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HANNAH ARENDT'S VISION OF POLITICS: EXEMPLARY  
NEGATIVITIES AND THE OSTJUDEN

by

JACOB PEARCE

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2020

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Hannah Arendt's Vision of Politics: Exemplary Negativities and the Ostjuden

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Jacob Pearce

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

April 3, 2020

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## ABSTRACT

Hannah Arendt's Vision of Politics: Exemplary Negativities and the Ostju-

den

by

Jacob Pearce

Advisor: Jack Jacobs

Abstract: Hannah Arendt's vision of politics is one of the most enigmatic, perplexing, thoroughly analyzed, and potentially generative aspects of her philosophic corpus. It is marked by insightful analysis, cutting deconstructions of pressing moral issues, and confusing vernacular wherein her analytic boundaries, topics, and categories appear obfuscated. Although it has been observed that Arendt's late-career theory of the political owes a debt to her earlier writings on Jewish history, including her Kantian-influenced theory of political judgment and storytelling, in this thesis I would like to narrow down this debt to a specific trope: The *Ostjuden*, or the imagined associations with Eastern European Jewry. In order to locate this "influence", which I will track through a certain indirect intertextual conversation, I will invert the Kantian term "exemplary validity". This concept is central to how Arendt's ideal of individual judgement can find resonance in the space of public action, and therefore I will mobilize a certain heuristic notion of "exemplary negativity" in order to analyze these indirect modes of influence and theory production. Along with other tropes, signifiers, topics and events, assessing the *Ostjuden*'s intertextual function as an exemplary negativity sheds light on how certain aspects of Arendt's politics that she presents as categorical in fact rely on certain assumptions about historical progress, cultural eloquence, and her own personal projections.

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## Introduction:

Any publicly enigmatic philosopher, particularly one as productive, controversial, and insightful as Hannah Arendt, poses a horizon of narrative options in representing their work or life. Arendt herself sat ambiguously in this space. Arendt herself was a thinker adept at the abstract and analytic, yet she was a strident critic of the philosophical tradition and what she saw as its elevation of contemplation over action, of ideas over stories. Tracing this tradition to Plato, Arendt argued that this mode of philosophy identified the value of life, not in living, but in a space external to experience, to be revealed by categorical speculation. Meaning was thus something to be observed instead of inhabited, produced and therefore narrated. Noted psychoanalytic theorist Julia Kristeva notes that in defiance of this tradition, Arendt promoted the notion of “the possibility of representing birth and death, to conceive of them in time and to explain them to others...” - “is, *the possibility of narrating* - [as the] grounds [of] human life” (Kristeva, 8). However, Arendt rarely engaged with the narrative modes of expression which she thought so essential to any kind of human condition and seemed to be more comfortable with, and incredibly talented at, inhabiting the classical philosopher’s position of detached observer.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the Arendt I engage with in this thesis will be parsed from a cross section of texts, ideas, and philosophical analysis. Her contemplative achievements will be most salient. Yet, they intersect with what could be conceived as her “narrative” life. Her life as a student, where she studied under Heidegger and immersed herself in a German philosophical tradition,

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, her closest full-length text devoted to some kind of consistent narrative mode of expression, was a biography of Rahel Varnhagen, a Jewish woman who was a mainstay in the salons of nineteenth century Germany. This biographical text, while narrative, is also a key point in Arendt’s theory of the pariah Jew and her tangential ideas about emancipation, assimilation, modernism and the historical public sphere.

provided the foundation for her notion of world and critique of that platonic tradition, as well as her theories of modernity and historic understanding. Her life as a refugee during World War II shaped her insightful critiques of human rights and the nation state that have become salient in the contemporary moment. Arendt the New Yorker was Arendt of the Eichmann trial and the banality of evil. In this essay, while predominantly focusing on Arendt as a theorist, I will also seek to explore the narrative element of her identity derived from her heritage and her Judaism, which she herself ardently sought to distinguish from her personhood and lived narrative.

Arendt was born in 1906 to a decidedly secular German Jewish family. Her own upbringing was marked by an ambivalence toward Judaism, even stating that her parents “didn’t tell me I was Jewish until [I] began to venture from the home.” Yet, her habitus was one deeply formed by the movements -- geographical, political, and cultural -- between Jews, Gentiles and the ever-changing boundaries of nation-states over the nineteenth century (Heller, 34). Her great grandparents were wealthy Russian Jewish merchants who had emigrated to Germany during the

Haskalah<sup>2</sup>. (Heller, 33) Her grandparents had continued this merchant tradition, while her parents were members of the “first large generation” of secular “highly educated German Jewish professionals since the Jewish Emancipation of 1812 in Prussia; their friends and peers were doctors, lawyers, judges, psychologists, and scientists.” (Heller, 34) Her parents saw themselves as “Prussians first”, and while they acknowledged their Judaism, it was emphasized as their background and not their personhood. (Topoloski, 6)

Despite this privatization of her Jewish identity, in an interview with German journalist Gunther Gaus, Arendt, commenting on her childhood relationship with Judaism, remarked that:

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<sup>2</sup> The Haskalah, commonly referred to as “The Jewish Enlightenment”, was a transnational, but largely central-Eastern European movement, from approximately the mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth century. The philosopher Moses Mendelssohn is considered by many to be the symbolic and historical “parent” of the Jewish Enlightenment. Mendelssohn eschewed Yiddish as a mode of communication and sought to participate in the general philosophical discourse of his era, whether in English, French, or German. Thus, the Haskalah, as associated with Mendelssohn, became the label for the movement of Jews who sought to leave “the ghetto” and enter secular society, living amongst Christians, and choosing to teach their children the language of their geographic location rather than Yiddish. Wealthy Jewish merchants, such as Arendt’s ancestors were a large constituency of the Haskalah movement, because of their economic privilege, and because that privilege had already enabled them some interactions with Gentile communities. Yet, it is important to view the Haskalah as more than ideology. It also arose from shifts in political economy that resulted in the literal physical movement of certain Jews into secular public spaces. The Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century re-shaped the map of Europe and were dependent upon many of the international financial resources provided by Jewish merchants and bankers. The Napoleonic codes, which many identify as one of the earliest examples of a contemporary notion of secular citizenship, focused heavily on questions concerning the rights of Jews as citizens, who had previously lived by law as a separate class. While the emancipation of Jews occurred at different moments in different countries, and was the subject of different debates in those different contexts, it was integral to the legal discourse involved in the formation of nation-states. It was simultaneously essential to the Haskalah movement and how it understood itself, because arguments for emancipation, whether from Jews or non-Jews, stressed an ethic of liberal rationalism and the rational capability of certain Jewish individuals rather than perhaps, Jews as a community. This idea of privileging the rational individual over the community was an ideological benchmark for the Haskalah, and was embodied in the narrative of leaving the “ghetto” or “shtetl” of Jewish culture in order to enter the secular culture as citizens amongst Christian peers. Ironically, for German Jews, the capability for assimilation into bourgeois society coincided with the decline of the Enlightenment ideals central to the Haskalah. Assimilationist Haskalah-influenced Jews in the late nineteenth century were devoted to the German ideal of “*Bildung*” or “the self cultivation of a ‘cultured personality... belief in the primacy of culture, which ... meant faith in reason and the regenerative power of ideas and education.” (Aschheim, 8) Yet, their German peers had already begun to rebel against this ideology of reason and the rational self. The German bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century became attracted to romantic ideas of *volkishness* and the core irrationality of the self, embraced by figures like composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Wagner himself published anti-Semitic polemics, and based his anti-Semitic arguments on an association between Jews and Enlightenment rationalism, as opposed to the romantic passions of the German people. Accordingly, I think understanding the *maskilic* roots of Arendt, and her roots in ideas related to the Haskalah, is essential. She seemed to have a disdain for romanticism throughout her life, even though her mentor Heidegger was deeply influenced by this tradition of German romanticism. Further her admiration of ancient Athens had clear overlaps with Enlightenment ideology, notably a German Enlightenment understanding of history and philosophy.

