

MELANCHOLY OF PROGRESS:
THE IMAGE OF MODERNITY AND
THE TIME-RELATED STRUCTURE OF THE MIND
IN ARENDT'S LATE WORK

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Abstract

In the first of her lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy Arendt writes that for the Philosopher the concept of progress contained an inherent melancholy, for its full application would preclude the possibility of contentment. Having in mind Arendt's own, consistent critique of the notion and of the related process-like image of history we can ask the question: was not progress for Arendt a rather melancholy idea? But then – in what sense of the semantically rich term might we speak about melancholy when associating it with progress? Hence, in which way could the concept of melancholy enlighten our understanding of the idea of progress?

All this has to do with Arendt's understanding of Modernity. First, the «innerworldly alienation» that in its various forms stands at its beginning is a form of a melancholic dissociation from the world. Second, *homo faber*, a figure of Modernity par excellence: lonely and detached from his fellow human beings, seems to be marked by the melancholic boredom. And progress belongs only to production, not to action. The metaphysical fallacy of representing the realm of the human affairs in the image of making is Arendt's known and constant adversary. So is progress.

In her late work Arendt attempted to develop what we may call, using her early expression, the formal structure of existence – of the mental activities in this respect, the human condition(s) of possibility. These were interestingly bound to different dimensions of time, not without its complications, especially in regard to willing and the future. Would constant projecting of one's self onto the future necessarily entail the irremediable sense of loss of the present, and therefore – depression? Would it be a lack in the self containing the whole of the present self? And was not the present time, or the gap in-between the dimension of time of the superior importance for Hannah Arendt? In which way therefore was she to deal with the melancholy of the will, the faculty she undoubtedly praised? These are the problems I would like to address in my paper.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, progress, Modernity, structure of mind, melancholy.

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I

In her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* Hannah Arendt writes that the author of the *Critique of Judgment* considered the idea of progress «melancholy»². She also cites Kant's opinion on progress in *On Violence*, underscoring its «melancholy side effects»³. It was, according to Kant, that in progress every present condition of man «remains ever an evil, in comparison to the better condition into which he stands ready to proceed» and that it therefore «do not permit contentment to prevail».⁴ To be sure, the notion of melancholy appears neither in *The End of All Things* nor in *The Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent* – the two Kantian essays Arendt refers to.⁵ But her intention of its usage is quite clear, for a feeling of sadness without a cause has been common to many symptoms of the black bile disease that have been stressed during the centuries since its first recognition by Hippocrates. Others were fear, despondency, idleness and inertia with the concomitant disinterest in the outer world, i. e. all the states of the mind that the psychiatric term «depression» – basically synonymous with melancholy – refers to.⁶ The fact that sadness was to be without a cause meant no more than this cause was hardly identifiable and incommensurable with the effects that had a character of moods, i.e. not particular feelings but rather ways of seeing the world in general. Though the symptoms of the melancholic mental disturbance remained surprisingly similar along the centuries its causes varied significantly. They differed from humoral and neurological to astrological and demonic. Could it be that the belief in progress might be counted among them?

We know that Arendt uses melancholy as an adjective, therefore as something reflecting the subjective state of mind that can be essentially introspected and not a noun – melancholia – associated rather with somatically conditioned disease, a state of the body.⁷ Was then a feeling of melancholy a proper experience related to what she understood by progress? But then why and precisely in what sense? These questions lead to a more general problem of the human temporal constitution that Arendt addressed frequently, but nowhere with such a depth as in her *The Life of the Mind*. In that book and elsewhere the trouble with man's relation towards his future was an important issue. What was Arendt's attitude towards the future in general and what would that mean – future? What was her hierarchy between the different dimensions of time, if there was any? These are the questions I will try to answer in the following.

