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consistent with the public appearances that Lévi-Strauss made with structuralist-minded biologists like François Jacob in 1968 and 1972. On the UNESCO *Statements on Race*, see RCA.

19. Lévi-Strauss himself saw the analogy between the study of race and the study of culture to be purely a formal one. Author's interview Sept. 12, 1997.
20. Author's interview with Lévi-Strauss Sept. 12, 1997.
21. For a somewhat divergent reading of Rousseau's influence upon Lévi-Strauss, see Thomas Shalvey, "Rousseau and Lévi-Strauss," in *Claude Lévi-Strauss, Social Psychotherapy and the Collective Unconscious* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 58-81.
22. Foucault's critique of humanism seems to have been most fully elaborated in his *Les Mots et Les Choses* (1966), published in English as *The Order of Things* in 1973. However, the seeds of his critique of humanism are arguably also found in his published dissertation of 1954, "Maladie Mentale et Psychologic," the basis of what would become "Histoire de la Folie" or *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in an Age of Reason*, published in 1961. I thank Bettina Bergo for these references.
23. Reprinted as the first section to the essay, "Answers to Some Investigations" (SA 271-274).
24. The first English translation by John Russell for Criterion Press (1961) was actually titled *A World on the Wane*.
25. I thank Jeff Lustig for this point.

Fourteen

All Power to the People!

Hannah Arendt's Theory of Communicative Power in a Racialized Democracy

Joy James

Introduction: The (Color-)Blind Search for Power

Hannah Arendt's innovative, liberal political thought provides insights into the complexities and contradictions of the world's premier democracy, its racialized practices and policies, and its mythologized status. Derived from personal experience as well as political practice and theory, Arendt's theory of power posits that it is neither force, domination, nor oppression; power is collective action for a common ideal rooted in freedom. A German Jew who survived Nazi genocidal campaigns during World War II, Arendt fought in the French Resistance and saw her mentors and friends Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger come to their own realizations about power, community, and violence: Jaspers was persecuted by the Nazis; Heidegger became one. Her adopted country, the United States, offered Arendt the space and platform to advocate for the return of a mythologized democracy, the Athenian *polis*, in order to valorize and solidify American democracy (a bourgeois democracy, one which functions as empire). Yet, this revival reifying rigidly distinct spheres of governance/domination fails to include a sustained critique of institutional racism and racialized exclusion and domination in her host nation.

Arendt's theory of power as communication rather than domination is based on the division of space into the non- or pre-political private realm and the political public realm.¹ Such a division engenders power as communication, according to Arendt, for the private realm "frees" inhabitants of the public realm from labor and work, biological and material necessity. She appears not to see that her idealized political state, the Aristotelian *polis*, subverted and undermined power and politics by oppressing the household. With the *polis* of ancient Greece as her model for democratic power, Arendt ignores

the fact that enslavement and economic exploitation and forced relegation to the “powerless” private realm enabled an Athenian elite (of propertied males) to practice democracy. Subjugation constructed a restrictive public space dedicated to the ideal of power as communication, reason, and persuasion, a site advocating freedom but built on oppression. The practice of power as communication by an elite citizenry predicated on the enslavement and exploitation of the majority (women, children, men) is the historical reality of the United States. This historical legacy (of genocide, slavery, and imperialism) has profound implications for political power, freedom, and community. Although Arendt shares with the Black Panther Party, a black anti-racist Marxist militant organization created in 1966, a populist mandate—all power should reside with the people—she is much more restrictive about who constitutes “the people.”²

Binary opposition to designate superiority/inferiority and normalcy/deviancy as biologically inscribed is common in a racialized democracy; political speech routinely attributes criminality, deviancy, corruption, and pathology to “the nonwhite” or non-European. The ultimate political binary is that of the civilized/savage. In binary opposition, anti-black racism has played a critical historical role in rationalizing economic, social, and political hierarchies. Arendt’s binary divisions, adopted from the *polis*, mask racism (which was not the foundation of slavery in ancient Greece) by concealing the private realm of domestic service, field labor, and child-rearing as the designated work for racialized peoples (and women). Reproducing the split between the public and private realms as necessary for the manifestation of true power, her uncritical embrace of polarities and hierarchies promotes elitism based on subordination. With racism as such a persistent and pervasive feature of American democracy, polarities and hierarchies become “naturalized.” The dualism to which she subscribes dismisses the political significance of the “private realm” and the bodies contained and policed there, allowing the personified public body to appear as both representative and universal (with little mention of the homogeneity of its appearance—propertied males racialized as white). The political person—naturalized and universalized as affluent, masculine European (or some approximation thereof)—shapes Arendt’s color- and gender-blind analyses. Her model is premised on an inequality marked by assumptions of biologically determined superiority/inferiority; this model impedes critiques of white supremacy, patriarchy, (gender and) racial domination, and state violence.³

Over centuries, dominance, violence, and terror have become institutionalized in the United States within households, slave quarters, and labor fields and camps, and are manifested most extremely within prisons. Thus, legislation as well as domestic and foreign policies and practices have created political spheres (both public and private) in which generalized racial attitudes and beliefs signify who is worthy of self-rule and who is subject to be ruled—that

is, who has the right to economic and political determination and who is less than truly “human.”