And to come back once again to what was special about my family home: all Jewish children encountered anti-Semitism. . . . The difference with us was that my mother was always convinced that you mustn't let it get to you. You have to defend yourself! When my teachers made anti-Semitic remarks mostly not about me, but about other Jewish girls, Eastern Jewish students in particular -- I was told to get up immediately, leave the classroom, come home, and report everything exactly. Then my mother wrote one of her many registered letters; and for me the matter was completely settled. I had a day off from school, and that was marvelous!" (Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, 8)

This vignette demonstrates Arendt's childhood understanding of resistance to anti-Semitism. Even when such discriminatory remarks were not directed at her, Arendt, inspired by her mother, clearly was aware of her sociological proximity to such expression and exclaimed her resistance. Yet, I think it is important to focus on that proximity, and the precise rhetorical declaration of proximate, but not identical, victimhood casually reported by Arendt in this recollection. The Eastern Jewish students were the direct victims of her early memories of anti-Semitism, but she was not. Arendt saw her mother, a leftist German Jewish woman, as the agent of resistance, and of inhabiting a feeling of responsibility, although one that was not based on shared victimhood. Of course, Arendt is recounting a personal memory, and the actions of her mother rather than the responses of her classmates would have been of more importance to a young Arendt. Yet, the story still speaks, indirectly, implicitly and personally, to certain contingencies of Arendt's childhood and the larger Jewish context in which she was raised.

She was born into a period when the demographics of Judaism in Germany were undergoing a period of intensive transformation. Starting in the 1880's, Jews from Eastern Europe began to flee in droves from the increasing hostility and ever more violent pogroms they faced in the Russian Empire. Arendt's ancestors, although from Russia, had been part of a trans-national class of Jewish merchants; these new arrivals -- the *Ostjuden* -- tended to be from smaller towns and appeared to be untouched by the Haskalah that drew her ancestors west.

These Eastern European refugees were met in Germany with ridicule and resentment by a German Jewish community which, although previously engaged in an imaginary conversation with the *Ostjuden*, now had to confront their demographic presence. It was a conversation that had been at the center of German Jewish identity, and arguably German secular culture, for the past century. German Jewry drew on Enlightenment ideals of humanism and rational ability in order to argue for their own legal rights, but also to articulate a culture that their rational abilities transcended. This discourse thus faced both outward, as an argument for secular emancipation, and inward, as a mode of self-definition. This definition was grounded in a binary wherein “emancipation and enlightenment” defined Jews “in the West” while “the continuation of political disenfranchisement and traditional Jewish culture” defined Jews “in Eastern Europe.” According to historian Steven Aschheim, “The new polarity introduced an unprecedented dialectical tension into Jewish life.” (Aschheim, 4)

A fetishized trope of the Eastern European Jew was common in many of the newly emancipated nineteenth century Jewish communities. In contrast to France and England, wherein the fictional distance was spatial as well as cultural until the late nineteenth century, German Jews had a unique position in relation to the trope of the *Ostjuden*. Living in the central region of what was imagined as the enlightened European countries, “German Jews were never able to forget that they shared a common border with the unemancipated Eastern ghetto masses.” Accordingly, while “[e]lsewhere in Western Europe the East European Jew was an irritant; in Germany, for both Jew and non-Jew, he became a major preoccupation and at times even an obsession.” (Aschheim, 5) Aschheim further explains:

The story of German Jewish assimilation would therefore be incomplete without taking this factor into account. For assimilation was not merely the conscious attempt to *blend* into new social and cultural environments but was also purposeful, even programmatic, *dissociation* from traditional Jewish cultural and national moorings ...In this tortuous process, marked by constant pressure to prove their fitness for equal rights, German Jews provided assimilation with its most systematic ideological articulation. (Aschheim, 5)

In the decades before Arendt's birth, what was for much of the nineteenth century a "psychological repository into which German Jews could deflect anti-Jewish sentiments" became an embodied reality. (Aschheim, 12) Aschheim describes how when "in the wake of persecution and poverty, masses of East European Jews streamed into Western Europe in the 1880s," German Jews were forced to account for the tangible human beings whom they previously had only encountered as a psychological repository of negative archetypes. (Aschheim 12) These *Ostjuden* still lived segregated from their German Jewish counterparts, albeit in the same country and sometimes, particularly in Berlin, the same city. This distance was complicated by a sense of duty, which was embedded with a sense of shame. Aschheim explains:

The German Jewish response to the problem of Eastern Jewish persecution and mass migration was, then, grounded in an old ambivalence. German Jews approached the problem on the basis of categories inherited from their nineteenth-century experience. Protective and dissociative modes operated side by side in uneasy alliance. German Jews undertook massive charitable work on behalf of the persecuted East European Jews at the same time that they sought the most efficacious means to prevent their mass settlement in Germany. This dialectical tension between responsibility and dissociation was built into the German Jewish liberal approach to the *Ostjuden* and underlay the way in which German Jews responded to the challenge of the great move West. (Aschheim, 33)

Accordingly, the arrival of East European Jews into Germany, and the awareness of their heightened persecution, put German Jewry in an uncomfortable place. Although perhaps repulsed, German Jewry also approached the *Ostjuden* with a sense of kinship and distant compassion (Aschheim, 40). I want to highlight the particular theory of kinship underlying this German Jewish way of relating to *Ostjuden*. In their allegiance to Enlightenment rationalism, German Jewry was already subscribing to a specific theory of kinship and society. That theory engen-

dered a mode of thought wherein relations coded as being kin or kin adjacent were antiquated, or, in need of transcendence by individuals and their capability for reason. The space of the public, which included civil society, state authority, and legal rights was to be devoid of kinship and even religion. Ideally those “private” concerns would not hinder the community of individuals and their capacity for detached reason-based interactions, as such concerns had, or were narrated as having, negatively affected the proto-states of medieval Europe. Accordingly, while *Ostjuden* may have been considered kin by German Jewry, it was that very relationality that was suspect and negatively connoted.

It should be of no surprise that the affective structure for German Jewry’s approach to the *Ostjuden* was a near citation of the general enlightenment narrative concerning kin-relations, the individual, and the public sphere. Aschheim observes that “The condition for equal family membership was the overcoming of a common, debilitating past. *Ostjuden* replicated German Jewry’s own physical and psychological history. This was the source of both the rejection and the responsibility.” (Aschheim, 40)

This balance of disassociation and mutuality in relation to the *Ostjuden* was linked to the emphasis on acculturation by German Jews of secular German ideas and tradition. Arendt’s childhood and years as a student performed this aspect in full. Moving west from Königsberg to Marburg for university, Arendt the student was stridently non-Jewish in her scholarly interests. Her tradition was that of German philosophy, and her world was filled with figures like Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Schlegel and perhaps most importantly, her mentor, Heidegger. She was inculcated into a phenomenological tradition that promoted the category of first hand individual experience and perception over private matters of faith and family.

Arendt was not unique among Jews in this intellectual trajectory, and in fact shared a similar educational experience with other assimilated upper-class German Jewish soon to be public intellectuals, down to her association with Heidegger and his following. Intellectual historian Richard Wolin describes how this demographic cohort “expected to find salvation and meaning not in the traditions of Jewish cultural belonging but in the hallowed Germanic ideals of *Geist* and *Bildung*.” (Wolin, 5) In fact, he notes that “Arendt’s biography fit squarely within this mold. She, too, had believed that if one only tried hard enough to internalize [those] virtues [and Germanic ideals], the doors to German society would magically open[.]” (Wolin, 38-39)

While the private or personal concerns of Jewish heritage were excluded, if not actively ignored, from this trajectory of intellectual experience, the historical contribution of the Greco-Roman classics was acknowledged as debt and foundation. In fact, ancient Athens would persist as a trope, or even fetish, for the pinnacle of human cultural achievement, and Arendt “frequently took [her] normative and political bearings from classical antiquity[.]” (Wolin, 14) At this point in her life, if Arendt were compelled to consider her intellectual “heritage”, she would consider it one rooted in certain German traditions, and how those German intellectual traditions were the supreme vessel for “Western” philosophy; Jews, Judaism or Jewry hardly appeared within Arendt’s intellectual orbit.