II

Man is essentially a temporal creature, conditioned primarily by the finite time span marked by his appearance and disappearance from the world. This finitude determines his time experience and forms the basis for authentic temporality – the experienced, relative time different from the quasi-objective «time of the world»⁸. (The continuous time sequence of everyday life, the succession of the nows as in the classical definition, is dependent for Arendt on the primordial time of the thinking ego: the

continuity is not a property of time itself, but can be experienced because «we *continue* what we started yesterday and hope to finish tomorrow»⁹. In contrast to the primordial time the continuous time is spatially conditioned.) Life is a «boundary affair»¹⁰ writes Hannah Arendt and that «man's finitude ... constitutes the infrastructure ... of all mental activities»¹¹ is her fundamental contention. The primordial time – coeval with the existence of man – is given only in thinking that gathers the past and future together into the lasting present, while judging and thinking transcend the finitude of life towards the unreachable past and future. Because of that there is a hierarchical order between activities, though the primacy of thinking does not directly affect the processes of judgment and willing¹². Thinking is an underlying faculty because it prepares the particulars for the other faculties by first de-sensing them, and second by transforming the internal images into the «thought-things» or «thought-trains». This is enabled by imagination, and thanks to it thinking annihilates both temporal and spatial distances. Things equally absent from the senses, no-longer and not-yet, remembrance and anticipation, meet in the activity of thinking.

All three dimension of time are therefore present at the same time in man, who transforms the empty time of sheer change – circular or linear – into the qualitative time of thinking experience. Past and future are experienced here as equally strong antagonistic forces, which – thanks to the spatial metaphor – can be represented as what is behind and in front of. Without man there would have been an everlasting change without the distinction of past and future.¹³

The space occupied by the thinking ego is – according to Arendt – «no-where», i. e. the thinking ego is radically un-spatial. But temporarily it is located in the «in-betweenness» of past and future, referred to metaphorically as a «battleground» or a «gap». This gap is an extended now – the *nunc stans* – the moment of rupture in time. What is crucial is that past and future both appear here «as such», emptied of their concrete content.¹⁴ To be sure, this extended now is quite the opposite of eternity. We are here in the heart of time and there is no escape from this «fighting presence» to the out-of-time. However, the time remains here also in the Kantian sense, as a form of the inner sense that determines the relation of representations. That means, time remains as a sequence in the mind ordering the representations of the de-sensed objects into thought-things rendering thinking discursive. This time is not a sequential time of everyday experience, for the original experience is de-spatialized. As Arendt says, the «juxtaposition» of experience is here substituted by the «succession of soundless words»¹⁵. These thought-things always have a definite origin in the gap – are rooted in the present and therefore inherently historical – but they point to the infinity. It is through them that the unending quest for meaning takes place.

Willing, as it has been mentioned, is together with judgment in a way secondary to thinking.¹⁶ Both – though mental operations – never fully leave the world of appearances. In her discussion of the willing faculty Arendt proceeds both phenomenologically, following Bergson's instruction

to take the internal experiences seriously, and historically, analyzing the willing faculty in terms of its history. Willing is our mental organ for the future and it deals with the invisible, not-yet existing objects in the form of projects. Arendt's position is closest to those of Augustine and Duns Scotus, the only two western philosophers who in her opinion took the willing faculty seriously. The crucial points are: first, that willing always consists of the two parts, of *velle* and *nolle* that are involved in every willing act and ultimately form the command and obedience. Second, that as far as the process of willing lasts, the will is free, that it is its own contingent cause.¹⁷ Arendt claims that it is «precisely the will that lurks behind our quest for causes»¹⁸. Third, that the internal struggle of the will can be only solved by cessation of willing and commencement of acting. And fourth, and most important, that free will is the spring of action.

The point of Arendt's argument on willing is to provide the basis for the notion of action as an absolute beginning, precisely as an absolute beginning in causality, though not in time. That such a beginning must exist is a condition of the appearance of novelty in the world and of freedom. Arendt's main effort is concerned with the preservation of the foregoing characteristics of the will against the prejudices of the philosophers traditionally more concerned with being and necessity than with freedom. Her purpose is to maintain the concept of the future as open and undetermined and to get rid of all the conceptions that imagine it in the guise of the Aristotelian potentiality – actuality, and so as a consequence of the past. In accordance with this, she is concerned with willing that is creative and *negates* the past, and not with the *affirmative* willing, which wants what happens anyway as in Epictetus, or decides not to will at all as in Heidegger's paradoxical will-not-to-will.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the tension between necessity and freedom remains untouched, for it is inscribed in the human mind in the form of the opposition between thinking and willing. This opposition, or the «clash» as she says, is reflected in the human experience by a certain «moods», with which the mind affects the soul.²⁰ In regards to the thinking activity these moods are nostalgia and remembrance constituting together the feeling of «serenity» and «quietness». In the willing faculty these are hope and fear, the two modes of expectation causing its «tenseness» and «disquiet».²¹