State violence (through the laws, the police, the military) practiced in the “private” realm shapes the practice and sites of power in the public realm but also incites communicative power and democratic action among those resisting oppression and exclusion from governing. The practice of voting disenfranchisement of African Americans through bureaucracy (poll tax), violence (imprisonment), and terror (lynching and/or police brutality) also suggests that the private realm was never truly understood in the United States as a site void of the practice of politics. Hence, political and state interventions in the private realm (really realms, given the multiple sites of political exile—household, factory, field, prison—which overlap and reside within each other) by governing elites to quell rebellions, from Nat Turner to the Black Panther Party, were not merely law-enforcement responses to criminality. Although the state represented them as such to claim that it has/had no political trials, political prisoners, or political executions,⁴ these were political maneuvers to reinforce and segregate political space and governance. Native and African Americans have historically been immersed in distinctions between domination and democratic power for freedom and community (see the slave narratives of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, or the memoirs of anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells). Collective responses to enslavement, segregation, and imprisonment were infused by discussions and practices concerning violence, power, and liberation during the time of Arendt’s writings on civil disobedience, violence, and revolution in the 1960s. The Deacons for Defense and Justice, based in North Carolina, won their battles with the Ku Klux Klan but lost to the U.S. government and so were dispersed and exiled; the Black Panther Party, initially organized as the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in Oakland, California, had to confront police brutality against and police executions of blacks, only to be decimated within four years by an FBI counter-intelligence program and its own internal contradictions. Add to this the writings of prison intellectual and former Black Panther field marshal George Jackson, author of *Soledad Brother* and *Blood in My Eye*,⁵ whose killing by California prison guards in 1971 sparked New York’s Attica Prison uprising weeks later (Attica became the site of one of the bloodiest state repressions to destroy the exercise of communicative power, initiated by force but elevated to negotiations for better food, health care, and less guard brutality against men in captivity). Any of these events, seriously studied for the exercise and contradictions of power and violence, could have profoundly altered Arendt’s allegiance to the state and her belief in its rehabilitation. None of these events merited much attention or consideration from her, perhaps because these political agents had already been delegated pre-political roles, and their places of power and communicative interaction—rural Southern black communities, impoverished urban black neighborhoods, and prisons whose populations

would become increasingly racially determined—had been designated as non-political sites.

Action within the private realm to challenge expressions of public power and domination exercised (by law and police) in the public realm to manage or control the private realm and its dissent are, in the United States, phenomena heavily shaped by race and repression. Ignoring the historical and contemporary specificities of this democracy and its racialized state violence and dominance allows Arendt to construct a theory of power that floats freely above a foundation mired in racially fashioned domination. A clearer vision requires that one review what Arendt's political thought omits: major trajectories shaping the understanding and practice of power in the United States.

During the Civil War, which initially was not fought to abolish slavery, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (the Emancipation Proclamation) codified rather than ended slavery, proclaiming it legal for those duly convicted of a crime. Following the Civil War, when private ownership of humans was banned, the Thirteenth Amendment's legalization of slavery for those convicted of crimes fueled the convict lease system—that is, the state owned humans. Under this joint venture between the state and private industry, African Americans were criminalized (crimes included economic competition with whites and exercising political power, along with theft or harm to people) and worked to death at faster rates than they had been under slavery.⁶ The prison replaced the plantation, and public ownership of racialized humans meant a renewal supply of labor through police sweeps. Over the decades, Slave Codes became Black Codes and, later, the basis for Jim Crow segregation, refining binary divisions and the dichotomy between dominance and power embedded in a racial state. Government policies/legislation and social practices worked to politically and economically disenfranchise a racialized domestic realm (populated by Native, African, and Latin Americans) and a racialized foreign realm qua domestic realm populated by indigenous peoples, Africans, Latin Americans, and Asians (hence the appearance of a metaparadigm in which U.S. foreign and domestic policies seem to mirror each other in terms of the treatment of the non-European as colonized/dependent Other).

Diminished power became naturalized as part of the American political landscape because of the foundation upon which the (Athenian *polis*) American democracy was built: self-governance predicated on the rule of other humans (constructed as inherently inferior). Democratic power, which extended to collective control of the state, was never intended for all of the people. Responding to the trajectory of racism that stems from slavery through the convict prison lease system through Jim Crow back into the prison industrial complex, despite desegregation legislation and integrationist policies, suggests that the militant assertion “All Power to the People!”—for the Panthers, governing power to the racialized mass, the “lumpen,” workers, laborers, the unemployed, and the criminally employed—sought to destroy that trajectory.

Arendt's liberalism, which appears not to have considered that the Athenian *polis* and its progeny might in fact be Trojan horses, rejected such anti-racist radicalism. Challenging the fundamental flaw of democracy, as we know it, anti-racist radicals (among whom the Panthers of the late 1960s and early 1970s came to epitomize the uncompromised defiance of the racially determined “household” or private realm) demanded liberation through revolutionary change in U.S. domestic and foreign policies.

This struggle to expand and realize communicative power and construct a nonracial democracy is as old as the nation-state. Arendt's personal observations of racism in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, the decades of the Southern civil-rights movement and the rise of black power movements, centered on Jim Crow segregation and racist terror. The civil-rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s transformed American politics and inspired mobilization among and between various sectors of the politically and socially disenfranchised; women, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities, Chicanos/Latinos, Native Americans formed movements, and the poor, immigrants, and the criminalized organized. Arendt's pronouncements about the civil-rights movement were “ambivalent” at best. Criticizing desegregation activism in the battles for school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas, while condemning racism in general, she failed to discern a racial phenomenon other than social racism, which she decried. However, disenfranchisement on a continuum, hidden behind “private” sentiments of racial ideology and preference, creates a facade of universal democracy. This facade obscures racial dominance and state violence as political acts against the political power of the private realm. Racism is political, not merely social; as a political phenomenon in the United States, it was never fully analyzed by Arendt.

