 2003, 137–138.
[198] Hutchinson 1989, 557; Bernstein 1991, 233, 238–240, 246.
[199] This argument is made in one form or another by Bernstein (1991, 238–239), Bhaskar (1991, 103), McCarthy (1991, 20) and Shusterman (1997, 71, 75), who argues that this is a consequence of Rorty's primary intellectual environment: the analytic philosophy within the context of late-20th century US society.

practices are in the first place[200]. Accordingly, he sometimes looks like a defender of the status quo[201]. Analogously to philosophical groundings, also his account of political argumentation and debate falls short – it is as if we could only have an argument when we have an agreed set of rules from which to begin. But this is practically never the case.[202] In real life the rules are among the things that we can argue about, but they exist nevertheless. No normal discourse is as "normal" as Rorty sometimes seems to be claiming in his early writings. We shall see in the fourth section that this is not true of Rorty's later writings.

To summarize, there *seems* to be a trend in Rorty's work (especially in the 1980s) towards a theodicy-like assumption that contemporary liberal society is the best of all possible worlds[203]. As Bernstein puts it: "What kind of ironist says to herself 'I will be ironical only about the private side of my life but not about the public side'?"[204] This criticism certainly has an edge, but, as we shall see below, this is not the last word about Rorty's politics. At this point it can be noted that the motive for detheoreticization of politics is not a conservative one, quite the opposite. Rorty is by no means opposing either social critique or revolutionary changes in political imagination. The only thing he opposes is the tendency to think that there is a "science" (in a strong sense) devoted to the analysis of the "real meanings" of sociopolitical phenomena that could *directly* play a *key role* in social change. Hence, for example, Foucault did a lot of politically important work as a social historian, but not as a philosopher concerned about his own *rapport à soi*. Rorty's point is that we should avoid the temptation to escape politics to sophisticated theory. (TT, 568–570)[205] Next we will have a look at what kind of political attitudes Rorty himself advocated.

4.3. Ethnocentrism, human rights, and reception in IR

4.3.1. Ethnocentrism

This section will discuss Rorty's ethnocentrism and views on human rights. These are probably his most often quoted ideas among IR scholars and hence his reception in IR from the early 1990s onwards will be discussed as well. Probably the first one to bring in Rortian ideas to IR debates was Chris Brown, who discussed Rortian pragmatism as one of the "new normative approaches" in his 1992 book. Furthermore,

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[200] Bernstein 1986, 53-54; Bernstein 1991, 241
[201] See e.g. Bernstein 1991, 233.
[202] Bernstein 1991, 239–240, 244, 246, 280–281.
[203] See e.g. Turner 2004, 283.
[204] Bernstein 1991, 280.
[205] On Rorty's view of Foucault, see also EHO, 193–194.

in a 1994 article he proposed a Rortian approach to IR metatheory[206]. After that, quite a few scholars have discussed Rorty's arguments about human rights and humanitarianism[207]. The first more wide-ranging discussion of Rorty's relationship to IR theory was Molly Cochran's 1996 article "The Liberal Ironist, Ethics, and International Relations Theory" where she argued that a large amount of Rorty's writings deal with issues relevant to IR. This is especially true, according to Cochran, about Rorty's writings on (1) liberalism, (2) anti-foundationalism, (3) the consequences of the first two on human rights thinking, and (4) the attempt to expand what Rorty calls 'we-groups'.[208] More or less all the aspects that Cochran mentions – as well as more or less all the questions relevant to the study at hand – can be placed under the rubric of ethnocentrism, so let us examine a bit closer what Rorty means by that notion and how it relates to the thematic of borders/boundaries of political communities.

Matthew Festenstein distinguishes three separate roles that boundaries play in Rorty's thinking. These are (1) Ethnocentric conception of justification; (2) Moral obligations as resting on particular identifications; (3) Suggestions for the ways to overcome these boundaries without an Archimedean point – that is, on the basis of the bounded community[209]. As stated above, all the vocabularies used for political deliberation (or anything else) are products of historical development and are used by a specific community at a given historical period. Because there is no metavocabulary, no God's-eye point of view that could save the members of any community from being acculturated as they were, everyone must work by their own lights, that is, be ethnocentric in the sense of testing the beliefs suggested by any other culture by trying to weave them together with the web of beliefs they already have. (ORT, 13–14, 26) One of the main reasons why Rorty is favorable towards the contemporary liberal society is that it is an ethnocentric culture that is aware and suspicious of ethnocentrism. It tries to enlarge the boundaries of its ethnos as far as possible by being as open minded as possible without losing the capacity to feel moral indignation. Hence, self-conscious ethnocentrism does not have to make societies "semantic monads, nearly windowless". Neither does it mean that we should say (with the Nazis) that "we have no need to legitimize ourselves in the eyes of others". It can, at best, lead to attempts of adding more and more windows, and trying to fully appreciate the viewpoint of "the Other". (CIS, 198; ORT, 2, 203–204, 214) If such ethnocentrism is blamed for being relativistic, this charge should be seen as mere red herring. If relativism refers to the belief that every belief is as good as the other, no one is a relativist in real life.

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[206] Brown 1994; On the same theme see also Käpylä – Mikkola 2006.
[207] See, e.g., Bellamy 2002, Booth 1995, Wheeler 1997, Dunne – Wheeler 1999, 11-12; Käpylä-Mikkola 2007.
[208] Cochran 1996, 29.
[209] Festernstein 2002, 561–563.

The question of relativism becomes relevant if, and only if, it is assumed that there is an Archimedean point from which the assessment between absolute and relative validity can be made. (CIS, 45-50; ORT, 23-24, 30–31)

As was pointed out, Rorty's views on ethnocentrism and human rights bear important consequences for IR. As Molly Cochran argues, even though Rorty has not directly commented on the status of states or sovereignty, he has articulated views that are closely related to the cosmopolitanism versus communitarianism debate. Of particular interest is Rorty's view on the individual-society connection, which goes beyond the deadlock of communitarianism/cosmopolitanism. For Rorty, as for the communitarians, the individual – her morality and identity – is a product of acculturation. On the other hand, Rorty sides with the cosmopolitans when it comes to goals and ideals. He wishes to enlarge our sympathies as far as possible beyond the boundaries of specific communities and is a supporter of the "human rights culture".[210] He has, indeed, repeatedly identified himself with the cosmopolitanism of Enlightenment thinkers such as Kant (TaP, 173). When it comes to the debate as such, his reply to Cochran makes his stance clear: "I am sorry to hear that people working in international relations find [the cosmopolitan-communitarian] issue of interest. I wish that it would just go away" (RT, 200). Practically everybody agrees that our acculturation limits our choices of life. On the other hand, everyone also agrees that it is better if these limits are as wide as possible (ceteris paribus) (RT, 200). It is then easy to note that Chris Brown's characterization of Rorty as a "postmodern communitarian"[211] is off the mark.

As Festenstein's point (2) above brings forth, our solidarities and moral self-identifications are based on specific communities – they are matters of "we-intentions". "One of us human beings" cannot have the same sort of force as does some more parochial identification such as "one of us Finns/Mormons/human rights activist" (CIS, 73, 190). This is not to deny that general terms have some force, the parochial terms are just usually much more powerful. Different ways for crossing these boundaries is of special interest for the work at hand. Rorty's idea of extending these "we" feelings is, as Cochran argues "a sentiment which has no regard for boundaries, and thus has implications beyond state borders"[212]. Festenstein names three different ways of doing this: (3a) renewing national solidarity (inclusion of internal outsiders) (3b) "sentimental education" and (3c) unforced agreement among those with different paro-

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[210] Cochran 1996, 39–40.
[211] Brown 1992, 210.
[212] Cochran 1996, 31.

chial identifications[213]. (3c) is to a large extent equivalent to the vision of democracy that will be discussed in section 4.4 below, and (3a) will be dealt with in sections 4.6 and 4.7. (3b), Rorty's defense of "sentimental education" will be explicated next – together with its (mis)interpretations among IR scholars.

4.3.2. Human Rights and ethics

Rorty's argument for sentimental education is raised in the context of human rights questions, so let us now turn to their role in Rorty's ethnocentrism. If our identity is always – or most of the time – dependent on our identification to a certain "we" group, there can be no such ahistorical basis for human rights that traditional views have assumed – contra Kant and others, there is no eternal human attribute called "rationality" (TaP, 171). Hence, humanity does not have such a moral force it was supposed to have. Human rights violators usually, Rorty argues, do not see themselves as violating *human* rights, since their concept of humanity essentially involves a distinction between morally superior and inferior (animal-like, child-like, or just non-male) "featherless bipeds". Indeed, those committing the worst kind of human wrongs may see themselves as doing a favor for humanity by clearing off the borderline cases (TaP, 167–169). Similarly, those supporting human rights do not have any privileged access to knowledge concerning Moral Truth. The "human rights culture" is a product of historical contingencies, the serendipitous total sum of political ideals, relatively safe environment and so on (TaP, 178–180). When it comes to effectively spreading the human rights culture, it is not really useful to claim that human rights correlate with human rationality. It is not a matter of becoming more conscious of the moral law, but of progress of sentiments. Hence, the best tool for promoting human rights is what Rorty calls "sentimental education". (TaP, 176, 179, 185)

The issue of human rights is the context of most discussion concerning Rorty and IR. In addition to Cochran, a great number of scholars (at least Ken Booth, Chris Brown, Nicholas Wheeler, Tim Dunne, James Brassett, Anthony Langlois, Alex Bellamy, and Kelly Staples) have discussed his "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality" essay at some length. Usually Rorty's point is taken to be the straightforward substitution of sentiment for reason. More often than not, this is seen as a good, although insufficient, move. Brown, Dunne and Wheeler, for example, argue that sentimentality is an inadequate response to human wrongs[214]. Elsewhere Wheeler treats sentimental education as an alternative to the

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[213] Festernstein 2002, 564.
[214] Dunne-Wheeler 1999, 10-11, Brown 1997.

agency of progressive social movements[215] and Anthony Langlois criticizes the whole argument as philosophically misguided[216]. In order to show why I see these interpretations as erred, I will discuss the human rights article in the context of Rorty's writings on ethics. The assumption that he would see sentimental education as the only tool for social change will be dealt with in section 6.

Even the most sympathetic and well-informed commentators such as James Brassett are not entirely free of the tendency to over-emphasize the sentimental side of Rorty's argument[217]. It is easy to see why this is so. Rorty, after all, does claim that "the emergence of human rights culture seems to owe nothing to increased moral knowledge, and everything to hearing sad and sentimental stories" (TaP, 171). But this is only seen in the correct light when placed in the context of Rorty's writings on ethics, especially his appraisal of John Dewey and feminist ethics of Annette Baier. Following these two, Rorty's ethical stance is based on the total dismissal of the Kantian distinctions between morality/prudence and loyalty/justice and their reconstruction as a continuum stretching from routine to non-routine social relationships (PSH, 75; PCP, 42). Rorty is suggesting something similar to feminist writings on the ethics of care. Both Rorty's pragmatism and the ethics of care oppose the traditional rule-based ethical thinking and take their point of departure from the inevitable bonds that individuals have to their environment and especially other persons, while simultaneously refusing the communitarian tendency towards conservatism[218].

The closest relationships are based on doing what comes "naturally", Rorty argues, whereas morality and law begin where the controversies start arising, or where our loyalties to different groups come to conflict (PSH, 73–75; PCP, 45; ORT, 200–201). The attempt to solve these moral dilemmas by a notion of unconditional obligation (e.g. the categorical imperative) is, in the words of Dewey, "born of timidity and nourished by love of authorative prestige" (PSH, 75) – a rudiment from "authoritarian, patriarchal, religious tradition" that should have been gotten rid of a long time ago (PCP, 187). These principles only make sense, Rorty claims, insofar as they "incorporate tacit reference to a whole range of institutions, practices, and vocabularies of moral and political deliberation" (CIS, 58–59, PSH, xxxii), that is, conditionally.

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[215] Wheeler 1997, 20–21.
[216] Langlois 1998.
[217] See Parker - Brasset 2005.
[218] See, e.g., Robinson 1997, 120.

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The distinction between reason and sentiment should be approached from this perspective. Rorty is not championing what he calls, following Heidegger, "inverted Platonism", viz. "the romantic attempt to exalt the flesh over the spirit, the heart over the head, a mythical faculty called 'will' over an equally mythical one called 'reason'" (CIS, 33. See also PCP, 44; CIS 6). Rather, the whole point is to move beyond these dichotomies by seeing, following Baier and Dewey, the self as existing always in the web of social relations, relations consisting of habits, sentiments, and rules. The over-emphatization of the latter has led traditional moral philosophy to see the self as "capable of existing independently of any concern for others, as a cold psychopath needing to be constrained to take account of other people's needs" (PSH, 77). Moral philosophers have thought they have failed unless they have convinced the rational egotist that he should not be an egotist. As a consequence they have neglected the more common character, a person who treats a limited number of people blamelessly, but does not care whether others outside this bounded web of relations suffer. The problem is not the egotist but "the good comrade who loves and is loved by his mates, but who thinks of women as dangerous, malevolent whores" (TaP, 176–177) or the loving mother who also happens to be a guard at the concentration camp (CIS, 32).

Moral development is a matter of "re-making human selves so as to enlarge the variety of the relationships which constitute those selves" (PSH, 79). It is not irrational to draw the limits of moral community at national (or racial, or gender) border. It may even be the most plausible thing to do since in some situations enlarging one's moral community may be extremely dangerous. It is, however, morally desirable to draw the borders as wide as possible. (PSH, 81, TaP 178) Moral progress means, then, the ability to take into account the needs of larger and larger variety of people and things (PSH, 81). From this perspective, human solidarity is not seen as a fact waiting to be recognized, but as a goal to be achieved by "the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers" (CIS, xvi. See also CIS, 69, 142; ORT, 193–194, 207, TaP, 12) by "our ability to make the particular little things that divide us seem unimportant – not by comparing them with the one big thing that unites us but by comparing them with other little things" (PSH, 85). Rather than seeing ethical inquiry as a search for general principles that could be derived from an answer to the question "what is human?" we should put our energies to the question "who are we?" and especially "what can we make of ourselves?" (CIS, 59–60; TaP 169). It is practically not possible to aim at "doing what is right" (you will never know whether you have hit the mark), so we should put our energies to improving our sensitivity to different forms of pain and humiliation (PSH, 82).

So, to sum up, Rorty's point is not to suggest the substitution of sentiment for reason. It is rather that a move away from general principles and towards imagination, loyalty and relational concept of the self might be useful from the moral point of view. What is more, it must be kept in mind that he is not claiming that sentimental education is the only way of getting something done in politics. He only claims it is more effective than "moral *knowledge*". Moreover, *pace* Langlois, there is no hidden assumption that "sentimental education" has the same kind of effect on everyone (which would imply the assumption of a human nature) regardless of the historical tradition and social context[219]. Rorty never assumes the naïve view of "natural sympathy" towards the sufferers. Sympathy is always "corrected" and sometimes even "rule-corrected" (TaP, 181). In other words sympathy, or more broadly sentiments, are always existent and efficient only in the context of complex historically-conditioned web of social relations. This web of social relations, in turn, is (or should be) open to democratic debate to which we now turn.

4.4. Democracy, pluralism, and communicative action

This section deals with Rorty's vision of democracy, which is torn between two conflicting impulses. The first impulse is the pragmatic radical democratic strand originating from Emerson, Walt Whitman and Dewey, visible for example in Rorty's defense of Habermas' theory communicative action (albeit in a "poeticized" form). The second impulse is the technocratic line of thinking Rorty sometimes adopts. Both strands are equally powerful in Rorty's thinking and there is no abstract and general way of striking the correct balance between the two. In this section, I will try to tease forth, even by reading "Rorty against Rorty", the radical democratic strand of Rorty's thinking while also trying to make justice to his apology for contemporary bureaucratic institutions. One way to sum up his position is to say that in order to achieve any progress in modern democratic societies, both top-down and bottom-up initiatives are needed (AOC, 52–53).

The key to Rorty's democratic tendencies is the emphasis he puts to conversation. As Bernstein has argued, Rorty is trying to redeem the notion of *phronesis* – the type of practical reasoning that does not make appeals to eternal standards or foundations[220]. For Rorty, democracy is shorthand for the idea that the only source of authority that is relevant to every member of any given community is the freely achieved consensus among its members (AOC, 18). The common nominator of monotheism, scientism

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[219] See Langlois 1998, 11.
[220] Bernstein 1986, 55.

and Platonic attempts to deduce politics from abstract principles is that they refuse to agree that there is no higher authority than democratic politics. The danger with this kind of thinking – what Arendt calls "politics as making" – is that one actually succeeds in coming up with an all-embracing philosophical position which will give one the privilege of not being obliged to listen to others.

Against this, Rorty suggests that we should give democracy priority over philosophy: "For purposes of social theory, we can put aside such topics as an ahistorical human nature, the nature of selfhood, the motive of moral behavior, and the meaning of human life" (ORT, 176; See also CIS, 196–197). Everyone can have their own answers to these questions, but the attempt to derive political practices from 'rationality' or 'human nature' should be put to rest. The discussion about the best practices should not be seen as "capable of being made conclusive" (PSH, xxxii). The political philosophers Rorty most values, Dewey, Habermas, and Derrida, are "antiauthoritarian philosophers of human freedom and social justice" who refuse to give conclusive answers to these questions and hence help people to form a self-image where the commitment to democratic republic is central to their identity (PSH, 238–239)[221]. In this scheme, to be a part of a society is to be taken as a possible conversational partner (ORT, 206). If two people do not share enough beliefs and habits to make a relevant conversation possible – if they cannot relate their opinions to some shared "normal discourses" – they cannot be seen as a part of the same society in any relevant sense. But when the sufficient common ground has been achieved everything – including that ground itself – is debatable.

This debate takes place in the context of what Jürgen Habermas has called communicative action and especially communicative reason for which Rorty denotes his support (See e.g. CIS, 67, *passim*.) while changing its status from a "scientific theory" to a moral-political vision[222]. Unlike the classical philosophical notion of "reason", the Habermasian communicative reason is not the source of anything in special. It is just a good, probably the best, way to justify one's opinions by arguments rather than by threats. (PCP, 51, 77[223]) If we read Rorty a bit between the lines, we might squeeze out a position that, pace Habermas, one of the things that are debatable, never fixed, is the definition of "ideal speech situation"[224]. Moreover, as Voparil argues, Rorty can be read as disclosing the practices that forge the kind of

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[221] One could add three other thinkers to the list: Arendt, Gadamer and Rawls.
[222] Bernstein 1986, 79.
[223] On Rorty's stance towards Habermas in general and the concept of communicative reason in particular cf. CIS, 62, 68. See also Voparil's discussion on Rorty's relation to Habermasian "rationality" (Voparil 2006, 9, 45–47).
[224] For Rorty's arguments supporting this reading, see CIS, 84.

democratic community that Habermas more or less merely assumes[225]. It is also worth noting, that Rorty – while giving up, contra Habermas, any transcendental criteria for arguments – is nevertheless defending argumentative exchange, not giving up on it like sometimes is claimed. There are, however, some serious flaws in his stance. I will come back to these shortly, but first we shall examine the pluralistic part of his democratic ethos.

This vision is closely related to the emphasis put on human plurality, advocation of which takes the form of what Rorty calls secular romantic polytheism (PCP, 29). If being democratic means being willing to discuss and argue, to use persuasion and not force, being polytheist in the secular sense means admitting that "there is no actual or possible object of knowledge that would permit you to commensurate and rank all human needs" (PCP, 30). Like the earlier pragmatists, Emerson, James and Dewey, Rorty champions the free- and many-spiritedness of individuals, and their ability to take part in communal life (PCP, 37)[226]. He underwrites both Emerson's poetic notion that "the value of life lay in its inscrutable possibilities; in the fact that I never know, in addressing myself to a new individual, what may befall me" [227] and Dewey's conception of democracy as the "faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished"[228]. Here, then, is the Rortian poeticized version of communicative democracy in a nutshell: following Dewey, James, and especially Emerson, Rorty's humanistic polytheism asymptotes the position that there is a certain kind of divinity in each human being. The area of agreement with Habermasian discourse ethics, on the other hand, is that the only way to really venerate this divinity is through inter-subjective discussions, talking and listening in the best spirit of plurality. From this point of view, democracy is not primarily a set of institutions or procedures, but a system of beliefs and ideals, even a faith.

This kind of faith is not based on any kind of philosophical foundation. It is rather an experiment whose results can only be assessed in practice according to its consequences (ORT, 196). A central part of this experiment is what Rorty calls "radical pluralism", i.e. the suggestion that there is no single context for all human lives, no "paradigmatic human beings" (CIS, 27, 35; PSH, 266). It is then wrong to accuse liberalism of the homogenization of differences. It is, by contrast, committed to as much pluralism as possible while still maintaining the possibility for cooperative action (PSH, 237). The only limitation for

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[225] Voparil 2006, 46.
[226] Rorty refers also to Nietzsche as a supporter of this vision.
[227] Emerson 1982, 291.
[228] Dewey 1998, 341–342.

different visions of life is that they should interfere with the possibilities of other kind of life visions as little as possible. (ORT, 194) Rorty goes on to agree with Habermas that the best way to prevent the "colonization of the life-world" by "expert cultures" through what Foucault calls "biopower" is by making sure that the decisions about public institutions and policies are made through democratic communication. (CIS, 66–67, see especially 66n30)

Since there is no single context for human lives, human beings do not share the same needs, and may hence disagree about the "objectively best thing" for social institutions to do. The resolution of this kind of disagreement can only be political: one must conciliate the various needs and beliefs through democratic institutions (AOC, 35). This is also the case with sub-cultures and neighboring cultures (one could add refugees etc.): the possible disagreements with these should be handled with the twin concepts of plurality and democracy in mind. This kind of antifoundationalist democratic tolerance is however strictly opposite to multiculturalism that tries to preserve cultural differences rather than deliberate between them. (ORT, 14; PSH, 252, 276; TaP, 189) The limits of tolerance have to be worked out case by case (ORT, 208).

As noted before, however, there is another side in Rorty's democratic thinking. Where he most starkly differs from Dewey is in their evaluation of participatory democracy. While Dewey was a strong advocate for radical participatory democracy on a communal scale, Rorty is doubtful whether this kind of decision making could produce the same amount of know-how as the current system of technocracy (AOC, 104). He is a supporter of piecemeal reforms and efficient bureaucracies (PSH, 228). It can easily be noted that there is a tension, if not a contradiction, between the technocratic-bureaucratic and romantic-democratic strands of thinking. This tension is never solved in Rorty's writings, and neither is there any easy way to do that. I will get back to this in the end of this section, but first we shall have a closer look at some other problems inherent in Rorty's position.

There are two intertwined issues that cast doubts on Rorty's democratic ethos. First, there is the equation of democracy and liberalism, and second, the broader problem concerning the lack of a public space in his stance. The liberalism issue was dealt with in some length in section 2 of this chapter, so at this point we shall just note that the concept of liberalism he employs is so wide that we might be better off by just dropping it off. This would also help solving the problem of the missing public space. Richard Bernstein notes that Rorty is guilty of contributing to what "Dewey (one of Rorty's heroes) called the 'eclipse of the public'" where "the public" refers to "the space in which human beings come together to debate and

argue with each other"[229]. This takes us to the problem of bureaucracy which effectively undermines Rorty's democratic ethos[230]. Pace Rorty, some of the biggest problems at the political sphere are not solvable through "social engineering" but need to be faced in an actual democratic debate. Rorty seems to have a tendency to repress genuine disagreements – for all his advocacy of ongoing and unending conversation he employs rhetorical strategies that rule out some areas of discussion.[231] He fails to make the much needed distinction between instrumental and practico-political reason and consequently between good and bad (*historically conditioned and contestable*) reasons in political argumentation[232]. In sum, it sometimes seems as if Rorty is proposing "the priority of democracy to philosophy" just in order to take us to "the priority of governance to democracy".

Hence, I think Allan Hutchinson is correct in saying that Rorty is "more liberal than democrat". Even if such institutional forms of democracy as education, free press, opportunities to exert political influence, and the like (See, e.g. CIS, 67) are no doubt important, this might nevertheless be the point where we should most decisively think *with* Rorty *against* Rorty. Like Hutchinson, I propose we should follow "the radical spirit rather than the liberal letter", take up the progressive leads that Rorty himself chose not to pursue, and all the way with the conception of "democracy as the Romantic expression of a poeti-cized politics"[233]. An important part of this democratic ethos is one of pragmatism's central concepts: meliorism. As Shusterman explains, "pragmatism's democratic faith is part and parcel of its melio-rism"[234]. Or as Rorty himself puts it: "Hope - the ability to believe that the future will be unspecifiably different from, and unspecifiably freer than, the past - is the condition of growth." (PSH, 120) The next section will thus deal with pragmatic meliorism as a condition of social criticism and growth.

4.5. Hope, utopia, and critique

Hopefulness (or meliorism), the topic of this section, has been one of the major elements in the pragma-tist tradition – especially with R.W. Emerson, John Dewey, William James and Rorty[235]. Colin Koopman goes as far as to define pragmatism as "a philosophical way of taking hope seriously"[236]. This hopeful-

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[229] Bernstein 1991, 284–285. As Shusterman points out, this is better interpreted not as being "unfaithful to Dewey" but as "being true to [Rorty's] own social reality" (Shusterman 1997, 73).
[230] See e.g. Dallmayr 101.
[231] Bernstein 1991, 245, 253, 278.
[232] Dallmayr 2001, 101; Bernstein 1991, 277.
[233] Hutchinson 1989, 557–558.
[234] Shusterman 1997, 7.
[235] See, e.g., Shusterman 1997, 7.
[236] Koopman 2006, 106.

ness does not refer to an uncritical happy-go-lucky attitude. Instead, the melioristic strand in pragmatism should be taken as a critical impulse – as the very basis of social critique. Rorty argues, for instance, that it is only by "imagining a community whose linguistic and other practices are different from our own" that we can subject the practices of our own community to radical critique (TaP, 214). Utopianism and critique are hence closely tied together.