The last point we should underline is that the projects of the will are hardly ever realized in the form in which they were intended.²² Although willing as creation is possible, this creation cannot assume the form of the *homo faber*-like fabrication and Arendt is consistently critical of the Marxist and existentialist notions of the self-made man. Action after all takes place only «in concert», and who we disclose in action is never visible to ourselves. If we add to this the discontinuity between action and its consequences, we can see why the projects of willing cannot be achieved and why the will cannot foresee the future.

To sum up: there would be three kinds of future. The first one is the empty future of thinking absorbed in the gap, the one that «comes towards us»; the second type is the future of willing consisting of its projects; and the third one is the future that is unpredictable and happens to

us unexpectedly.²³ Only the last one can be called an «authentic» future. It comes towards us like the future of thinking, but this time being not empty but filled with the content of concrete happenings. How do these different temporalities relate to the concept of progress? Can progress be real within the human finite temporality?

III

For Hannah Arendt progress belongs to the experience of *homo faber*, who stands in her work as a figure of Modernity. Within his categories of the world-view – instrumentality, utility and productivity – progress is quite a natural state of affairs. It concerns the relations between the different stages of the process of production – each of which is superior to the preceding one – while *homo faber* himself remains the master of the whole process being superior to the most supreme of his products. These different stages of production ultimately vanish into the end product that is definite and predictable. As far as time is concerned we can therefore speak of durability and permanence as the temporal characteristic of *homo faber*.²⁴ This attribute concerns his end products that add to the artifice of the world providing its durability and objectivity. This progress is limited to the transformation of the materiality of the world and cannot concern the realm of the human affairs – it would not work in the sphere of action.²⁵ But it perfectly works in the domain of modern science that understands the truth as something being made, where the accumulation of knowledge is as real as the improvement of its technological applicability.

The problem begins when instrumentalization inherent in *homo faber*'s experience becomes unlimited and transforms the utilitarian chain of production into a mere process. When the utilitarian chain of production becomes endless we cannot any longer speak about durability, for now everything is degraded into the means towards an always transient and elusive end. The distinction between operation and product is lost and the notion of progress becomes infinite.²⁶

In the context of the development of the modern science Arendt explains this phenomenon as a shift from «what and why» to «how». Modern ideals of cognition are *homo faber* ideals – the truth is accessible thanks to his instruments and verifiable in the experiment, which is a production itself. With the shift that takes place first in the natural and then in the historical sciences²⁷, the objects of science – nature and history – cease to be considered the lasting entities and become mere processes instead. This emphasis of the process-character of the object «transcends the mentality of man as tool-maker and fabricator, for whom, on the contrary, the production process was a mere means to an end»²⁸.

In the realm of the human sciences this shift towards process happens somewhat later. Still in Hegel and Marx the process of history has a beginning and an end, it is marked by a progress that culminates with fulfillment. The introduction of the never-ending progress has the most disastrous consequences in the historical realm. Embedded in the concept of organic development – «the only conceptual guarantee»²⁹ for the notion

of endless progress and linear time – is the conviction that every present contains in itself the seeds of the future. This is for Arendt a «turning point»³⁰ in the construction of the self-image of Modernity. What is lost is the classical causality principle that operates and is derived from the process of fabrication in which the cause (the author) is more perfect than its effects. Within this self-image and contrary to everyday experience nothing unexpected can happen and no authentic future is left.