This changed when circumstances forced her own Jewishness to the forefront of her livelihood. With the rise of the Nazis, Arendt found her own political status actively attacked by a country and government of which she had previously considered herself a citizen. She left Germany in 1933 after suffering personal and professional harassment due to her Jewish background and settled in Paris. (Heller, 108) While in Paris, Arendt transformed from a detached

German phenomenologist to a politically engaged scholar, and importantly, one devoted to Jewish issues. She worked for a Zionist organization and devoted herself to learning Hebrew and Jewish history, telling her tutor that she “wanted to know my own people” (Heller, 109). Reflected in her writings from this time, she adopted an attitude of affiliation with Eastern European Jewry, even studying Yiddish, and claiming that she was “‘the only German Jew far and wide’ to have done so”. (Heller, 109)

In fact, much of her scholarly production, and arguably thought from this period, revolved around “the ‘Jewish question,’ which she had earlier found irrelevant.” Arendt herself noted that at this point “[B]elonging to Judaism had become my own problem, and my own problem was political.” (Heller, 109) The emphasis on the political component of her analysis of Judaism in her work during this period also perhaps accounted for Arendt’s shift from the phenomenological training of her pre-Nazi studies to the theory of the political which would mark much of her later work. Ranging from Zionism, to the history of anti-Semitism, to a fairly self-aware and critical assessment of German Jewish emancipation, she developed a fairly prolific corpus of Jewish-themed writing from roughly the mid 1930’s to the mid 1950’s. She eventually became disillusioned with her Jewish identity, primarily as she grew estranged from the State of Israel and Zionist politics. Yet, the influence of that period of Jewish writing on her later theory should not be denied or ignored.

Arendt’s Jewish studies thus turned her philosophical attention toward the political. In what follows I examine not just how Arendt’s writings on Jewish history influenced her study of politics and the political. Scholars such as Richard Bernstein, Dagmar Barnouw, and others have provided critical lenses and research on this relationship. Using this and other scholarship, I

want to interrogate how a sometimes trivial, sympathetic, paternalistic, and even, at times, nuanced, textual relation to the *Ostjuden*, present in Arendt's work on Jewish history, is in conversation with her idea of the political.

While there is biographic, and arguably explicit conceptual evidence for the influence of Jewish history on Arendt's political philosophy, the relationship between her theory of politics and the *Ostjuden* is indirect. In order to locate and contextualize this relationship, I have chosen Arendt's philosophy of storytelling and aesthetic judgment as a conceptual starting point. One of Arendt's most abstract philosophical projects, articulated as an exposition on Kantian norms and theories and her theories of storytelling as a mode of judgment are necessary for understanding her theory of political action. Furthermore, since my analysis of the relationship between Eastern European Jewry and political philosophy in Arendt's work will be primarily intertextual, her theories of narrative provide both a guide and philosophic context. They are suggestive of how Arendt thinks about and rhetorically performs the interaction of philosophical concepts, analytic categories, historical narratives and the theoretical affordances of this interaction.

One such affordance is a position that I call *exemplary negativity*. My thesis will demonstrate how this concept operates, how the *Ostjuden* serves as an exemplary negativity in Arendt's work, and how exemplary negativities in general, as well as the specific instance of the *Ostjuden*, are integral to the theoretical framework from which Arendt's ideal of the political emerges. The term *exemplary negativity* is a direct reference to the Kantian notion of *exemplary validity*, which Arendt championed as a key link between her conceptual analysis of political judgment, storytelling, and the realities of history in the process of constituting a political community. The specific *exemplary negativity* of the *Ostjuden* exists at a nexus within her theoretical framework

wherein her ideas of political culpability intersect with her story of Jewish history. This moment, and other sites of exemplary negativity, I would argue, are simultaneously highly generative and highly ambiguous moments in Arendt's work. They are necessary in how they are marginal and therefore can help elucidate some of Arendt's most troubling but insightful critiques.

# **I. Arendt's Theory of Judgment, Storytelling and Dimensions of the Political**

Arendt's interest in politics was always in conversation with her interest in the philosophy of judgment. She was curious about how individuals judged, how they should judge, and how such judgments produced, and should produce, a shared plural world. She was highly critical of how the philosophical tradition perceived judgment and evaluated its use. In turn, she saw the legacy of that problematic tradition in the contemporary world, and diagnosed that influence as essential to the negation of the political, which she thought was illustrated by the rise of totalitarianism and individualist consumerism during the twentieth century.

Arendt sought to situate herself in a sort of middle ground in terms of how philosophers had typically thought of judgment. She was critical of the ideal of judging from a detached perspective supposedly outside the world, a paradigm that she called the Archimedean point. But she was also unwilling to associate with the relativism and romantic antithesis of this Archimedean perspective, which emphasized the sentiments of personal experience over any attempt at neutrality.

Nevertheless, while a critique of relativism, extending that suspicion to being distrustful conceptually, and in practice, of empathy, Arendt found narratives of individual lives to be a methodologically advantageous mode of producing knowledge. She preferred portraits and reflections over categories. In pursuing this form of knowledge production, Arendt returned to the arguably most categorical of Western philosophers, Kant. Yet, she had a specific purpose, and turned to his ideas to give substance to her theory of the political. For her, it was not his writings on rationality and the categories of perception, or even his political cosmopolitanism, but rather

his theories of aesthetic taste, experience and judgment that were to be the foundation of the political self. Accordingly, if Kantian taste was the best mode of engaging in politics, it was storytelling, a wide-ranging definition of storytelling, encompassing numerous genres and forms of representation, aesthetic and academic, that was Arendt's preferred action-based form of making claims about knowledge: historical, philosophical or otherwise.

Part of what drew Arendt to Kant's taste was its ambiguity. Philosopher Lisa Jane Disch explains that Kantian "[t]aste" simultaneously has access to some level of truth but essentially emerges from and "operates in a contingent situation, meaning for which there can be no precedent and in which judgment takes its bearings not from general concepts or rules but from particular phenomenon." (Disch, 147) While rooted in contingency, the judgments stemming from taste, for Arendt, cannot be entirely subjective, and must emerge from individuals' ability to transcend their sole perspective. Still, as Disch explains, this conception of judgment is not the pure rationality of Kant's non-aesthetic forms of judgment, and that "[e]ven though Arendt claims that judging must leave behind self interest...judging is only possible within the limits of *some* community, because it is only *in* community that communicability makes sense." (Disch, 152)

Despite this favoring of instances, perspectives and context over abstractions, Arendt's storytelling-based mode of representation and truth is not pure subjectivism. Judgment and stories, as the conduit for producing and recognizing truth are grounded in, and the grounds of, politics. For Arendt, this political element is instrumental to and necessary for storytelling-based truth to not be a form of nihilism or relativism. The reason for this instrumentality emerges from what one could perhaps call Arendt's metaphysical paradigm, although she might scoff at her ideas being described with that terminology.

In order to observe this de-facto Arendtian metaphysics, which she would undoubtedly reject as a descriptor, it's helpful to examine her writings on the concept of freedom. She was highly critical of the traditional Christological notion of free will, and instead, grounded the capacity for freedom in communal action and a shared world. Preferring the polis to the soul, Arendt saw freedom as a product of political engagement rather than an innate human capacity to be protected by governance. Philosophic attempts to ground freedom in the subject, individual or a-priori were, for Arendt, "illegitimate or derivative" and obfuscated the essential origin, and therefore, optimal understanding of the concept. (Pitkin, 245).