Following Koopman, we can think this kind of meliorism as combining the three most important aspects of pragmatism: pluralism, humanism, and democracy. Pluralism in this context has two meanings. One the one hand, it refers to a kind of perspectivism. As Koopman puts it: "the realities we inhabit are many […] There is no one way that things are"[237]. Even though, for instance, a scientist and a layperson may see the same table very differently (fluid/solid), both points of views are valid. On the other hand, pluralism also refers to the kind of political pluralism explicated in previous section – one of the themes that connect pragmatism to Arendt. In this sense, pluralism means that there are no "paradigmatic human beings" (CIS, 35; PSH 266) – or, to quote Arendt's famous (even if gendered) formulation, that "men, not Man, live on the Earth and inhabit the world" (HC, 15). Humanism, in turn, is the thesis that what reality is – that is, what it is for us – is dependent on the human interaction with the non-human reality. In William James' oft-quoted phrase, "the trail of human serpent is over everything"[238]. Taken together, and stirred with democratic ideals, these theses form the idea that we are capable, with effort, of creating better worlds for ourselves[239].

But, as noted earlier, we should not let ourselves be fooled to think meliorism as cheap optimism. Optimism is a prediction concerning the future course of events, a claim to *knowledge* about a better future. This clearly is not Rorty's stance. Especially during the presidency of George Bush Jr., Rorty became rather pessimistic about the contemporary prospects of ethical-political progress. Writing about the emergence of his preferred global utopia during the next couple of centuries or so, he pondered whether "we *have* a few centuries?". The answer was as strict as it was gloomy: "Perhaps not. The possibility of nuclear holocaust or environmental catastrophe will not go away, if it ever does, for a long time" (TaP, 201n26. See also PSH, 273–274). In relation to globalization Rorty was afraid that we may be witnessing the emergence of a global economic cosmopolitan Inner Party in Orwellian sense that will make all the important decisions – decisions that are smoothly and efficiently carried out by the educated cosmopoli-

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[237] Koopman 2006, 107.
[238] James 2000, 33.
[239] Koopman 2006, 107–108.

tan professionals, "the people like you and me" (AOC, 87). In more detail, he became especially skeptical over the future of American society over the coming century. In an interview by *The Believer* he was asked whether he has become less sanguine about the political future of the USA since he had approvingly quoted writers arguing that America was "heavily thickening to empire". The answer nicely sums up his position:

> "Well, at this point you have to quote Gramsci: 'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will.' If I had to lay bets, my bet would be that everything is going to go to hell, but, you know, what else have we got except hope?" (IRR)

In other words, no matter how short the odds may seem, we should not stop constructing utopias (TaP, 201n26). This kind of utopianism is closely connected to Rorty's general anti-foundationalism. We should not look for certainty, for some non-questionable principles on which to base society. (PSH, 34) There are *political* reasons for this suggestion. Utopias here are strongly contrasted with teleological accounts of history – movements that claim to know something about the underlying forces of historical development. As he puts it in an essay called "Failed Prophecies, Glorious Hopes":

> "Memories of the dungeons of the Inquisition and the interrogation rooms of the KGB, of the ruthless greed and arrogance of the Christian clergy and of the Communist nomenklatura, should indeed make us reluctant to hand over power to people who claim to know what God, or History, wants. But there is a difference between knowledge and hope. Hope often takes the form of false prediction, as it did in both [the Communist manifesto and the New Testament]. But hope for social justice is nevertheless the only basis for a worthwhile human life." (PSH, 204)

This warning resonates with Arendt's understanding of totalitarianism. As she saw the matter, what made Nazism and Stalinism 'totalitarian' was their combination of determinism and hubris: the totalitarian leaders thought they had found the key to history's secrets and thus believed that they are on the side of something stronger than the uncertain deeds of the political sphere[240]. It is in this light that Rorty's "general turn against theory and towards narrative" (TaP, 231) becomes tangible. The ability to use History as an object from which we get support for our utopias has diminished (TaP, 231) and this fact should be welcomed since deterministic philosophical-historical theories may have politically dangerous outcomes. Hence, instead of them the intellectual background for political deliberation should be historical narrative which connects the present with the past and "segues into a utopian scenario about how we can get from the present to a better future" (PSH, 231; CIS, xvi).

The self-image of society plays an important role in this scheme. Social protest movements should protest, not in the name of humanity, but in the name of the society against those aspects of the society which are unfaithful to its own self-image (CIS, 60). Any society necessarily has to start from where it

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[240] See, e.g., Canovan 1994, 11–13, 26.

already stands and evaluate its social practices through historical comparison with past, present and especially utopian alternatives (CIS, 53). Hence, the best way to criticize current practices is to envisage a practice that is less cruel and more just than the present one. On this issue, there is a resemblance between Rorty and Critical IR Theory. Ken Booth, for instance, has argued that ideals and utopias are vital for any human community since they are the guides for judgment and action[241]. Relatedly, however, here we meet one of Rorty's major shortcomings: the fact that the actual conditions against which the utopian scenarios should be assessed have – in Voparil's words – "an uncertain place in Rorty's vision"[242]. In other words, even if we accept Rorty's conceptualization of political change – as I think we should – we have to supplement it with a serious analysis of the existing conditions.

From this perspective Rorty id only half-justified in his criticism of post-structuralist academics. As we shall see in chapter 6, I share Rorty's worries that some political theorists are getting absorbed in to "principled, theorized, philosophical hopelessness" – being too interested in theories and "self-mockery" without any attempt whatsoever to sketch an alternative social practice (See e.g. AOC, 36–37). Rorty takes the fact that political philosophers have derived their thinking from the philosophy of language or psychotherapy as an indicator of hopelessness and argues that it is likely to remain politically sterile (PSH, 232). For Rorty, merely pointing out the "internal contradictions" of a social practice is a non-starter, since every social practice necessarily contains such tensions (ORT, 16, see also AOC, 9.). For the same reasons, furthermore, Rorty praises so called "prophetic feminist" like Catharine MacKinnon and Annette Baier for putting the needed effort to the question "what can we make of ourselves?" (TaP, 175, 206) The most important political question is whether our society has been imaginative enough to come up with alternative ideas and practices. (PSH, 34) Social progress comes about when people try to "actualize hitherto-undreamt-of possibilities by putting new linguistic and other practices into play" (TaP, 208). Next, we shall look into this idea of changing the political practices through utopia and innovative use of language in more detail.

4.6. Cultural politics: changing the socio-linguistic practices

This section gets us to the Rortian idea of socio-political change. It is the cutting edge of my positive interpretation of Rorty that, pace his critics, his vision does not lead to an apology for status quo but actually contains interesting points about the possibilities of changing social practices. This takes us to

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[241] Booth 2007b, 130–133.
[242] Voparil 2006, 47–48.

the very center of his writings at least since Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature till the very last post-humously published essay. As Guignon and Hiley point out, if freezing-over of culture is what is most feared, then the antidote naturally is "to create an environment in which new forms of abnormal discourse constantly spring up"[243] I shall bring forth Rorty's ways of changing the public discourse and thus the political practices by taking my point of departure from his views on social movements, especially feminism. This is a natural starting point, since his essay "Feminism and Pragmatism" for the first time and most explicitly articulates his views on the prospects of agency for social change. As Fraser puts it:

> "In feminism, in his account, we meet a discursive practice that involves far reaching redescriptions of social life and thus has all the marks of the sublime, the abnormal, and the poetic, yet is simultaneously tied to the collective political enterprise of overcoming oppression and restructuring society." [244]

Rorty begins his article by noting that the contemporary socio-linguistic practices, like probably all socio-linguistic practices, construct a logical space where certain forms of injustice do not look or feel like injustice even for the oppressed themselves. Should the oppressed try to describe themselves *as* oppressed, their claims would sound crazy even for themselves because the very language of justice is shaped by and for the needs of the oppressors. There are no neutral premises from which to start. (TaP, 202–203, 206) So the only way to make a difference is to revise the very language in which the claims of justice and injustice are made. This, in turn, can only be achieved by trying to imagine a new kind of socio-linguistic practice. 'Mere' critical analysis of the current practices, no matter how 'deep', is not going to be enough (TaP, 203–206, 226–227; FID, 100). "Only if somebody has a dream, and a voice to describe that dream, does what looked like nature begin to look like culture, what looked like fate begin to look like a moral abomination." (TaP, 203)

The oppressed groups are trying to achieve authority over themselves. This cannot be done individually.

> "To get such authority you have to hear your own statements as a part of a shared practice. Otherwise you yourself will never know whether they are more than ravings, never know whether you are a heroine or a maniac. People in search of such authority need to band together and form clubs" (TaP, 223)

I think this idea is the closest we get to a public space in Rorty's writings. The idea that people need to have a public space in which their opinions and actions (and not their inherent attributes) are judged comes rather close to Arendt's notion of a "right to belong to some sort of organized community" (OT, 296–297). And if the oppressed groups cannot do this in the larger public sphere, they most form a *polis* of their own until they are seen "as full-fledged human beings rather than […] as degenerate cases - as

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[243] Guignon - Hiley 1990, 344.
[244] Fraser 1991, 262.

being entitled to love and protection, but not to participation in deliberation on serious matters" (TaP 224).

So the radical social movements are visioning a new set of practices that seem more ethical, a whole new way of societal being – a new answer to the question "what can we make of ourselves?" (TaP, 205–206, 226–227; CIS, 7) The chief instrument of change from the current set of practices to the new and better practices sketched by these movements is "speaking differently": "Nothing politically useful happens until people begin saying things never said before" (FID, 100). Rorty argues that the feminist writer Catharine MacKinnon sees feminist as needing to change the instinctive emotional reactions related to moral situations by providing new words and creative misuses of old words – thereby creating a wholly new language and consequently, hopefully, and in the long run, extending the logical space by making certain claims of injustice that used to seem crazy sound sane (TaP, 204).

The boundaries between different vocabularies are of course blurry, so to effect a change a certain amount of to and fro movement between different vocabularies is needed (CIS, 7n1, ORT, 221). Or, since the new vocabulary and practice is just about to emerge, one needs to "flirt with meaninglessness" (TaP, 217; CIS, 56). In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty calls this attempt to find new ways of speaking "edification" and in CIS he speaks of "metaphoric speech" but the idea is basically the same: one hopes to bring about a change by saying something that somehow disturbs the conventional ways of speaking rather than by arguing "rationally" in accord with the existing rules (PMN, 320, 360; CIS, 12, 18, 48). Whether or not one's objectives will be fulfilled is a matter of chance. Firstly, there is simply no way of knowing the consequences of one's own actions. Political agency always takes place in a context of complex contingencies: "despite what Scripture says, truth will not necessarily prevail" (TaP, 225)[245]. The only thing one can do is "to manipulate the tensions within [one's] own epoch in order to produce the beginnings of the next epoch" (CIS, 50). Secondly, even the actor's own objectives will probably change during the process. Pragmatism is very suspicious of the means-ends continuum which it hopes to replace with the metaphor of experimentation (TaP, 217)[246]. The hope is that the future will make every proposed frame obsolete (AOC, 20).

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[245] Interestingly, Rorty does indeed speak of "the truths" that social movements are advocating in a non-historicist manner, even if this may seem to conflict with his overall position. His point, however, is that even if it has always been *true* that patriarchy is wrong, the reasons that make this proposal true have not always been there. True sentences are true only on the basis of a bunch of other beliefs that we hold. (TaP, 49–50, 226, 225–226n42).
[246] See also Dewey 1999, 15, passim.

Having now described the ethical-political building blocks of Rorty's stance – his democratic vision, ethical attempts at widening one's web of social relations, and his take on the prospects of social change – we shall turn to the consequences of these aspects for normative IR theory. I hope that the things said above have proved that Roy Bhaskar is wide off the mark with his claim that

> "There is a structural factor tending to make Rorty unable to deal with social phenomena of criticism, critique and (non-incommensurable) change, lending his work to an apologia for, and so normalization, and thence eternalization (and so divinization), of the social status quo."[247]

Indeed, this is what Rorty, at all cost, tried to avoid. While he certainly leaned towards apologetics, this does not mean that he was unable to deal with the social phenomena of criticism. For Rorty was not an apologist for status quo but for all kinds of social movements and Deweyan democratic virtues[248]. In the next section, I shall summarize the contents of the earlier parts and bring forth the consequences for the debate on the boundaries and borders of political communities.

4.7. Rorty, statism, and IR: a reconsideration

4.7.1. Ethnocentrism and community levels

It is now time to weave together the threads that we, guided by the research questions and horizon created by IR theory, have so far perceived and collected from Rorty's oeuvre before re-opening them in discussion with Arendt. Let us start, once again, with some negative assessments. Bhaskar says that Rorty's "we" has three blameworthy characteristic. It is arbitrary (groundless), flexible, and monolithic[249]. In the context of IR debates, in turn, Eduard Jordaan claims that Rorty's conception of inclusion only refers to inclusion of "internal outsiders" and that he does not "question the state boundaries or sovereignty principles that keep external outsiders out"[250]. Similarly, Kelly Staples argues that Rorty has no tools for dealing effectively with the ethical-political problems created by the phenomenon of statelessness, and that this particular failure illuminates the failure of his project as a whole[251] The rest of this chapter tries to find out whether this is the case or not. My approach is twofold. I shall start by once more reflecting on the consequences of ethnocentrism to IR theory. After that, the issue of refugees and stateless persons shall be discussed in more detail.

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[247] Bhaskar 1991, 97.
[248] Bernstein 1986, 88–89.
[249] Bhaskar 1991, 94.
[250] Jordaan 2006, 7–8.
[251] Staples 2011. See especially page 1014.

The criticisms of ethnocentrism usually pick up one or more themes from the following line of argument: ethnocentrism is inward-looking, nationalistic, opposed to global solidarity, and at the same time promotes or at least optimistically ignores any imperialistic/hegemonistic tendencies[252]. This kind of reading is no doubt possible, and even backed by some of Rorty's own comments[253]. However, other kind of reading is also possible. In the reading I suggest, openness is the very center of any ethical polity. The most important questions for any community are, according to Rorty, the following:

> "what are the limits of our community? Are our encounters sufficiently free and open? Has what we have recently gained in solidarity cost us out ability to listen to outsiders who are suffering? To outsiders who have new ideas?" (ORT, 13)

Global solidarity is exactly something Rorty wishes to promote, although he also thinks it is quite hard to achieve – one can tell detailed and concrete stories of oneself as a member of a small group, but only abstract and sketchy stories as a citizen of the world (RT, 201; PCP, 46). Neither is Rorty ignorant of "our customary imperialist hypocrisy" – the fact that Westerners have usually propagated their world view with "the Gatling gun", backed up with a "Me rational, you Jane" narrative structure (ORT, 219; PCP, 54)[254]. His ethics is not all about spreading our way of life – quite the contrary: there is also an impulse towards an ethics of listening and openness to otherness. To further clarify the issue we can distinguish between four different meanings of "community" that we can derive from Rorty.

These different community levels are: (1) The "primary community" working as a basis of our self-identification of individuals – usually but not necessarily the nation-state; (2) The community of a group of people that are (actively or passively) kept out from the public discourse. The existence of these groups as a community, as was pointed out in the last section, presupposes the fact that the group of people in question is starting to forge an identity for itself; (3) "Cultural community" based on certain shared premises but divided by institutional (state) borders (e.g. the "Western democracies"); (4) "Ethical community": the people who we feel sympathy for but do not strongly identify ourselves with. For the members of the "human rights culture" (which in itself is a level-3 community) this means ideally the whole humankind.

Hence, the local community, be it state, tribe or family, is clearly for Rorty something that will probably always play an important role. These communities (1) are contingent, yet not – *pace* Bhaskar – arbitrary.

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[252] See e.g. Billig 1993, 72, 77; Turner 2004, 279.

[253] Most clearly in "The Unpredictable American Empire", a complex essay where Rorty, while condemning the imperialistic tendencies of the U.S., nevertheless argues his support for military action against dictators (UAE, 219).

[254] Historically, of course, the reference has been to divine commands instead of rationality.

Following this strand, Rorty suggests an ideal world order based on the model of a bazaar surrounded by exclusive clubs. The creation and locus of ethical-political identity in a "thick" sense would always take place in a relatively small community. However, the institutional form, precise scope and the porosity of its borders/boundaries is debatable. So when, for instance, Cochran points out that Rorty offers no indications about whether, as a result of the expansion of "we" feeling, the institutional structure of state will remain or some other form arise[255], he can only answer that no one can make predictions on this area, but he can only wish that the current state system will eventually fade away (RT, 201). This is in accord with the pragmatist confidence that their own vocabularies, like all vocabularies, sooner or later, "will be superseded – and, from their point of view, the sooner the better" (ORT, 219).

In addition to the three points Festenstein noted as ways of going beyond the contemporary political boundaries (see section 3 above), one could add, on the basis of the last section, changing the public discourse so that the meaning or scope of a specific boundary begins to seem different. To effect a change within a community (1) or (3), and through them a change in the whole logic of world politics, one has to rely on the splits and tensions within those cultures, especially articulated by cultures (2), or on some kind of disruptions from outside. Therefore, the only hope for change are tensions which make people listen to unfamiliar ideas (ORT, 13-14). Changes in the world of politics do not occur, Rorty argues, as a consequence of theoretical discoveries. Instead, they are the contingent result of a "reflective equilibrium between old platitudes and reactions to new stimuli" (TaP, 324). One source of such tensions in current world is global flows of people, refugees, immigrants, and such phenomena. In the next section, I will pose the question in more detail especially through refugee related questions, albeit the implications concern all anomalous groups in the matrix of nation-statism.

4.7.2. Refugees, sentimentalism, and agency

If the refugee, as the "paradigm of politics in the 21st century"[256] is also the new stimulus vis-à-vis the old platitudes of state-centric world politics, the question becomes: how can the workings of the reflective equilibrium be made more democratic, open and ethical? Most readers of Rorty would probably answer that we should put our efforts to humanitarian action backed with "sentimental education" that will make us more aware of the suffering of various groups around the world. Rorty himself probably would not strongly disagree with this kind of reading. There are, however, serious flaws in sentimental

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[255] Cochran 1996, 40, passim.
[256] Parvikko 2002.

humanitarian action. Sentimentalism has the structural effect of reducing the sufferers to a cliché – to "bare humanity" empty of any kind of agency that would disturb the compassionate reaction[257]. As, among others, Patricia Owens and Costas Douzinas have argued, this kind of sentimentalism privatizes, genderizes and consequently depoliticizes humanitarian action[258]. As Douzinas puts it,

> "We participate in human rights struggles from our front room not as *polites*, publicly-minded citizens, but as *idiotes*, private persons, committed to personal interest. No wonder that the G8 leaders and targets of Live8 stated […] that they would be happy to participate in the 'action' against them."[259]

The problem concerns especially the lack of agency given to refugees or migrants, who are problematically depicted as a danger from somewhere else, external from the public space[260]. However, on the conceptual level, refugees are always already *within* the public sphere, even if practically kept out from public deliberation.

Putting the problem this way takes us to another possible way of approaching the issue from a Rortian horizon. If we, instead of taking our point of departure directly from sentimental education, take a detour by focusing on the themes developed in sections 4, 5 and 6, we begin to see that there is a genuine possibility for democratic agency in Rorty's stance. Even if, as Fraser argues, Rorty never took the last step to the full political consequences of his thinking he gave us some important hints on how to proceed[261]. As has been repeatedly pointed out, the most important prerequisite for growth is that there is a constant possibility for different abnormal discourses to spring up. Remember, further, that abnormal discourse is what happens when someone who is ignorant of the conventions of normal discourse joins the discourse. It is then easy to see that migrants/refugees could be one of the groups constantly challenging the normal discourse of the settled peoples. They could be the stimuli for such tensions in our thinking that, as we saw, are the only hope for the betterment of our political vocabularies.

To claim, as Staples does, that the stateless and other outsiders are rendered voiceless by Rortian position is utterly wrong. Her argument is based on the misunderstanding of Rortian account according to which the stateless would have to express themselves using the vocabulary of the community in which they seek sanctuary. This, according to Staples, is because "the only alternative option […] a shared

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[257] Nyers 1999, 11, 15–16, 20–21; Owens 2009, 570.
[258] Owens 2004, 288, 291-295, 295. Douzinas 2007, 8, 11, 20.
[259] Douzinas 2007, 67.
[260] Owens 2004, 299.
[261] See Fraser 1991, 266.

human potential for accommodation" is purportedly ruled out by Rorty[262]. There are, however, two defects in this criticism. First, it supposes that vocabularies are fully coherent and integral wholes, impenetrable from the outside. But as we have seen, communal vocabularies are not windowless monads, and the vocabularies that Rorty most values are the ones characterized by radical pluralism. The second problem with Staples is that she seems to presuppose that Rorty denies the possibility and potential for accommodating strange voices to our communities. Apparently Staples thinks this is the case because of Rorty's refusal to make claims about human nature. But Rorty never denied that human beings have a variety of different attributes and potentials. He only wanted to direct our attention to the level of linguistic activity instead of a transcendental human nature, since it is at the fist-mentioned level that the most interesting and most distinctively human activity takes place[263]. This takes us back to the abnormal discourse generated by inclusion of outsiders, and the consequential hope for political amelioration.

The hope cannot be fulfilled, however, if the refugees/migrants are actively kept out from public deliberation and via governmental practices also prevented from organizing themselves and thus forging a moral identity for themselves. There is a danger that, like women and blacks historically, refugees are seen as either child-like or animal-like or both, instead of fully-fledged humans capable of self-government on both individual and group level[264]. There is then an ethical-political demand in Rorty's thinking that calls for promoting a public space (not necessarily bound by the borders of nation-states) for people that are not fully allowed to take part in the national public space. This is the condition *sine qua non* for the possibility of the oppressed to forge a moral identity and for the possibility of growth for all of us, since all attempts to edify ourselves are matters of making connections between our own culture and some other – connections, that is, in the life-world and not in the world of theory (TaP, 200–201; PMN, 360). The next section will discuss the direction towards which the practice of making new connections takes us, that is, what kind of world and what kind of world politics Rorty envisages.

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[262] Staples 2011, 1016.
[263] In the following quote, Rorty tries to illuminate what he does and what he does not imply with his anti-foundational attitude towards human beings: "If agreeing that human beings are, among other things, animals which can suffer pain is enough to make me a realist and an essentialist, then of course I qualify […] I only want to deny that [human beings] possess […] an extra added ingredient, a description of which can be used to explain, for example, why they have dignity rather than mere value. My view is that the only extra added ingredient they have is the extra neurons which make them capable of becoming language-users, and thus changing themselves by changing the way they talk" (RT, 130).
[264] On different distinctions between humans and pseudo-humans, see TaP, 168–169.

4.7.3. The present and beyond

One consequence of Rorty's thinking is, as Cochran points out, that there can be no *a priori* reasons for doubting the moral status of nation-statism[265]. However, *pace* Cochran, it could even be claimed that the whole notion of "moral status of states" presupposes such *a priori* premises. The only way to assess the moral status of anything is *a posteriori*, in relation to practice and in comparison to other possible practices. Rorty is actually a firm supporter of national identity projects:

> "a sense of shared national identity [...] is an absolutely essential component of citizenship [...] [A] nation cannot reform itself unless it takes pride in itself – unless it has an identity, rejoices in it, reflect upon it and tries to live up to it." (PSH, 253) [266]

However, he sees his own position as an antithesis to "simpleminded militaristic chauvinism" and ties himself instead tightly to the themes of democracy and hope. Democratic discussion presupposes a specific community as its point of reference. Without any kind of commitment to a certain political entity, it is hard to produce the needed agency for its betterment. (AOC, 3, 8, 11)[267] He strongly believes that his utopian goal of a "global, cosmopolitan, democratic, egalitarian, classless, casteless society" can only be achieved through the help of national governments (PSH, xii; AOC, 3). It should also be noted, that Rorty is not using "the national" as a red herring supposed to draw attention away from class and other differences. Instead, he reminds us that there is s stark contrast between the class differences of 20th/21st century America and the original idea that the country was supposed to be "the world's first classless society" (PSH, 259). Against the promoters of politics of recognition or …of identity, he states that "we must remind ourselves […] that Marxists were absolutely right about one thing: the soul of history is economic." (PSH, 227)

The point is, then, that "we should not let the abstractly described *best* be the enemy of *the better*" (AOC, 105. My emphasis). Rorty would not disagree with Fred Dallmayr, who argues that the attempts to achieve different countries are necessarily interdependent and that national pride is possible only on the condition that it is tied to the promotion of "pride in humanity"[268], albeit Rorty would probably wish to specify that pride in humanity means that the group of people in question would take pride in their

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[265] Cochran 1996, 41.

[266] In this, he is agreeing with Julia Kristeva's psychological standpoint, according which national pride is comparable to the good narcissistic image that the child elaborates into an ego ideal and the degradation of which may cause depression (Kristeva 1993, 52).

[267] Rorty further clarifies his position by stating that "I see the 'orthodox' (the people who think that hounding gays out of military promotes traditional family values) as the same honest, decent, blinkered, disastrous people who voted for Hitler in 1933. I see the 'progressivist' as defining the only America I care about." (PSH, 17).

[268] Dallmayr 2001, 102–103.

attempts to enlarge their moral community and think the consequences for their actions as much on a global scale as possible. Ethnocentrism means we have to start from where we are, in this case the nation-state system as it currently stands, and try to look for toeholds to move further. Any given political entity always remains "unachieved" – its ideals are never fully embodied in the institutional structure and, moreover, those ideals are in constant flux. To aim at fixity would mean giving up hope for enchantment. (AOC, 101) Rorty cites approvingly Derrida's ideas on the "democracy to come":

> "Justice [...] is what the metaphysics of presence keeps trying and failing to identify with some set of institutions or principles. Such identification is impossible, because every institution or principle will produce new, unexpected, injustices of its own. Every imaginable utopia will need a social protest movement. Justice is a ghost that can never be laid." (PSH, 213) [269]

Such unexpected injustices can be more easily spotted and our current ways of thinking, acting, and judging transcended only if more and more groups are seen as being entitled not only to "love and protection" but also to participation in public deliberation. To start with, different subordinate groups may need to form what Fraser calls a "counter-public sphere", "a discoursive space where 'semantic authority' is constructed collectively, critically, and democratically"[270]. Owens suggests something similar in the context of migrants/refugees with her notion of "a counterpolitics of foreignness" in multiple public spheres, underwriting two partly conflicting goals: the inclusion of migrants/refugees to democracy's national future ("the better" above) and attempting to denationalize democracy ("the best")[271]. Sentimental education is not opposite to this kind of empowering agency-creation. As Parker and Brassett point out, Rortian ethics of sentimental education take political realties seriously and, by letting the migrants/refugees to publicize their experiences in their own words, help developing a political agency of the excluded[272]. Moral education, that is, moral progress, is necessarily a matter of "*education sentimentale*" and as such it ought to discover different local communities as sources of virtue, as Douzinas argues[273].