The endless progress proper is for Arendt a bourgeois notion: it can be traced back to the idea of never-ending accumulation of capital and property and the related and indispensable for its secure never-ending accumulation of power characteristic of western imperialism.³¹ Her critique of liberalism, the bourgeois philosophy par excellence, is in fact based on its perversion of the classical, XVIII-century notion of progress as a purposeful mean of emancipation. Liberalism as Arendt understands it overlooks the fact of human finitude and assumes for the private interests the infinite length of the time continuum annihilating true politics and true temporality. As she writes: «Death is the real reason why property and acquisition can never become a true political principle»³².

This trend is continued in totalitarianism, the propaganda of which disseminates the sense of fatality making the perfect use and marking the culminating stage of the modern idolization of science³³. Through the pseudo-scientificity of the totalitarian prophecies (and to the satisfaction of the masses that are longing for predictability and «refuse to recognize ... the fortuitousness that pervades reality»³⁴) the future emerges as already determined.

It looks in the end as though the *homo faber's* ideals have been reduced to those of *animal laborans*, for not only the durability of the artifice is lost, but also the notion of beginning and end. To be sure, this is not circular temporality over which it has certain advantages, the main being that secures the linear concept of time. But because it is all-encompassing the unlimited progress denies not only the authentic future – the unexpected – but also the future that can be planned according to the purposes of the actors.

To conclude: in *homo faber's* distorted experience that comes close to that of *animal laborans* the infinite temporality in the form of the infinite progress takes precedence over the human finitude. Connection of this infinite progress (qualitatively different from the limited progress of production) with melancholy becomes clear once we think about another concept that can be associated both with the state of melancholy and with the experience of *homo faber*, namely, the loss.

IV

In this respect, the Freudian account of melancholy may be useful. Remembering Arendt's own aversion to psychoanalysis deemed by her a «pseudo-science» it is hardly possible – even if she knew Freud's conception – to have it in mind while writing about Kant's attitude towards progress in her catchy phrase. But that account has a certain advantages over

the others, mainly because Freud analyzes melancholy in terms of loss and provides a prospect for associating it with experiences other than death. In his instructive essay on the subject he examines melancholy in terms of its correlation with mourning, as its pathological transformation. Crucial for the present discussion is that mourning is for Freud a reaction not only to a loss of a loved person, but also «to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as fatherland, liberty, and ideal, and so on»³⁵. Moreover, he states that «the occasions giving rise to melancholia for the most part extend beyond the clear case of a loss by death»³⁶. And his explanation runs roughly as follows.

First, the symptoms of mourning and melancholia are quite similar, i. e. inhibition of activity, grief and dejection. But in melancholia in addition to mourning we have the lowering of self-esteem of the sufferer. This component of self-accusation is central to Freud's and all post-Freudian accounts of melancholy.³⁷ Moreover, we do not clearly see what has been lost (the age-old theme of sadness without a cause reappears again, yet now the unknown cause has been delegated into the unconscious). Freud's explanation for this phenomenon is that the lost object, the other person or some abstraction, have been incorporated – «introjected» as he says – into the self, and therefore the patient experiences the loss as the lack in the self. In consequence the work of mourning cannot be completed³⁸ and we have instead to do with the impoverishment of the sufferer's ego experienced by himself, or to put it differently with the loss of that part of the self, which has been identified with the now introjected object (in Freud's technical language this is the withdrawal of the libido from the object into the subject). The precondition for this process is the ambivalence of the attitude towards the lost object.³⁹

Now, to go back to Hannah Arendt, the theme of loss is one of the central and ever-recurring concepts in her writings, associated most of all with the break in tradition that separates the Modern Age from the contemporary world. But as far as *homo faber* is concerned it is the Modern Age that begins with alienation, which is itself a kind of loss, a withdrawal and separation from the world. It is first, the spatial alienation of man from his immediate surroundings resulting in the discovery of the globe, and second, the world-alienation analyzed by Weber and resulting in the new capitalist mentality. This second alienation is not yet a self-alienation as Arendt underlines, but quite on the contrary is based on the care for the self.