Arendt's lack of attention to the phenomenon of racial ruling within the United States reflects her relegation of the racialized and criminalized to the outer realms. Understanding the limitations to the manifestation of power valorized by Arendt requires an understanding of the racial dominance and violence embedded within U.S. democracy. It is critical to examine the political implications of the racist nature of policing and incarceration. Arendt warned about the military-industrial complex of her time,⁷ but given her insufficient attention to racial dominance, she could not anticipate the continuance of slavery through the prison-industrial complex. Prison, the most excluded realm within the private sphere, is also a space where power and domination appear in their most extreme forms.

In 2000, at the turn of the new century, two million people, some 70 percent of them African, Latino/Chicano, Native American, or Asian American, lived behind bars in U.S. prisons, jails, and detention centers, three times the number documented twenty years earlier. Although some might argue that this nether realm is populated by those who “chose” it by demonstrating their incapacity for “human togetherness” (Arendt's term discussed below), surely we must note the “coincidence” that the construction of a population unfit for

self-governance and communicative power remains racially determined. Although they comprise only 12.5 percent of the U.S. general population, African Americans comprise 50 percent of the U.S. prison population. In a democracy in which nearly one in every twenty-five adults goes to jail each year, one in three black males is tied to the criminal-justice system (and, in states which strip the franchise from felons, they potentially cannot vote). What would it mean for a democracy to *create* a private realm of bodies to be ruled, and to racially mark them? Consider the following: One is eight times more likely to be sentenced to prison if one is black than if one is white for a similar offense. Defendants receive multiple times the sentencing for use or sale of crack—considered a black urban drug—as opposed to powder cocaine—considered a white suburban indulgence. Although the majority of drug (cocaine) offenders are whites, most defendants sentenced to prison for drug use and sale are African Americans and Latinos; although the proceeds from the “drug war” are mostly concentrated in European and European American banks and finance, the wars against drugs, both domestic and foreign, target the non-European (American). Logically, one might deduct that such wars function not merely on the level of criminal justice or law enforcement but on the level of political inclusion or exclusion.⁸ By racially fashioning the “criminal” or “public enemy,” one determines the parameters of political community and communicative power and who is capable or worthy of it. Racial profiling and policing ranges from the infraction “DWB” (driving while black or brown) and “voting while black or brown” in the 2000 presidential election to xenophobia and anti-Muslim/Arab racist assaults following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The idealized *polis* or democratic state is the ultimate gated community as the sequestered space of democratic power.

The final exclusion from political community is, of course, through death. State executions are racially determined in part (50 percent of those now on death row are people of color, from minority groups representing only 20 percent of the U.S. population).⁹ From 1977 to 1986, 90 percent of prisoners executed were convicted of killing whites, although the number of black victims was approximately equal; in fact, one is four times more likely to be sentenced to death for being convicted of killing a white person than of killing a black person.¹⁰ (Ironically, there appears to be a diminishment of the “3/5 human being” status which the U.S. Constitution granted to enslaved blacks.)

It is not that Arendt ignored racism. While condemning it, she tended either to generalize or to selectively examine it. Her examinations, which include torture and economic profiteering from racism, exempt the United States, as in her discussion of imperialism and totalitarian terror. For example, she sees totalitarian terror as a twentieth-century phenomenon and as relatively new in political history. Her assertion that totalitarian terror is a relatively new form of government oppression is ill-informed. Genocide is not

unique to the twentieth century, assuming that one would agree that genocide is a byproduct of totalitarian terror. As a form of state racial terror, it is a relatively stable feature in history through European and American imperialism. Arendt notes in “Imperialism,” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the late-nineteenth-century genocide of twenty million Congolese by the Belgian government. The genocide of the Native populations of the Americas by Europeans and Americans also predates the twentieth century and reflects the roots of twentieth-century totalitarianism and terror in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imperialism and genocide.¹¹ In “On Violence,” Arendt suggests that the legacy of Europe’s imperial, racial wars and conquests offers a cautionary tale: “The much-feared boomerang effect of the ‘government of subject races’ . . . on the home government during the imperialist era meant that rule by violence in faraway lands would end by affecting the government of England, that the last ‘subject race’ would be the English themselves” (OV 153).¹² What transpires when the new “race” (as socially constructed) is a hybrid construction of and for the propertied “American”—an American whose racially influenced notions of dominance are masked in the guise of economic or national(ist) superiority or “law-abiding” conformity and citizenry?

Arendt’s discussions of anti-Semitism create a somewhat abstract totalitarian terror as she fails to explore fully how Nazi terrorism was based upon racist ideology (reportedly, both Nazis and Afrikaners, creators of apartheid in southern Africa, cited U.S. development of reservations to imprison, impoverish, and starve Native Americans as a model to emulate). Racism transforms subjects into either rulers or the ruled. Racism is a fundamental component of terror, and so of violence. Hence, colonized peoples, Native Americans and African-Americans, have disproportionately been the targets of excessive violence and terror emanating from the state and its racialized (white) majority. With racial violence and exclusion, the reduction of (human) subjects to (animal) objects transforms repression into “work” much like politics is transformed into making and work.¹³

Arendt viewed the risks we take in neglecting communicative power. We can appreciate her arguments for power and against domination, while noting that being “color-blind” or closed to an analysis of U.S. racial ruling renders aspects of her thought overly abstract and indifferent to racial control.