This democratic process also, hopefully, opens up the *possibility* for expanding the "we" groups via edifying discussion. Since, as Cochran points out, Rorty's "we" is built around any kind of "practice, metaphor, or reading that can construct necessary sympathy"[274] it is also a "we" that can possibly go

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[269] On the same theme see also TaP 192–193 where the same sort of idea is attributed to Dewey. On "democracy to come" see also e.g. Derrida 1994, 80–82.
[270] Fraser 1991, 266.
[271] Owens 2004, 301.
[272] Parker – Brasset 2005, 246, 250–251.
[273] Douzinas 2007, 79. Douzinas explicitly takes this point to be *contra* Rorty, but I hope I have succeeded in arguing that it is compatible with the Rortian position.
[274] Cochran 1996, 41.

beyond the contemporary institutional structure of nation-states if communities (3) and (4) gain strength vis-à-vis community (1). The creation of this kind of solidarity is not – pace McCarthy[275] – *creatio ex nihilo* (creation in absence of any commonalities) but merely creation in absence of a common human nature that would somehow provide a pre-existent guide for the process. Hence, following the pragmatic holistic and fallibilistic line of thinking, we end up in a situation where everything – goals, interests, methods, agency, criteria for success, etc. – is potentially up for revision, but we should not try to make our judgment about everything at once since that would only be possible if there existed ahistorical criteria for judgment[276]. Following the same holistic train of thought we can also note that there is probably no way of making judgment about all borders at the same time in isolation from all the other political questions. This is also a consequence of Rorty's ethical-political stance of keeping the conversation going and refusing all temptations that seek closure by eternalizing contemporary institutions.

Rorty is worried that the contemporary west, trapped in the cycle of minor reforms, is not imaginable enough to see beyond the current institutions. We may, as a consequence, have to put our hopes to the third world. (EHO, 179–187) But the categories are, as the phenomena of migrant flows and refugees suggests, not solid. Hence we should try to adjust our vocabularies and institutions so that to produce more and more people who are able to enlarge their flexible web of social relations wider and wider – take into account the interest of formerly unknown people not just the closest ones in the web of social relations. Simultaneously an open discussion on means and ends of political action should be promoted. Even if some sort of cosmopolitan government would be the utopian goal, it should not be seen as a fixed end. With the help of fallibilistic and humanistic critical intelligence – the refusal of the temptation to see one's own identity as self-sufficient and fixed (PCP, 66)[277] – we should cultivate the Deweyan idea of "creative democracy", where both the intersubjective practice and individuals related to it are creative[278]. In the words of Emerson: "No truth so sublime but it may be trivial to-morrow in the light of new thoughts. People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them."[279] Having articulated in this chapter this forward-looking, radically democratic way of looking at Rorty's ethical-political horizon, and the role of open but institutionally-cum-spatially rooted community in it,

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[275] McCarthy 1991, 38.
[276] Festenstein 2002, 569.
[277] This does not mean, Rorty continues, "being an indecisive petit-bourgeois wimp, a Woody Allen figure, never quite sure who he is or what is to be done" (PCP, 66).
[278] Dewey 1998, 341; Bernstein 2006, 201; Campbell 2004, 182–183.
[279] Emerson 1982, 237.

we can now move to Arendt's conceptions of public world, democratic community and the problems of nation-statism.

5. PUBLIC WORLD IN ARENDT′S THOUGHT

5.1. Introduction to Arendt

Classifying Hannah Arendt as a political thinker is almost impossible. She does not seem to fit any of the established categories of political or intellectual schools, even though she is sometimes connected to republicanism or phenomenology. Partly because of this, she remained during her lifetime a somewhat marginal figure in political philosophy, even though her 1963 *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil* provoked a severe controversy. During her life and the years following her death she was often also, to a certain extent, misunderstood. The source of the somewhat misleading early representations of her work lies in the assumption that she tried to build a classical abstract system of political philosophy on the grounds of experiences derived from the (idealized) Greek *polis.* From this point of view, it is natural to start from her most theoretical work, *The Human Condition.* However, after the publication of Arendt's biography by Elizabeth Young-Bruehl in 1983 a growing number of scholars have noticed the notable influence that her personal experiences of the Nazi totalitarianism and statelessness had on her thinking, and that, therefore, the place to start is *The Origins of Totalitarianism*[280]. This is also in line with her own descriptions of what she was doing: "What is the subject of our thought? Experience! Nothing else! And if we lose the ground of experience then we get into all kinds of theories" (HA, 308. See also EU, 20). Her main interest was to understand what happens (HA, 303), and especially to understand in a non-dogmatic way, "without a bannister".

In order to gain insights from Arendt, we need to have a look at her intellectual context. It is becoming widely accepted by scholars that there is a dynamic tension between the two sources of her thought. On the one hand there are her personal experiences as a stateless person and a German Jewess during the Nazi period. On the other, there is the influence of German "Existenz philosophy", especially the thought of Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers.[281] Both sources were equally needed for the development of the basic categories of Arendt's thinking. Neither this nor the fact that she always wrote on concrete experiences means, however, that her corpus is inconsistent. As Margaret Canovan points out, "Arendt had a naturally systematic mind that tended of its own accord toward consistency and synthesis"; there-

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[280] See especially Benhabib 1996, Bernstein 1996, and Canovan 1994.
[281] Benhabib 1996, xxiv, 47; Bernstein 1996, 6–9.

fore, her writings form a "spider's web of concepts," one part of which cannot be understood if one is unaware of its connections to the rest of her work – an insight we also gained in its general form from hermeneutics. Arendt was then, an "unsystematic system-builder", whose 'system' is supposed to remain dynamic and unfinished.[282] Arendt was, as her biographer Elizabeth Young-Bruehl explains,

> "a critic in the original sense of the Greek word χρίτής, a judge or interpreter who can make distinctions, separate things out, give meanings. She was not a philosophical or political visionary. There is no utopian impulse in her work, though she took political hope form the existence of councils, the spontaneous outgrowths of revolutions."[283]

This dynamic system is in many ways related to themes relevant for IR, even though Arendt has thus far remained a somewhat underexploited resource within IR literature (her close relationship with Hans J. Morgenthau, the grand old man of the discipline, notwithstanding[284]). The interest in her thinking has, however, lately increased[285]. When it comes to the study at hand, we are in a bit different situation than the case was with Rorty. Firstly, Arendt's oeuvre is wide and deals almost exclusively with political issues. Therefore a lot issues have to be left outside the scope of our presentation. Secondly, the number of valuable interpretations of Arendt's work is also, unlike with Rorty, relatively high. This allows for a bit more straightforward reconstruction of Arendt's thinking without consuming energy in shooting down problematic criticisms (which do exist, but have usually already been scrutinized by others). On the other hand, this also means that we will not attempt to reconstruct Arendtian political theory, or even a part of it, in an authentic manner. Again – as with Rorty – we are thus creating a 'profile' or repetition, and not a reconstruction in any rigid sense of the word. Rather, the chapter serves as what Arendt called "exercise in political thought", an attempt to think the themes of nation-statism, refugees and cosmopolitanism in an experimental way through Arendt's writings on statelessness, world, plurality and action.

The chapter begins by explaining what Arendt understood by political thinking and criticism. It is pointed out that the basis of her ethical-political vision is what she refers to as 'the world', i.e. the human in-between, the space that both brings human beings together and separates them from each other. The basic character of the human in-between, explicated in section 5.3.1., is plurality. As plural actors, human beings crave for freedom and equality, which are the conditions – according to Arendt – for the disclosure of the unique identity of each person. Having laid down these basic ethical-political demands

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[282] Canovan 1994, 5–6.
[283] Young-Bruehl 2004, 473.
[284] Morgenthau and Arendt were close friends from 1950s onwards and Morgenthau seemingly appreciated Arendt's thinking. After Arendt's death, he wrote an obituary (1976) for her, as well as a contribution to a special issue on Arendt in *Social Research* (1977).
[285] Especially worth mentioning on this score are the works of Patricia Owens and Patrick Hayden as well as the edited volume by Anthony F. Lang and John Williams (2005).

of Arendt's vision, we proceed to a discussion of the threats they face in the modern world. This takes us to the problematique Arendt refers to as "the social", a constantly accelerating process of normalization and wordlessness, the substitution of politics by the administration of "the life process of society". These degenerations are, according to Arendt, strongly related to the development of the modern nation-state system. Such issues as minority problems and massive statelessness – people ejected from "the old trinity of state-people-territory" (OT, 282) – are, she argued, inevitable byproducts of the tautologies of the political just discussed. If a cure is to be found, it is not from moralism or sentimental humanitarianism, but from political action. In order to safeguard the right (more important than anything we understand by "human rights") to belong to some kind of organized political community (see section 5.5.1.), Arendt suggests that we need to remake 'humanity' into a properly *political* concept (purged from all sentimentality), engage into a project of civic friendship and work towards a pluralistic, multi-level arrangement of councils and federations with limited powers (see sections 5.5.2., 5.5.3., and 5.5.4.).

5.2. The pariah thinker: criticism without a bannister

Characteristic of Arendt was her complete refusal of any identification to a school or sect, be it political or intellectual. In respect to the latter, she once told a student that she was "a sort of phenomenologist", hastening to add: "but, ach, not in Hegel's way – or Husserl's"[286]. With regard to her political affinities, when asked by Hans J. Morgenthau – her close friend – in a seminar on her thinking about her stance within "the contemporary possibilities" of liberalism versus conservatism, Arendt answered:

> "I don't know. I really don't know and I've never known. I suppose I never had any such position. You know the left think that I am a conservative, and the conservatives sometimes think I am left or I am a maverick or God knows what. And I must say I couldn't care less. I don't think that the real questions of this century will get any kind of illumination by this kind of thing." (HA, 333–334)

Like Heidegger, her former teacher, Arendt considered thinking (or the lack thereof) the major question of our time. Whereas for Heidegger "[m]ost thought-provoking is that we are still not thinking – not even yet, although the state of the world is becoming constantly more thought-provoking"[287], Arendt saw "thoughtlessness[288] – the heedless recklessness or hopeless confusion or complacent repetition of 'truths' which have become trivial and empty" as an outstanding characteristic of modern society (HC, 5)[289].

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[286] Young-Bruehl 2004, 405.
[287] Heidegger 1993, 370.
[288] Arendt insisted on using the word "thoughtlessness" even though her friend Mary McCarthy, who often corrected Arendt's English, tried repeatedly to convince her that the word does not exactly have the kind of connotations Arendt was looking for (see Benhabib 1996, 177).
[289] She defined her own project, therefore, as an attempt to "think what we are doing" (HC, 5).

What separated her thinking from Heidegger's was the strongly political way of looking at things, partly provoked by the bitter witnessing of Heidegger's infamous odyssey into politics[290]. At this point, her experiences as a Jew enter the picture. She explained time and time again that for years, the only reasonable answer to the question "who are you" for her was "a Jew" (MDT, 17–18; see also EU, 12; JW, 137; HA, 334). The political events around her made Judaism a personal problem for Arendt, "and my own problem was political. Purely political!" (EU, 4–5, 12; see also MDT, 18). She greatly valued certain Jewish individuals whom she considered "conscious pariahs" (JW, 274), and to whose ranks she would probably had wanted to include herself. The term 'pariah', which she draw from Bernard Lazare and Max Weber, along with its counterpart, the parvenu, contains the seeds of what she later thematized as independent thinking, political responsibility and the social versus the political.[291] This derived directly from Arendt's own experience. As she saw matters, a Jew in European societies had traditionally had two options: either becoming a parvenu by accepting the rules and prejudices of the society that she did not belong to by birth, or being a pariah – either unconsciously or consciously (JW, 279). It was the latter option that Arendt preferred. Her prime example, from whom she also drew the concept of conscious pariah, was Bernard Lazare[292], who was the first to understand the full political consequences of pariah being: "As soon as the pariah enters the arena of politics and translates his status into political terms, he becomes perforce a rebel."(JW, 284)

It has often been noted that Arendt was simultaneously talking about herself when she described Gotthold Lessing: "His attitude toward the world was neither positive nor negative, but radically critical and, in respect to the public realm of his time, completely revolutionary."(MDT, 5) Arendt's own thinking was "radically critical" because of her tireless defense of the pluralism of the world (see the next section) against all conformist and non-pluralist tendencies. She advocated 'critical' thinking (although avoiding the expression "because of the Frankfurt School"), not letting oneself "get away with repeating clichés of the public mood" (HA, 309). Always looking at things from the point of view of 'the world' – the human in-between – and anchored to the fact of human plurality, this kind of criticism takes place "between past and future", not in some kind of timeless and spaceless realm as metaphysics has always

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[290] In his 1933 rectoral address Heidegger endorsed Nazism. This created a problem for Arendt she never sufficiently solved (although she eventually forgave Heidegger, excusing his mistake as a *deformation professionelle" (*MH, 303]). Arendt was forever haunted by the question concerning the relation between thinking, judging, and acting. How could it be, as Benhabib puts it, that "the one who could think like no other, namely, Martin Heidegger, and the one who could not think at all, namely, Adolf Eichmann," made the same political mistake? (Benhabib 1996, 192)

[291] See, e.g., Bernstein 1996, 17–18,

[292] Lazare was a French Jewish literary critic and a political actor. Arendt also names three other examples of pariah Jews: Heinrich Heine, Charlie Chaplin, and Franz Kafka (JW, 276).

claimed (BPF, 9–13). Moreover, it "can never give rise to a definite world view which, once adopted, is immune to further experiences in the world because it has hitched itself firmly to one possible perspective." (MDT, 7–8) This kind of criticism does not have a fixed ground or foundation on which to stand, or, as Arendt preferred to put it, it lacks a bannister[293]. When Arendt – "[l]ike a pearl diver who descends to the bottom of the sea" – looked back to Greek or Roman antiquity, or the American Revolution, she did so not in order to get back to some lost Golden Age, but in order to understand the present and to guide the way towards a better future (MDT, 205–206; BPF, 10, 14; JW, 149–150).

She refuted both reckless optimism of progress and reckless despair of the prophets of doom (OT, vii). She did not believe in inevitabilities in politics, quite the contrary: political action, one of her most important concepts, rules out by definition all kinds of irresistible processes. In an early essay she called for an "active patience", comparing politics to drilling slowly into a hard board, and defined patience as continuing this drilling steadily instead of waiting for a miracle to happen (JW, 139). Unlike sometimes suggested, however, Arendt was not an unreserved advocate of political action. As Canovan reminds us, Arendt wanted both to reassure that action is always possible and to warn against the dangers of hubristic over-confidence and the consequential need for limits, especially in the form of institutions[294]. These institutions are an important part of what Arendt calls 'the world', a concept we will be looking into more closely in the next section.

5.3. The basic concepts of Arendt's political thought

5.3.1. Pluralism, equality, freedom, and the world

Even though Arendt is best known of her emphasis of action[295], I believe such commentators as Margaret Canovan and Olivia Guaraldo are correctly arguing that not action but plurality is the most fundamental concept of her thinking[296]. Plurality (the very thing that totalitarianism had tried to eliminate) means, in short, that "men, not Man[297], live on the earth and inhabit the world", and is "not only the

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[293] Arendt used the German version of this expression, "*Denken ohne Geländer*" (HA, 336)

[294] Canovan 1994, 67–68.

[295] This is indeed one of her most important contributions, which allies her with Aristotle, Machiavelli and Montesquieu against the overwhelming majority of Western tradition whose attitude towards action and praxis is highly suspicious (See, e.g., d'Entrèves 1994, 66; Villa 2000, 11).

[296] Canovan 1994, 110-111, passim.; Guaraldo 1997, 304–305.

[297] Arendt consistently uses the masculine pronoun when referring to human beings in general. I have tried to eliminate this manner as far as possible, but preserved it nevertheless in direct quotations.

conditio sine qua non, but the *condition per quam*[298] of all political life" (HC, 7). In "Introduction *into* Politics*"* (PP, 93–204), which was planned as a follow-up book for *The Human Condition* but never completed, Arendt argues that politics essentially deals with "the coexistence and association of *different* men", whose self-organization is based on certain commonalities abstracted from "an absolute chaos of differences" (PP, 93). For Arendt, then, pluralism, politics, freedom and equality form a conceptual matrix from which no concept can be separated without severely violating the understanding of the others. Pluralism and politics presuppose each other, freedom is the *raison d'être* of politics, and freedom is only possible in the conditions of political equality. All these, in turn, are only possible within the context of a common world.

The basic features of this conceptual matrix can already be found from the Greek *polis,* "a form of political organization in which the citizens lived together under conditions of no-rule, without a division between rulers and ruled" (OR, 20); in the Greek sense*,* politics

> "is therefore centered around freedom, whereby freedom is understood negatively as not being ruled or ruling, and positively as a space which can be created only by men and in which each man moves among his peers. Without those who are my equals there is no freedom" (PP, 117)

The notion of no-rule is of vast importance. The form of political organization in Greek was not any kind of 'archy' or 'cracy' (e.g. mon*archy* or demo*cracy*). Instead, Arendt argues, it was an *isonomy*, where equality and freedom – *on the political sphere* – were almost synonymous:

> "Isonomy guaranteed ίσότής [*isotes*], equality, but not because all men were born or created equal, but, on the contrary, because men were by nature […] not equal, and needed an artificial institution, the polis, which by virtue of its νόμος [*nomos*] would make them equal." (OR, 20–21)

Proper equality, for Arendt, is limited to the political realm, between citizens; it is the artificial, institutionally created, equality of plural and radically different individuals, not an innate natural quality of humans.

Plurality is an exclusively human feature; it is the paradoxical plurality of unique[299] beings that are all the same in that nobody is ever the same as anyone else throughout time and space (HC, 8, 176). This derives from the fact that in humans, the individual life-story from birth to death (*bios)* rises above the biological life of species existence (*zoē)* (BPF, 42). The most important consequence of this, according to Arendt, is that even if there was a "human nature" (which is doubtful), *we* can never know it. Like

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[298] *Condition per quam* translates as "condition through which".

[299] Arendt emphasizes that it is uniqueness that is characteristic of human beings. Otherness is something that humans share with everything that is, and distinctness something that we share with everything alive (HC 176).

Rorty, Arendt held that human beings cannot be defined in terms of "what" they are; their being is always an answer to the question of "who" (HC, 9–10). Each individual possesses the capacity of enacting his or hers uniqueness by acting, that is, starting something new in the world. Arendt calls this capacity, the potentiality of freedom, natality – the fact that each person is a genuine newcomer, that there is a new beginning inherent in every birth (HC, 9).

Plurality as a condition of politics is the cause of inevitable tension between politics and metaphysics, since the latter always thinks of humanity (and, after Hegel, also history) in the singular. This is a crucial point for Arendt: "*Man* is apolitical. Politics arises *between men*, and so quite *outside* of *man*" (PP, 95). While these notions may sound rather truistic and commonsensical, their implications are revolutionary. Plurality rules out not only the attempts to perceive politics from the point of view of kinship, natural rights, categorical imperatives, Hegelian-Marxian idea of world history and Platonic vision of deriving politics from preconceived ideas, but also absolute goodness no less than absolute evil[300]. What all these have common is some sort of absolutism, and for Arendt "[t]he absolute […] spells doom to everyone when it is introduced into the political realm" (OR, 74). This mistrust towards absolutes grows directly out from Arendt's reflections on totalitarian ideologies: their assumption of infallibility based to the belief that the movement had found the "key to history", the hidden forces of history or nature, hence forming logical systems in which, once the first premise is accepted, everything else follows by necessity (OT, 10, 345–349, 457–458).

The realm of human affairs is not a place for absolutes, but is – we might say – objectively relative. The *raison d'être* of the public sphere is twofold: safeguarding plurality and making the actualization of freedom possible. These, in turn, are only possible through equality, through establishment of a public world where human beings are equal in condition of no-rule (HC, 32–33) and recognize each other as "builders of worlds and cobuilders of a common world" (OT, 458). Equality is an achievement of political organization and culture, not a given fact. We *become* equal by making a decision to guarantee ourselves equal rights in order to be able to build a common world. (OT, 301[301]) What in the last analysis ties plurality, equality and freedom together is the world, which has a specific meaning for Arendt. Adopting and developing further (early) Heidegger's understanding of the world, Arendt sees it consisting of two parts. One the one hand, there is a concrete, tangible reality of *things* in general, and tools in specific – Arendt calls this "the human artifice" or "the physical in-between". This aspect of the world

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[300] All these themes occur in Arendt's work repeatedly. See e.g. HC, 73–74; PP, 14, 94–95; MDT, 27.
[301] See also Bernstein 1996, 85–86.

guarantees its (relative) stability, that is lasts longer than individual human lives. On the other hand, there is the political, public world, without which the world of things would lack any meaning. This is the 'narrative' or 'discursive' *web of human relationships*, or "the subjective in-between". Between these two ends of the continuum lies culture, especially in the sense of the so-called "high culture" of works of art, which are the most lasting and least "useful" of all concrete things, hence transgressing the mere utilitarian thinking connected to tools. (HC, 154, 167–173, 182–183)[302].

For Arendt, the world and (almost synonymous) public space are, no less than a prerequisite for meaningful and, *a fortiori*, fully humane life on earth. The world, Arendt argues, is like a table with people sitting around it. Like every in-between, it has the double function of bringing people together and separating them at the same time; it gathers us together, and "prevents our falling over each other" (HC, 52)[303]. Consequently, as Canovan explains, without the world, human beings cannot be plural individuals rather than interchangeable members of a species[304]. On the other hand, also the reality of the world is dependent on human plurality. Each person has her specific place in the world, and this place constitutes her perspective; the reality of the world relies on the simultaneous presence of these different perspectives (HC, 57). Only when things have public appearance and can be talked about from a variety of perspectives, we can be assured of the reality of world. Two dangers threaten the world, then (albeit these can be parts of the same process, as in totalitarianism). In the one extreme, if there are no possibilities for discussion and hence agreement, we end up in a solipsism of private opinions. If we cease to notice that we are always concerned with the *same* object, despite our different perspectives, no shared nature can save the world from destruction (for this reason common sense, as the classical *sensus communis,* is one of the most important political qualities). In the other extreme, when people start multiplying each other's' viewpoints until we are left with only one perspective, the common world has come to its end. (HC, 55–58, 208–209; OT, 476) In sum:

> "Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear." (HC, 57)

To sum up, we are not equal by virtue of birth, that is, by nature; we become equalized by an agreement that creates a set of institutions that establish a space where freedom and action can appear (HC, 214–

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[302] All these – with the exception of "authentic publicity", which is clearly an implicit criticism of Heidegger – are themes that Arendt derived from Heidegger's conception of world in Being and Time and other writings and seminars in the 1920s.
[303] The "falling over each other" of which Arendt talks about may refer to two distinct phenomena that are equally unworldly, that is, violence and love.
[304] Canovan 1994, 106.

215; BPF, 153)[305]. This set of institutions, the world, instead of a shared human nature, is what we have in common with each other.

By now, it should already be clear that the Arendtian world, i.e. the public space, is necessarily spatially limited to a certain concrete place. We need a relatively stable human artifice as a context for our actions in order to live a meaningful life. Otherwise human affairs would be "as floating, as futile and vain, as the wanderings of nomad tribes" (HC, 204). But having a common world in this sense is not enough. Pluralism is not actual pluralism, nor freedom actual freedom if they are not enacted; hence the importance of political action. And the world, without being talked about from different viewpoints, different "it appears to me" standpoints, "would not be a human artifice but a heap of unrelated things" (HC, 204). These two intertwined activities, acting and speaking, the deed and the word, constitute the basic fabric of politics. Their nature will be examined next.

5.3.2. Action

Acting, for Arendt, is *the* political activity *par excellence*, and corresponds to the human condition of plurality (HC, 7). In its widest sense, 'to act' means taking an initiative; it refers to the human capacity to begin something new. Through it human beings enact their uniqueness, actualize their potential for freedom, and disclose their identities. As we saw before, every individual is for Arendt a genuine newcomer. This fact – the human condition of natality – alone guarantees the possibility of starting something new in the world: "action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth […] [it] is the actualization of human condition of natality" (HC, 177–178, 189)[306]. This possibility was what totalitarianism tried to eradicate through its central institution, the concentration camp (OT, 447; AJC, 166). It is against this radical evil that Arendt's theory of action is designed, not the historical and conceptual constellation of classical Greek, inapplicable to modern conditions, as Habermas has claimed[307]. To actualize and concretize the potentiality for freedom, human beings need to weave their strand into a network of human relations, that is, to take a venture into the public sphere. This takes place first and foremost through speech. For Arendt, the Aristotelian definition of human beings as *zōon politikon* is ungraspable if it is not combined with the other definition of them as a *zōon logon ekhon*, that is, a being capable of speech

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[305] On the centrality of institutions to the Arendtian world, see Canovan 1994, 109.
[306] Dewey (1984, 127) makes almost exactly the same point: "Each individual that comes into the world is a new beginning; the universe itself is, as it were, taking a fresh start in him and trying to do something, even if on a small scale, that it has bever done before".
[307] Habermas 1994, 214, 220.

(HC, 24–27). The two things are practically inseparable. A deed without speech is usually meaningless, and on the other hand, action often takes the form of speaking (HC, 26, 178; EU, 23). Deeds need to be understood to be effective, and understanding requires discussion.