The most important however, and directly connected with *homo faber* is the alienation that takes place in science and in philosophy simultaneously. While the discovery of the Archimedean standpoint enables the alienation from the earth in natural sciences, in philosophy it manifests itself in its increasing subjectivisation that starts with the Cartesian doubt. The outcome in the sciences is the distrust towards the world as given to the senses and a quest for the reality of being underlying the appearances (symbolized by the telescope) while in philosophy it is the quest for certainty in introspection with the effect of *reductio scientiae ad mathematicam*, the pattern of the human mind.

Altogether, it is the loss of the sensual world.

The loss of the self is to a certain extent simultaneous with these processes (as Arendt emphasizes, the *res cogitans* cannot survive the loss of the *res extensa*), but the entire implications of some of the modern ideals become fully realized only in totalitarian domination. Arendt's analysis of the totalitarian ideology from *Ideology and Terror* may shed some light on this theme of loss.

In her account ideology is an instrument of explanation of history – not only past, but all becoming – that proceeds by applying the deductive logic to the inspiring, single idea that serves as its premise. History is here understood as a movement, the law of which – the direction and character of change – is provided by this idea. Analogy with her later fully developed concept of *homo faber* is evident. However, what distinguishes the totalitarian ideologies from their XIX century predecessors is the lack of the guiding idea abandoned in favour of the sheer logicity: together with the loss of direction they become the «permanent movement to nowhere». And to come to the theme of loss: the basic experience of *homo faber* – as Arendt repeatedly stresses – and the necessary condition of fabrication is «isolation» of the maker from his fellow human beings, with whom he is unable to enter into the meaningful relationship except as on the market.⁴⁰ This isolation is a precondition of political tyrannies and though man in a tyranny is politically isolated he still remains in contact with the artificial world of his products.⁴¹ However, with the totalitarian reduction to *animal laborans* man is no longer «isolated» – he becomes «lonely». He loses not only the political realm – the inter-subjectively constructed reality – but also his own self. In Arendt's words: «Self and world, capacity for thought and experience are lost at the same time»⁴². Together with the artificial world and the relationship with others man loses also himself. What remains is bare life without the past and the future, reflecting the circular temporality of nature.

To sum up the forgoing: the melancholy of (infinite) progress happens when the *homo faber's* categories become perverted towards those of *animal laborans*, i. e. when in the experience of progress its end products become unattainable. This process is marked by the concomitant loss of the world and of the self. What underlies this twofold loss is the more fundamental loss of the original, qualitative time of thinking, first in favour of the fictional, infinite linear time, and eventually – as it happened with the modern masses' attitude towards history – in favor of the indifferent circular temporality of *animal laborans*. What is ultimately lost together with the authentic present is the authentic future, for now the future is understood as already embedded in the present. Together with the authentic, unpredictable experience of that future man loses also himself. How to overcome the melancholy of progress?

V

At first sight, it seems as if will understood as its own contingent cause and as a creation and not affirmation would be a sufficient remedy.

Arendt can agree neither with the Nietzschean repudiation of the will and causality in favour of the eternal recurrence of everything for that would mean recourse to the circular temporality of *animal laborans* and would resemble Epictetus' solution. Nor can she accept Heidegger's *Kebr* that she interprets as a renunciation of the willing faculty, which would result in the idle state of serenity. But she agrees with both of them as far as their arguments on the inherent destructiveness of willing are concerned. It is true that will wants to overcome everything, and that it understands the future not as something that approaches us from the front, but as what is determined by our projects. After all, the infinite progress, in her words a «permanent annihilation»⁴³, is in perfect accordance with the experience of the willing ego that transcends the limited life span of the human life. The main problem with willing is however that by devouring every present in favour of the future *ad infinitum* it implies the loss of what has not yet happened. As Arendt writes while commenting Nietzsche's attitude towards the will: «expectation, the mood with which the will affects the soul, contains within itself the melancholy of an and-this-too-will-have-been, the foreseeing of the future's past, which reasserts the Past as the dominant tense of Time»⁴⁴.

