Call for articles: "Sites of appearance, matters of thought: Hannah Arendt and Performance Philosophy"

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> In this world which we enter, appearing from a nowhere, and from which we disappear into a nowhere, *Being and Appearing coincide*…. Nothing and nobody exists in this world whose very being does not presuppose a spectator.
>
> (Arendt [1971] (1978), 19)

> [T]hinking is always out of order, interrupts all ordering activities and is interrupted by them.
>
> (Arendt [1971] 1978, 197)

We live in Arendtian times. Though it would give her no comfort to know it, Hannah Arendt's 1951 *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is in near constant citation during these times of strong-man populism and resurgent ethnic nationalism. After the 2016 US election, Arendt's book was reportedly out-of-stock on Amazon (Griswold 2017), and Arendt scholar Roger Berkowitz (2017) provides a thorough analysis of its relevance to alt-right politics and the rise of Donald Trump. Meanwhile, Arendt's diagnosis of the predicament of those fleeing persecution and abandoning their countries of birth—as she herself did ("We Refugees", [1943] 1994)—remains all too relevant, and her discussion of "the right to have rights" (Arendt [1951] 1973, 267–302) prefigures recent analyses by Agamben (1995, 2005), Rancière (2004), Gündogdu (2015), and others. Arendt's work has also inspired artistic and activist interventions: in 2015, for example, Tania Bruguera launched the *Hannah Arendt International Institute for Artivism* in Havana with a hundred-hour reading of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Arendt's philosophy is an activist philosophy, in which thinking and doing are inseparable.

A political performance philosophy might take inspiration from Arendt's conception of politics, which might be called a performative politics, articulated in her conception of "action". Rather than restricting politics to the operations of coercion and brute force, or a politics oriented toward certain ends, Arendt was interested in "spaces of appearance", which "come into being whenever [persons] are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government" (Arendt [1958] 1998, 199). This Arendtian performative politics is also one predicated on a gentle conflict, a "warfare between thought and common sense" (Arendt [1971] 1978, 80)—one with contentious differentiations between the social and the political, but also one where thought and collectivity are necessarily embroiled. This conflict shaped Arendt's presence as a woman working in political philosophy, whose place in intersectional debates on democracy, citizenship, and the politics of exclusion remains an ongoing debate (Pitkin 1981, Young-Bruehl 1982, Dietz 2002), offering a poetics of the publicness of political life.

Indeed, we can see something of "an Arendtian turn" in certain aspects of recent political philosophy: in Chantal Mouffe's distinction between politics and "the political" (Mouffe 2000, 20); in Jacques Rancière's idea of the "partition of the sensible" in which "Politics, before all else, is an intervention in the visible and the sayable" (Rancière 2009, 13); in Jean-Luc Nancy's account of "co-appearance" or "compearance" (Nancy [1986] 1991) and the plurality of being (Nancy [1996] 2000); in Giorgio Agamben's biopolitics (Agamben [1995] 1998); in Wendy Brown's investigation of neoliberalism's undoing of the *demos* (Brown 2015); and in Judith Butler's explicit invocation of Arendt in relation to the "movement of the squares" and arguments for agency in plurality (Butler and Athanasiou 2013; Butler 2015). Whereas Arendt herself focused perhaps too much on an idealised view of the Greek *polis* (Euben 2000), a performance philosophy might ask where and how these spaces of appearance can emerge, and in what ways performance is a modus of thinking the political in Arendtian philosophy.

Performance philosophy might also take inspiration from the example of Arendt herself: who and how she was in the world. "No theories. Forget all theories," were reportedly her first words to her students (Arendt 2009, xxii), and she advocated a philosophy that was actively engaged in the world—sometimes described as a "hermeneutic phenomenology" (Borren 2013). As a public thinker, she gained widespread attention for the way in which she bore witness to the Eichmann trial (Arendt [1963] 2006); and she kept an intellectual diary, her *Denktagebuch*, as an extraordinary document of her intellectual journey through her life (see Storey and Berkowitz 2017). Her work on thinking as always "out of order", "interrupting all other activities" (Arendt [1971] 1978, 197), and her unfinished examination of judgment, offer a resistant poiesis of critical thinking, whereby critique is an embodied operation of withdrawal, action, and appearance. To Arendt, as in her work, thinking is a kind of seizing, a searching for what is beyond its reach, and what is already in appearance.

This issue of *Performance Philosophy* is dedicated to the thresholds, borders and dialogues between Hannah Arendt's philosophy and performance. Arendt's life-long inquiry into the nature of political experience and rule asks questions not only about the process of thinking and the condition of plurality, but also about appearance, freedom, dissent, and authority. In her thinking from and with history, her engagement with the realms of the social and political, and her probing of questions of authority and legislation as much as those of sensing, togetherness, and citizenship, Arendt's work provides a point of entry to thinking through and on appearance as a political problem, and thinking as a problem of appearance.

What kind of thinking does appearance make happen in performance, and what kinds of appearance does performance make in Arendt's work? What kinds of conflicts and tensions—between public and private, social and political—emerge across Arendt's work, when confronted with our current political moment? How might we think action, and how might performance engage with appearance? We invite contributions to this special issue that engage directly with Arendt's ideas, or that use the themes of Arendt's work as points of departure in relation to artistic and activist projects, including:

- The poetics and politics of appearance; making politics appear
- Plurality, collectivity, and processes of performance
- Performance under and against totalitarianism and ethnic nationalism
- Movement and migration; the refugee crisis and "the right to have rights"; refugees as "the vanguard of their peoples" (Arendt [1943] 1994)

- Performance as thinking; withdrawal from the world of appearances (Arendt [1971] 1978, 75); the resistant possibilities of thinking as "out of order" (Arendt [1971] 1978, 197)
- "Work", "Labour", and "Action" in and as performance
- Feminism, Arendt, and the social
- Natality, making-new, and feminist/intersectional readings of Arendt
- Judgment as made possible by "the presence of others", or judgment as "enlarged thought" (Arendt [1982] 1992, 42)
- The "unnatural growth of the natural" (Arendt [1958] 1993, 47); posthumanism, Arendt, and action
- The Eichmann trial, the "banality of evil", and the responsibility to witness
- Arendt, Benjamin, and gesture as intervention

Queries about suitability of topic or approach are welcome: email us at proposals@performancephilosophy.org

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We are interested in scholarship that draws on a broad range of philosophical traditions, concerned with any aspect of philosophy, whether from Continental or Analytic traditions or beyond, and with any discipline or definition of performance, including but not limited to drama, theatre, dance, performance art, live art, and music.

Schedule:

Full articles due 1 February 2019. This issue is scheduled for publication in June 2019.

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For full details see

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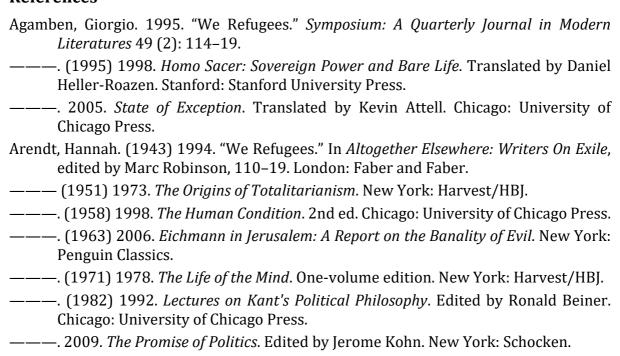
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