But what exactly *is* action? At this point, the commentators seem to divide into two opposite camps. To put matters simply, there are those, like Seyla Benhabib and Maurizio Passerin d'Entréves who see Arendt as a forerunner for Habermasian communicative action; and the other side there are those, like Bonnie Honig and Dana Villa, who emphasize the agonistic, self-disclosing (Nietzschean) character of action. The latter embrace the side of Arendtian action that Hanna Pitkin debunks as "machismo,"[308] whereas the former emphasize the rational communication between participants. I believe Mary Dietz and Bonnie Honig hit the mark by criticizing the Benhabibian side for casting Arendt "under the spell of Habermas" and misrepresenting the agonistic side she criticizes[309]. But on the other hand, the interpretation that Benhabib supplies is more able to grasp the associative side of Arendtian action[310], whereas Honig is at times guilty of casting Arendt under the spell of post-Heideggerian French thinkers by conceptualizing action as a kind of a 'pure event'[311]. Nevertheless, we do not need to go into these debates any further. The point is to acknowledge the existence of both sides of Arendtian action with the consequence that the comparisons to both Nietzsche and Habermas fall short.

We must take Arendt at word and seek the models of her action from actual historical events, and from the republican tradition, especially form Machiavelli and Montesquieu. From the latter, she took the idea that action, insofar as it is free, is not a phenomenon of the will; it does not spring from a motive and it does not aim at a specific goal or a predictable effect (that is, these are not the determining factors, even though important nevertheless) . Instead, it is inspired and will be judged by a principle, something much too general to prescribe any particular goal, perhaps somewhat similar to Derrida's ethical ideals that we always try to, but never fully succeed in, reconciling with the juridico-political institutional realities (BPF, 150–151; OR, 88; PP, 193–195)[312]. Inspired by a principle, a person acts freely, or in

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[308] Pitkin argues that Arendt's "citizens begin to resemble posturing little boys clamoring for attention ('Look at me! I'm the greatest!' 'No, look at me!') and wanting to be reassured that they are brave, valuable, even real" (Pitkin 1981, 338).
[309] Dietz 1995, 38; Honig 1995c, 156–159.
[310] See Dietz 1995, 38.
[311] See e.g. Honig 1995c, 146–147. By 'event' in this context is meant a kind of a radical break that transgresses the rules of a situation from which it occurs. It cannot therefore easily be combined, e.g., with an understanding of politics as debating.
[312] See e.g. Derrida 2001, 11, 17, *passim.*; Another point of comparison could be Deleuze's "virtual". These parallels bring forth the non-Kantian character of principles. Peg Birmingham provides a good account on the matter: "Arendt is not claiming that principles are atemporal or eternal. Her claim that principles need to be enacted in order to be fully manifest suggests that a temporal dimension is always present in the manifestation of a principle. The principle's inexhaustibility, on the

other words – as Arendt learned from Machiavelli – uses his/her *virtú*. *Virtú* is the response by an actor to the specific way the world discloses itself to him/her, i.e. the constellation of *fortuna* in the current conjuncture. (BPF, 137, 151) Only virtue, in this sense radically different from goodness, is capable of "embodiment in lasting institutions" (OR, 74). A part of virtuous action is also the ability to get other to join in the effort; real political action is always done by a group and can only accomplish something in this way; indeed, action is never possible in isolation (OR, 165; HA, 310; HC, 188).

Because it takes place in the web of human relationships, action is by its very nature unpredictable, contingent, and aleatoric. The contingent nature is temporally both past and future oriented. In relation to the past every new beginning is like a miracle; any causal explanation for its occurrence is necessarily insufficient: "[t]he fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him" (HC, 177–178; BPF, 168). When it comes to the future, the fact that every action, to be meaningful, takes place in the web of human relationships makes its consequences difficult to anticipate. Since action acts upon beings who are also capable of action, it may well start a chain reaction that goes on quite literally till the end of humankind (HC, 190, 231–232). Because every reaction is also an action in the same sense as the action to which it is a *re-action*, it is quite impossible to know the consequences of one's own actions. "[O]ne deed, and sometimes one word, suffices to change every constellation" (HC, 190); hence the biblical proverb, "forgive them, for they know not what they do" is true for all action, and forgiving (in addition to making and keeping promises) is one of the major political virtues, one without which any kind of 'undoing' would be impossible in the realm of human affairs (EU, 23; HC, 236–247[313]). For this reason, furthermore, it is not possible to distinguish between goals and means of political action: "the means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals" (CR, 106).

In addition to the reduction of politics from nature (as in racism or nationalism), action is threatened from another direction. For Arendt, the pet peeve of Western tradition at least since Plato has been the understanding of politics as 'making'. Both actors and thinkers have been looking for an activity that would rid politics of the contingency and unpredictability inherent in pluralism. The basic scheme has

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contrary, describes the way in which it can never be fully realizable in any particular concrete action." (Birmingham 2006, 15)

[313] Arendt credits Jesus of Nazareth for "discovering" the role of forgiveness in the realm of human affairs (HC, 238). Arendt often, furthermore, often praised Jesus (of whom she talked in strictly secular-historical sense), his unworldliness notwithstanding, for understanding action. In an unpublished piece she wrote that "Jesus knew what action is better than anybody else, [but] he did not know what institutions are" (cited in Canovan 1994, 147).

always been the same: one blueprint (a Platonic idea), implemented in a process led by one man. This vision is not only anti-pluralistic, but also potentially violent (as well as androcentric, even though this was certainly not Arendt's criticism) as 'making' always involves violence towards its material: "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs". And of course the 'material' in human affairs is other people. A milder expression of the same tendency is the idea – originating from Rome and culminating in Kant's moral philosophy – that political activity is primarily legislating (and that laws are, further, understood as God's prohibitions: "Thou shalt not"). (HC, 63, 139–144, 220, 229; OR, 181)

Arendt does, however, agree that action's unpredictability needs to be limited, but only by means characteristic of action itself. Arendt, in other words, seeks to find the narrow path between determinism and reckless optimism (hubris) both of which were essential for totalitarian layout[314]. Against the first tendency, she emphasized that since every person is by default a newcomer and, furthermore, possesses imagination "we are *free* to change the world and to start something new in it" (CR, 5; HC, 177–179). Against the latter she highlighted the indispensable role that political structures – institutions in a wide sense – play in safeguarding human dignity and the possibility of action. For instance, a relatively stable and constitutional legal system is a prerequisite for working political arrangements. Hence,

> "the old virtue of moderation, of keeping within bounds, is indeed one of the political virtues par excellence, just as the political temptation par excellence is indeed *hubris* (as the Greeks, fully experienced in the potentialities of action, knew so well) and not the will to power, as we are inclined to believe." (HC, 191)

It is important to note that this is not a conservative point. It is to be read in the context of totalitarian movements and against any kind of (widely understood) imperialistic tendencies. It also brings forth the importance of some sort of worldly stability: without a world which, as we saw before, should last longer than individual lives, action's meaningfulness becomes under question. The fact that change and stability are seen as opposites in today's political vocabulary is according to Arendt a sign of its corruption (OR, 215; CR, 78–79). These are in fact two sides of the same coin. New beginnings aim at creating institutions, which in turn, while also making them possible, limits later actions. Action always takes place in the world – that always is already 'there' – consisting of tangible and intangible objects and institutions. We are in a Heideggerian sense thrown into the world, and accordingly no action is ever permitted to start from the scratch, to create *ex nihilo*.

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[314] Canovan 1994, 103–104. There is also a more philosophical intention behind Arendt's theory of action, that is, to pick up what she thought was good in the *Existenz* philosophy of Heidegger *et al.* and, following Jaspers, to rip it apart from the solipsistic tendencies of Heidegger (See Hinchman – Hinchman 1994, 143).

The creation of institutions is based on the faculty of making and keeping promises, the other major political virtue (in addition to forgiving, as we saw). The capacity of promising "serves to set up in the ocean of uncertainty, which the future is by definition, islands of security without which not even continuity, let alone durability of any kind, would be possible" (OT, 237). It is the world-building capacity par excellence and thoroughly intertwined with plurality (OR, 166–167; OT, 237). The force of mutual promise or contract is the only suitable force for keeping a public space in existence (HC, 244–245). However, Arendt held that this capacity, as well as all the other world-building capacities, has been increasingly forgotten in a long and steady process. For her, the genealogy of Western world is a narrative of degeneration in which "the social" slowly takes over "the political", i.e. the world and action, as well as the private in its original sense. The rise of the social sphere then renders authentic political action (and hence freedom, political equality, and so on) an impossibility. Moreover, interestingly from our point of view, it changes the way we conceive political communities and their boundaries. For Arendt, nationalism and the nation-state, especially in their exclusive, quasi-biological sense, are the political manifestations of rising social sphere.

5.4. The social, nation-statism, and statelessness

The issue of "the social", or "society", is perhaps the most controversial part of Arendt's thinking. The concept denotes a kind of a hybrid space, where such issues as poverty are dealt with, between the privacy of the household and the publicity of the *polis*. The basic character of this hybrid space is that out of Arendt's threefold conceptualization of human activities, *laboring* – "man's metabolism with nature" – has become the main public concern instead of world-building activity of *work* or identity disclosing *action*. With appalling consequences, "making a living" has been raised on the top of the hierarchy of human activities hence degrading everything else to the level of "hobbies" (HC, 5, 46, 128). Things are more complicated than this, however. Commentators usually pinpoint two or three meanings for the term throughout Arendt's oeuvre[315]. Moreover, there is hardly one single commentator who finds the concept entirely appealing. It is therefore quite safe to say that she tried to do *too many things with a single concept*. It is for this reason that the concept starts to seem like some inhuman force, some kind of science

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[315] For Bernstein, these are the "high society", bureaucratic collective housekeeping, and the social question in the sense of the existence of poverty (Bernstein 1996, 17); Benhabib separates the rise of commodity exchange economy from wider problem of mass society, and both from a "society of tastes and manners" (Benhabib 1996, 23–28); Canovan, in turn, distinguishes mass society and "national housekeeping" (Canovan 1994, 117–120).

fiction "blob", as Hanna Pitkin puts it[316]. Yet, this does not mean that the concept is completely analytically gratuitous.

For our purposes, a consciously not-all-inclusive two-fold division offers enough conceptual clarity. On the one hand, there is the rise of conformist mass society and on the other the transformation of economy from a private concern to a central politico-social issue. Both are consequences of, and show themselves in, "the degeneration of the *citoyen* into the *bourgeois*" (OT, 79), transformation of publicly-minded citizens into a person who judges everything by the yardstick of his private interest of consumption (OT, 336). The dangerousness of this development is obvious since, as Arendt noted already in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, [n]othing proved easier to destroy than the […] private morality of people who thought of nothing but safeguarding their private lives" (OT, 338). Moreover,

> "a consumers' society cannot possibly know how to take care of the world and the things which belong exclusively to the space of worldly appearances, because its central attitude towards all objects, the attitude of consumption, spells ruin to everything it touches." (BPF, 208)

In this section, I will give an eclectic reading of the controversial concept. My argument is that there are two sides to the question. On the one hand, there is "the social" as socio-economic-technocratic area, something separate from "the political", a separation widely criticized. I believe that Bernstein hits the mark by pointing out that "the question whether a problem is itself properly social (and therefore not worthy of public debate) or political is itself frequently the central political issue"[317]. This is one of the points where Arendt's art of making distinctions (a basic activity, according to her, of a political theorist) led her astray. Even so, there is something extremely important at play in the distinction[318]. The tenable part of the distinction is "the social" as a pure critique and problematization of modern politics, as a 'genealogy' that points out processes that narrow off the space for authentic political action. I will be arguing that the concept should be read in the context of other criticism of modernity, such as those provided by Weber, Adorno, and Foucault, and will concentrate on the latter's notions of normalization and biopolitics as points of comparison, or rather as signposts for pearl-diving into Arendt's writings on the matter. Both aspects are of interest from the point of view of the work as a whole, since they offer valuable perspectives to the analysis of workings of the nation-state system, bureaucracy being the political form of nationalism, and modern understanding of life (the entry of *zoe* into political considerations) determines both nationalism and most understandings of humanity.

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[316] Pitkin 1995, 53.
[317] Bernstein 1986, 252.
[318] Bernstein 1986, 246–248.

5.4.1. The social as 'normalization' and bureaucratization

In its first meaning, 'society', refers to the kind of problems that have been widely described by variety of authors especially in the 20th century. Bureaucracy, mass society and conformism with their "normalizing" effects have polluted, Arendt argues, the authentic public realm. Arendt, to whom the public sphere had an enormous significance, unhappily admitted that Heidegger's phrase, "*Das Licht der Öffentlichkeit verdunkelt alles*" ("The light of the public obscures everything"), was "the most succinct summing-up of existing conditions" (MDT, ix). This is the basic meaning of "the dark times" where Arendt thought we were (and still are) living in. In this characterization, she was rather straightforwardly following Heidegger and Sartre (and in agreement with Adorno, Foucault, and others). Arendt admitted that

> "Nothing of this is new. These are the conditions which, […] were described by Sartre in *La Nausée* […] in terms of bad faith and *l'esprit de sérieux*, a world in which everybody who is publicly recognized belongs among the *salauds [...]* And these are the same conditions which […] Heidegger described with uncanny precision in those paragraphs of *Being and Time* that deal with 'the they'"(MDT, viii–ix).

To put it shortly, it seems to Arendt that with modernism, whole populations have started to behave like conformist parvenus or aristocrats of "high society"[319]. The rise of the mass society has distorted authentic political faculty of judgment and replaced it with genuine prejudices that appeal to the authority of "they say" (PP, 100), demanding the members of society to act as if they were members of one enormous family with only one opinion and one interest (HC, 39). In slightly other words, instead of the one-man rule of the previous centuries, we now have the impersonal rule by "nobody", that is, the assumed one interest and one opinion of society as a whole. And:

> "As we know from *the most social form of government, that is, from bureaucracy (the last stage of government in the nation-state* just as one-man rule in benevolent despotism and absolutism was first), the rule by nobody is not necessarily no-rule; it may indeed, under certain circumstances, even turn out to be one of its cruelest and most tyrannical versions." (HC, 40. My emphasis)

By judging everything according to *mores* (and hence, morality) (OR, 107), society excludes action from the public sphere and instead it

> "expects from its of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to "normalize" its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement." (HC, 40)

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[319] See, e.g., Benhabib 1996, 28–29; Canovan 1994, 119–120. See also BPF, 195. The problem was raised by Arendt already in her early biography of Rahel Varnhagen (a work, begun in 1929, that Arendt intended as her *Habilitationschrift,* which is a prerequisite for gaining teaching positions in German universities)

Society tends towards unanimity, thus against pluralistic opinion forming, and thus against politics as such: "no formation of opinion is ever possible where all opinions have become the same" (OR, 217[320]). This takes us to the point where Arendt is most often seriously misunderstood, that is, the complex relationship between (two forms of) equality, society, and conformism. For, as we have seen, real equality for Arendt is political isonomy, an artificial condition created in order to make political action (and hence freedom) possible. However, when equality "becomes a mundane fact", Arendt warns already in *The Origins*, there is a serious risk of it being confused as social, not political concept. There are ninety-nine chances in a hundred that equality, which actually is nothing more than "a working principle of political organization", a minimal requirement for justice, "will be mistaken for an innate quality of every individual, who is 'normal' if he is like everybody else and 'abnormal' if he happens to be different" (OT, 54[321]). In other words, *in its 'social' form, equality has a normalizing function*, making deviant – "rogue" – individuals weird at best, and security threats at worst. Arendt's description of society, then, encases the same sort of problems that Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, called "normalization of judgment" and "panopticism"[322]. For him, disciplinarity creates a system that "compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes.*"[323] For Arendt, on the other hand, "the victory of equality in the modern world is only the political and legal recognition of the fact that society has conquered the public realm" (HC, 41). With this she is criticizing *social* equality which, with its normalizing function, actually works against real political equality. We saw already how the normalization of the society is, according to Arendt, mirrored in the bureaucratization of political rule, which she considers as the last stage of national government. Later we will see how the tendency towards unanimity and conformism is fueled by modern nationalism. But first, to fully understand the dynamics in play, we will have a look at the society's development into a quasi-biological entity, a process also strictly related to the development of that nation-state system.

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[320] Arendt's (in)famous thesis on the "banality of evil" is the clearest example of this. In the totalitarian context, the "they say" of the society did not prevent monstrous deeds, but, on the contrary, made it easier for people like Adolf Eichmann to carry on with their duties. The trouble with these people, Arendt said, was that they were "terribly and terrifyingly normal", to the point of, indeed, banality (EJ, 252, 276). They were not sadistic nor did they close their ears from the voice of their conscience, since their conscience spoke on the voice of surrounding society; what they lacked was not conscience but the ability to judge and think, that is, to look at things form the other fellow's point of view(EJ, 47–49, 126). Judgment and the rule of the common opinion are mutually exclusive.

[321] Hence Eichmann, who wished nothing but to be normal, experienced a "Pontius Pilatus feeling": if no-one else was against the final solution, why should he be? *Who was he to judge*?" (EJ, 114).

[322] Foucault 1979, 177–184, 195–228. The similarity is also noted by Bernstein (Bernstein 1986, 302n19; Bernstein 1996, 142) and Benhabib (1996, 26).

[323] Foucault 1979, 183. Emphasis in original.

5.4.2. The social as "unnatural growth of the natural"

The second meaning of the social is the "unnatural growth of the natural" (HC, 47). The natural process-es having to do with fostering life (labor and consumption) have been released into the public realm, where they have taken a life of their own and emancipated from their natural short-cyclic-ness: "Through society it is the life process itself which in one form or another has been channeled into the public realm" (HC, 45). The care for preservation of life, both the individual and the species, which in antiquity had belonged strictly to the private realm, now entered the public sphere (BPF, 117). In a sense, this Arendtian analysis can be seen as a precursor of analyses of global and national biopolitics[324] – especially in the Foucauldian vein and much less in the Agambenian, although the latter was probably the first to suggest that Arendt and Foucault can be read together. Nevertheless, this is not to claim that Arendt 'invented' biopolitical analysis before the letter – the notion does not actually fit very well in her thinking[325]. Arendt, however, in important ways, opened up a space where the *problematique* that Foucault terms as "the entry of life into history"[326] can be analyzed[327].

The central point of the development towards what Braun calls "the *zoēication* of humans"[328], according to Arendt, was that life, instead of the world, became the highest good in a two-phase process. First, during the middle ages, Christianity raised the life of the *individual* on the highest stand (HC, 313–314). This was already a definite step towards a state of "worldlessness", but only when the process of secular-ization deprived individual life of its possible immortality it became possible to fully unleash the life process:

> "The only thing that could now be potentially immortal, as immortal as the body politic in antiquity and as indi-vidual life during the Middle Ages, was *life itself, that is, the possibly everlasting life process of the species mankind*." (HC, 321, my emphasis. See also HC, 318–320)

It is crucial that man as a living being, instead of as citizen, became a public question and biological understanding of man-as-species entered the political realm. Arendt, like Foucault sees it as decisive that "men are no longer called 'mankind (*le genre humaine*)' and begin to be called 'the human species

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[324] Hayden 2009, 68. See also Duarté (2005) and Kathrin Braun (2007). Similarities on this matter are also noted by Owens (2009, 570)

[325] Owens 2011, 885.

[326] Foucault 1998, 139–141.

[327] There is, actually a possibility that Foucault was partly influenced by Arendt, since her works were translated into French in 1970s when Foucault worked with his analyses of disciplinary power and biopolitics. Since Foucault did not usually explicitly discuss with the secondary literature, this cannot be verified (see Fontana – Bertani 2003, 286–287).

[328] Braun 2007, 8. Braun is here referring to the classical Greek distinction of *zoē* and *bios*, purely biological life and quali-fied life or form of life (see also section 3 of this chapter above).

(*l'espéce humaine*).'"[329] Since the administration[330] of life cannot deal with the human species as such, the human race needs to be divided into smaller units. The objective hence becomes the *territorially confined population*, which simultaneously becomes the object of new areas of knowledge, such as demography, statistics, and economy[331]. All these sciences – Arendt adds modern science of history, biology, and geology to the list – have in common the interest in *processes*, a concept, Arendt claims, virtually unknown before the modern age (HC, 116, 232)[332]. At the same time, the locus of security and the goal of government moved from the security and freedom of the individual and the sovereign to the undisturbed maintenance and development of the life process of society (PP, 149–154; BPF, 148).

The question, however, is not merely the management of (quasi-)natural process. Biopolitics exist simultaneously with the old sovereign power, and their combinations can sometimes have almost diabolic consequences. But how can the power, whose function is to foster life, kill (even indirectly, by suffocating, rejecting, expulsing, exposing and so on)? At this point (state) racism enters the picture; for Foucault racism is a way of introducing a break into the domain of life, of fragmenting the field of the biological[333]; or, as Arendt puts it, politically speaking race is "not the beginning of humanity but its end" (OT, 157). Both Arendt and Foucault locate the "invention" of racism to the imperial/colonial practices; it was the emergency explanation of human beings, the natives, who were so different from the colonialists that they no longer cared to belong to the same species (OT, 185)[334]. Its field of application, on the other hand, is not limited to imperialism. As Duarté argues, there is a sort of paradox involved in modern politics when, on the one hand, life has been elevated to the status of the supreme good, and on the other, the instances in which life is degraded the utmost have multiplied. It seems, indeed, that biopolitics, when fused with nationalistic and racist thinking, produces a huge mass of people who are denied of their basic rights. [335] One must be cautious, however, in speaking of racism and nationalism. Arendt held that while the former was one of the most destructive forces in modern politics, the latter could also function as a stabilizing force if firmly connected to a body politic[336]. However, as Ronald Beiner brings

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[329] Foucault 2007, 104–105.
[330] And modern politics is indeed administration and thus, especially from an Arendtian perspective, ceases to be politics in the real sense of the word.
[331] See, e.g. Foucault 2003, 243-246; Foucault 2007, 65, 106.
[332] The rise of process-thinking was no wonder, however, since population, conceived biologically, is "a set of processes to be managed at the level and on the basis of what is natural in these processes" (Foucault 2007, 98).
[333] Foucault 2003, 254–256.
[334] See also Foucault 2003, 257.
[335] Duarté 2005.
[336] Arendt makes a strict separation between Western and Eastern European forms of nationalism. Whereas the former was always tied to already existing body politic and hence a stabilizing factor in politics, the latter made nationality a "portable private matter", not a matter of common concern in the public sphere (OT, 231).

forth, for Arendt, in the last analysis, nationalism is essentially a pathology of citizenship that, firstly, accounts for the subordination of the state to the nation and, secondly, creates an expansionist version of nationhood that surpasses the existing boundaries and hence, at the end of the day, is self-destructive for the nation-state itself[337]. It is also the case that all forms of nationalism are racist *to some degree*[338]. Even if the contemporary state repudiates open racism – even that based on 'cultural attributes' – its policies of inclusion/exclusion imply certain type of family resemblance to racism. The next section of the study will deal with the problems of the nation-state system and the tragedy of the anomalies of this system, the stateless refugees that emerged as a consequence of the First World War, and have never since left the stage of world politics.

5.4.3. The aporias of the nation-state system

"The fundamental political reality of our time", Arendt tells us, is determined by two facts: firstly, it is based upon 'nations', and secondly, it is "thoroughly menaced by 'nationalism' (EU, 207). The 20th and 21st centuries have witnessed the ever-growing tensions in the nation-state system, as its principle of organization, its ethical foundation and its practical consequences have increasingly conflicted with each other. The basic cause of these tensions is, according to Arendt, "the conquest of the state through the nation" (EU, 208). The degradation of the *citoyen* into the *bourgeois,* which was discussed earlier, was accompanied by another degradation of citizenship, the equation of the citizen and the national, i.e. the transformation (Arendt says perversion) of the state from an instrument of law into an instrument of the nation (OT, 230–231); and this in turn was a logical consequence from the rise of the social realm which found its political form in the nation-state (HC, 28). That nation-state according to Arendt was a political body especially designed for the 'biopolitical' rule of society already hints to the fact that she saw it politically dangerous. In short, nationalism poisons the public sphere, making it more difficult to achieve the conditions for proper citizenship.

The problems of the nation-state order are partly derived straight from its origins. Being a replacer of absolute monarchy and a contemporary of secularism, nationalism usurped to itself some of the authority formerly connected to the religious institutions on the one hand, and the monarch on the other (EU, 208–209; OR, 182, 186–187). When the monarch was replaced with different classes, the unity of the body politic was in danger of falling into pieces. Nationalism, the new emphasis put on the origins, was an

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[337] Beiner 2000, 50. Imperialism, according to Arendt, developed straightly from the conflicting tendencies within the nation-state, even though in principle imperialism and nationalism are unbridgeable (OT, xvii, 152–153).
[338] Birmingham 2006, 135.

answer to this problem of loosening ties (OT, 152–153, 230; OR, 150)[339]. In this sense, nationalism also re-introduces an absolute into the realm of politics, thereby corrupting the institutions of the state. The specific form that this absolute of the nation took in the modern conditions, especially in post-revolutionary French, was "the general will" and hence the national sovereignty that supposedly was above all governments and laws and, even more importantly, above the wills of the individual members of a nation. The general will created not a republic but a majority rule, more alike to an (absolute) monarchy than to a republic (OR, 14, 67-69, 154–155)[340]. This, in turn, is of course an anti-pluralistic factor since both majority rule and potential unanimity vitiate the pluralistic debate between different points of view, which is the condition for existence of a public realm (OR, 83). For Arendt, thus, any ideology that denies the plurality of political actors can only do so through repression and injustice; and this injustice of homogeneity is inherent in all nationalisms[341]. And not only that, nationalism also introduces a politics of exclusion more severe than ever seen before.