Communicative Power

Arendt argues that power is communal rather than coercive. It cannot be exercised over someone, it can only be practiced with others. Dependent upon community, it is a collective enterprise, one rooted in non-coercive relationships for the common good. Power as community and relationship becomes the goal or end rather than the means for some other objective. Arendt does

not discount the role that specific goals or objectives play in inspiring political associations; rather, she maintains that transcending all specific or limited ends is the ideal.

Arendt's theory of political power directly contrasts with the prevailing notion of power as control posited by Max Weber.¹⁴ For her, the contemporary "human condition" is one of disappearing political power, person, and space; it is one of disappearing humanity as words and deeds become characterized by violence and domination rather than by reason and persuasion. Confusion about the "nature" of power stems from "a firm conviction that the most crucial political issue is, and always has been, the question of who rules whom?" She continues, "It is only after one ceases to reduce public affairs to the business of dominion that the original data concerning human affairs appear, or, rather, reappear, in their authentic diversity."¹⁵ The current confusion, argues Arendt, stems from Western political philosophers who have historically misunderstood their enterprise by adhering too rigidly to the "Platonic approach." That is, they overemphasized the search for ideal forms and eternal truths, confused politics with ruling (perhaps opportunistically to ensure the "peace" needed for contemplation), and located contemplation apart from the world of action and experience. What many have failed to comprehend, she argues, is that political community exists where "the revelatory quality of speech and action comes to the fore where people are with others and neither for nor against them—that is, in sheer human togetherness."¹⁶

In place of the ancient Greek vocabulary of ruling, European nation-state sovereignty, the Hebrew-Christian patriarchal tradition of obedience to law, and John Stuart Mill's psychology of the will to dominate,¹⁷ Arendt offers another interpretation of politics and power: "The Athenian city-state . . . had in mind a concept of power and law whose essence did not rely on the command-obedience relationship and which did not identify power and rule or law and command. It was to these examples that the men of the eighteenth-century revolutions turned when they ransacked the archives of antiquity and constituted a form of government, a republic, where the rule of law, resting on the power of the people, would put an end to the rule of man over man, which they thought was a 'government fit for slaves'" (OV 139). Yet, the eighteenth-century American revolution worked to consolidate the economic power of the ruling elite landowners; the Founders' intent was to restrict possibilities for economic democracy and for increasing the size of the political electorate. For Arendt, power is found in citizens' non-coerced consent. In a representative government the people are supposed to rule those who govern them. Without consent there is neither power nor legitimate government.

Plurality expressed in the need and desire for communication and collective action characterizes both a democratic nation and the human condition, according to Arendt. Plurality, like friendship, exists only between peers; without equality, commands replace communication; then there is neither common ground for communication nor anything (i.e., diversity and unique-

ness) to communicate. Plurality embodies both commonality and diversity; for Arendt, political equality is contingent upon admittance into the political peerage or community. Those excluded are prevented from practicing this power. The basis for racially determined exclusion logically should be a central issue in this theory of politics and power in which arbitrary exclusion based only upon the ability to exclude contradicts power as communication; in addition, exclusion based on a "universal truth" of inferiority and inclusion based on "superiority" contradicts *Existenz* philosophy.

Arendt cites a number of obstacles (which, given the construction of the public realm, preclude any mention of racism, sexism, or impoverishment) that diminish human togetherness and power. This diminution occurs when politics is misperceived as either making (instrumentality) or being similar to warfare; when tyranny curtails power; when the "myth of the strong man" distorts power's communal nature; and when violence supercedes communicative action: "Whenever human togetherness is lost, as for instance in modern warfare, where men go into action and use means of violence in order to achieve certain objectives for their own side and against the enemy. . . . In these instances . . . speech becomes indeed 'mere talk,' simply one more means toward the end, whether it serves to deceive the enemy or to dazzle everybody with propaganda. . . . In these instances action has lost the quality through which it transcends mere productive activity" (HC 180).

Tyranny and Violence

Tyranny is the antithesis of democracy. The tyranny of a racialized democracy resides in its ability to use violence and domination much more freely against marginalized sectors, whether Native Americans on reservations or Palestinians in occupied territories. It is not fully clear how Arendt would distinguish between state violence and state terror in connection to U.S. destabilization of democratic movements within its borders and of "Third World" governments.¹⁸ Yet, U.S. politics revolve around coeval manifestations of democracy and tyranny, of collective power expressed in its electoral bodies and dominance through violence or terror. For instance, tyranny within American democracy allowed the use of police terror to destabilize anti-racist dissent. Before his execution by the Chicago police department and the FBI in December 1969 in a COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) operation,¹⁹ twenty-one-year-old Black Panther leader Fred Hampton, in call and response, rallied organizers with the familiar Panther chant: "All Power to the People! Brown Power to Brown People, Red Power to Red People, White Power to White People, Black Power to Black People."²⁰