Accordingly, Arendt's theory, or loose genealogy, of freedom provides a metaphysical space for criticizing Kant, while mobilizing Kant's categorical mode of critique and understanding. She does emphasize the importance of establishing theoretical nuances and intellectual "boundary policing" that is emblematic of Kantian critique. (Pitkin, 245) Yet, despite this methodology, Arendt rejects the a-priori transcendental assumptions grounding Kant's theory of the rationally critical subject. These assumptions include a metaphysical paradigm that views the individual mind as having access to a transcendent apriori arena of truth. This truth, within Kantian metaphysics, but decidedly not in Arendt's, is detached from context, history, tradition and human experience.

Arendt's ambivalence regarding Kantian metaphysics propelled and imbued her work on political judgment. Arendt's philosophical goal was the preservation of the capacity for agency, and action, which she had felt to be in a time of crisis. Her writings thus seek to preserve the plurality of individual responsibility, while re-articulating how the freedom of the individual should be understood, interpreted, and enacted within a community of judgment. In doing so, she reach-

es a theoretical ambiguity. Arendt's ideal agent appears, without assumption of a-priori aspects, through action, and can only achieve freedom in shared political action. Yet, as noted by philosopher Chad Kautzer, her writings on freedom and "Arendt's entire body of work" in general, are "engaged in identifying and policing boundaries" as derived from Kant's use of categorical critique. (Kautzer, 4) Arendt's agent of freedom is thus narrated through the use of categories derived from the Kantian paradigm she attempts to negate.

The "Kantian" metaphysical paradigm of Arendt's critique, arguably encompassing many Western philosophical ideals of personhood, index a solipsistic agent whose possession of freedom precedes experience. Politics is not meant to actively conduce, but rather, to protect such an imagined inheritance or individual essence. Arendt insists that emphasizing action, over choice or cognition, provides a way to negotiate the tension at the core of her theory of political personhood. Action, as the location of agency, presumably negates the solipsism at the core of the "Kantian" paradigm, but still protects the maxim that a form of agency must stem from an individual agent. (Pitkin, 281)

The individuality of agency is important for Arendt. While freedom may be a product of inter-communal action, as Arendt would argue its conceptual origins and her own analysis assert, if one does not account for the individual one loses the theoretical capacity for articulating the responsibility of actors. Arendt's theory of individual agency is not one of the pre-experiential possession of a "will", and the separate expression of that will in public, as articulated by that Kantian metaphysics. Nevertheless, Arendt's theory of agency is still a product that can be observed, assessed, judged and located in a singular person.

Although it's questionable whether Arendt solves, at the level of conceptual precision, the tension between the tradition of philosophical individuality and her alternative theory of freedom, her exploration of this tension leads toward her focus on storytelling and narrative as the primary mode of expression for agency and freedom, which directly contrasts Kant's reified emphasis on rational argumentation and universal validity. Her agents are individuals, with an innate capacity to judge, but can only pursue that judgment, and the freedom to utilize that judgment, when embedded in a participatory context. Stories are the representational pathways for individual agents to articulate truth, while grounding that truth in a shared experience beyond their own perspective. Yet, that "beyond personal experience" is not a Kantian transcendent, but a reciprocal feedback of taste and observation. Summing up this distinction between Kantian judgment, and Arendt's adoption of it, and how they reveal two divergent theories of the individual capacity to represent truth, Disch explains:

The difference between Kant and Arendt's conceptions of representative thinking might be summed up as a contrast between the philosophical imagination and that of artists and storytellers. Where Kant describes representative thinking in terms that are general and philosophical, thinking from the position of "any" man, Arendt describes it in literary terms as populating one's imagination with a multiple cast of characters. (Disch, 154)

The beneficial advantage of storytelling<sup>3</sup>, for Arendt, is embedded in what she also considers its political efficacy and participatory nature. Storytelling facilitates participation because it uses concrete examples that can be drawn upon as guides for human action. Hence, in contrast

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<sup>3</sup> Despite this emphasis on storytelling, it is important to reiterate that Arendt typically operated in a mode much more similar to Kant's philosophical imagination than the modality she espoused. She did attempt to operate from this orientation of narrative, but would typically place narrative or etymological storytelling in the context of, support of, or supported by, traditional theorizing. Her most common mode of storytelling or narrative adjacent argument was through her practice of "pearl diving" and use of historical examples, as influenced by Walter Benjamin's ideas of history. Although Arendt employed this method, more often she would theorize about its potential use in methodologically grounding the difference between her ideas and the more traditional "philosophical" or "Kantian" concept of intellectual action. (Pitkin, 278)

to Kant's theory of rational, isolated and abstract deduction of ethics and moral behavior, Arendt thought that, as explained by Leslie Paul Thiele:

[t]he only way for 'an ethical principle to be verified as well as validated,' ...is 'when it manages to become manifest in the guise of an example.'... [Arendt] observes that Shakespeare goes much further than 'dry volumes of ethics' to instill a sense of what duties are required of us. Examples, furnished either by history or fiction, allow us imaginatively to 'go visiting,' to see and feel the contours of a plural world[. Such] examples are the narrative accountings that facilitate persuasion in the midst of common experiences and disparate opinions. [Further] Kant insisted that 'We cannot do morality a worse service than by seeking to derive it from examples.' Arendt argues that examples are central to ethico-political judgment. (Thiele 710)

Perhaps because of her ambivalent relation to the influence of Kantian ideas on her , Arendt's theory of storytelling by examples as a bedrock of political action operates on two intertextual registers throughout her work. These two registers are signified by two rhetorical stances toward the examples she adopts and the sphere of the social, which she considers as antithetical to her ideal of political storytelling. On one level are the individual agents, whom, through action, reveal the "who" of their personhood and not the "what" of their demography. Although Arendt argues that these types of truth are distinct in reference, her division is not the platonic division of contextual and transcendent truths. Because of her concept of action, the difference between a person's "who" and "what" is that the former is determined through performance and public assessment and the latter exists beyond an agent's capacity to influence with their actions.

Philosopher Hannah Pitkin, who observed these two intertextual registers, remarks how this personal level of Arendt's political action conceives of "politics [as] a tool for individual self realization[.]" Arendt's valorization of this individual engagement with the political is inevitably discussed in reference to how such ability is hindered in modernity. She posits that European modernity has been engulfed by the amorphous concept of the "social" that functioned as a "homogenizing agency[.]" destroying the capacities for individuals to act and tell unique stories, and thus, for Arendt, perform their full political potential. This social thus reduces persons to the

*what* of their demography or status and limits, if not eliminates, their ability to sustain a public *who*. (Pitkin, 199)

When Arendt discusses politics in terms of community and execution, rather than the individual, she relies on slightly different vocabulary, which Pitkin observes as the secondary intertextual register. For instance, while she often identifies politics as the essential mode for the creation of individuals and their unique stories, when discussing this communal register of politics, she situates “individual uniqueness as” inspiring political action instead of its result. In this context, “politics is primarily about founding and sustaining our shared world” and therefore the “consequences of action” is not the disclosure of individual value, but rather, actual politically viable results. Rather than existential damage, the social of modernity, in this register functions as a form of “collective impotence[.]” (Pitkin, 199) One could perhaps argue that Arendt’s notion of natality corresponds to her individual register, while her concept of plurality corresponds to this communal register.