The state may, as a power institution, become aggressive and claim more territory, but it is the nation, not the state, that seeks to close the borders and put an end to all migrations. Indeed, as a legal institution "the state knows only citizens no matter of what nationality; its legal order is open to all who happen to live on its territory" (EU, 208). Especially this was the case as long as the medieval principle *quidquid est in territorio est de territorio* was still valid; with the emergence of *national* sovereignty, the people needed to be defined more strictly, and this was done by identifying the *demos* as straightforwardly with the *ethnos* as possible[342]. One could say then that the border control mechanisms of modern states (an aspect of external sovereignty) were direct results from the emergence of internal national sovereignty. During the 20th century the conflict between these principles of territorial organization and the ethical foundations (the nation state, after the French Revolution, was supposed to be the guarantor of the human rights) of this kind of order became explicit. It became increasingly clear that the nation-state order was full of paradoxes. Christian Volk sorts out four separate paradoxes: the paradox of the right to self-determination, the paradox of deassimilation and denaturalization, the paradox of lawlessness, and the paradox of human rights[343].

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[339] To this matter Arendt also notes that nationalism and nationally justified imperialism were reactions to liberal individualism and atomized society (OT, 152–153; EU, 209).

[340] Arendt would no doubt agree with Foucault that political theory is yet to cut off the king's head (Foucault 1986, 121).

[341] Benhabib 1996, 42–43.

[342] See Volk 2010, 182-183; Benhabib 1996, 43.

[343] Volk 2010, 175. See also Benhabib 1996, 79.

These paradoxes led to a full-blown political crisis in the 20th century. It should be noted at this point that Arendt's criticism is not based on moral or ethical assumptions, but is purely *immanent*; she starts with the inherent principles of the nation-state system and proceeds to show how, starting from the First World War, these principles were invalidated by their growing inapplicability to worldly realities; she is not – at least not in the first place – putting forth a historicist argument (*pace* Beiner)[344]. The first nail in the coffin of this declining order was the problem generated by the right-claims to national sovereignty and its conflict with the rights of minorities and refugees. Especially after the dissolution of the Russian, the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires a huge problem of minorities arose in Eastern Europe. The peace treaties lumped many nationalities together in single states, and called one of them "state people", entrusting them with government, whereas the other inhabitants of the territory were to be guaranteed their rights by Minority Treaties. Different groups were nevertheless so many in numbers and so arbitrarily territorially divided that the Treaties that had been designed as exceptions suddenly became the rule. In reality this arrangement led to bitter conflicts between different ethnic groups when all nationalities became convinced that real freedom was only possible through national emancipation, which in turn was possible only for nations big enough. The foremost practical consequence of the good willing Minority Treaties was the establishment of minorities as permanent phenomenon in European politics. They said out loud the formerly implicit presupposition of the nation-state system, that only nationals could be citizens. In the end of the day, this led to a situation where minorities had to "fight or flight," thus making the phenomenon of statelessness a European-wide problem. (OT, 268–275)[345]

The First World War and its aftermath created a new kind of refugee (denationalizations were now for the first time applied to a mass of people). Suddenly a group of people emerged on the political stage of Europe to whom the rules of the surrounding world had ceased to apply. These people, "the most symptomatic group in contemporary politics" (OT, 276–277),

> "unlike their happier predecessors in the religious wars, were welcomed nowhere and could be assimilated nowhere. Once they had left their homeland they remained homeless, once they had left their state they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights they were rightless, the scum of the earth." (OT, 267).

Abruptly a group of people were deprived of their 'inalienable' rights, and were forced to live either under a law of exception or in the state of total lawlessness (OT, 267-269). These new refugees were both "undeportable" (they could not be repatriated) and difficult to assimilate, the latter both because a

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[344] See Volk 2010, 174. Cf. Beiner 2000, 56. By "historicist argument" Beiner refers to the fact that Arendt at times talks as if it was an objective historical fact (in a Hegelian sense) that the nation-state had run its course.
[345] Volk 2010, 176–182; Bernstein 1996, 79.

reasonable assimilation policy would have required international cooperation and on the other hand because the groups themselves (unlike earlier refugees who were paradigmatically individuals) were not especially keen to assimilate. This led the nation-states facing a huge mass of refugees to lawless actions. In the fear of a "dangerous" multinational state, states started to refuse naturalizations and cancel the ones already granted.[346] This had two consequences: firstly, states were driven into small-scale police-led border wars, trying to smuggle the stateless people into each other's territories; and secondly, different kind of refugee camps were established (especially when the Nazi regime started to expel people from Germany). Both of these solutions were basically somewhat beyond the normal juridical functioning, and even forced the nation-states into downrightly illegal acts (OT, 283–284)[347]. They also created a "new kind of human beings": "the kind that are put in concentration camps by their foes and in internment camps by their friends" (JW, 265). The most alarming feature of these beings is that, unlike their predecessors, they have not been expelled for who they are (what they have done or what beliefs they hold) but purely on the basis of *what* they are, i.e. members of certain nationality, race, etc (See, e.g., JW, 264; OT, 294).

Asylum practices were unable to solve the problem, because they were designed for individuals, not masses of people (JW, 233). The problem is, indeed, insolvable in the system of nation-states (JW, 235). A bit over-optimistically Arendt predicted that

> "Future historians will perhaps be able to note that the sovereignty of the nation-state ended in absurdity when it began to decide who was a citizen and who was not; when it no longer sent individual politicians into exile, but left hundreds of thousands of its citizens to sovereign and arbitrary decisions of other nations. No international guidelines have been able to deal with the problem of stateless persons, a problem that is unsolvable in a world of sovereign nations." (JW 139–140).

The situation of stateless showed that the so called "inalienable" human rights, supposedly belonging to every individual were in practice only available to citizens of a sovereign state, as was the membership in the 'international society'; for the stateless, there was no "international" anything (JW, 326; OT, 291–293). Statelessness seems to be the prime example of a situation where the human rights should apply. But in reality the result is the opposite (OT, 300). There is no issue in contemporary politics

> "filled with a more poignant irony than the discrepancy between the efforts of well-meaning idealists who stubbornly insist on regarding as 'inalienable' those human rights, which are enjoyed only by citizens of the most prosperous and civilized countries, and the situation of rightless themselves" (OT, 279).

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[346] Volk 2010, 184–185. If one replaces "multinational" with "multicultural" this notion is definitely not unknown in today's political vocabulary.

[347] Volk 2010, 186–187. Despite this, it is important to note, the humanitarian catastrophe related to refugees is not for Arendt a piece of evidence about the nation-state's sovereignty (somewhat pace Agamben), but on the contrary discloses the impracticability of the nation-state system and hence shows its total inability to deal with this kind of problems (see Volk 2010, 173ff).

True, the right to asylum was traditionally a human right that applied to international affairs; but the masses of stateless people in the 20th century instantly turned this notion into an anachronism (OT, 208). This paradox had been present in the modern state from its beginning. Universal human rights and national sovereignty were declared at the same time, with the consequence that the latter was seen as a natural guarantor of the former (OT, 291):

> "In other words, man had hardly appeared as a completely emancipated, completely isolated being who carried his dignity with himself without reference to some larger encompassing order, when he disappeared again into a member of people. From the beginning the paradox involved in the declaration of inalienable human rights was that it reckoned with an "abstract" human being who seemed to exist nowhere" (OT, 291)

This situation of stateless people is clearly, as Bernstein points out, one of the things Arendt had in mind when she wrote that

> "totalitarian solutions may well survive the fall of totalitarian regimes in the form of strong temptations which will come up whenever it seems impossible to alleviate political, social, or economic misery in a manner worthy of man" (OT, 459)

Bernstein is further correct in pointing out that this issue has "the hyper-real quality of a commentary on our contemporary world situation"[348]. As the plight of the stateless demonstrated so powerfully, a human being who is nothing but a human being lacks all those qualities which make possible to treat him/her as a fellow human being: "the world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human" (OT, 299-300). A properly stateless person is a politically irrelevant being[349]; they create the uncanny expression of being at the mercy of "the unpredictable hazards" of love, friendship, and sympathy. Once the compassionate reaction has "reached its inevitable end", no one seems to know what to do with them. (OT, 301–302; OR, 97–98; JW, 212). This is related to Arendt's general suspicions towards what she calls "passion for compassion" (OR, 61) as a political force – a theme important for the current work given Rorty's defense of sentimentalism.

The problems here are diverse. Firstly, compassion by its very nature can only be related to particularity – it cannot be generalized (which is the prerequisite for political meaningfulness); if it is generalized by force, the result is a depersonalization of sufferers, their lumping together into an aggregate. In other words, compassion always deals with singularities (OR, 75, 80; HC, 168). Secondly, compassion – like charity and love ("perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical human forces") – since it seeks to abol-

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[348] Bernstein 1996, 78.

[349] Indeed, the latin word "*homo*" originally referred to a person who was nothing but a man, hence not a citizens, i.e. a slave (OR, 36).

ish the distance between persons, is by its very nature unworldly and therefore anti-political: it destroys the in-between, the worldly space between human beings (OR, 76; HC, 53, 242). Thirdly, if generalized, compassion – which is a *passion* – degenerates into the *sentiment* of pity (that is, "to be sorry without being touched in the flesh"), a perversion of its original nature (OR, 75, 78). Finally, and relatedly to the worldlessness of compassion, it disregards the essence of politics, human beings as talking animals. If it does lead to action, it does so directly, singularly, and by skipping "the drawn-out wearisome processes of persuasion, negation, and compromise" (OR, 76–77). Springing from "the darkness of human heart", passions and emotions are not suitable for the harsh light of the public sphere that only tolerates words and deeds (OR, 86; MDT, 15–16) [350]. They are a matter of relations between persons, or even of the relation of a person to him/herself[351], whereas in politics the question is always a concern with the world.

What are suitable for the public sphere, on the other hand, are *principles*[352]; in this case, the suitable principle – the alternative to pity – is *solidarity* or the Aristotelian *philia politikē*, a kind of "friendship" without intimacy and closeness (OR, 78–79; HC, 243). This kind of solidarity means the establishment, deliberatively and dispassionately, of a community of interest with the oppressed, the common interest being something like the dignity of human race. In this way, solidarity is able to comprehend a multitude through a process of reason-giving (OR, 78–79). It is not that Arendt is putting forth a traditional defense of rationality, though. Both rationality and sentimentality are, for her, substitutes for a lost common world; both look for the binding factor in human affairs from within each individual, not from the world (MDT, 16). Principles are not moral laws in the Kantian sense, but rather dynamic ideas, inspiring action[353]. Moreover, they are not a result of absence of emotions either, which in views of a tragedy would be a pathological phenomenon or a manifestation of incomprehension (CR, 161).

To fully grasp the plight of stateless and rightless persons, as well as for getting the first hints of possible remedies, we need to recall what was said of action, freedom, and plurality in the section 3 of this chapter. Because they are deprived of a place in political community, they are deprived of a world in the Arendtian sense. Consequently, they are also deprived of equality, and hence freedom, and hence the

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[350] "[S]hould human beings be so shabby," Arendt asks, "that they are incapable of acting humanly unless spurred and as it were compelled by their own pain when they see others suffer?" (MDT, 15)

[351] Canovan 1994, 197–198.

[352] It is important to distinguish principles from values. Principles, for Arendt, are at the very center of politics, whereas values are either 'moral values' and hence a personal matter, or 'social values', which are perversions of political principles (OR, 213). Arendt specifies four principles (in addition to Montesquieu's fear, honor, and virtue): equality, freedom, justice, and fame. The categories are not fixed, however; what in one epoch was a principle, may be a goal of action in the next. (PP, 193-195)

[353] See Canovan 1994, 173; and also section 3.2. of this chapter.

possibility of disclosing *who* they are. In short, action is what the stateless are first and foremost deprived of. And since compassionate reactions of humanitarian sort were necessarily insufficient, the only remedy is also to be found in political action. What is needed is action based on humane principles and aiming at solidarity. The next and concluding sections will look at Arendt's suggestions beyond biopolitically oriented nation-state system. We will start by looking at Arendt's inconclusive discussion on the "right to have rights", which, it will be argued, is an important part of, yet not the key to the solution she had in mind. Toward the end of the chapter, we invoke Arendt's notions of humanity as a political concept and her articulations of civic friendship, councils, and federations in order to see the idiosyncratic cosmopolitan politics she had in mind, one that does not imply a global governmentality yet entails institutional suggestions that go beyond the relations between singularities.

5.5. Towards Arendtian decentralized cosmopolitanism?

5.5.1. The right to belong

As seen, the possibility of action is the most important thing of which the stateless are deprived of: "[t]hey are deprived, not of the right to freedom, but of the right to action; not of the right to think whatever they please, but of the right to opinion" (OT, 296); they were deprived of "a place in the world which makes opinion significant and actions effective" (Ibid.). Their situation finally brought into the harsh daylight the paradox of *universal* rights guaranteed by *particular* states[354], and made us aware of a right more important than any of the so called human rights:

> "We became aware of the existence of *a right to have rights* (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions) and *a right to belong to some kind of organized community*, only when millions of people emerged who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation." (OT, 296-297. Emphasis mine.)

The stateless, having lost their citizenship in their state of origin, were in practice expelled from humanity altogether (OT, 297); no solution seemed to exist to regain their rights. They were the re-incarnation of those people in antiquity (women, slaves, barbarians) who could not appear in the *agora* of the *polis*; they were "*aneu logou*, deprived [...] of a way of life in which speech and only speech made sense" (HC, 27). Racism is a related matter. If a person is judged entirely based on the color of his/her skin, the person is unable to disclose who, instead of what he/she is[355].

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[354] The conflict between universality and particularity at the roots of modern state is explicated, e.g., by Benhabib 2004a, 181-182.

[355] Parekh 2004, 46.

But what does Arendt's ambiguous formula, "right to have rights", actually mean? Benhabib offers a good account by breaking down the two uses of the word 'right'. The first 'right', she says, is a moral imperative addressed to humanity as such, whereas the second 'right(s)' refers to juridico-civil usage of the word, to the group of various rights and responsibilities granted to citizens of various states[356]. Whereas the guarantor of juridico-civil rights is the state, it is less clear who should be the guarantor of the right to these rights. Bridget Cotter suggests that Arendt's "solution" is based, even if vaguely, on the possibility of international agreement on supranational law that consists solely of the right to belong to a political community[357]. I am not convinced, however, that this is the whole truth on Arendt's position. She was much more critical on the very political ontology of nation-statism than Cotter's argument intimates. As we have already seen, she firmly believed that the whole problem of statelessness (and hence the problem of absolute rightlessness) was insolvable as long as the world was territorially divided into sovereign nation-states.

Problematic is also Serena Parekh's argument (in an otherwise praiseworthy article) that Arendt misunderstood "the possibility of a world-government like the United Nations", which in its current function merely encourages governments to respect rights instead of being an absolute sovereign ruling the whole of Earth[358]. I have two misgivings with this statement. Firstly, it is highly suspect whether it is plausible to equate the UN with world-government as Arendt understood it. The UN is not a world-government *acting differently* than Arendt predicted, rather, it simply is not a world-government. Secondly, it is not clear whether it is worthwhile to contextualize Arendt too much into the "rights-talk"[359], given the intimate connection between the human rights discourse and the hierarchical world order of today. But, on the other hand, as her discussion in *The Origins* as well as her membership in Amnesty International manifest[360], she surely had sympathies with this kind of endeavors. However, her discussion on "the right to have rights" on its own, isolated from her wider oeuvre, is inconclusive and does not get us very far. It is therefore necessary to discuss the problem of statelessness and the right to belong in the context of what we have learned from her thinking in the earlier sections as well as her suggestions of developing humanity into a political concept.

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[356] Benhabib 2004a, 179–180.
[357] Cotter 2005, 108–111.
[358] Parekh 2004, 50–51.
[359] Therefore I also disagree with Peg Birmingham, who claims that "readers of Arendt have failed to grasp that one of her primary concerns, beginning with The Origins of Totalitarianism, is the working out of a theoretical foundation for a reformulation of the modern notion of human rights" (Birmingham 2006, 3, *passim*.).
[360] Young-Bruehl 2004, 391.

5.5.2. Humanity as a political concept

Unlike the two preceding centuries, the 20ᵗʰ century could refer to neither nature nor history as the last resort in politics. Both concepts have become equally alien for us. In their stead, humanity, which in Kant's time was nothing more than a regulative idea, has now become "an inescapable fact". Therefore, Arendt argues, "the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself". But sadly, as she further noted, "[i]t is by no means certain whether this is possible." It might not be possible because of the territorial organization of states according to national lines. (OT, 298) Humanity has become an inescapable fact, not because the dreams of the humanists, and not even due to political events, but first and foremost due to technical development. All people are part of a world-wide whole, and all states have a common present (which, however, is not based on a common past nor guarantees a common future). The most powerful symbol of this state of affairs is what Arendt refers to as "negative solidarity" caused by the fear of global destruction through the deployment of nuclear weapons. (HC, 250; MDT, 82–83) The easiest solution would of course be the founding of a world-state, a scheme not unheard of in the IR discussions either[361]. For Arendt however, that was a dead-end. The very idea of one sovereign force ruling the whole globe would not only be a nightmarish tyranny, it would also be a direct assault against the basic concepts of politics: plurality, diversity and mutual limitations (MDT, 81). Moreover, Arendt raised the frightening possibility that "one day a highly organized and mechanized humanity will conclude quite democratically – namely by majority decision – that for humanity as a whole it would be better to liquidate certain parts thereof" (OT, 299).

Neither is it possible to be a citizen of the world in the same way as we are citizens of specific countries (MDT, 81; HC, 257). World citizenship would, for Arendt, be an oxymoron, since meaningful citizenship must be limited by territorial boundaries. For this further reason, the establishment of a world-state would not be the climax, but the end of world politics. (MDT, 81–82) Hence, a citizen of the world, "living under the tyranny of a world empire, and speaking and thinking in a kind of glorified Esperanto," would be "a monster" (MDT, 89). Arendt was therefore very conscious of the dangers of cosmopolitanism, if it means nothing but the "universalization" of one set of cultural understandings and institutions. Given the existing power relations, we should pay close attention to this warning[362], while also remembering the other side of her argument. "To say," she reminded us, "that a world state conceived in the

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[361] The most notable suggestions of this sort are perhaps Hans J. Morgenthau (2006, 505–550) and Alexander Wendt (2003).
[362] See also Arato – Cohen 2010, 166–167.

image of sovereign nation states or of a world empire in the image of the Roman Empire is dangerous […] is no solution for our present political problem" (MDT, 82). The problem, in short, was that

> "human dignity needs a new guarantee which can be found only in a new political principle, in a new law on earth, whose validity this time must comprehend the whole of humanity while its power must remain strictly limited, rooted in and controlled by newly defined territorial entities." (OT, ix)

To accomplish this, the first step is to make humanity a properly political concept, which in turn requires the rethinking of the whole logic of territorial units[363]. The negative solidarity has to be transformed into something more positive, an active solidarity of humankind, and coupled with political responsibility on a global scale. As usual, Arendt is not lacking of a sense of tragedy here. She is well aware how heavy the burden of a global responsibility is, and to what kind of misconducts it may lead. It was no surprise for her that "the common reactions to it are political apathy, isolationist nationalism, or desperate rebellion against all powers that be rather than enthusiasm or a desire for a revival of humanism" (MDT, 83). She also held that "[t]o follow a non-imperialistic policy and maintain a non-racists faith becomes daily more difficult because it becomes daily clearer how great a burden of mankind is for man" (EU, 131).

How, then, could we promote the positive solidarity, the political concept of humanity? Following from the basic themes of Arendt's thinking we come to face a double demand. On the one hand, the solution cannot be purely theoretical or related to the ethics of singular actors; it has to have an *institutional* face to it. But on the other hand, Arendt also seeks to avoid all kinds of blueprints for policies. Her role as a political theorist is not to lay down institutional designs, but merely to understand and to judge the institutions that have come to existence. In sum: only political structures and action (not philosophy, morality, or religion) can work as bulwarks against the political evil[364]. She, like the actors of American Revolution she admired, did not lay her trust in the human nature but to the fact that it can be restrained. "It is human worldliness that will save men from the pitfalls of human nature." (OR, 166) When it comes to the institution of the nation-state, various commentators from Judith Butler to Ronald Beiner have noted that Arendt's argument seems to both emphasize the importance of states and show how the nation-state system cannot work. The solution, then, is to try to think beyond nation(alism)-based sovereign states[365]. We will end this chapter by sketching out the Arendtian position, first by attitudinal lines, then in a more institution-oriented manner.

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[363] See Volk 2010, 196–197.
[364] This point is comprehensively argued by Canovan 1994, 162–163.
[365] Beiner 2000, 55; Butler 2007, 26.

5.5.3. "We must, must be friends", or, sharing the world with others

As we have seen, the basic quality of the world, the human in-between, is its plurality. The *raison d'être* of public sphere is the safeguarding of plurality and the establishment of freedom among equals. The beginning of a political concept of humanity is therefore the active embracement of plurality and a *project* of human equality. Arendt is calling for a "civic friendship" (JW, 161) quite different from mere "tolerance" or "multiculturalism". The latter, as Joan Cocks argues, is a non-starter for an active political discussion and leads to a paralysis of judgment[366]. The key to a political concept of humanity is to be found from a conception of civic friendship. Arendt quotes Nathan the Wise from Lessing's play: "we must, must be friends". This civic friendship, deriving from Greek, is a readiness to share the world with others and to uphold it through speech, radically different, therefore, from intimate friendship as well as from the conception of humanity as fraternity – which is a substitute for world among the oppressed peoples (MDT 12–13). Humanity in Arendt's sense must be "cool and sober" and strongly engaged into fallibilistic, perspectival, pluralistic discussion. (MDT, 24–26) Hence the "inhumanity of Kant's moral philosophy" (MDT, 27), which is based on the categorical imperative, unlike, it must be noted, his "political philosophy" that Arendt found, more than a bit surprisingly, from *The Critique of Judgment* where the basic idea is not the absolute categorical imperative but "wooing the consent of everyone else" (BPF, 211–238; LKPP, *passim.*).

One single truth, ending all conversations, would mean the end of all humanness. In explicating this, Arendt draws from Jaspers' concept of "limitless communication", which means giving up the binding authority and universal validity of any particular tradition and putting all different viewpoints into discussion with each other[367]. Unlike Habermas' communicative theory – which Jaspers strongly anticipates[368] – no presuppositions of "an ideal speech situation" or a rational conclusion are made. An agreement on one religion or philosophy would indeed be a terrifying lost for humanity, and this should be avoided at all cost. (MDT, 84–90) This is one more reason why Arendt is against world-wide political structures and prefers local polities as the primary loci for politics. Therefore, the strand of cosmopolitanism Arendt is promoting is local first, and global only second, so to speak.

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[366] Cocks 1995, 241.

[367] Hence, "[c]ompared with Kant, Jaspers's concept of mankind and world citizenship is historical; compared with Hegel, it is political." (MDT, 92)

[368] Jaspers' position (as Arendt represents it) is, for example, that truth reveals itself only in communication (MDT, 85)

Arendt puts emphasis on the flexible and non-foundationalist character of public spaces: "The *polis*, properly speaking, […] is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together", it precedes all official establishments of public spheres (HC, 195, 198–199). Canovan and Honig argue that constituting a political community on the basis of a stable, prior and shared homogenous identity is a direct threat to plurality and hence for spaces of politics as such[369]. As Honig puts it, Arendt "theorizes a democratic politics built not on already existing identities or shared experiences but on contingent sites of principled coalescence and shared practices of citizenship"[370]. And Butler concurs: "[a] polity requires the capacity to live with others precisely when there is no obvious mode of belonging"[371]. All three further note that this kind of thinking is in an explicit conflict with nation-statism. Also Arendt herself rejected the idea of thinking political community through the terms of family or kinship (PP, 94). On the other hand, Arendtian public space is not a freely floating sporadic practice either since, as we have seen, her conception of the public space is tied to her conception of the world, which, in addition to its "subjective" side also has an "objective" character, which provides important stability to the human in-between.

5.5.4. The councils, federations, and the possibility of world politics

The public sphere is hence always in some sense or another time and space bound. Whenever freedom has existed as a tangible reality it has always been spatially limited (OR, 267; PP, 170). These "islands of freedom" are created by law and beyond them there is only a space without law and without world (PP, 190; MDT, 81–82). Even though she wanted to extend equality to all, her project was tied to particular local communities. On the last pages of *Crises of the Republic* she shortly sketched "a new concept of the state," based on councils (whose existence she also praised in the essays collected in *The Jewish Writings*, as well as in *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution*). The councils are the central sites in which the authentic Arendtian politics take place. Any modern nation-state is too big for one all-including public; there needs to be a number of smaller public spaces within it (CR, 232–233). The voting booth, on the other hand is too small, since it only holds one at a time. Jefferson had already pointed out the dangers of giving all power to people as an electorate without providing them with a plausible public space, that is, giving them the opportunity of *being* republicans and *acting* as citizens (CR, 233; OR, 245). Parties do no solve the problem for Arendt either, since in them most of us are "but the manipulated electorate" (CR, 233). Against all these alternatives,

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[369] Canovan 1994, 244; Honig 1995c, 149.
[370] Honig 1995b, 3.
[371] Butler 2007.

> "[t]he councils say: We want to participate, we want to debate, we want to make our voices heard in public, and we want to have a possibility to determine the political course of our country […] [I]f only ten of us are sitting around a table, each expressing his opinion, each hearing the opinions of others, then a rational formulation of opinion can take place through the exchange of opinions." (CR, 232–233)

Arendt takes pains to point out that the council system is not an artificial theoretical construction (or an idealized Greek *polis* transformed into modern conditions), but has its roots in the concrete institutions of wards in the USA and in different communes, workers' councils, *soviets*, and *Räte*s that were developed virtually by all revolutions (OR, 248; HC, 216–217). Each person must be given the opportunity to be a participator in government in these elementary publics, whose basic assumption is that "no one could be called either happy or free without participating, and having a share, in public power" (OR, 247; CR, 233). To sum up, Arendtian public space does not become political until it is bound to a concrete place (PP, 123). Like Jaspers', her thought is "spatial because it forever remains in reference to the world and people in it, not because it is bound to any existing space" (MDT, 79). We must be wary of confusing local political spaces with small-scale communities of warmth and intimacy. Even though small, the public space must be a place where "strangers could meet in relations of civility rather than intimacy", and in which, moreover, "there was enough space between people for them to stand back and judge one another coolly and objectively"[372].