Arendt ignored the promise and pitfalls of radical antiracist organizations such as the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, the Young Lords, the Brown Berets, and the Independentistas (all groups argued for the right of self-defense from racial and state violence, and some of their members bore

arms). She preferred to lump them generically into a category of rebellious minorities, unsuited and perhaps, at least temporarily, unqualified for the burden of full citizenship in this democratic state. The rebels who truly interested her were the white, middle-class, disaffected university and college students protesting the Vietnam War (her students at the New School in New York City, the heirs apparent to her romanticized *polis*). In "On Revolution," Arendt endorses physical resistance to oppression in the form of revolution. Yet, that resistance is never extended to radical antiracist formations, so when antiracists withdrew their consent because the government lost its legitimacy, she possessed no framework to analyze the ensuing battle between the state and its subject racialized minorities. She argues that people choose violence over action because they idealize violence: the "implications of violence inherent in all interpretations of the realm of human affairs as a sphere of making" produced a glorification of violence as the only means for "making" political change. Criticizing middle-class white students for romanticizing violence, Arendt denounces the "strong Marxist rhetoric of the New Left [which] coincides with the steady growth of the entirely non-Marxian conviction, proclaimed by Mao Tse-tung, that 'Power grows out of the barrel of a gun'" (OV 113). (The Panthers sold Mao's "Little Red Book" to finance the purchase of guns for their patrols to monitor racist and brutal police in Oakland; in fact, working-class Black Panthers sold the book, at a considerable mark-up, to middle-class white students at UC Berkeley.)

The outcome of all political action, because it embodies freedom, is never completely predictable; consequently, it is unlike violence as a tool or technique. Politics is characterized by freedom rather than control; so, too, is violence, with its unpredictability. There is no certainty of the intended outcome, writes Arendt, although violence is generally employed to ensure intended results, it remains arbitrary and uncontrollable.

There are instances when violence or war is the only logical or rational choice; yet it is illogical and irrational to romanticize violence, using it indiscriminately, and to institutionalize it within the political community by confusing or equating it with power. (This, of course, was one of the failings of the Panthers—their tragic and destructive responses to violent state repression by the FBI's COINTELPRO.) Arendt elaborates:

Violence, being instrumental by nature, is rational to the extent that it is effective in reaching the end that must justify it. And since when we act we never know with any certainty the eventual consequences of what we are doing, violence can remain rational only if it pursues short-term goals. Violence does not promote causes, neither history, nor revolution, neither progress nor reaction; but it can serve to dramatize grievances and bring them to public attention. As Conor Cruise O'Brien (in a debate on the legitimacy of violence in the Theatre of Ideas) once remarked, quoting William O'Brien, the nineteenth-century Irish agrarian and nationalist agitator: Sometimes "violence is the only way of ensuring a hearing for moderation." To ask the impossible in order to obtain the

possible is not always counterproductive. And indeed, violence, contrary to what its prophets try to tell us, is more the weapon of reform than of revolution. (OV 176)

Arendt notes that if "goals are not achieved rapidly, the result will be not merely defeat but the introduction of the practice of violence into the whole body politic. Action is irreversible, and a return to the *status quo* in case of defeat is always unlikely" (OV 177). According to Arendt, student radicals did not recognize that the practice of violence engenders a more violent world. She writes that student rebels' idealization of violence as the cornerstone of change is derived from a faulty interpretation that views history as "a continuous chronological process, whose progress, moreover, is inevitable, violence in the shape of war and revolution may appear to constitute the only possible interruption" (OV 132). Presenting an intellectualized abstraction of why people resort to violence for change, she contradicts her quotation of O'Brien that "sometimes violence is the only way of ensuring a hearing for moderation." Of course, what must follow to ensure not just a more violent world is action: "It is the function, however, of all action, as distinguished from mere behavior, to interrupt what otherwise would have proceeded automatically and therefore predictably" (OV 132–133). But if one does not consider the Other to be human or civilized, there can be no negotiations, only domination, and the prospect of more violence and terror erupting in response to violence and terror (both past and potential, both real and imagined).

Tyrants who aspire to power as control and politics as ruling may or may not use force; non-violent tyrants "if they know their business may well be 'kindly and mild' in everything" (HC 221). Whether violent or nonviolent, tyranny encourages citizens to preoccupy themselves with manufacturing and the acquisition of property, positions, or titles: All tyrants "have in common the banishment of the citizens from the public realm and the insistence that they mind their private business while only 'the ruler should attend to public affairs'" (HC 221).²¹ Part of what is to be acquired and maintained is the existential wealth of racial superiority.

Addressing material needs or desires, as well as fears, tyranny "buys" one out of political freedom, power, and political community. (If corporate capitalism's and consumer culture's obsession with material wealth creates a citizenry more interested in status and money than in developing identity and realizing humanity through power, arguably capitalism undermines communicative power and political community and would be the focus of an extensive critique by Arendt.) States can combine violent and nonviolent methods to deter the development of democratic power, mingling persuasion and coercion.²² For Arendt, the great danger of tyranny that combines power and violence (two distinct phenomena that can appear together) is not so much the brutal, physical oppression of the people as it is the loss of community and political efficacy of both citizenry and tyrant. Tyranny "prevents the de-

velopment of power, not only in a particular segment of the public realm but in its entirety; it generates, in other words, impotence . . ." (HC 202). In addition to tyranny, Arendt was concerned with a greater evil—terror. Terror is the extreme manifestation of violence. Contrasting violence with terror, she states that she would not characterize violence as "evil" and so implicitly characterizes terror as such. For her, political terror is found only within totalitarianism—specifically, Nazism and Stalinism as described in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Terror magnifies all the destructive elements of violence and emerges when violence has destroyed every form of political action, power, and resistance. Its effectiveness depends upon the destruction of all community, upon the "social atomization" or alienation of the individual citizens who fear to speak or act collectively (OV 154–155).²³