The connection between the melancholy of progress and the melancholy of willing lies precisely in this anticipation of the future's past. In both there is a longing for the future involved, which can never be satisfied, for every future is already lost in advance. As Kristeva maintains, melancholy is characterized by the distorted sense of the time in which there is no horizon and no perspective towards something because everything is gone. For the melancholic person the past is the dominant tense of time and «an overinflated, hyperbolic past fills all the dimensions of psychic continuity»⁴⁵. The difference with the Arendtian melancholy would be that here the lost object of the melancholiac is the future, which is becoming the past before it has happened.⁴⁶ In order to solve the destructive predicaments of willing and unsatisfied with the solutions provided by the philosophers Arendt returns at the end of her book on willing to the men of action for help. But as far as she does not find what she expected, namely the notion of action as an absolute and not a relative beginning, she ends up with Augustine, along with Duns Scotus and Kant her most important author on the subject. It is his notion of *initium* that seems to be the only guarantee for the possibility of an absolute beginning. And it all looks like she is willing to abandon the absolute freedom of the will in favour of the limited political freedom. So in the end it seems that only action – the necessary precondition of which is the will – but not the will itself, is able to solve the predicaments of melancholy temporality.

If we look upon the temporal traits of both the *vita activa* and the cognitive capacities of the mind a curious parallel between them emerges.⁴⁷ It is as if they corresponded to each other on the three levels and were moreover hierarchically arranged. At the bottom level there is, on the one hand, the activity of labor, and on the other, the abilities of logical reasoning. Both belong to what is given to man by the mere fact of being alive and are marked by a circular temporality with neither beginning nor

end. On the middle level there lies the relationship between fabrication and intellect, based on the fact that both rely on the categories of means and ends, and both are concerned with production of tangible results. The notion of time underlying them would be the linear, sequential time that is the continuous time of everyday experience.

The most important and occupying the highest position would be the correspondence between thinking and acting.⁴⁸ It is true that Hannah Arendt was frequently warning against their equation. But it is also true that their close relationship is undeniable. First of all, they both proceed through *logos* – the coherent speech – towards disclosure of meaning: «Thinking beings have an urge to speak, speaking beings have an urge to think»⁴⁹. Then, both are the ends-in-themselves and leave not durable outcomes behind – the «frailty» of action is here mirroring the frailty of thoughts. Next, both have a definite beginning but no identifiable end, for they are pointing into the infinite. And finally, when it comes to temporality, it is the authentic, primordial time of the in-betweenness of past and future that underlies them. Both thinking and acting take place in this gap in time, even though in the case of acting this gap is in addition constituted spatially by the in-betweenness of the public realm, which the thinking lacks. And the conclusion is that only action, which reflects the original temporal experience of the human being and opens up the horizon of possibilities for the authentic future can overcome the melancholy of progress.

VI

This solution would be reasonable as far as the connection of melancholy with the distorted temporality is concerned, if it had not been contradicted by some other Arendt's statements. In fact, her paradoxical usage of the term points to one of the crucial tensions of her philosophy. By citing Kant this time as well, she uses the term «melancholy» in a different context in order to designate the inherent haphazardness of the historical process, founded both on the haphazardness and particularity of willing and the omnipresence of the unintended consequences of action.⁵⁰ Again, the term «melancholy» does not occur in Kant, but is – at this time – Arendt's translation of the German «*trostlos*»⁵¹ (in this context she also speaks about «annoying contingency»⁵²). This melancholy signifies the loss of the whole that could provide the meaning to the particular. Kant's solution to this «deep-rooted melancholy disposition»⁵³ is an escape into the whole constituted by the idea of the progress of mankind understood as a part of nature and subject to its ruse. It is only thanks to this assumption of progress that History can make sense for him.