The council system, however, needs to be tied to a larger political unit[373]. The nation-state will not do, since Arendt sees the rise of nation-state as the main reason for the failure of the council system in contrast to the success of the party system (OR, 239). As an antidote towards the totalitarian terror and the safeguard of plurality was to be found in the Montesquieuan principle of separation of powers, which for Arendt did not refer to a tripartite separation of executive, legislative and juridical powers, but to a more fundamental separation of powers within the states in a way that makes any notion of (internal) sovereignty an impossibility. The specific system Arendt had in mind to bring together these small elementary publics without a sovereignty principle, was a (con-)federation, made up of different people with equal rights (CR, 232; OR, 143–146; 162; JW, 336). Its major advantage is that "power moves neither from above nor from below, but is horizontally directed so that the federated units mutually check and control their powers" (CR, 230). While Arendt's praise for federations is a bit sketchy, if not naïve, it does contain some important points, namely, the separation of powers and the nation-state states system's

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[372] Canovan 1994, 247–248.
[373] And this is also what has happened in the actual historical events, for example in the Hungarian revolution 1956: in a couple of weeks since their establishment, the councils started to form 'higher' councils, first provincially and then on a nation-wide scale (OR, 259).

inability to solve the world political problems of the 20th and 21st centuries (especially the problem of statelessness and the Jewish-Arab question, of which Arendt wrote in 1940s; see JW, 193–198; 400)[374]. Arendt does leave, however, many questions unanswered:

> "is there an 'outside' to every federated polity? Must a federation assume 'sovereignty' in the context of international relations? Can international relations be organised on the basis of federative politics and, if so, can international federations enforce their laws without recourse to sovereignty?"[375]

Many of these questions Arendt would not even had wanted to answer, since the concrete institutional layout is always to be left on the actors themselves. And action, guided by humane principles, is indeed what Arendt's position counts on.

5.6. "A vision of tragedy but not of despair"

We have been following Arendt's trains of thought concerning political community in general and nation-states in particular. What in the second section of the chapter was called "critical thinking from the point of view of the world" has led to some interesting assessments concerning certain tendencies of modern politics: growing anti-pluralism, normalization of behavior, shifting of emphasis from the human in-between to the life processes of the population and the consequential exclusive practices. We have also seen how she tried to uncover some kind of *Ausgang*, an exit from the aporias of modern politics. This attempt has included transforming humanity into a properly political concept, vouching a political form of friendship, and enhancing the possibilities for political action.

Arendt sees the modern nation-state problematic for both those who are happily located within its sphere (it is a political structure that hampers action, rather than making it possible) and especially for those somehow forced outside the system's logic (they are deprived of a context that makes life meaningful). On the other hand, a supranational authority will not do, since it

> "would either be ineffective or be monopolized by the nation that happens to be the strongest, and so would lead to world government, which could easily become the most frightful tyranny conceivable, since from its global police force there would be no escape – until it finally fell apart." (CR, 230)

In a bit wider terms, Arendt's vision of politics introduces a certain double-bind. On the one hand, constitutional government, which is the only way of guaranteeing the possibility of action, erects boundaries by necessity. It creates an institutional framework that resists change to some degree and is time and space bound. On the other hand, Arendt emphasizes how each new birth potentially brings into being a

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[374] See, e.g., Butler 2007.
[375] Butler 2007.

new world; radical breaks and entirely new beginnings are always possible. At the end of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, it was these two demands she wanted to remind her readers of (OT, 465–466, 479–479; see also BPF, 174–189). We will conclude this chapter by seeing how these demands play out in Arendt's version of "decentralized cosmopolitanism", as we will be calling it. With close affinities to the Rortian position reconstructed in the end of the last chapter, Arendt speaks of the importance of immigration for the (in this case, American) polity: "[t]he immigrants, the newcomers, are a guarantee to the country that it represents the new order" (BPF, 172). This statement is easy to combine with Arendt's praise for the councils. Because of their non-foundational character, these basic units of Arendtian politics are to be open to anyone in the territory in question[376]. In other words, they presuppose a political friendship, i.e. the willingness to share the world with others, no matter where they come from.

For Arendt, the concept of 'community' does not play an explicitly important role. She prefers terms like public sphere, world, and political structure. However, we can take these terms in their wide sense, and summarize Arendt's position on the community-question thus: (1) similarly to Rorty, the Arendtian polity has multiple levels. There are and should be different public spheres, connected to different political structures, on different levels (council, federation, perhaps a wider con-federation of some sort). Or, in slightly other words, we inhabit many worlds at the same time. (2) If the membership in any given community/public sphere is limited by any kind of 'natural' attribute (race, place of birth, etcetera), the basic principles of politics are necessarily violated (in the *social* sphere some exclusive policies can be tolerated). (3) The powers of different publics should be organized so that they form a system of checks and balances. No organ should have sovereign power in the sense of being able to make the final decision. (4) Finally, it remains an open question what kind of boundary/border policies Arendtian polities would execute. Given the double-bind mentioned earlier, any one body politic is perhaps permanently stuck between the demands of stability on the one hand, and the un-justifiability of exclusion on the other.

To circumvent this impasse, a possibility of moving from negative to positive solidarity without simultaneously establishing a hegemonic or imperial world order is a project that needs to be kept alive at all cost. This project may be called a project of decentralized cosmopolitanism, even though the term cosmopolitanism carries a heavy semantic load on its back. From an Arendtian perspective, there can be no cosmo-polis, that is, a single, unitary political community consisting of world-citizens. Yet she calls for a

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[376] Linguistic and other questions of course make matters a bit more complicated.

global law, comprehending the whole humanity, but strictly limited by territorial units. This is a complex and difficult demand. Yet Arendt's vision was that of "tragedy that does not leave you despairing"[377]. At least as long as we are not living in a global totalitarian system, political action is always possible, the world can always be created anew through words, deeds, and especially promises, the "isolated islands of certainty in an ocean of uncertainty" (HC, 244). Having 'repeated' this Arendtian cosmopolitanism in this chapter, we are now set to move on to the combinatorial part of the study, in which the ethical-political horizons of Arendt and Rorty (or, our IR oriented readings of them) are set as parts of the same force-field – i.e. "a relational interplay of attractions and aversions"[378].

6. **A** COMMON VISION?

This final chapter of the work consists of two parts. In the first part I will, first, provide the reader with a frame of reference for juxtaposition of the Arendtian and Rortian ethical-political horizons and, second, present an assemblage, even an eclectic synthesis or fusion, of certain relevant *parts* of their positions. By combining their arguments – not only observing the similarities, but also reconciling between their differences – I attempt to put up a vocabulary that borrows heavily from both Arendt and Rorty, but claims adherence to neither. The second part will then engage in critical dialogue with the different positions in the recent ethical-political IR discussions introduced in the third chapter. The combined Arendtian-Rortian position developed here is indeed juxtaposition – and not for instance a fusion or assimilation. Mutual criticism between the positions is considered a source of strength and therefore actively brought forth. We will proceed thematically from general similarities between their positions to more issue-specific agreements. It was pointed out in the introduction that while certain similarities between Arendt and Rorty have been noted, their shared themes have not been sufficiently explicated. In wider terms the "significant overlap" between Arendt and pragmatism, especially its Deweyan strand, is more developed[379]. Noticing this commonality can also help us to proceed here. Firstly, reading Arendt side-by-side with (neo-)pragmatism ceases to be as odd an idea as it first seems. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Arendt can point us towards some stances that Rorty could have learned from Dewey – but did not – and do this without entering into the tiresome scholastic debates within the pragmatist tradition between Rortians and Deweyans. In other words, by opening the Rortian strand of pragmatism

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[377] Jaspers to Arendt 16 May 1963 (Arendt – Jaspers 1992, 505)

[378] Bernstein 1991, 9.

[379] Bernstein 2005b, 81. Even though stressing the similarities between Arendt and the early pragmatist, Bernstein also points out that there are differences between them. For instance, Dewey had much greater faith in the "common man", and would not have accepted some of Arendt's conceptual distinction, such as that between the social and the political (Bernstein 2005b, 128–129n6).

to a voice from the outside, it may become possible to develop the pragmatist position further and simultaneously (even consequently) enter into a more fruitful relation with the Deweyan legacy[380].

Despite the fact that Arendt's knowledge of, not to speak of appreciation for, pragmatism was not remarkable, she once noted that "[p]ragmatism and phenomenology are the most […] interesting of the epigonal philosophical schools of the last hundred years" (EU, 164). This concession is surprising since elsewhere in her work she usually likened pragmatism to abject utilitarianism and (falsely, as we learned from our reading of Rorty) to attempts to "make history" (BPF, 86). Her attitude towards Dewey was twofold: on the one hand, she criticized him for naively ignoring the experiences of concentration camps and statelessness, yet on the other, assented that it was also "hard to disagree" with him (EU, 194–196). Bernstein nicely summarizes her relation to Dewey by saying that even though Arendt certainly was no pragmatist, "her description of the equality (isonomy) of citizens, the public spaces of tangible freedom, and the 'revolutionary spirit' beautifully complements Dewey's understanding of the democratic ethos."[381] Nevertheless, our topic is not the relation between Arendt and Dewey and/or pragmatism, but that between her and Rorty. Their visions converge on many areas. Two key terms for this affiliation are pluralism and (political) fallibilism – terms that call for engaged political debate and deliberation based on a deep respect for others. These concepts are intimately connected to others. Even though I am by no means making the claim that Arendt was or should be read as a pragmatist, the five concepts that Bernstein names as the pragmatist *ethos* – anti-foundationalism, fallibilism, nurturing of critical communities, contingency, and pluralism[382] – are as relevant for her thinking as they are for Rorty's.

I will make my argument by, firstly, examining the mutual elements (and reciprocal critical and complementary observations) through four categories and, secondly, by putting this common *ethos* to work in the dialogue with the ethical-political viewpoints to community introduced in the third chapter of the work. The conceptual categories we will be looking at next are the following: (a) a general intellectual outlook, and, in particular, the relationship between philosophy and politics; (b) pluralistic and fallibilistic democratic politics conceived as an ongoing task; (c) in relation to political change, disclosing better futures, a "zero-degree utopianism"; (d) the dynamics of belonging, the importance and meaning of

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[380] In many ways, my project is analogous with Colin Koopman's (2009, 1–5) "third wave pragmatism" that (a) focuses on processes of transition, (b) emphasizes the connection between Dewey and Rorty, and (c) calls for freely availing resources offered by nonpragmatist (in Koopman's own case, this means especially Foucauldian genealogy). Especially the latter two points are relevant for the study at hand.
[381] Bernstein 2010, 28.
[382] Bernstein 1991, 326–331.

political communities, and the role of institutions. Further similarities, also discussed in the chapter, include the role of narratives (both personal and communal) in politics, demands for radical openness and accentuation of tangibility. We will begin with the general outlook and build the big picture piece by piece. However, before going into that, I will renege something I just said. Even if a fully developed fusion of horizons or synthesis is well beyond the scope and purpose of this study, I will next shortly present, as a sort of a heuristic roadmap for the present chapter, the general features of a potential synthesis. I will concentrate on the *complementary* (i.e. different but compatible) aspects of Arendt's and Rorty's thought, thereby disregarding both severe disagreements and most obvious similarities (which will be discussed below).

The first aspect of the synthesis would be to incorporate Arendt's understanding of (public) world and political acting into Rorty's thought, so that his conceptions of vocabularies, normal discourses and the sort of political action he argued feminism to include would become properly politicized, that is, developed into aspects of political theory proper. Second, and relatedly, we would have to substitute Arendt's critical attitude towards political praxis for Rorty's laid-back attitude[383]. The latter may be suitable for philosophical reflection (*post festum*), but not for an engaged critic. This is also related to the fact that Arendt's analyses of political realities were more precise and comprehensive than Rorty's. Third, incorporating Arendtian understanding into Rorty's position also means that we have to linguistify and widen up the concept of political action. In this sense, Rorty's post-linguistic-turn approach to politics is theoretically speaking more up-to-date and, combined with more in-depth understanding of action, provides us with important tools first to understand such issues as oppression producing discourses and especially to do something about them, to aim at emancipatory goals beyond mere resistance. Fourthly, and these will be shortly discussed below, Rorty can provide Arendtian politics with useful conceptions of self-conscious ethnocentrism, one the one hand, and the role of emotions in politics, on the other. However, let us now move to explicating the possibility of a common vision in more detail through specific topics of agreement.

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[383] Some of the empirical claims that Rorty made on the effects of liberal, wealthy, and secure societies on their inhabitants are utterly wrong. He made the same mistake that he accused Foucault of: concentrating on certain empirical realities of liberal societies, while ignoring others.

6.1. The tentative relationship between theory and politics

In the abstract end of the spectrum, a common theme for Arendt and Rorty was their shared despise of Platonism and the related view on the relationship between philosophy and politics. The horror of Platonism, for both, was the attempt to come up with a philosophical absolute, a blueprint for politics rising above and ruling over the multiplicity of opinions. Even if blatant Platonism is not extremely fashionable in the contemporary political theory, let alone political reality, the problem of appealing to moral certainties, to something beyond debate and argument, is anything but a danger left behind[384]. This is especially apparent in the transformation of political discourse in the West after 9/11[385], but also in the kind of theoretical discourse that seeks to force a singular logic over the whole of political reality. The vision of theory-praxis nexus that we can draw from Arendt and Rorty is remarkably different. For them, political thinking is radically time-bound activity, independent of metaphysics and consequently free from absolutes and ahistorical foundations. Therefore also its public function is different from that envisioned by Platonic perspectives. The following comes from Arendt, but could as well be from Rorty's pen:

> "this means that the philosopher has left behind him the claim to being 'wise' and knowing eternal standards for the perishable affairs of the City of men, for such 'wisdom' could be justified only from a position outside the realm of human affairs and be thought legitimate only by virtue of the philosopher's proximity of the Absolute." (EU, 432)[386]

Despite the loss of eternal standards, theoretical perspectives are not useless from the public's point of view. Firstly, they may serve as springboards for sporadic interventions to the public realm, trying to provoke critical thinking, independent judgment, and suggesting new viewpoints to issues under debate. Secondly, philosophy and theory may have a more indirect impact through influencing the self-image and mental faculties of the actors – in other words, effects the way the actors see their communities and what they can make of the mental tools that their community makes available to them. For instance, Rorty argued that despite their differences both Habermas and Derrida helped their readers to form a self-image in which commitment to a democratic republic was central (PSH, 238). But one cannot directly derive any specific guidelines for action from this ideal. Similarly, for Arendt the central question

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[384] Arendt argues, quite plausibly, that the quest for certitude has changed its form. It today's society, only few would say they possess a truth. Much more common, even symptomatic, is the type of person who is sure that s/he is right. But in spite of the differences, these two ways of thinking have one thing in common. Those who believe in them "are generally not prepared to sacrifice their view to humanity or friendship in case a conflict should arise. They actually believe that to do so would be to violate a higher duty, the duty of 'objectivity'" (MDT 28)

[385] See Bernstein 2005b.

[386] In one sense, then, both writers endorse Hegel's famous description of philosophy's inability to teach the world what it ought to be. "When philosophy paints its grey on grey," he wrote, "one form of life has become old […] The owl of Miverva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering" (Hegel 2001, 20). The passage was quoted by both Rorty (CIS, 55) and Arendt (LKPP, 77).

concerning her students was: "when the chips are down […] how they will act" (HA, 309). But she was also appalled at the idea of a theorist telling people what to do or think ("my God! These are adults!")(HA, 310). The point was, rather, to foster the mental capacities needed for critical thinking and sound use of judgment.

Putting these two writers into a dialogue also shows that in spite of the similarities, Arendt's attitude was, most of the time, more critical than Rorty's. As we saw, Rorty has often been depicted as a defender of a liberal status quo; and this criticism is by no means downright false. Even though they share an idea of what kind of public role we can give to theory, when it comes to critically assessing our time, we may learn more from Arendt than we do from Rorty. Yet the case is far from simple. The citizen-Rorty, if not the philosopher-Rorty, was an active participant in the public debate of his times. Judith Butler once even claimed that "no one has spoken out more than Richard Rorty on the terrible events of our times"[387]. However, when it comes to the theorist-cum-philosopher-Rorty/Arendt, who are our main interests here, we must widen our scope and examine how their ethical-political viewpoints work together in areas more directly related to politics. We will start with democratic communities and take Canovan's words as our springboard. Writing of Arendt's resonances with contemporary political thinking, she argued that

> "One of the reasons for the great stress she laid upon politics was, as we have seen, that she was an 'anti-foundationalist' long before the term came into use, doing her thinking 'without a bannister' , convinced of what Rorty has called 'the priority of democracy to philosophy' and of the capacity of political men to act without philosophical authorization."[388]

6.2. Pluralistic democracy as an ongoing task

"Democracy is a way of personal life," Dewey wrote, "controlled by faith in *the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished*"[389]. This faith was not only shared by Arendt and Rorty – it was one, if not *the*, central issue in their political writings. It is also

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[387] Butler quoted from a live discussion by Green (2008, 8).

[388] Canovan 1994, 278. In a footnote Canovan continues: "Although there are similarities between their positions, there is a complete difference in tone. For Arendt […] the relaxed tone in which Rorty assumes that we can take a liberal political system for granted without needing to worry about its foundations would have seemed grotesquely unrealistic." (Canovan 1994, 278n2) I agree with Arendt's alleged reaction, but the representation of Rorty's argument is not exactly fair. Canovan's (and mine) point about Arendt's anti-foundationalist attitude and prioritization of democratic politics over philosophy shows the uselessness of Benhabib's worries over the fact that "Arendt could not base 'the right to have rights,' i.e., to be recognized as a member of some organized human community, upon some further philosophical principle"(Benhabib 2004b, 65). The point, as I see it, is that she did not want to, because she saw such attempt futile at best and dangerous at worst.

[389] Dewey 1998, 342. My emphasis.

central from the point of view of our study since it is utterly impossible to understand what they mean by community if the question is not approached from the point of view of democracy. As Rorty once put it, democratic politics, for him, is a name for an attempt to bring a planet-wide inclusivist community into existence (UT, 1). Major aspect in their works was the analysis of the general conditions that need to be supplied so that intelligent judgment and action may flourish and that everyone, including the stateless (in the case of Arendt) or otherwise oppressed would have the opportunity to practice their judgment and agency – in Rorty's words to be taken as possible conversation partners and participants in deliberation on serious matters. Their vision of democracy is characterized by fallibilism and pluralism – attributes correlating with their shared anti-absolutism.

Pluralism (of persons, traditions, perspectives, cultures) is the key concept to Arendtian-Rortian democratic politics. The fact that we cannot rank all the human needs, that there are no paradigmatic human beings, that the world opens itself differently to different people and that each unique being approximates sacredness, is – as Arendt put it – the condition per quam of politics. Pluralism is both a fact and a value. Exactly because the multitude is not a homogenous unit but radically heterogeneous any appeal to an absolute is dangerous in the political field. To defy pluralism is to defy politics as such, since the world only comes into being when there are perspectives. As Bernstein puts it, learning to accept and to encounter radical plurality and acknowledge singularity is "*the* problem of human living", to which there is no final solution[390]. We are always exposed to the temptation of repressing plurality, assimilating what is radically other to "more of the same"[391]. But at the same time, it is not uncritical celebration of all otherness that we must embrace, but critically engaged pluralism that puts a serious effort to understanding what is different from us and critically assesses both our own views and those of the other[392]. What is needed, therefore, is debate and deliberation – within communities, between communities, and especially at their borders and boundaries.

Central to Arendt and Rorty is a political debate based on fallibilism and persuasion. In this context fallibilism should not be understood as a purely epistemological concept, but a set of practices necessary for a functioning democracy: tolerance for uncertainty, courage to revise one's beliefs, a genuine will-

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[390] Bernstein 1991, 75.

[391] Bernstein makes similar point through a commentary on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, and argues that the suppression of otherness can justifiably be called 'ontological imperialism' or 'ethical imperialism' (Bernstein 2005b, 34; Bernstein 1991, 71).

[392] Bernstein 2005b, 34–35. This means, especially, being critically aware of anti-pluralistic tendencies both in ourselves and in the other.

ingness to test one's ideas in public, and openness to engage in dialogue with otherness[393]. Political speech based on fallibilism does not require, *pace* Habermasian understanding, the presupposition of a consensus. Debate can, or even should, be – as we learned especially from Arendt – agonistic (yet not antagonistic). But it should be committed to an attempt to persuade[394]. This is a crucial concept for both Arendt and Rorty. For the latter, it meant not enforcing our beliefs on others and was one of the most prominent aspect of his democratic thinking (CIS, 48–52, 60, *passim*; ORT 219; PSH, 276). For the former, the term was a weak translation of *peithein*, a specifically political mode of speech that refuses absolute standards in favor of opinions, i.e. formulations in speech of how the world opens up to me. But, as we saw, it is always nevertheless the same world that opens itself up differently to different persons – otherwise no reconciliation, no persuasion would be needed. But since the world is nevertheless common to us, we need to communicate, debate, and persuade since only persuasion "reckons and knows how to deal with the multitude". (PP, 7–14)

These virtues (fallibilism, deliberation, embracing of plurality), as we have seen, are not arbitrary. There are perfectly good reasons for advocating them. Nevertheless, both Arendt and Rorty draw our attention away from the over-emphasized theories of justification. To many democratic theorists, such as Chantal Mouffe, Rorty's key contribution was to point out that in order to secure our allegiance to democratic principles, we need to pay more attention to the creation of democratic ethos, and less to arguments that attempt to justify democracy theoretically (as attempted by liberals such as Rawls). The task is a practical one, and has to do with mobilization of sentiments and "the multiplication of practices, institutions and language games" that foster democratic politics[395]. It is this practical attitude to democracy that distinguishes Arendt and Rorty from most of the other positions discussed in the third chapter. Against abstract theories of justification and blueprints for institutions, they emphasize that often "the civic spirit is more important than the details" (CR, 231–233). But, at the same time, against the theories whose main focus is in the communities produced by encounters between singularities, they point out that institutions matter. Communities only exist in the proper sense when they are embodied in institutions.

The real issues that need to be tackled in order to a community to function democratically are at the focus here. And often, this means institutions: institutions that foster pluralism, enhance democracy, and create the possibilities for action and public speech, increase our ability to disclose new possibilities.

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[393] Bernstein 2005b, 29; Cochran 1999, 207.
[394] Bernstein 2005b, 73–74.
[395] Mouffe 1996, 5.

Mere goodness and ethically reflective behavior is not *politically* enough if not backed by institutions. Arendt was well aware that only political structures can work as bulwarks against the political evil[396]. And for Rorty, any morality only makes sense if it is related "to a whole range of institutions, practices, and vocabularies of moral and political deliberation" (CIS, 58–59). What Arendt learned from the Greeks and the revolutionaries was that human beings are by nature unequal, and need an artificial institution, which (through its *nomos*) makes them equal and creates a space where freedom and action can appear (OR, 20–21; HC, 214–215). Pluralism can only be preserved and engaged with through political institutions (AOC, 35; OR, 20–21, 74). This understanding of the role of institutions is diametrically opposite to some of the positions in the 'post-structuralist' end of the political theory spectrum in the market.

Whereas some of these positions only engage with the problem of institutional structure from the point of view of resistance, Arendt and Rorty see the problem in a more nuanced way. They attempt to single out the juridico-institutional arrangements that would have positive effects on freedom, political agency and equality. Criticism of existing institutions – indeed any existing institutions – is a crucial part of this effort. We saw this especially with Arendt, who argued that bureaucracy, the "rule of nobody" is the last state of government of nation-states, and that this form of government works so as to discipline its subjects, thereby diminishing the space for real political equality, and hence of freedom, and hence of democracy. In other words, we need to be aware that the institutions and the beginnings inherent in them can have highly detrimental consequences. But – and this is a central point – this should not keep us from paying attention to the "world-building" capacity of human beings or make us back away from the hope of creating institutions that have positive effects.

This is related to another point. In their own ways, both of our writers embrace historicism in the sense of "starting from where we are". Liberal democratic theories easily slip into the kind of "chicken-and-egg" paradoxes examined in the third chapter: the democratic public and its general will presuppose the very boundaries and procedures they are supposed to justify. Such 'radicals' as Agamben, Nancy, and Hardt and Negri, on the other hand, tend to make references to spontaneous interruptions to the forces that be (which are difficult to locate or produce). I think Patchen Markell hits the mark when he argues that Arendt (and the same goes with Rorty) is not looking for a middle ground between the two positions, but rather takes a different angle to the whole question. Instead of looking for some sort of purity

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[396] See, e.g. Canovan 1994, 109, 147.

in political action, we should note that all actions are in some sense "secondary" to the context from which they spring. Our actions are always responses to some pre-existing events, acts or beginnings.[397] That is, our action is always *in some sense* related to the surrounding political community.

In a good pragmatic fashion, this way of looking at things "replaces the unanswerable question of how to generate something [...] out of nothing," i.e. autonomous public from preceding heteronomy in the liberal case, and spontaneity from determination of the present system in the post-structuralists' case, "with the more tractable question of how to sustain, intensify, and democratize the beginnings with which we are already confronted"[398]. There is no "solution" to the democratic chicken-and-egg paradox: we have to start from the forms of democratic community currently in existence and attempt to create new beginnings (new publics, new voices to be heard). And this task is practically endless. It is all about concrete historical examples, institutions and practices that once existed or exist at the moment (or could be imagined to exist) and their modification and transition so that they can better reduce cruelty, oppression and violence. Institutions may either restrict our possibilities to response to events, to act and to deliberate, or they can encourage and stimulate just that. Exactly for this reason they have to be in the constant spotlight of criticism, but as concrete, particular institutions that can be ameliorated if approached with the needed reflective intelligence.