War technology accelerated the chain reaction or "snowball effect" of violence, according to Arendt. Violence, once initiated, is uncontrollable; nothing exemplifies this more than the image of nuclear war, which points not only to the uncontrollable nature of violence but to the finality of its destruction. Few have analyzed the phenomenon of violence, though many have concentrated on war and warfare, according to Arendt, and the neglect of the study of violence has much to do with the perception of violence as so ingrained in human affairs that violence itself became a "marginal phenomenon." "Anybody looking for some kind of sense in the records of the past was almost bound to see violence as a marginal phenomenon. Whether it is Clausewitz calling war 'the continuation of politics by other means' or Engels defining violence as the accelerator of economic development, the emphasis is on political or economic continuity, on the continuity of a process that remains determined by what preceded violent action" (OV 110–111). Arendt quotes Russian physicist Andrei Sakharov: "A thermonuclear war cannot be considered a continuation of politics by other means" for it entails universal suicide (OV 111).²⁴

One World

For Arendt, international affairs provided the initial stage (she argues this because she discounts [domestic] violence in the private realm) for the appearance of violence and provided the space for its final appearance: "The chief reason warfare is still with us is neither a secret death wish of the human species, nor an irrepressible instinct of aggression, nor, finally and more plausibly, the serious economic and social dangers inherent in disarmament, but the simple fact that no substitute for this final arbiter in the international affairs has yet appeared on the political scene" (OV 107). She argues that Hobbes's statement that "Covenants, without the sword, are but words" is likely to remain true "so long as national independence, namely, freedom from foreign rule, and the sovereignty of the state, namely, the claim to unchecked and unlimited power in foreign affairs, are identified [as synonymous]" (OV 107). A nation may remain independent of any other nation without retain-

ing its sovereignty, which Arendt defines as the refusal to defer to a higher authority (e.g., world community). Sovereignty and independence are not synonyms; the former fosters resistance to recognized arbiters.

Maintaining that the construction of power stems from communal practice rather than dominance, and that community signifies plurality, diversity, the many, her critique of nation-states' refusal to limit expansionism allows her to write that "sovereignty, the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership, is contradictory to the very condition of plurality . . . [no one] can be sovereign because not one . . . [but many] inhabit the earth" (HC 234). This plurality and power in fact manifest in activism to counter the state's refusal to allow it to be disciplined by international law and human rights conventions.

Since the United Nations and the World Court lack the "sword" to enforce their decisions, violence remains a "natural element" of international politics. The reduction of violence inherent in international affairs is possible, writes Arendt, only if individual nation-states acknowledge a higher authority than their own sovereignty. Echoing Karl Jaspers, she maintains that "nations must renounce sovereignty for the sake of a world federation." The fear of global destruction, she writes, produces an "intolerable position of global responsibility," one which Jaspers attempts to address with a concept of world citizenship that bases the solidarity of humanity on "mutual understanding and self-clarification on a global level."²⁵

Arendt's appreciation of Immanuel Kant and Jaspers led her to advocate strongly world community and world citizenry: Humanity and power find their fullest expression in world community based on diversity, acceptance, and communication. Through its foreign policy, the United States extends the private realm, of the less than civilized, the subordinate, the politically unworthy, the non-peer, to the so-called Third World—the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Not only to governments (many of which are not democratic or are democracies in name only) but to the disenfranchised confined to the private realms—the poor, women, imprisoned radicals are deemed politically unworthy for world citizenship.

Can democratic theorists afford to ignore the fact that the United States undermines institutions that sustain world community? Although the International Court of Justice and the United Nations were created in response to World War II, the United States declares itself to be bound by neither the International Court of Justice nor by proclamations of the United Nations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁶ In theory, human-rights protections exist for everyone in the United States under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the international convention's ban on racial discrimination, abuse, and torture. The United States continues to exempt itself from international human-rights obligations and place itself above the law; the government can weaken treaties it ratifies with reservations. The United States' withdrawal from the International Tribunal

on War Crimes in May 2002, and from the earlier (September 2001) United Nations World Conference Against Racism and Xenophobia in South Africa, heralded its aloof position toward antiracist initiatives. It failed to sign on, as the European Union did, to a statement designating the slave trade as a "crime against humanity." Yet within days, the United States would condemn the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks as "a crime against humanity," call upon Americans to relinquish voluntarily their political rights, and demand global solidarity in a world community united to isolate and "destroy"—a word of finality and eschatology—terrorism. War is pursued with diminishing democratic input in a military campaign initially named "Infinite Justice" and overseen by the Pentagon, the White House, and its new Cabinet-level post for the "Defense of Homeland Security."

The challenge of extending all power to all of the people requires a willingness to shoulder and share democratic responsibilities while rejecting promises of protection, comfort, and supremacy: "It is the obvious short-range advantages of tyranny, the advantages of stability, security, and productivity, that one should beware, if only because they pave the way to an inevitable loss of power, even though the actual disaster may occur in a relatively distant future" (HC 222). Finally, the very possibility of realizing "All Power to the People!"—not the police or ruling elites determining domestic and foreign policies but the mass resisting institutionalized force and violence from others and themselves—relies upon a democracy where the permeable boundaries between public and private, self-governance and subjugation, are neither reified nor romanticized. How, then, in a bourgeois democracy might "We the People" seeking to "form a more perfect union" share ideals and communicative power with the masses and the impoverished in whatever national and international realms we encounter each other?