According to Arendt the irreconcilability of the idea of Man's intrinsic dignity with the notion of progress as the law of the human species, i.e. between the perspectives of actor and spectator, is the basic contradiction of Kant's philosophy.⁵⁴ But a similar tension is present in her philosophy of history. While claiming that «it is against human dignity to believe in progress»⁵⁵, she recognizes at the same time the urgency of the «redemp-

tion from melancholy haphazardness»⁵⁶. The difference is of course that with the assumption of progress the meaning can be disclosed at the beginning – as if future, the one that is coming towards us, has not existed. All future appears here as determined, and as in *homo faber's* product its beginning contains the seeds of the end – except that for Kant this progress is perpetual and infinite. For Arendt on the other hand the escape into the whole is also an indispensable task but it can only assume the form of the backward glance. It is as if the «innermost meaning» of action itself was not enough and had to be complemented by the spectator's historical meaning. But in the need to redeem the past from its contingency there is an ever-present danger that by introducing «the authors» of the process in the form of causes different from particular volitions, the story told will assume an oppressive role, denying the dignity of man and the authentic future. This tension is never ultimately resolved by Hannah Arendt, and its irresolvability looks like another predicament of the dry and cold disease.

References

- ¹ This paper was made possible thanks to the support of the Marie Curie program «European Doctorate in the Social History of Europe».
- ² Arendt, H. *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Ed. R. Beiner. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982. P. 9. Cited thereafter as LKPP.
- ³ Arendt, H. On Violence. In: Arendt H. *Crises of the Republic*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972. P. 128.
- ⁴ Kant, I. *The End of All Things*; cited after Arendt, LKPP, p. 9.
- ⁵ Though Kant had his own notion of melancholy, which he understood – in accord with the spirit of his time – as a mental disorder, «the illness of the soul with regard to the cognitive faculty» (Kant, I. On the Cognitive Faculties. In: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. V.L. Dowdell, in: J. Radden (ed.) *The Nature of Melancholy*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000, p. 199). In the clinical discourse since Kraepelin it is common to distinguish between the disorders of affection and of cognition with melancholy belonging to the former. See: Radden, J. *From Melancholic States to Clinical Depression*. In: J. Radden (ed.), op. cit., p. 3–51.
- ⁶ Jackson, S.W. *Melancholia and Depression, From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times*. New Heaven, London: Yale UP, 1986, p. 14–25; Radden, op. cit., p. 22–24.
- ⁷ A semantic distinction mirroring the difference between the phenomenological and the behavioral attitudes towards depression, as either internally or externally diagnosed; see: Radden, op. cit., p. 29–36.
- ⁸ Arendt, H. *The Life of The Mind. Vol. I. Thinking*. San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace&Co, 1978, p. 20–21 (cited thereafter as LOM I). I refrain here from commenting on Arendt's indebtedness to Heidegger's analysis of the temporal structure of *dasein*. That her point of departure is existential phenomenology is quite evident, all the differences with Heidegger notwithstanding.
- ⁹ LOM I, p. 205.
- ¹⁰ LOM I, p. 192.
- ¹¹ LOM I, p. 201.
- ¹² LOM I, p. 76–77, 213.
- ¹³ On time experience of the thinking ego see especially: LOM I, p. 197–213.
- ¹⁴ LOM I, p. 206.

15 LOM I, p. 202.

16 I exclude the faculty of judgment from the present discussion for it is not substantially related to the overall argument of this essay.

17 Consequences of Arendt's position may be best illustrated by Duns Scotus' theory of partial causes, where the infinite number of causes coincide engendering the contingent human historical reality. As she eagerly repeats after Scotus contingency is the price to be paid for freedom; see: LOM II, p. 137–139.

18 LOM II, p. 89.

19 Such a will becomes omnipotent, for it ceases to project the novelty, being contented instead with the affirmation of existence and events as they happen. It is therefore not helpless upon the unattainability of its own projects.

20 LOM II, p. 34–38.

21 Although the experience of willing is more real in a sense that we can simply prove freedom by refraining from doing something, whereas in the case of thinking we can neither prove nor disprove the necessary character of the present moment; see: LOM II, p. 139–140.

22 This problem is informatively analyzed by: Honig, B. *Arendt, Identity and Difference // Political Theory*. 1988. Vol. 16(1), p. 77–98.