Beyond these semiotic nuances, Arendt populates these two registers with two different sets of narrative examples. In fact, not just the fact of these two registers, but their divergence, illuminate Arendt’s own engagement with her theories of judgment, and the tension in her work between history, theorizing and storytelling. Her analysis of politics as individual acts or an individual act, notably in her book *The Human Condition* “emerge [commonly] when Arendt is explicating the view of the ancient Greeks[.]” (Pitkin, 199) When she discusses community and direct action, her typical exemplars are mid-twentieth century resistance efforts, whether from Western European countries in World War 2, the short-lived Hungarian Council system in the mid 1950’s, or, more distant historically, the American Revolution and the Constitution. (Pitkin,

199) There is little linearity in her examples, mostly adopted in their presumed ability to contour the historically amorphous concept of the social, in resistance or negation.

Many have noted the problems with Arendt's examples. They are largely Euro-centric, or in the case of the polis, incredibly outdated. Arendt does respond to some of this criticism, specifically arguing for the genealogical nature of her comments on the polis, and her reliance on a "Western" tradition of ethics and knowledge. (Pitkin, 257, 276-277) Yet, following Arendt's own ideals, her choice of examples should be seen as elemental to what her theories articulate. The Kantian concept of exemplary validity, as a marker for how publicly circulated examples and stories should be assessed, is adopted by Arendt as grounding her emphasis on and specific choice of historical examples. Arendt's use of such disparate historic illustrations could mirror her envisioned political public wherein, as Thiele explains:

competing stories. . . vie for the status of good examples. Unlike truths, judgments grounded in exemplary validity cannot ensure assent. They do not demonstrate objective validity. But the judge can legitimate her assessments, evaluations, and choices by rendering an account of their development, referencing commonly shared experiences and worthy examples along the way. Logic and reason may (and should) play a role in this account, but they remain in service to narrative meaning. Selecting the right examples, therefore, is the better part of judgment. (Thiele, 711)

The concept of exemplary validity connects the individual as judge, spectator, storyteller and political community member within Arendt's framework. In linking these capacities, categories and identities Trevor Tchir explains:

Arendt found the main difficulty of reflective judgment to be the linking of the particular with the general that the spectator must identify. To help regulate one's reflections within judgment, Arendt turned not only to Kant's notion of an original compact of humankind, with its related notion of purposiveness but also to Kant's notion of 'exemplary validity,' a notion Arendt found 'far more valuable.' 'Exemplary validity' implies that particular deeds may be taken as valid examples by which to judge other cases. This establishes an historical tradition that provides the origin for concepts and deeds that are their heirs. The notion is crystallized in the word principium, which is both a beginning and an ideal. The community of spectators rearticulates, through continuous argument, the sensus communis from which the meaning or intelligibility of these principles and their historical examples arise and in which they are conserved. (Tchir, 195)

Precisely because of the importance of exemplary validity to Arendt's project, it is important to scrutinize how Arendt's choice of historical examples narratively illocute her "theories" of political philosophy. In her selection of examples, Arendt arguably presents herself in a performative role; trying to index, or approximate, the theory of judgment she's advancing in her writing. This performative element has certain historiographic impulses. Dagmar Barbour explains that "whether she dealt with political concepts or events[,]” Arendt “presented, coaxed into the present, thinking or speaking or acting subjects so that they could be heard and seen and remembered distinctly as contributing to political experience.” (Barnouw, 25) Arendt's performative intention, embedded in her philosophical/historiographic project, is most clearly demonstrated in her analysis of Jewish history. While her analysis of Jewish history has at times been considered to be a form of victim blaming, her goal in such analysis appears to have been to produce historical subjects with a dimension of agency and capacity for action that she thought absent in much of the typical discourse on diasporic Jewish culture, history and identity. Although this narrative of Jewish history will be discussed later, it is a key intersection of her theory of exemplary validity and its execution in her historical/philosophical analysis.

This intersection of Arendt's theory of exemplary validity and its purposeful execution gestures toward the curational responsibility within Arendt's narrative enterprise, specifically in the understanding of what does not become an example. Barnouw explains:

Arendt's reclaiming presentation has created for her readers the peculiar accessibility and immediacy of a world expanded by others in narrative space and time. Clearly, even forcefully, she has been responsible for the decision of who should be remembered, and therefore present, and this decision has been based on her taste, 'the chief cultural activity,' and importantly connected with humanity's political abilities. (Barnouw, 25)

Thus, the very act of selection itself is another performative element in Arendt's ideal of political judgment, and is perhaps even a mode of action, one that is inseparable from cultural or aesthetic judgment and action. Such action of selection therefore claims a certain level of curatorial responsibility. That responsibility in how one curates their evidence and argumentative structure includes both specific choice of content, and the conceptual apparatus mobilized in selecting and curating that content.

The exemplary negativities described in the introduction are at the core of, but ambivalently located in relation to, how curatorial responsibility operates within Arendt's intertextual mode of articulating a narrative or theory of the political. They are not ignored, since there are inevitably absences in the selection process of historical writing. They are also not condemned, and are thus not the Janus-faced opposite of events, persons, and ideals that Arendt would consider worthy of exemplary validity. Instead, forms of exemplary negativity in Arendt's work operate to bolster Arendt's judgments of both her positive and negative examples, providing historical cues not needing explanation. I hope to explore how this indexical relationship to Arendt's argument or prime examples, because of the use of trivial rhetorics, gives exemplary negativities, while compositionally marginal, a generative element in how Arendt articulates her central ideas, particularly those of politics and political action.

In trying to analyze the exemplary negativity of the *Ostjuden*, it's important to understand the historical set of examples, positive forms of validity, or negative forms of repudiation, with which the trope is in direct intertextual conversation. Therefore, in the next section I will look at Arendt's narrative of Jewish history. Arendt wrote extensively, albeit not always accurately, on the topic and I do not have room to cover the entirety of this corpus with expositional detail.

Thus, following Arendt's own theoretical outlook, I will base "Arendt's narrative of Jewish history" on certain examples that she thematically emphasized within that corpus.

## II. The Political in Arendt's Narrative of Jewish History

Arendt's story of diasporic Jewish history is conceptually tethered to her description of Jews, following Weber, as a "pariah people". While Arendt does adopt certain aspects of Weber's analysis, she seeks to excavate a certain philosophical attitude embedded in the pariah position. She extends Weber's analysis to look at individual "pariahs", mostly Jews, in order to examine how that demographic position can produce philosophic dispositions, both negative and positive.

While much of her writing on the pariah position, is indebted to Weber, and to a larger extent, Bernard Lazare, whose influence on Arendt will be discussed later, in an article reviewing a biography of Rosa Luxemburg by J.P. Nettl, she cites Nietzsche as having made a keen and essential observation about the Jew as pariah. She credits his observation that "the position and function of the Jewish people in Europe predestined them to become the 'good Europeans' *par excellence*." Speaking specifically of the bourgeois-adjacent Jewish middle classes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Arendt continues that they were the only group in the region that could claim to be truly "European", vs. French, German, English etc. (Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 42) Importantly, this European essence was not a "cosmopolitan or international" identity, as thought by some, or a national identity, as those who thought they were assimilated claimed, but rather it was a positionality tied intrinsically with the political economy of Europe. It is this positionality that Arendt argues helped create the conditions for the rise of political anti-Semitism, totalitarianism and the Holocaust. (Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 42-43)

Arendt has a particular analysis about that set of conditions, mostly of political economy, for the different stages of the diasporic Jew as pariah within the European nation-state system.

While the sociological conditions that produced the pariah position were historically located and context specific, the attitude of the pariah only became, in a sense, realizable when those historical conditions were no longer present. In terms of the individual emergence of conscious pariahs, it is when the pariah identity is legally non-existent, that it can be optimally inhabited as a self-aware philosophical orientation. It was only after the emergence of emancipation in European liberal democracies over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that Jews, previously a pariah class, could interact with the public in general as pariah actors.