Notes

1. See Robert Bernasconi, "The Invisibility of Racial Minorities in the Public Realm of Appearances," in K. Thompson and L. Embree, eds., *Phenomenology of the Political* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), and "The Double Face of the Political and the Social: Hannah Arendt and America's Racial Divisions," *Research in Phenomenology* 26 (1996): 3–24.
2. See Charles Jones, ed., *The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998) for analyses of the Black Panthers.
3. For a discussion of "state violence," see Joy James, *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender and Race in U.S. Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
4. Amnesty International documents that approximately one hundred individuals are being held as political prisoners in the United States. The longest held, those

associated with the Black Panther Party, were incarcerated during Arendt's lifetime. She appears to not have made mention of political prisoners and likely failed to study U.S. repression against anti-racism. See Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960–1972* (New York: Free Press, 1989). J. Edgar Hoover, long-time director of the FBI, initiated surveillance against Martin Luther King Jr. (and FBI agents sent King messages suggesting that he commit suicide before it was revealed that he was a "moral fraud" given his extramarital affairs) and designated the Black Panther Party the number-one threat to the internal security of the United States.

5. George Jackson, *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson* (New York: Random House, 1970), and *Blood in My Eye* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1970).
6. See Matthew Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866–1928* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996); and Angela Y. Davis, "From the Convict Lease System to the Super-Max Prison," in Joy James, ed., *States of Confinement: Policing, Detention and Prisons* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), pp. 60–74.
7. Arendt cites the rhetoric from the military, the government and the Pentagon, jargon which arose, she writes, when World War II was followed not by peace but by the "Military-Industrial-Labor Complex." Such jargon states, "The priority of war-making potential as the principal structuring force in society"; "economic systems, [as well as] political philosophies and corpora juris serve and extend the war system, not vice versa"; "war itself is the basic social system, within which other secondary modes of social organization conflict or conspire" (Hannah Arendt, "On Violence," in *Crises of the Republic* [New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1969 (1972)], p. 111; henceforth OV).
8. Arendt rejects any analysis of gender domination and gender violence. However, it is important to note the status of women in the private realms. The last group of the private realm to be legally granted the vote in the United States, women, while a small percentage of the imprisoned, have seen their incarceration rates dramatically increase. The patriarchal punishments of the private realm, within the family, have been relocated to bureaucracy, where the state acts as surrogate father seeking paternal control. Most of the women incarcerated in the United States are nonviolent offenders convicted of economic crimes or drug use. The majority are mothers, poor, and women of color (black women receive longer jail time and higher fines than white women do for the same crimes). Within the concentric realms of the private realm, caged women find themselves subject to new forms of physical and sexual abuse, which in the international arena is defined as "torture."
9. Over 65 percent of juvenile offenders sentenced to death since the 1976 reinstatement of the death penalty have been either black or Latino; one of the few democratic nations to execute minors, the United States has executed more youths than has any other industrialized nation.
10. When the United States did not submit a 1995 report on its compliance with the Convention Against Torture, non-governmental organizations issued a report.

Morton Sklar, ed., *Torture in the United States: The Status of Compliance by the U.S. Government with the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (Washington, D.C.: World Organization Against Torture, 1998).

The report notes the major areas of noncompliance in the United States: the death penalty, prison conditions and the treatment of refugee detainees; physical and sexual abuse of women in prisons; the return of refugees to situations of torture and persecution and their long-term detention under abusive conditions. Other violations include U.S. shelter for torturers who worked with the Central Intelligence Agency or were trained at the School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Georgia; and arms sales that support torture in foreign countries.

11. Implications for this legacy in the twenty-first century require sustained and serious study. In an interview with B92, Belgrade radio, in September 2001, Noam Chomsky observed, "The horrendous terrorist attacks on Tuesday are something quite new in world affairs, not in their scale and character, but in the target. For the US, this is the first time since the War of 1812 that its national territory has been under attack, even threat. Its colonies have been attacked, but not the national territory itself. During these years the US virtually exterminated the indigenous population, conquered half of Mexico, intervened violently in the surrounding region, conquered Hawaii and the Philippines (killing hundreds of thousands of Filipinos), and in the past half century particularly, extended its resort to force throughout much of the world. The number of victims is colossal.

"For the first time, the guns have been directed the other way. The same is true, even more dramatically, of Europe. Europe has suffered murderous destruction, but from internal wars, meanwhile conquering much of the world with extreme brutality. It has not been under attack by its victims outside, with rare exceptions (the IRA [Irish Republican Army] in England, for example). It is therefore natural that NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] should rally to the support of the US; hundreds of years of imperial violence have an enormous impact on the intellectual and moral culture."

12. OV 153. Arendt quotes Commager from "Can We Limit Presidential Power?" *The New Republic*, April 6, 1968.
13. For studies of the genocide of colonized people in the United States, see Peter Matthiessen, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* (New York: Viking, 1983), and Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).
14. Jurgen Habermas writes, "Max Weber defined power (Macht) as the possibility of forcing one's own will on the behavior of others. Arendt, on the contrary, understands power as the ability to agree upon a common course of action in unconstrained communication. Both represent power as a potency that is actualized in actions, but each takes a different model of action as a basis." Jurgen Habermas, "Hannah Arendt's Communication Concept of Power," *Journal of Social Research* 44, no. 1 (Spring 1977): 4.