Hence also with public spaces, the main democratic institutions. We are not just already met with some kind of public spaces (with the exception of the camps, which Arendt saw as laboratories for destroying human spontaneity), but there are always already a plurality of public spaces, pluralities of publics, constituted of pluralities of actors making pluralities of demands. But this does not mean that democracy is necessarily doing well – quite the opposite. Both the pragmatists and Arendt teach us how fragile democracy is. What needs to be done is constant re-articulations of the democratic ethos and conceiving the creation of properly democratic public spaces as an ongoing task[399]. There are no final institutions of democracy, not even final meanings for democracy. In this, Arendt and Rorty take sides with both Dewey and Derrida. As to the former, democracy that is creative is always a task before us[400]. And similarly for Derrida democracy is "to come": not as a future form of democracy, but as the structure of a promise

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[397] Markell 2010, 79–80.
[398] Markell 2010, 80.
[399] See Bernstein 2005b, 83, 122.
[400] Dewey 1998, 340–343.

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of democracy itself – a promise that allows us to criticize the existing democracies that "remain inadequate to the democratic demand"[401].

One of the most promising historical openings for democracy for both Arendt and Rorty was their homeland, the United States. Rorty's sentimentalism about Whitman's and Dewey's habit of using 'democracy' and 'America' as synonyms is well-known. While both of his heroes never committed to the view that everything would necessarily go well, they also held that the America that always remains unachieved is the most through-going experiment in democratic self-creation at a communal level: "our essence is our existence, and our existence is the future" (AOC, 13–22). And, sounding much like Rorty, Arendt wrote of her new home country:

> "America, this republic, the democracy in which we live, is a living thing which cannot be contemplated and categorized […] It is not and never will be perfect because the standard of perfection does not apply here […] If you try to "make America more American" or a model of democracy according to any preconceived idea, you can only destroy it." (EU, 400)

Moreover, she congratulated (more than a little problematically) her country of refuge for being spared from "the cheapest and the most dangerous disguise the absolute ever assumed in the political realm, the disguise of the nation" (OR, 187). It is this common embracing of the *promise* of democracy as it has been experimented in America that also allows us to examine critically the differences in Arendt's and Rorty's position. Democracy is probably the area where the interplay between Arendtian and Rortian positions is most valuable.

Arendtian considerations can complement and even correct Rorty in many areas where he is in danger of undermining the democratic ethos he himself endorses. His position, while strongly acknowledging pluralism, is suffering from a shortage of efficient tools for comprehending political conflict and, furthermore, a political space for engagement in these conflicts. Rorty, in his "philosophical, not political" disagreement with Habermas[402], is not always sufficiently aware how the Habermasian emphasis on communicative reason aiming at a consensus draws his attention away from two other sources of influence Rorty greatly valued, i.e. the earlier pragmatist and the romanticist movement. While Arendt was not enthusiastic about either of these sources, she shares with them an important political conclusion. That is, Arendt helps us to cope with the through-going political implications of plurality. Where Rorty sometimes saw day-to-day politics as nothing else than technocratic consensual problem-solving, the

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[401] Derrida 2005, 85–86.
[402] The problems of following Habermas too strictly are also noted by Mouffe (1996, 6–8).

Arendtian corrective helps us to illuminate both sides of politics more fairly. For even though acting in concert (what Arendt calls power) is necessary to keep public spaces of freedom in existence, political action (of which Rorty had hardly any notion[403]) is also often agonistic. Dissent and conflicting values are as central to a well-functioning democracy as consensus is. Moreover, by participating into public debate the plural actors can also disclose their identities in a manner that is only occasionally acknowledged by Rorty. To summarize: Rorty was, in the end of the day, a bit too willing to identify democracy with the current liberal institutions. He is always in danger of, against everything else he stands for, slipping into a reaffirmation of certain normal discourse, namely, liberal democracy. While, as was argued earlier, this is not a structural factor in his work, Arendt can be used to steer the Rortian position further away from liberalism and towards a more open and pluralistic democracy, in a way attempted on purely Rortian resources in the fourth chapter of the present work.

But while Arendt can definitely cast more light on the agonistic debating and acting side of democratic community, Rorty can nevertheless bring into the discussion an area left into shades by Arendt, that is, the commerce between political and social ideals. Based on her distinction between the social and the political, Arendt was not able to deal effectively with issues concerning poverty and socio-cultural inequality, even though it can be very compellingly argued that these questions have direct implications to the political sphere proper as she understood it. It is in this that Rorty can be helpful. For he tirelessly reminded his reader of the importance of economic issues, and sometimes even formulated his idea of democracy as a quest for social equality rather than as a purely political ideal (thereby also mirroring the problems inherent in his position). Better than Arendt, Rorty grasped the fact that social inequality very easily turns into a hindrance to being a full-fledged participator in democratic deliberation. Therefore, while Arendt effectively pointed out the democratic achievements of the American revolution, he was not as aware as Rorty was that "the whole point of America was that it was going to be the world's first classless society" (PSH, 259).

One aspect, finally, calls a move beyond both of our writers. This aspect is the role of emotions[404] in political deliberation. Even though Arendt and Rorty oppose each other quite directly on this matter, they both put forth a problematic position. For the latter, sentiments are a useful tool to be used in the attempt

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[403] Ironically given Rorty's dismissal of Kant, what Arendt says of the latter could also be said of the former: he understood that there is a need for public freedom, but is totally ignorant of the nature of, and the need for, action (See LKPP, 19).

[404] 'Emotions' refer to a range of issues such as: affects, passions, sentiments and sensations. Since this is not a central issue, we lack the needed space to make any further conceptual clarifications between the aforementioned.

to achieve what Arendt and Kant would call "enlarged mentality," i.e. seeing matters from other person's point of view. However, if sentiments are to have a central role like this, one would suspect that Rorty has, if not a full-blown theory, at least some kind of positive conception of what they are and how they work. But it turns out this is not the case, which makes his position somewhat superficial. Arendt, on the other hand, dismisses the public role of sentiments because of their particularity, unworldliness, and untalkativeness. Yet, even if the problems she raises are real something seems to be wrong with her view as well. For the conception of emotions she is putting forth, i.e. seeing them as something that springs from the darkness of the human heart, is old-fashioned and, to be fair, quite useless[405]. However, this is quite different story from ours. The next section will continue the discussion on democratic communities by taking a look at Arendtian-Rortian vision of political change. As seen, democratic politics is a pluralistic practice that stimulates new beginnings in the political sphere – and, as Rorty explicitly put it, a means to bring a more inclusivist community into existence. It is therefore necessary to have a look at the prerequisites of bringing a change about – in short, criticism guided by a disclosure of new possibilities.

6.3. Disclosing possibilities: critique, utopia, and 'going beyond'

As a natural extension to their views on democracy, Arendt and Rorty also share a lot when it comes to bringing about political change. This section argues that they share what I dub as a "zero-degree utopianism". By this, I mean the kind of politics that employs utopia not as an imagined perfect order to be realized in the future after a revolutionary rupture in history, but rather as a guidepost guiding our action and criticism. That is, their strand of utopianism is embedded in an understanding of political action that defines it as a contingent and aleatoric practice. The final result of action cannot be known, so the means used in the process are often more important than the achieved results. This strand of utopianism, therefore, is less about ideal structures and more about possibilities of political action within the current conjuncture, about manipulating the tensions within one's own age in order to produce a future different from the present. One could also therefore call it immanent utopianism. We can, again, quote Dewey as a precursor of this line of thinking: "[D]isclosure […] [of a] sense of possibilities that are unrealized and might be realized are when they are put in contrast with actual conditions, the most penetrating 'criticism' of the latter that can be made"[406].

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[405] There has been a growing interest in emotion in political theory in the recent years. See, e.g., Connolly 2002.

[406] Dewey 1980, 360. It is from this basis that Dewey made his controversial claim that "art is more moral than the moralities" (Dewey 1980, 362).

We paid a great deal of attention to Rorty's melioristic utopianism in the fourth chapter. With Arendt the suggestion of utopianism is perhaps a bit more surprising. This claim is, nevertheless, affirmed by Bernstein[407]. One of the clearest manifestations of Arendt's utopianism is in the beginning of *Crises of the Republic* where she discusses political action. Action, she contends, always begins something new. Yet, it is never possible to create *ex nihilo*; rather, in order to make room for one's own action, the existing constellation has to be changed. And such change "would be impossible if we could not mentally remove ourselves from where we physically are located and imagine that things might as well be different from what they actually are" (CR, 5). The capacity to change facts – in other words, to act – owes its existence to imagination. This is what this specific strand of utopianism shares with others. Where it differs from them is in the conceptions of the process. Both Rorty and Arendt are equally aware of the dangers of what the latter called "politics as making", i.e. the attempt to "make history" like we make objects for use. In politics, this will not do. Also, even though we might let our action to be inspired by utopias in the proper sense of the word, the actual guidance for action must come from more short term aims. Rorty was often denounced – and not without reason – for his support of piecemeal reformist politics. But what is valuable in his reformism can be grasped and saved if placed in constellation with what Arendt said about the symptoms of conceiving politics hubristically and dangerously as 'making', and as aiming to fulfillment of an utopian goal:

> "Whenever we hear of grandiose aims in politics, such as establishing a new society in which justice will be guaranteed forever, or fighting a war to end all wars or to make the whole world safe for democracy, we are moving in the realm of this kind of thinking." (BPF, 79)

By contrast, in words of Arendt "what we will have to do, by and large, is experiment" (HA, 322). The political strand of fallibilism is at work in this case as well. It requires that we use our imagination to formulate new hypotheses and subject them to a public debate, and that we openly engage with otherness in order to experiment with possibilities not previously disclosed within neither 'us' nor 'them'[408].

Change can occur either as a result of a debate or a metaphoric redescription of the context in which the debate takes place. Even though in the latter case the change is supposedly much more radical, there is no reason from an Arendtian-Rortian position to dismiss either channel as less useful. We need to acknowledge that politics includes both the wearisome process of negotiation and deliberation *and* a

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[407] Bernstein 1983, 212. For Bernstein, Arendt's utopian strain is akin to Gadamer and takes the form of a critique of the present (Ibid.)
[408] See also Bernstein 2005b, 29; Cochran 1999, 207.

sporadic radical change in the way we look at things, when suddenly, to quote Arendt "an entirely new imagery begins to cluster around the new metaphor and an entirely new vocabulary is introduced into political language" (OR, 38–39). Pace Habermasian critical theory, *both* alternatives are of democratic nature in the sense that was explicated in the preceding section. Indeed, it is one of the major results of the democratic ethos shared by Arendt and Rorty, that *if* democracy functions properly, it constantly discloses new possibilities, new alternatives – that is, new forms of abnormal discourse.

When it comes to criticism and judgment of the present, then, a community plays an important role. Our judgment arises from our community but is not determined by it. This is one of the areas in which being a member of a particular community and the idea of being something more cross paths for both Arendt and Rorty. When one uses one's judgment, develops a point of criticism, and acts on the basis of these two mental activities it is always on the basis of one's community, but in a manner in which one places the platitudes of the normal discourse in question by engaging and interacting with otherness (be that outsiders or new and unexpected happenings and events – any kind of "new stimulus" will do). Shortly put, we judge as a member of a community, but in a manner that puts certain elements of that community under a critical scrutiny.

Hence also with "cosmopolitan existence". We cannot derive any judgment or direct guidance for action from 'humanity'. But, nevertheless, as Arendt argues on the basis of her reading of Kant, even though we judge as members of a community, "in the last analysis," when one judges and acts in political matters "one is supposed to take one's bearings from *the idea, not the actuality*, of being a world citizen and, therefore, also a *Weltbetrachter*, a world spectator"(LKPP, 75–76. Emphasis mine. See also Rorty's AOC, 3). That is, by imagining a community that is radically more open and inclusivist than the currently existing one, one can critically engage with existing conditions so that to change them for the better. The next section will explicate this idea in more detail as well as presenting a conclusion of our findings on the commonalities of Arendtian and Rortian horizons. The main emphasis will naturally be on the questions of community and belonging.

6.4. Non-foundational, tangible communities

We will now turn our attention towards the central problematique of the present study, the understanding of political communities and their functioning. The preceding sections have already pointed out important convergences between Arendt's and Rorty's ethico-politics on this area: pluralistic democratic

community as a source of new ideas and critique is an idea common to both our writers. In this section, we will further develop this idea and inquire into the question of what kind of commonalities we can tease out from the interplay between Arendtian and Rortian horizons. Even though the two writers illuminate their shared ground from different perspectives, they both endorse an idea of a community that has no stable ground, no absolute foundation (such as a nation), yet is both spatially and temporally limited, and is actualized through an institutional structure that is supposed to last longer than the individual members of the community in question. This common ground is elaborated in this section and gets further clarified in critical dialogue with other viewpoints available.

We will begin with a defense of tangibility. Even though both Arendt and Rorty are fast to note the 'imaginary' elements of community – its discoursivity, that it is produced by a web of relations and so on – they also point out the importance of noting that a community is always tangible, something taking place in specific time and space. From Arendt we learned that the world – a political community, public space – must be already disclosed for action to have any meaning. No speech and no deed would be understandable to others were there not a worldly background that "makes opinions significant and actions effective". This worldly background, moreover, consists of two aspects, the physical in-between and the subjective in-between. Were there not a physical reality that lasts longer than individual lives, the world could not guarantee the much needed stability without which any equality and, *a fortiori,* any freedom or plurality would not be possible in the first place. Similarly, for Rorty, the local we-community, which always comes first, is also something quite concrete, the actual society that surrounds us. However, there is a transition from tangibility to discoursivity that occurs in both Arendt and Rorty.

What guarantees the continued existence and meaning for worldly things and human deeds is the subjective side of the world, the discursive web of human relations. For Arendt, a world is meaningless unless it is talked about – unless the pluralities of unique beings inhabiting it talk to each other and unless there are people who can tell stories about political actors, thereby forming the web of interrelated narratives. By speaking and acting, human beings disclose their identities, enact their freedom and plurality, and simultaneously rebuild the world. For Rorty, every community is based on certain amount of shared beliefs and values, and as with Arendt, common narratives that makes political action, i.e. deliberation, possible in the first place. A minimal requirement for a community is, then, a vocabulary that makes possible the interaction between the members of that community. If, on the other hand, the given com-

munity is democratic, it aims at enlargement, variation and/or replacement of this normal discourse by variation of its rules, either by debating about them or metaphorically altering them.

The same themes that Rorty derives from his linguistified readings of pragmatism, Arendt derives from her phenomenological background, specifically from the Heideggerian conception of (being-in-the-) world. In both cases, firstly, we are talking about a background or pre-understanding that makes a genuine communication possible. We are also dealing with a concrete spatial place, an always already existing context of life that defines the basic predicates of our existence. From both angles, again, institutions and works of art are seen as an important mediator between tangibility and durability on the one hand, and discoursivity and change, on the other. As we have seen, institutions are a major element in building public freedoms and equality, reducing cruelty and providing possibilities for amelioration. They are also elements in the public in-between that are meant to produce durability and continuance, yet without forestalling change. Similarly, art produces stability (through lasting objects), tells politically relevant stories of past deeds, and poetically reaches towards future, thereby playing and important role in keeping a community alive (see e.g. HC, 173; CIS, 69).

For both Arendt and Rorty the human ability to create change by spontaneous acting, thereby preventing the freezing-over of any normal discourse, was something to be kept alive at all price. Even though greatly valuing institutions and the stability they create, they both shared an admiration for those moments in history when a sea change washes over the existing set of institutions. Even though limitations and boundaries exist in the political arena, they cannot, nor should they, stand in the way of the potential for change through action, arising, as Arendt held, from the human condition of natality (HC, 191). Analogously, both writers emphasize not only the ethical demand of resisting exclusion at the boundaries, but also share the belief that a community can work democratically, can renew and revitalize itself if, and only if, its borders are open and it welcomes strange and dissent voices as parts of the public debate. The outsider plays an important role, hence, in keeping any community alive.

We have come up with a double demand. First, we are urged to start "where we are", in other words, the starting point of our analyses should be the concrete political institutions and communities we find ourselves at the present moment, instead of making an epitome general concept of communities or abstract ontological analyses of what a community, or belonging to it, is. In this task the Arendtian position may have lessons to learn from the spirit, if not always the letter, of Rorty's ethnocentrism. Inspired by her

phenomenological background, Arendt's emphasis was always on the Western tradition from the Greek antiquity onwards, yet with a semi-universalist tone. She never really faced the problem of the potential relevance of her thinking to non-Westerners. It could, therefore, be of value to see Arendt's thinking more self-consciously as a product of the Western tradition and the intellectual and political environment in which it grew. And this is where Rorty's formulation of ethnocentrism may be useful[409].

Second, despite starting from where we are, we should not lay any of the current modes of belonging as a foundation for a political community *per se*. Both Arendt and Rorty emphasize that there is no ultimate ground beyond all differences, be it nation, culture or ethnicity. Not only do we have a plurality of political communities, the plurality within the communities goes all the way down as well. It is therefore a sign of a healthy community that its members realize this fact, in other words, that they grasp that they are not responsible for anything else beyond their fellow beings: neither history, nor God, nor an essence of their nation. This realization makes possible the experimental and creative attitude towards democracy, and consequently, towards the community as such. This is a common ethos that can be drawn from both Arendt's and Rorty's writings, yet it is bit more consistently applied by the former, who was more critical than the latter of the liberal trust in contemporary institutions such as representative government.

In slightly other words, it is an important aspect of Arendtian-Rortian communities that even though they emphasize the importance of institutions, they are – ideally – more closely related to 'smooth' than to 'striated' spaces in Deleuzian terminology[410]. Even though the two ends of the spectrums only exit in mixtures, it is a useful way of putting the issue. Political communities should be 'smooth' in the sense that they are more open than enclosed and bordered, more rhizomatic than rigid. They consist of multiplicities that constantly produce new openings, new connections, and new transformations, thereby rendering impossible any transcendental principle of organization. Stylistic differences aside, the Deleuzian conceptual toolbox can thus help us to grasp important aspects of the community envisioned by Arendt and Rorty[411].

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[409] Arendt could have developed a similar point from her reading and correspondence with Jaspers, who advocated the idea of "universal communication" in which the contents of one's own tradition are 'playfully' put in conversation with the contents of other traditions and living philosophizing (MDT, 84).

[410] See section 3.2.4. of the present work.

[411] I also believe that any empirical study conducted with a reference to the theoretical perspective developed in this study might benefit from eclectically engaging with Deleuze (as well as with Foucault).

To summarize: we have come up with an idea of community that, instead of asking what is a community (especially in a metaphysical sense), asks the pragmatic question: "what a community does?" The answers given by Rorty and Arendt are remarkably similar. Firstly, a community provides a basis for engagements with events we encounter. What Rorty calls a normal discourse and Arendt a *sensus communis* both emphasize the fact that when we act and judge, we do so as a members of communities, not as members of supersensible world (LKPP, 67–75). Both concepts work as a background for belonging, something that fits us into a community, since communication depends on them (LKPP, 70; PMN, 11, 319–320). To be part of a community is to be able to be a participator in public deliberation – for this reason the background plays an important role. Moreover, we have seen that the ideas of community and democracy are largely overlapping. The value of pluralism therefore arises directly from the idea of community as a guarantor of self-reflectivity of this community. The reader may, however, find the idea of community thus far reconstructed a bit abstract. To dissolve this impression, I will next engage directly with the competing ethical-political frameworks and empirical analyses introduced in the third chapter (the next section). After this, before moving to conclusions, we will consider the contribution of this study to the theoretical landscape of IR in the section 6.6.

6.5. Engaging with the competing theories

This section enters into a dialogue with the competing theories and ethical-political viewpoints on community. Even though critically assessing all the frameworks introduced earlier, my aim is not to debunk them, quite the contrary. By pointing out some of the blind spots of these viewpoints, I attempt to move the discussion further, to produce new standpoints and new ways of framing the problems – that is, new angles that may help the concrete political engagement with these issues. The cosmopolitan-communitarian debate that has, in a sense, provided the general background of the present study, will not be directly engaged here for two reasons. Firstly, references to this debate have been made in the discussions on Arendt's and Rorty's positions, and secondly, in the disciplinary debates, the specific problematique of the communitarian/cosmopolitan debate, as argued in the third chapter, has been mostly overcome. Our emphasis will therefore be on the more recent debates within Critical IR (that nevertheless carry some references to the earlier one) between Kantian/Habermasian cosmopolitans and the various approaches usually placed under the misnomer 'post-structuralism'.

Before going in details of the debate, let us first consider the problem, already touched upon lightly, of democratic theory's inability to deal effectively with borders. The problem, as we have learned – espe-

cially for liberal democratic theory – is that democratic legitimacy does not seem to exist before the establishment of borders and the consequential creation of a *demos*. From the perspective we have been developing, however, this problem is a result of a wrong-footed approach, namely the attempt to philosophically justify an existing practice. Our approach should be the opposite. We should start from the existing practices, inquire into their consequences, and after assessing these consequences ethically, develop effective strategies for political action that aims at changing them. Hence, in the case of borders, if we conclude (as I think we should), that the existing practice of exclusion through filtering is ethically problematic we have to put our efforts in creating practices that are more inclusivist. The problem of legitimizing as it is represented by the liberal-democratic theory therefore vanishes.

When it comes to Habermasian discourse ethics, our position shares a lot with it – most importantly the claim that deliberation should be seen as the central ethical-political activity. Some important differences exist nevertheless. If we would approach the question from purely Rortian point of view, nothing much could be said of the *substance* of the Critical Theory with a capital C, since Rorty's disagreement with them is, in his own words, mostly philosophical. He only disagrees with Habermas on the transcendental presuppositions of politics, i.e. sees Habermasian concept of rationality as one more attempt at foundation for politics and hence both problematic and ineffective. Relatedly, many Critical Theorists are too closely related to a classical, and especially liberal, political theory in that they, firstly, ask questions concerning philosophical justification for institutions, and secondly, ask questions starting with 'what' (i.e. what is the real meaning of this concept, what would be the most morally appraisable political order and so on). Both sets of questions are, as Rorty would have it, bad questions in that they owe too much to the metaphysical tradition. We could fare much better by substituting with questions starting with 'how'. Or, as Rorty puts it, paraphrasing Marx, "philosophers have long wanted to understand concepts, but the point is to change them so as to make them serve our purposes better" (UT, 25).

From the combined Arendtian-Rortian perspective we have come up with, there are multiple other problems in the Critical Theorists' take on the issues of community as well. Firstly, Arendt and Rorty (the latter thanks to his Emersonian-Nietzschean influences) are much better equipped to grasp the throughgoing implications of pluralism (even if Rorty is in this respect sometimes a bit too close to Habermas). Communication, from our point of view, is a way to agonistically deal with our differences and come up with temporary agreements. This is something that is sometimes left in the shadows of evaluating 'validity claims' in the Habermasian Critical Theory. For both Arendt and Rorty, there are better and worse

arguments in politics, but the term 'validity' is too strong to be used in the area where persuasion and opinions are the central material. More widely put, there is a tendency in Critical Theory (Habermasian or not), to conceive criticism as a moral criticism of politics, in which morality, further, is understood in a Kantian sense as a set of imperatives premised on (practical) reason. This sets part of their critique itself beyond critique and therefore beyond politics. They are thus guilty of what Arendt called "the inhumanity of Kant's moral philosophy," caused by the fact that "the categorical imperative is postulated as absolute" thereby missing the fact that in politics, it is only possible to speak of humans in their plurality, not of Man in the singular (MDT, 27).

Secondly and relatedly, Critical Theory's universalism looks problematic from the Arendtian-Rortian perspective. No matter how 'thin', universalism is universalism, and as Beck says, involves substantive norms and procedural rules that are to be upheld at all costs[412]. It also involves, even if the formulation is unnecessarily brutal, "imposing an order on the world"[413]. This last point should make it clear that the problem with universalism is not, at least not primarily, philosophical but political. In line with their isolation of morality from politics, Critical Theory's cosmopolitanism is based on certain values and principles that are beyond negotiation. In the task of creating an inclusivist community on a world-scale this is a problem. First of all, it lacks some of the radically open and pluralist attitude that characterizes Arendtian and Rortian democracy as a constant task. It is a few steps short from Rorty's affirmation that "the ability to be citizens of the full-fledged democracy which is yet to come, rather than the ability to grasp truth, is what is important about being human"(UT, 3)[414].

Moreover, the problem of universalism leads us to the problem of imperialism. Despite the protestations to the contrary, I see no effective tools within the universalists approaches to deal with the problems of imperialism and the fact that the cosmopolitan framework of global institutions is created according to Western ideals that promote liberal democracy and capitalism. That is, even if there is a remarkable emancipatory potential in the set of ideas promoted by Critical Theory, the outcome of their utilization in the context of contemporary global power relations is anything but clear. Promoting a set of values that

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[412] Beck 2006, 49–59.
[413] Beck 2006, 20.
[414] To clarify, this does not necessarily imply giving up the term 'universal', but rather reclaiming its radically open, future-oriented critical potential. I think Judith Butler is on the right tracks on this issue. After pointing out that "the meaning of 'the universal' proves to be culturally variable" she continues: "this is not to say that there ought to be no reference to the universal or that it has become, for us, an impossibility. On the contrary. All it means is that there are cultural conditions for its articulation that are not always the same, and that the term gains its meaning for us precisely through these decidedly less than universal conditions" (Butler 1996, 45–46)

are closely related to the political institutions of the West in the contemporary hierarchical world order may play in the hands of prolongation of the said hierarchy, even if this is a strict opposite of the intentions of Critical Theorists. In other words, there is a risk of identifying the present too strongly with the ideal instead of using the ideal as a critical source for evaluating the present. This point of criticism can be further extended to cover the whole attitude of this strand of theorizing. When it comes to the transformative potential, most of the Critical Theorists seem to lack the needed imagination. Even if they correctly emphasize the need to enhance the contemporary institutions, they are also too unimaginative in their attempts to think beyond them. Most of their suggestions for future politics are related to a changing role of nation-states and a development of global civil society, which is a good start, but not sufficient if we wish to critically engage with the problems of exclusion, political agency (or the lack thereof) and power relations in the contemporary world.