In tracing this transformation from a sociological pariah class to a philosophical or cultural position that individual Jews could inhabit, Arendt also analytically performs her intention to proscribe diaspora Jewry with a valence of historical agency. She does treat events like the Treaty of Westphalia or the French Revolution as essential to the emergence of European political and secular modernity. But Arendt explicitly seeks to de-emphasize the importance of such events in her account of European Jewry. Instead, Arendt chooses a specific event, the Sabbatian movement, to chronologically bifurcate her narrative and serve as a sort of narrative introduction for Arendt's telling of *modern* Jewish history. It is important to acknowledge that in choosing and recognizing this event as a fundamental historical turning point, her interpretation was directly influenced by the work of Gershom Scholem. She is also starting her story with decisions made not by secular or Gentile governments, but by largely Jewish actors.

Although Arendt's story of Jewish modernity does begin with the Sabbatian movement, or its collapse, she still discusses what could be labeled a "pre-Sabbatai" form of Jewish identity, with amorphous terms and with little reference to geographic diversity or historical change. She paints this period as defined by segregation and diaspora. With her insistence on Jewish agency,

she shifts the agentive locus behind that diaspora to Jewish avoidance of the Gentile public, instead of, or at least less than usually ascribed, Gentile oppression. Arendt sees this pre-modern community as largely autonomous due to self-imposed segregation from Gentile Europe. Because of this segregation, in turn, Arendt saw pre-modern diaspora Jewry as incapable of producing any type of political community, at least in her definition of engaging in the shared world of human plurality. Philosopher and student of Arendt Ron Feldman explains that in Arendt's historical narrative, "[u]ntil the end of the Middle Ages," European Jews "had been able to conduct their communal affairs by means of a politics that existed in the realm of imagination alone -- the memory of a far-off past and the hope of a far-off future." (Feldman, in: Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, xlvii)

It is telling that she describes the pre-Sabbatai Jewish community as autonomously participating in an imaginary rather than substantive form of politics. Arendt's use of the term imaginary is not exactly that of the individual cognitive faculty. It is a form of communal apprehension that is distilled from the present, pertaining to what she believed was a messianic horizon that viewed history as referring to either the biblical past or redemptive future, instead of a publicly shared procession of action-shaping events. For her, such ideology affected how diasporic Jewry could engage in a politics of plurality.

Arendt identified this ideology with the term "worldlessness." Loosely adapted from Heidegger, to have a world, for Arendt, meant to be part of a community, that held a tradition and shared locus of authority that enabled a space for the identityproducing storytelling and political action. She argued that such a tradition was unavailable to the diasporic pre-emancipation Jewish community, because of discrimination or self-segregation. Continually present in Arendt's analy-

sis, and an aspect that will be assessed later, is her assertion that this condition for pre-modern Jews anticipated what would become a sort of a-political reality for much of modern Europe, as it began to be engulfed by the emergence of the realm of the social and its associated wordlessness.

In addition to the assessment of wordlessness, Arendt also relies on certain traditional, albeit similarly nonspecific, historical analysis of European Jewry. She locates them as solely existing in oscillation between segregated ghettos and the “market sector of the economy”. This market space also contributed to the condition of wordlessness. Arendt considered economic and political activity as fundamentally distinct in terms of how they produce individuals and mediate the actions of those individuals. She articulated that philosophical separation in *The Human Condition* through her pseudo etymological reading of the Greek polis wherein the non-political domestic sphere, or private household, was associated with the domain of economics. Hence, diasporic Jewry’s communal segregation in all areas except economic, and emphasis on economic vs other genres of public activity and interaction, for Arendt, was not conducive to the objects, actions, and speech acts that comprise a truly political existence, communally and individually.

Summarizing this triadic of wordlessness, political-economy, and the historical transition from pre-modern to modern, for both Jews and Gentiles, Feldman explains that Arendt contended:

[T]he modern age was characterized by the cause which underlay the Jews' reliance on money wealth: the lack of any physical place to which people were rooted and from which they could orient themselves to the world, grasp reality, and experience history. The unique worldless situation of the Jews increasingly became the generalized condition of humankind. And, as the world within which they existed as a pariah people started to disintegrate, the Jews were at the forefront of the process because they had, as it were, a head start. (Feldman, in: Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, lxvi)

Of course, Arendt does not deny the role played by secular institutions and political events in Jewish history and the emergence of emancipation. Arendt adopts a specific narrative in how she tells the story of this historical shift. She suggests that the fundamental transition is from the pre-modern socio-legal status of Jews as pariah people to the modern post-emancipation period, wherein, Jewish individuals, although no longer inhabiting the same legal category, had a unique capacity to adopt pariah positions in Western Europe. She grants the Sabbatian movement, as mentioned earlier, a tremendous influence in facilitating this transition. She focuses extensively on the Sabbatian movement, its influence, and collapse, in two articles, “The Jewish State” where she compares it with late nineteenth century Zionism, and “Jewish History Revised”, which, while a review of Gershom Scholem’s book on the role of the movement in the history of Jewish mysticism, develops into Arendt’s own exposition on the historico-philosophical impact of the moment, as well Jewish mysticism in general.

While only present extensively in two essays, in those essays, she accords the event a monumental prominence. Prefacing her analysis in “The Jewish State” she asserts that “[d]uring the twenty centuries of their Diaspora the Jews have made only two attempts to change their condition by direct political action. The first was the Shabbetai Tzevi movement [; a] mystic-political movement for the salvation of Jewry which terminated the Jewish Middle Ages.” The ostensible failure of the movement “brought about a catastrophe whose consequences determined Jewish attitudes and basic convictions for over two centuries thereafter.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 377) Furthermore, she concludes in “Jewish History Revised”, with poetic emphasis, that “[t]he catastrophe of Shabbetai Tzevi, after closing one book of Jewish history, becomes the cradle of a new era.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 311)

Undoubtedly, Arendt's emphasis on the Sabbatian movement is rooted in her scholastic context. Gershom Scholem, who had almost single handedly established the academic study of Jewish mysticism, had first argued for the indispensable importance of the Sabbatian movement, an argument Arendt is commenting upon, championing and from which her analysis launches. Instead of being treated as historical novelty, Scholem's Sabbatai was a figure whose tremendous impact was in conversation with trends in Jewish demography and intellectual history. Arendt, following Scholem, situates this movement as a turning point in Jewish modernity. For both scholars, the Sabbatian movement is at the root of the later eighteenth and nineteenth century movements of Chassidism, Haskalah and Reform Judaism, refuting previous assessments that had considered Sabbatianism as a curious spectacle before the emergence of those more modern movements.

Emphatic and admiring of Scholem's influence and research, despite their later and famous fallout, Arendt locates his work within her own project of re-narrating Jewish history in terms of Jewish agency rather than Gentile discrimination. Summarizing the historical narrative she is seeking to counter, Arendt starts her review of Scholem's text with the observation:

Jewish historians of the last century, consciously or not, used to ignore all those trends of the Jewish past which did not point to their own major thesis of Diaspora history, according to which the Jewish people did not have a political history of their own but were invariably the innocent victims of a hostile and sometimes brutal environment. Once this environment changed, Jewish history logically would cease to be history at all, as the Jewish people would cease to exist as a people. In sharp contrast to all other nations, the Jews were not history makers but history sufferers, preserving a kind of eternal identity of goodness whose monotony was disturbed only by the equally monotonous chronicle of persecutions and pogroms. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 303)

In championing what she sees as Scholem's historiographic intervention, she iterates her emphasis on the Jewish roots of Haskalah modernity. She explains that Scholem's "entirely new

interpretation of the Reform and other modern developments that broke away from Orthodoxy” helps counter the previous assumption that such movements, “used to be viewed as the consequences of the emancipation granted to sections of the Jewish people and as the necessary reactions of a new adjustment to the requirements of the Gentile world.” She emphasizes that “in the last chapter of his book,” Scholem, “conclusively proves that the Reform movement, with its curiously mixed tendencies toward liquidating Judaism and yet preserving it, was not a mechanical assimilation to the ideas and demands of a foreign environment but the outgrowth of the debacle of the last great Jewish political activity, the Sabbatian movement, of the loss of messianic hope, and of the despair about the ultimate destiny of the people.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 303)

This characterization of Reform Judaism bares importance to what I consider Arendt’s impetus in re-narrating European Jewish history, particularly as it dwells in the ambiguities of political action. Reform Judaism was a quintessentially German Jewish movement, and as Arendt points out, sought to assimilate into Gentile society while preserving some form of Jewish identity. In trying to ambivalently place agency within Jewish actors historically, while emphasizing the perhaps suspect decisions made with such agency, the influence of Sabbatai is essential. Reform Judaism is not a positive move made in reference to new secular opportunities, but rather a move away from the political, toward the social (treating Jewish community life as a de-politicized identity rather than potential locus point for political action) informed by an emphatically Jewish event centuries before.