23 That is the future of proper action as analyzed by Arendt in *The Human Condition*.

24 Ricoeur, P. Action, Story and History: On Re-reading The Human Condition, *Salmagundi*. 1983. Vol. 60, p. 60–72.

25 «To act in the form of making, to reason in the form of 'reckoning with consequences', means to leave out the unexpected, the event itself, since it would be unreasonable or irrational to expect that is no more than the 'infinite improbability'»; see: Arendt, H. *The Human Condition*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 300 (cited thereafter as HC).

26 As far as the process and not the product is concerned we have here instead of time as durability the time as passing.

27 HC, p. 296–297.

28 HC, p. 297.

29 Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 128.

30 HC, p. 312.

31 Arendt, H. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt, Inc., 1968, p. 139–147 (cited thereafter as OT).

32 OT, p. 145.

33 OT, p. 346.

34 OT, p. 351–352.

35 Freud, S. *Mourning and Melancholy*; trans. J. Strachey. In: J. Radden (ed.), op. cit., p. 283.

36 Ibid, p. 289. Melancholy belongs to actual neuroses, which have a psychogenic origin – they stem from actual life experiences and events and are not an outcome of some somatogenic processes; see: Jackson, op. cit., p. 219–227.

37 Radden, op. cit., p. 44–47.

38 In mourning the task is accomplished when the ego reconciles with the loss and invests its libido elsewhere.

39 In *Mourning and Melancholia* Freud does not settle whether the narcissism is constitutional, i.e. forms the basis of the original choice of the object of love, or is it the outcome of the regression of libido into the ego after the loss. The ambivalence struggle happens in the subconsciousness and when it becomes conscious the ego becomes divided into two and criticizes itself.

40 One can therefore consider *homo faber* already a melancholic figure as far as the loss of the world is concerned, even if his experience of progress is limited and essentially positive. Interestingly, melancholy has been traditionally associated with the notion of creative genius as a side effect of intellectual or artistic

creativity and brilliance, a theme starting with pseudo-Aristotle's *Problems*, continued throughout Modernity and not wholly abandoned even by Freud (Radden, op. cit., p. 12–17). And genius is for Arendt an ideal of the Modern Age, a bit more, but still a *homo faber*. The work of genius – she claims – is in this sense distinct from production that the product surpasses here the author. This lack of the superiority of the creator is for Arendt a «predicament» of genius (HC, p. 210–211).

41 OT, p. 474–475.

42 OT, p. 477.

43 LOM II, p. 50.

44 LOM II, p. 171. The idea of the melancholy character of the will goes against the traditional association of depression with the lack of voluntary control.

45 Kristeva, J. *Black Sun, Depression and Melancholia*; trans. L.S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1989, p. 60.

46 Although for Arendt melancholy would also have a classical sense. She writes that the moods of the activity of thinking – to the extent that it is connected with remembrance – «incline to melancholy» (LOM II, p. 36). She also speaks about the idea of the golden age as a «melancholy thought» (LOM II, p. 215).

47 On the distinction between cognitive capacities see: e. g. HC, p. 170–171. On the temporal traits of the *vita activa* see: Ricoeur, op. cit., and of the life of the mind see: Taminiaux, J. *Time and the inner conflicts of the mind*. In: J.J. Hermesen, D.R. Villa (eds.) *The Judge and The Spectator, Hannah Arendt's Political Philosophy*. Leuven: Peeters, 1999, p. 43–58.

48 See: Jonas, H. *Acting, Knowing, Thinking: Gleanings from Hannah Arendt's Philosophical Work // Social Research*. 1977. Vol. 44(1), p. 25–43.

49 LOM I, p. 99.

50 The phrase «melancholy haphazardness» appears several times, see: Arendt, H. *Between Past and Future*. New York: Viking Press, 1968, p. 82, 85, 242 (thereafter as BPF); LKPP, p. 24.

51 The German *trostlos* means *grim* or *dreary*, to be sure a mood that can be associated with melancholia.

52 BPF, p. 242.

53 LKPP, p. 25.

54 LKPP, p. 51–58.

55 LKPP, p. 77.

56 BPF, p. 85.