Nevertheless, taking into account the global power relations is not a shortcut to a position that is plausible from ethical-political point of view. Take Hardt and Negri's analysis of global Empire as an example. Their analysis is certainly illuminating in relation to the various processes that corrode the sovereign state as a natural form of political community by replacing it with an assemblage of increasingly isomorphic governing practices and global capitalism. The problem, however, is with their vague discussion on the multitude. As Connolly argues, it is hard to point out any concrete example of the multitude, and any analysis of political struggles that may contain both pro and anti-Empire elements is absent in Hardt and Negri's text[415]. Moreover, by refusing the idea of the multitude building political institutions that work *against* the present global assemblage of power, Hardt and Negri effectively render their position to the plane of mere resistance. They thus paralyze creative action[416]. This takes us to the problems of some 'post-structuralist' positions more widely. These will be discussed in detail next.

I will begin the critical scrutiny of 'post-structuralist' positions by taking a look at Agamben and his followers. This being done, I will move to Nancy, whose position is closely related to that of Agamben. Because Agamben draws from Arendt, one might suspect that there is an overlap between their positions – especially since we have already seen that there is an overlap between Arendt and Foucault, another major source for Agamben. That, however, is not the case. On the contrary, Agamben's position (to the

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[415] Connolly 2004, 36. One could ponder, for example, if the Arab Spring of 2011 could be counted as a movement of the multitude against the Empire. Yet, it is hardly news that these revolutions also contain pro-Empire elements in the form of actors whose aim is to transform their countries into Western-style liberal democracies.
[416] Connolly 2004, 37.

extent that it is independent from Foucault's) turns out to be a target of a heavy criticism from the point of view of the position developed in this study. But we should not get ahead of ourselves. It is easy to criticize Agamben for pessimism and for leading us to a historical impasse[417]. Things, however, Agamben's followers are eager to point out, are not this simple[418]. Nevertheless, Connolly makes an important point of criticism that is both left untouched by the reactions by Agambenians and is also in line with the position we have been developing in this study. That is, Agamben's analysis of intensification of biopolitics and sovereignty is not so much wrong, Connolly contends, as it is overly formal[419]. There is a tightly defined cultural-political logic that originates in the beginning of Western metaphysical tradition and intensifies into a global biopolitical machine through a generalization of exception in Schmittian sense. Of the three writers (Arendt, Foucault, Schmitt) Agamben cites, he most resembles Schmitt in that (especially when seen from an Arendtian and/or pragmatist point of view) his approach is a kind of an exercise in metaphysics (if not theology). Gone are Foucault's detailed analyses of historical developments and Arendt's complex histories and contexts of the rise of the nation-state and her emphasis on experience as a source of political thinking. The situation of contemporary stateless, for example, if seen from the point of view of the present study, is not the latest manifestation of sovereign exception, but a contingent result of ill-guided politics.

The same goes with Agamben's 'solutions'. For, according to Agamben, "until a completely new politics […] is at hand, every theory and every praxis will remain imprisoned and immobile"[420]. In search for a solution, the emphasis moves from political philosophy to "first philosophy", that is, ontology (in a strictly metaphysical sense). Until we have come up with "a new and coherent ontology of potentiality […] a political theory freed from the aporias of sovereignty remains unthinkable"[421]. Until the philosophers have formulated an ontological position different from the one implicated in contemporary reality, our politics remain captured by the sovereign exception. It is here that we must stop and reflect. For in his idiosyncratic manner, Agamben is taking us back to the tradition of political thinking that started with Plato. Once again we have a philosopher return to the people with an Idea, in this case the ontological idea of pure potentiality. Our seemingly 'political' problems are insolvable through political projects. Instead, they are problems of 'the political' as such, to be solved at the ontological (or at least ontopoliti-

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[417] This kind of argument is put forth, for instance, by William E. Connolly (2004, 27).
[418] Edkins – Pin-Fat 2005; Prozorov 2010.
[419] Connolly 2004, 28. Agamben's way of framing the problem is also criticized by Wendy Brown (2010, 86).
[420] Agamben 1998, 11.
[421] Agamben 1998, 44.

cal level)[422]. From our point of view, Connolly is hitting the mark when he says that "Agamben displays the hubris of academic intellectualism"[423]. And if hubris is, as Arendt says, dangerous in politics, it is dangerous also in political theory. Dangerous, that is, in that it obstructs the attempt to solve the problems it raises.

Agamben optimism, as Prozorov explains, is based on the belief that the current biopolitical nihilism, by emptying out all positive life forms and making them into a bare life, actually produces the conditions of possibility of radical transformation. This transformation is to take place through subtraction from biopolitics through "preference not to," a kind of a final sovereign decision from the part of the individual to let himself/herself to be in the pure potential of whatever being, thereby making possible the "happening" of the coming community[424]. Edkins and Pin-Fat are little more concrete with their take on Agamben. Their example of Agambenian resistance to sovereign violence is an Iranian person, asylum-seeker in the United Kingdom, who sewed his lips together to protest against the treatment of asylum-seekers in the UK. This act, they argue, demonstrates how bare life of homo sacer can be transformed into a way of life, thereby refusing the sovereign distinction between ways of life (that makes exclusion possible). However, from the Arendt-Rortian perspective, we must disagree with the analysis in the same manner as Owens does from Arendt's perspective: "lip-sewing can form the basis of a new politics if it is acted upon and talked about over and over again"[425]. That is, if the act does not affect the discourse on exclusion, if our community does not develop a vocabulary to deal with the issue and do something about it, if there is no worldly effects in Arendtian sense, if a community of solidarity is not created with the asylum-seekers, the act does nothing to contest sovereign violence.

The first step, from the perspective developed here, for achieving something relevant politically, is to make one's claims and deeds understandable to the members of the community one wishes to influence. Ironically, Edkins and Pin-Fat implicitly affirm this in their article, since in giving meaning to the act of lip-sewing they quote what Abbas Amini, their protagonist, had to *say* about his action[426]. The second step, furthermore from our perspective, would be to aim at lasting changes in the institutional structure that imposes injustice. This is also denied by Edkins and Pin-Fat since, they argue, the asylum-seekers

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[422] Prozorov 2010, 1054–1056.
[423] Connolly 2004, 29.
[424] Agamben 1995, 61. Prozorov 2010, 1064-1067. The "preference not to" refers to Melville's *Bartleby*, in which the main character refuses to do anything, even actively refuse, he just "prefers not to" – he never even preferred to prefer not to (Prozorov 2010, 1064–1067).
[425] Owens 2009: 577.
[426] Edkins – Pin-Fat 2005, 2.

do not attempt to influence policy, but to question the very rules based on which the policy debate is premised[427]. *As if* the distinction could be made that neatly, *as if* policy and its premises where situated on different ontological levels, to be dealt with separately; *as if* the change of premises would do any good, without being translated into the policy praxis. Not that the changing of premises would not be a perfectly good goal, quite the contrary. As Rorty's discussion of feminism demonstrates, sometimes (in the issues that matter the most) changing the rules is exactly what political action should aim at. But ignoring the policy-level altogether is like constantly debating the rules of a game without ever playing it.

The problems we faced with Agamben are somewhat similar than the ones we face when discussing Nancy and singularity. Arendt's and Rorty's defense of the plurality of unique beings is in some sense closely related to the emphasis Nancy et al. put on singularity. Like Agamben's coming community, also Nancy's inoperative community refuses any positive identity, since these are seen as anti-political forces leaning towards totalizing tendencies. However, the problem is that avoiding totalizing tendencies easily slips into total removal of tangible, concrete experiences of community in favor of an ontological, pre-political experience of community. That is, this kind of understanding of community is easily empty of praxis, or at least the praxis is hard to detect. Moreover, given that any empirical examples of this kind of community are rather short-lived sporadic practices, it is hard to imagine how this idea, if not provided with a more detailed analysis of everyday practices, could help to achieve solidarity and possibilities of political action on a long-term basis. In sum, as already stated with Agamben, there is a danger of proceeding backwards, i.e. starting from an exercise in metaphysics and slowly descending on the level of political praxis.

A further problem concerns the more detailed descriptions of singularity. That is, even though much emphasis is put on the relation (*clinamen*) and being-with aspect of community, thereby transgressing problems of individualism, the community of singularities subsequently described nevertheless easily lacks the tangible, mundane, worldly character of an Arendtian in-between. Even though 'being-with' and 'in-between' are related to each other, there is a crucial difference: 'in-between' describes things from the point of view of the world, whereas 'being-with' relates to the singularities that constitute the world (the difference between *a web* (Arendt) and *a relation* illustrates the same point). Arendt and Rorty agree that we are all unique in the same sense as Nancy and others mean, and also agree on the

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[427] Edkins – Pin-Fat 2005, 21.

axiom, suggested by Douzinas, of cosmopolitan justice: "respect the singularity of the other"[428]. But they would disagree with such claims as "each one is a unique world"[429] or that "my world is distinctively mine"[430]. These are the strict opposite of the Arendtian understanding in which "the world comes into being only if there are perspectives" (PP, 175), since there can only be perspectives when there is a human artifact.

> "To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time. The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak." (HC, 52)

It is the emphasis on plurality in the world that provides our approach the possibility to effectively engage with difference and yet without losing sight of the institutional background in which this engagement is to happen. Both pragmatism and Arendt provide us with an analysis of plurality that takes effectively into account both commonality and singularity[431]. The problem with most of the 'post-structuralist' accounts is that they do not shed enough light on what it exactly means to encounter other singularities and to form a community with them. Arendt and Rorty fare a bit better. With their emphasis on democracy, action, speech and public space in which it is central to listen to others, especially outsiders and newcomers, they take community to a level beyond mere being-with. A further and related problem with the singularity talk is that by avoiding institutional questions it lacks a clear articulation of the relationship between the philosophical articulation of the ethics of singularity and ethical-political praxis. That is, how can the ideal have any effects in the political reality? Furthermore, if we are not naïvely to suppose that all otherness is benign, how to deal with those aspects of otherness that are oppressive and violent? Or those singularities, who see belonging to a bounded community, based on a (imagined) common origin, as a major aspects of themselves? And finally, is a lack of common identity itself not a positive political project? Most of these questions are more easily answered from an Arendtian-Rortian perspective, which sees the groundlessness of a community as something that we need to be constantly reminded of and urges us to start from the present settings and imagine both better ethics and better institutional settings for the future.

On the positive side, the emphasis on narrativity is something that Arendt and Rorty share with the 'singulariteans'. "Cosmopolitanism to come" is a cosmopolis of coming together of singular memories,

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[428] Douzinas 2007, 294.
[429] Douzinas 2007, 57, 294, *passim.*
[430] Coward 2009, 259.
[431] See Bernstein 1991, 78n46.

intertwining of past events and stories[432]. And by forming body spaces in which singular stories can be told and heard, even the most oppressed can gain political agency[433]. Similarly, for Arendt action and speech will always result in a unique story and for Rorty, telling stories of individuals is an important vehicle in sentimental education (TaP, 172; HC, 97)[434]. But in this area as well, differences spring up. For Arendt and Rorty, narratives, on the one hand, create permanence and remembrance for the actors and reveal the meaning of the act afterwards and produce reactions in others, on the other. But for Douzinas, for example, the emphasis is on the role of narratives in the encounters between singularities, thereby making the temporal-aspect more momentary than in the Arendtian-Rortian case. The latter, moreover, also emphasize communal narratives – even see them as an important part of creating a community that is inclusive, democratic, and future-oriented. Douzinas, Nancy and Agamben, on the other hand, see these kind of narratives as a risks that close the space for politics.

6.6. Transgressing the debate

We have seen above that the Arendtian-Rortian position of the present work differs from both of the opposite approaches in the market at the moment. Compared to the Kantian cosmopolitans and representatives of Critical Theory, our approach is better equipped to engage critically with deep structural problems and power relations of the current order, and especially in a better position to think beyond the current institutions of democracy and political agency. Our approach shares with Critical Theory, however, the emphasis on dialogue as an essence of politics. And this is perhaps the key difference to the 'post-structuralist' theories that, perhaps overreacting to Habermasian idea of 'ideal speech situation', dismiss the notions of communication, debate and deliberation in favor of more passive and abstract notions of respect for otherness and encounters of singularities, thereby forgetting what Arendt and Rorty were actively preaching, i.e. that "men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other" (HC, 4). In addition, Arendt and Rorty provide us with tools to deal with political institutions in a manner that pays attention both to their negative and positive consequences, and thereby neither

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[432] Douzinas 2007, 57, 294.
[433] Puumala – Pehkonen 2010, 63, *passim.*
[434] Anthony Lang, in discussing Arendt relation to global governance, points out the importance of narration to Arendtian position. He argues that "action must be accompanied by explanation and articulation of the ideas that motivate the individual and/or group", but, because agents produce their identites through their actions "demanding a clear agenda *prior* to action is not the most important factor" (Lang 2005, 187). For a discussion on Rorty, narratives and IR, especially refugee questions, consult Parker and Brassett (2005, 250–251).

ignores institutional level altogether as 'post-structuralism' does, nor identifies current or emerging institutions too closely with ideal ones, as Critical Theory is sometimes in danger of doing.

The opposite ends of the theoretical spectrum, moreover, share with one another a problematic family resemblance to the traditional metaphysical approach to politics. Both sets of theorist, as seen above, easily slip into a quest for Ideas in a quasi-Platonic sense. This, generally put, is why an approach influenced by Arendt and Rorty can help us to transgress the problem-field created by the debate between these two approaches. For both Critical Theorist and some of the 'post-structuralist' it makes sense to separate 'conceptual solutions' and 'political solutions', and, what is more, in such manner that the former is logically prior to the latter[435]. From our point of view, this way of looking at the issue does not make much sense. The political level is what matters, and if one is able to solve a problem at that level, 'conceptual solutions' may follow (*a posteriori*), but are not necessarily needed.

In a time when the settled form of political belonging is losing its taken-for-granted status, yet the replacing organizational principle is anything but clear, it is natural that a general anxiety is felt in respect to political, social, and cultural boundaries. In this situation, an ethical-political ethos in which communities are seen as essentially open, non-foundational political nodes whose legitimacy is to be evaluated according to their democratic and future-oriented character is highly called for. Arendt and Rorty acknowledge the need, clearly manifesting itself in the contemporary world, to belong to some kind of organized political community. But when it comes to the structure of this community, they do not conceive as the theorist's task to design the schemes. In relation to the deteriorating order, they held that like all orders, the national order of things is full of injustices and flaws. The kind of separation of insiders and outsiders characteristic of the nation-state-based order is not "justifiable" for neither Arendt nor Rorty. For them – contra Huntington and the communitarians – a functioning democracy does not require that the citizens share the same cultural background; it only requires that good democratic institutions are functioning and that the citizenry shares enough beliefs to make discussion possible.

Moreover, the profiling practices discussed in the third chapter – whether on the national or post-national borders (such as the EU) are seen from the Arendtian-Rortian position as a betrayal of the ideals and utopian goals guiding the very communities in question. Our approach holds that something important happens at the border from the point of view of community's identity. This was also implicated in the

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[435] See e.g. Benhabib 2004b, 59 and the above discussion on Agamben and Nancy.

profiling practices. But creating practices that enhance the hierarchy of cultural-communal backgrounds and treat foreign elements as correlative to a corruption of the civil religion of our community have to be seen as tendencies of governance that conceal and attempt to evade, rather than highlight, the political character of the borders. Consequently, they also steer our attention away from the politics of our community, and hence the democratic potential of our community.

By building the combined Arendtian-Rortian position, and using it as a critical lens through which the prevailing theoretical field has been assessed, the present study has also aimed at be a contribution to the wider "pragmatist turn" in IR. My input to this area has been three-fold. First, in general terms, the study has attempted to bring questions concerning community and belonging to the pragmatist focus. The introduction cited Mendieta and Kautzer on the simultaneous centrality and under-specificity of community for the pragmatist tradition. Illuminating the issue from the perspective of the key figure in the "second wave" pragmatist movement, I hope to have taken a modest step towards less under-specified pragmatist account of community. Simultaneously, we have verified the thesis, put forth by Kangas, that "pragmatism is particularly well suited for analysing such moments of political change where the habitually available assumptions of a political community are challenged and undergo a transformation"[436]. Secondly, my reading of Rorty – differing as it does from many other readings of him – calls for a reconsideration of the promises of his position from the point of view of IR theory. Thirdly, by putting the pragmatist account in discussion with a voice from the outside – as indeed has been the pragmatist habit throughout the tradition – the present work has attempted to bring in new aspects that pragmatism has not articulated but that fit easily to the tradition – i.e. Arendt's analyses of the causes of and possible cures for statelessness, and her writings on political action in general.

Altogether, the study can be read as a call for widening up the pragmatist perspective towards contemporary debates in political theory, on the one hand, and towards what has been called "third wave pragmatism"[437] on the other. If integrating Wittgenstein[438] to pragmatism was the key for second wave pragmatism, maybe the third wave can be developed by integrating such political theorists as Arendt and Fou-

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[436] Kangas 2007b, 286.
[437] Koopman 2009, 2. In Koopman's typology, the central concept of first wave pragmatism (especially James and Dewey) was experience, whereas second wave pragmatism emphasized language. He, in turn, articulates his third wave pragmatism around the concept of 'transition'.
[438] And, for Rorty, Heidegger.

cault[439]. The pragmatist approach is specifically well-suited for serving as a basis of integrating various different theoretical perspectives, as well as promoting a general research outlook that is not delimited to the insights provided by one disciplinary tradition – the 'inside' and the 'outside', IR and political theory, are parts of the same problematique that must be approached holistically. It is also pragmatism's virtue that it reminds us as researchers, that there are ethical and political motives for doing research, even though the research settings and results are not dictated by them. The key motive, for the pragmatists, should be the promotion of the idea of just and fair democracy embedded in inclusivist communities.

7. CONCLUSION

It is now the time and look back to the preceding chapters and to conclude our lessons from Arendt and Rorty. The study set out to examine ethical-political communities from the point of view of the political theories of Hannah Arendt and Richard Rorty. The introduction set the tune for the study, noting the almost paradoxical nature of the present state of affairs, in which communal borders are at the same time losing their significance to some actors, and evermore heavily protected by others. We also noted that the Westphalian model of state sovereignty is in crisis – contemporary global security environment, global economy, environmental questions, and especially the huge mass of people outside the paradigmatic statist settings all have highlighted the anomalous nature of the nation-state-based global order. On the basis of the problematique, we qualified our main research questions concerning Arendt and Rorty with supporting questions about the role of communities and borders from democracy's point of view, the functioning of the nation-state and its logic of belonging vis-à-vis the community of humanity, and finally, the possibilities of a positive political change.

The thesis has argued that, first, the ethical-political horizons of Arendt and Rorty – or certain parts thereof – can be combined in a mutually enforcing way and, second, that this combined horizon can help us in effectively engaging with the existing array of theories and realities of political belonging and forms of community. It was argued that Rorty can be read as a writer who champions political change through linguistic innovations and their embodiments, who calls his readers to a self-conscious ethnocentrism and a related view of democracy as a way to engage plurality and as an ongoing challenge to our existing institutions. In Arendt's case, it was shown that her ethical-political position is built on an

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[439] Foucault's integration is Koopman's suggestion. He focuses especially on Foucault's genealogical method (Koopman 2009, 10, *passim.*)

ethos of plurality and criticism "from the point of view of the common world". Arendt's thinking aims at safeguarding the plurality of human beings and their possibilities for enacting their plurality politically. It is from this point of view that she presented critical histories of nation-states, statelessness, and human rights, and argued that they constituted serious ethical-political problems. In sum, it was demonstrated that Arendt and Rorty share an idea of democratic politics that endorses plurality and considers belonging to a community to be defined on the basis of whether or not one is taken to be a possible conversation partner in deliberation on serious matters. Both endorse juridico-political institutions as means to guaranteeing freedom and possibility for practicing political agency as well as creating justice and equality. But they also call for a critical scrutiny of the existing institutions that always remain unfit to the democratic and cosmopolitan ideal.

In relation to the competing theories, it was argued that the combined Arendtian-Rortian perspective can question the deadlock between the two existing, almost incommensurable thought-paradigms. From the perspective built in the present work, the 'post-structural' criticism of Critical Theory is certainly correct in pointing out the dangers of its universalist outlook, and its overly consensus-and-validity-emphasizing way of looking at political discourse. At the same breath, we must also abstain from the opposite tendency to escape the muddy waters of political reality into a formal, metaphysical analysis and to averse from an idea of political debate and institutional approaches altogether. The Arendtian-Rortian position developed above is not a third way, an easy middle ground, between these two positions. It calls not for a compromise between the existing positions, but by acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of both positions, it seeks to go beyond their horizon. That is, it seeks to approach the topic from an altogether different angle, urging us to start from where we are, from current institutions, and trying to ameliorate them, increasing their inclusivism and creating more possibilities for action. Political space will always have territorial-cum-institutional limits, but we must constantly try to overcome the form and the shape of its present embodiments, assessing them from the point of view of the idea of democratic and cosmopolitan existence.

On this basis, we can re-approach the research questions that were set in the introduction. Firstly, in Arendt's and Rorty's conceptualizations, ethical-political communities are not merely political surroundings or environments for individuals – they form the basis (but do not determine) for the use of judgment, the ability to communicate, and the ability to form beliefs. They are the primary openings from which things gain their meanings. Thus, a life that is deprived of the possibility for speech and action,

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like that of the stateless, is a life that has been imposed to one of the worst kinds of cruelty known. Both writers also envision a constellation of various communities, instantiating different ethical/political tasks on different scales. Moreover, even though limited communities are the main locus for politics, ethical-political communities should not delimit their membership based on any pre-given or 'natural' attribute. Democracy works most effectively at the immediate level, but just for this reason a great deal of attention must be paid to the institutional arrangements that ensure the communication and responsiveness between different levels. It is of utmost ethical and political urgency that those who are kept out from public discourse, excluded from the community in the sense that they are not taken as participants in public deliberation, are listened to. Refugees, for instance, are not to be taken as voiceless victims, but as potentially active participants in political deliberation, voicing from their own perspective what kind of aid and what kind of rights they should be granted. Paraphrasing Arendt, we could speak of a right to demand rights, a right that is the minimal step that needs to be taken before we can even talk about a right to have rights.

Secondly, even though both Arendt and Rorty evade, for good reasons, institutional blueprints, it is clear – especially in Arendt's case, which I claim can be incorporated into the combined mutual vision – that they are highly critical of the logic at work in current nation-states. Whether we focus on the filtering practices and border governance of liberalism or the more explicitly exclusionary attempts to enclose the borders with walls, there are serious ethical-political problems in these practices. The former disciplines the movement at and through the border, and subjects the possible entrant to a utilitarian calculus thereby diminishing their political agency. The latter, in turn, seeks to limit political membership on the basis of arbitrary, pre-given attributes and xenophobic stereotypes. Take the poem cited in the introduction for example. The outsiders and immigrants are pictured as bearers of practically all the attributes available in the 'rogue' imaginary: terrorism, drug-smuggling, criminality. To "keep safe this land of mine," some people, plain and simple, need to be kept out. The Arendtian-Rortian position developed here calls for a strict empirical analysis of these practices, their harsh criticism and disclosures of better ways of coping with the issue – openly political, inclusivist ways – practices that urge not only that democracy should constantly question its own borders, which it nevertheless needs, but that to function, democracy needs but loose and porous borders. It is the most important question for a democratic community to ask, whether it has been open enough for outsiders.

Thirdly, the position developed here urges we look things – in Arendt's words – from the point of view of the idea, not the reality of a cosmopolitan human community. It is aware of the lurking imperialist pitfalls in the attempt of institutionalize this world-wide community. They therefore prefer loose cosmopolitan institutions. But they do not see anything inherently imperial in the concept of humanity. Quite the contrary, the ideal of humanity can guide and inspire political action that attempts to create more equal world. In this way, pace Agambenian scholars, there is still critical potential left in human rights and other related 'humanist' discourses. Nevertheless, even if inspired by the idea of humanity, we always act and judge as members of bounded communities. Political action aiming at amelioration may include smaller units of democratic agency, forms of 'abnormal democracy' located above the national borders and global forms of institutions. An important part of it is also to provide a possibility for political speech and action for those who are presently excluded from the national order of things. The vehicles for political change include political debate, resistance to current injustices and the talent of redescribing the current institutions so that they start to seem unfit and we start looking for better ones. Change can only happen if we can constantly come up with new ideas, thereby disclosing new possibilities.

Politically speaking, the present work has served as a plea for a way of political thinking and acting that is extremely mistrustful towards any absolutes. Absolutes, however, have the tendency to gain their popularity when the uncertainties of life get unbearable. At the moment, uncertainties are on the rise. Global capitalism, climate change, terrorism and other phenomena are making the nation-states increasingly reactionary actors. If we follow Arendt in her claim that the nation may, at its worst, be "the cheapest and the most dangerous disguise the absolute ever assumed in the political realm", we may ponder whether the upcoming years will witness an increasing tendency to activate the detrimental aspects of this specific form of belonging. The general form of political community may well be in significant transitional period. Whether this is so (and if so, so what) must be left an open question. Knowing the future is not the business of an IR scholar. As Hedley Bull puts it,

> "The search for conclusions that can be presented as 'solutions' […] is a corrupting element in the contemporary study of world politics […] The fact is that while there is a great desire to know what the future of world politics will bring, and also to know how we should behave in it, we have to grope about in the dark with respect to the one as much as with respect to the other. It is better to recognize that we are in darkness than to pretend that we can see the light."[440]

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[440] Bull 1977, 319–320.

Meantime, however, we must remain alert to the fact that at this moment, nation-states are the only meaningful sites of political citizenship. There is no other available sources of remedy to the plight of the stateless and refugees. From the perspective of the position developed above, if the practices of our community render individuals or groups voiceless, it fails its own ethical and political premises and downplays the sources of its own strength. Politics that suffocates or destroys perspectives to the world we share suffocates and destroys itself. In any given community, as Arendt puts it, the more there are perspectives, "the more people there are in the world who stand in some particular relationship with one another, the more world there is to form between them, and the larger and richer that world will be" (PP, 175).

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