Accordingly, Arendt continues Scholem’s trend in tracing modern Judaism to Sabbatianism, instead of, or with a more pronounced emphasis in comparison to, legal emancipation. She argues that “Sabbatianism represents the first serious revolt in Judaism since the Middle Ages; it

was the case of mystical ideas leading directly to the disintegration of the orthodox Judaism of the ‘believers’ It was the influence of these elements which had not openly cut themselves off from Rabbinical Judaism which, after the French Revolution, became important in fostering the movement towards reform liberalism and enlightenment’ in many Jewish circles.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 309)

While Sabbatianism does not appear “political”, in contrast to the French Revolution and associated movement toward emancipation that, at first glance, seem to epitomize a commonplace definition of politics, the Sabbatian movement did galvanize the Jewish community in a way that, according to Arendt, could potentially approximate some type of political action. This potential of Sabbatian politics fell short precisely because it was organized around apocalyptic mysticism and not grounded forms of governance and inter-communal action. Still, for Arendt, Sabbatianism at least held political possibility, which is why she selects the moment as an example of great interest and node of importance in her story of Jewish history. That potential, in Arendt’s narrative, was squandered by the Jewish response to emancipation, and the formation of a civil society that emerged, which was inhabited by newly “emancipated Jews” and was fundamentally a-political. With ostensible legal rights, Jews adopted more individualized social forms of public participation, simultaneous to the widespread emergence of the “social” or “society” as engulfing the public and marginalizing the capacity for politics among both Jewish and Gentile citizens.

The Sabbatian movement is for Arendt therefore a liminal moment of potentiality in Jewish politics. She explains that “the Shabbetai Tzevi movement” served as the space wherein “centuries-old memories and hopes” of diasporic Judaism, that, in her narrative, drew meaning solely

from its own affairs, which in turn, extrapolated significance from an ideographic reservoir of oppressive history and redemptive futurity and “culminated in a single exalted moment. Its catastrophic aftermath brought to a close probably forever the period in which religion alone could provide the Jews with a firm framework within which to satisfy their political, spiritual, and everyday needs.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 377)

In that space, Jews had been galvanized to, in a sense, leave their ghetto, as Arendt would suggest, but not enter secular society completely. With the potential of redemption, in Arendt’s narrative the present, as a space to live and engage with community was for the first time in the diaspora a horizon open to the Jewish imagination. Much of Arendt’s granting of that potentiality is arguably due to Scholem’s interpretation of the pre-Sabbatian shift in Kabbalistic mysticism that emphasized the Jews’ historically active role in preparing for the messiah. Although mystical in content, the ability of that paradigm to disperse to a large community and organize that community around a common trope, Sabbatai Zevi, for Arendt, held the potential for a Jewish politics.

While this messianic movement could have sparked action, the potential for action dissipated with its failure. The faith in what had been the exilic norm collapsed and, according to Arendt, the “disillusionment” of that collapse “was lasting insofar as from then on their religion no longer afforded the Jews an adequate means of evaluating and dealing with contemporary events, political or otherwise.” Large sections of the Jewish community ideologically shifted toward the position that their theological history was irrelevant toward their lived lives, capacities and institutional situations. They would from then on “judge secular events on a secular basis and make secular decisions in secular terms.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 378)

Arendt argued that what the Jewish community, at that point, “needed was not...a guide to reality, but reality itself; not simply a key to history, but the experience itself of history....[T]his need of reality had existed since the collapse of the Shabbetai Tzevi movement and the disappearance of messianic hope as a lively factor in the consciousness of the Jewish masses.” (378) It is intriguing, that Arendt, while in no way endorsing messianism, does see some type of messianic consciousness as holding the potentiality for politics. Presumably, this potentiality, in order to emerge as legitimate political action, would require that messianic component to narratively transform into a secular type of exemplary validity, organizing the action of individuals within the community toward goals in the lived present. This narrative process, while necessary for Arendt’s interpretation, is never tangibly delineated by Arendt in either her historical or theoretical writings. Such structural necessity, but also silence, signifies a certain intertextual node that is interpolated by Arendt with the types of tropes and exposition that constitute what I have termed exemplary negativity.

For Arendt, the collapse of the Sabbatian movement and its “messianic consciousness” serves as a narratological origin point for modern European Jewish history. In its failure, or felt failure, European Jews made the *choice* to place their futurity in secular culture, approaching that milieu as individuals. Such a choice was not necessarily a negative in Arendt’s paradigm, but in this context, it fetishistically covered up the social forms of anti-Semitism newly legally emancipated Jews were to face. What was at issue with this narrative mode of individuality and individual *choice*, at least as argued by Arendt during World War II, was that Jews mistakenly focused on cultural assimilation at the level of individual capacity as the remedy toward hostile attitudes, instead of political mobilization. Hence, when given the legal capacity to participate in secular

society, they *chose* to do so in a fundamentally non-political way, preferring attempts at social integration over political assertion.

Arendt's scrutiny of figures like Rahel Varnhagen, who embodied this emancipation era approach, demonstrates the overpowering element of the social in the lived experiences of emancipated Jewry. While emblematic of this period, as well as earlier eras, such as the history of court Jews, her focus is explicitly on the lack of Jewish political potential or output during these periods, and how that deficit, in the case of Varnhagen, affected her interior life. Further, although she does engage with the emergence of the bourgeois and the relationship of Jewish communities to transformations in political economy, in Arendt's intertextual story there is an ostensible void in the potentiality for exemplary validity from the collapse of the Sabbatian movement until nearly a century and a half after legal emancipation. The emergence of political anti-Semitism, and intellectual Zionism are for Arendt the markers of this next moment in her story of Jewish modernity; narratively the most salient event after its Sabbatian beginning.

Arendt locates the milieu that inaugurated this movement of intellectual Zionism in a set of demographic events. She argues that there were "two entirely separate factors whose coincidence produced Zionism [...] [T]he first of these factors" stems from the cross geographic emergence during the late nineteenth century of institutional and social forces of "anti-Semitism [that] sprang up as a political force simultaneously in Russia, Germany, Austria, and France." Although roughly contemporaneous, there were distinctions with respect to the emergence of anti-Semitism in these places. Despite such differences, for Arendt, the effects of rising anti-Semitism directed Jewish populations westward.