Habermas maintains that *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *On Revolution* are the basis for Arendt's theory of power; yet, he asserts, because both totalitarianism and revolution are aberrations in Western mass democracies they are insuffi-

cient bases for the construction of a theory which is to have broad application; therefore Arendt provides a weak foundation for a comprehensive theory of power as communication. Her theory of power, however, is found and developed in *The Human Condition* (1956), *The Life of the Mind* (1978), and *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (1983). Within these works she explicates her theory of power as community and relationship and community as the ultimate goal and precondition for all non-violent human interaction and loss of the true meaning and practice of power as communal.

15. OV 142-143. See also Hannah Arendt, "Reflections on Violence," *New York Review of Books*, Feb. 27, 1969.
16. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 180; henceforth HC.
17. For John Stuart Mill, according to Arendt, obedience is the first lesson of civilization; this coexists with two contradictory desires or inclinations: one, to exercise power over others; two, to not have power exercised over oneself. Quoting from Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861, pp. 59, 65 [Arendt's citation]), Arendt counters, "If we could trust our own experiences in these matters, we should know that the instinct of submission, an ardent desire to obey and be ruled by some strong man, is at least as prominent in human psychology as the will to power, and, politically, perhaps more relevant. . . . Conversely, a strong disinclination to obey is often accompanied by an equally strong disinclination to dominate and command. Historically speaking, ancient institution of slave economy would be inexplicable on the grounds of Mill's psychology. Its express purpose was to liberate citizens from the burden of household affairs and to permit them to enter the public life of the community, where all were equals; if it were true that nothing is sweeter than to give commands and to rule others, the master would never have left his household" (OV 138-139).
18. See the writings of Noam Chomsky and Ward Churchill for descriptions of violence and terror in U.S. domestic and foreign policies.
19. The FBI's counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) was initiated by then FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Consisting of illegal actions ranging from break-ins to assassinations, it served to disrupt and destroy antiracist and anti-war movements inside the United States in the 1960s and early 1970s, exemplifying the government's opposition to human rights. In 1975, the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (the "Church Committee," named after Senator Frank Church [D-Idaho]) investigated COINTELPRO and publicly exposed the FBI's clandestine program. See Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters*, and Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1992). In the aftermath of September 11, political pundits have blamed the Church committee and its prohibitions of state malfeasance (assassination of heads of state) for the U.S. "weakness" that enabled terrorist attacks.
20. See the documentary *Eyes on the Prize: A Nation of Laws?* (Boston: Blackside, 1993), pp. 68-71 for a record of Hampton's electrifying persona and the FBI

counterintelligence program that led to the deaths of Hampton and Mark Clark, and eventually the deaths or imprisonment of other antiracist militants and revolutionaries. See also Philip Foner, ed., *The Black Panther Speaks* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995).

21. Arendt quotes "Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* XV.5" (Arendt's citation).
22. For discussions of the concepts of "conspicuous consumption" and "false needs," see, respectively, Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1899), and Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).
23. Atomization "is maintained and intensified through the ubiquity of the informer, who can be literally omnipresent because he no longer is merely a professional agent in the pay of the police but potentially every person one comes into contact with." Arendt maintains that the "decisive difference between totalitarian domination, based on terror, and tyrannies and dictatorships, established by violence, is that the former turns not only against its enemies but against its friends and supporters as well, being afraid of all power, even the power of its friends" (OV 154).
24. Prior to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, bipartisan authors of a 1988 Heritage Foundation report, *Discriminate Deterrence*, argued that a "winnable" nuclear war was an unmarketable concept. Although then-President Ronald Reagan marketed the image of an "evil empire," *Discriminate Deterrence* maintained that the "East/West" conflict must be de-emphasized to allow U.S. conflicts with the "Third World" to shape policy into the twenty-first century. The U.S. had intervened militarily in the "Third World" over thirty times since the end of World War II ("interventions" included invasions; funding of military juntas and coups, counterrevolutionaries, and death squads; and carpet bombings). Waged without formal declarations of war, post-World War II conflicts usually reflected U.S. counterrevolutionary ideology and government conflicts with (often Soviet-backed) liberation movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Such wars often targeted civilians as the United States reserved most of its funding for terror in "Third World" countries. *Discriminate Deterrence* states that to protect U.S. interests and allies in the Third World requires greater national consensus on both means and ends and fewer legislative restrictions. U.S. economic military assistance flowed to "Third World allies" routinely condemned in the international community for human-rights atrocities (such as death squads in El Salvador, genocide in Guatemala, occupations and dictatorships in the Middle East, contra terrorists in Nicaragua and Angola). "U.S. interests" funded combatants whose terror campaigns most often victimized women, children, and noncombatants in so-called soft targets—farming cooperatives, schools, daycare centers, and hospitals. That is, the private realm was the space for the implementation of foreign policy and the ruling of subjugated peoples/nations racialized by the West. See Joy James, *Resisting State Violence*.
25. Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), p. 83.
26. On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its thirty articles outline the major pre-

cepts for human rights and civil society while the preamble asserts that the inherent dignity, equality, and the "inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Drafted in response to the atrocities of a world war, the Declaration describes "the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people." Democratic tyrannies can ostensibly promote "freedom from fear" by removing from society segments of its population (deviants, criminals, poor, blacks) deemed to be dangerous and destabilizing to individuals and the social collective.