Arendt explains that “[t]he pogroms of 1881 in Russia set in motion that huge migratory movement from East to West which remained the most characteristic single feature of modern Jewish history until 1933.” This essential demographic shift was complemented by “the emergence of political anti-Semitism at exactly the same moment in both Central and Western Europe[.]” Shocking for many Jews in these emancipated nations was that “the support, if not leadership, given” to political anti-Semitism “by sizable sections of the European intelligentsia refuted beyond doubt the traditional liberal contention that Jew hatred was only a remnant of the so-called Dark Ages.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 379)

European Jewry, due to the late nineteenth century feedback loop of migration and political anti-Semitism, had thus gone through an existential shift matched only by the end of the Sabbatian movement. “Existential,” while maybe not Arendt’s word, I think is apt for her narratological rhetoric. This situation and the Sabbatian event, within Arendt’s mode and continuity of storytelling serve as the two watershed moments wherein the Jewish community was forced to reflexively re-narrate their own position in relation to their surrounding culture. In turn, it is in those moments, for Arendt, that the potentiality of political action could have emerged.

Accordingly, the later event, the rise of intellectual Zionism, of existential ambiguity and political imagination, included philosopho-cultural shifts that were embedded in the sociological feedback loop between anti-Semitism and migration. Arendt describes how the relationship between demography and philosophical culture was “important for the political history of the Jewish people” because of “the fact that the westward migration despite the objections to the ‘Ostjuden’ so loudly voiced by the emancipated Jews of the West brought together the two main sections of Jewry[.]” Arendt continues that a “new feeling of solidarity” arose “at least among the

moral elite and taught both Eastern and Western Jews to see their situation in identical terms.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 379)

This moral elite, for Arendt, was made up of those who saw the shared social persecution, and presumably, in her terms, opportunity for political mobilization. In broad strokes, such a group, within the German context, was comprised of “[t]he Russian Jew who came to Germany in flight from persecution” who had “discovered that [the] Enlightenment had not extinguished violent Jew-hatred, and the German Jew who saw the homelessness of his Eastern brother [and] began to view his own situation in a different light.” (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 379)

Arendt’s moral elite, which she suggests to be cross-class and cross-cultural, as well as sociologically aligned around an ethic of Jewish solidarity, is in conversation with another demographic shift underlying the rise of intellectual Zionism. She notes that:

The second factor responsible for the rise of Zionism...was the emergence of a class entirely new to Jewish society, the intellectuals, of whom Herzl became the main spokesman and whom he himself termed the class of ‘average (durchschnittliche) intellects’. These intellectuals resembled their brethren in the more traditional Jewish occupations insofar as they, too, were entirely de-Judaized in respect to culture and religion. What distinguished them was that they no longer lived in a cultural vacuum; they had actually become "assimilated": they were not only de-Judaized, they were also Westernized. This, however, did not make for their social adjustment. Although Gentile society did not receive them on equal terms, they had no place in Jewish society either, because they did not fit into its atmosphere of business and family connections. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 379)

It is in this generation that Arendt’s conscious pariah emerges, or at least, became a widespread viable option for European Jews. Of course, conceptually there is nothing tying the conscious pariah to this exact demographic group and historical moment. Further, only a part of this demographic would have filled Arendt’s theorized identity, and thus the approximation of some kind of Jewish exemplary validity. But this group of late nineteenth, early twentieth century European Jewish intellectuals did presumably include figures like Lazare, and Kafka, who were two

of Arendt's key conscious pariahs, as well as many other figures she wrote on with rhetoric of critical adoration, such as Rosa Luxemburg or Walter Benjamin.

Arendt's exposition on the conscious pariah will be discussed more in depth later, but I would like to focus on certain assumptions in the passage about the historical emergence of this class that would house many of Arendt's conscious pariahs. For Arendt, what distinguishes this generation of Jewish intellectuals from past generations is that they had truly inherited the Western tradition. If the end of the Sabbatian movement inspired many Jews ideologically to align themselves with secular history and society, it is this generation that fully internalized the full extent of the "Western" horizon of knowledge, identity and perspective.

Arendt narrates the emergence of this generation as coinciding with the migration of Eastern European Jews, specifically, Jews who, in the imagination of both the Western Jews and their Gentile surroundings, signified the trope of the *Ostjuden*. Arendt's class of intellectuals, which was not identical but certainly overlapped with her moral elite, at least in terms of the Western members of the "elite", was thus in an auspicious position based on this migration, existentially, socially, and to an extent, politically. They had personified liberal Enlightenment ideology, or in the German case, "Bildung", with its rhetoric of acculturation and the transcendence of the individual over inheritance and context. But, in being the Jewish fruition of that ideograph, this class of intellectuals were highly aware of superstructural fallibility of "Bildung" as an ideological apparatus. They held more Western approaches and intellectual opportunities than their ancestors, while also forced to recognize the futility of their ancestors' dream of full assimilation, in terms of acceptance, in a society of religious tolerance and liberal individualism. Still, it is worth noting that similar to how Aschheim locates the presence of the imagined *Ostjuden* as in-

tegral to those Jewish “Bildung” dreams, Arendt describes the presence of actual *Ostjuden* to this generational moment in the realization/failure of those dreams.

Returning to Arendt’s performative intention in narrating Jewish history, as described by Barnouw and Disch in the first section, and the role of exemplary validities in intentional storytelling, one wonders how her emphasis on the two moments described in this section interact with that purpose. Beyond these two moments, Sabbatianism and the rise of intellectual Zionism, Arendt produced a wide corpus of writings on Jewish history, political anti-Semitism, and Zionism, particularly from the 1930’s to 1950’s. Nevertheless, she herself granted these moments a certain unique relationship to the affordance of political consciousness, albeit political consciousness that never led to the kind of action she would consider necessary for viable Jewish politics.

It must be noted that this era in Arendt’s writing is not explicitly in conversation with her later theories of the political. Still I am using the narrative developed during this period, wherein she focused on Jewish history, in order to analyze and contextualize certain more abstract ideas, such as those on political judgment described earlier, which she would develop later in her career. In fact, her work on Jewish history is seen by many to be a precursor, if not a de-facto laboratory for the theory of politics she would articulate later on in *The Human Condition*, or *Between Past and Future*. Further, it has been noted that the methodological genealogy of both Arendt’s political philosophy and theory of historical narrative, in development and execution, is present if not inseparable from her writings on Jewish history. (Bernstein, 17, 22, 31-32, 50, 52, 54)

Although my next section will largely assess Arendt's ideas of politics as they intersect with her rhetorical use of the *Ostjuden*, I want to emphasize that her experimenting with the idea of a *Jewish politics*, elucidated in her narrative of Jewish history, is entangled with how she was theoretically experimenting with a universalesque theory of the *political*. Hence, the conceptual and narrative nodes of emphasis within Arendt's Jewish history discussed in this section, the Sabbatian collapse and intellectual Zionism, I would suggest, are important performatively and in content at the level of Arendt's general theory of politics. Her exposition of these events details what can approximate a communal politics, and the difference between individuals and communities in the thinking and execution of the political. Accomplished through the use of examples rather than pure analytic distinction, these boundaries are essential for understanding Arendt's political, but are rarely defined with exactitude.

While the rhetorical practices associated with Arendt's "narrative" or non-explicitly analytic mode of boundary production may be more indexical than iconic, the latter presumably being the semiotic shape of a full exemplary validity, such practices arguably delineate key points and structures in Arendt's implicit conceptual framework of exemplary validity. These points are the theoretical outskirts of what the concept can denote and therefore how the concept can be narratively explored and deployed. Hence, if the *polis*, the American Constitution, or the Hungarian Council System of the 1950's, three of Arendt's clearly articulated exemplary validities, can demonstrate the form of a sufficiently political community, the "failures" of Sabbatianism and intellectual Zionism can show what could be, but are not, ideal modes of communal political action. These two moments thus provide those outskirts, or ambiguous boundaries, for the more clearly bounded moments of exemplary validity and narrate certain parameters that are required

assumptions for judging and presenting an example as worthy of validity and replication. Therefore, moments like those described in this section, that I would suggest are essential to Arendt's theory and story of Jewish politics, because they are examples of heightened potential but also heightened failure, are enmeshed with the function of exemplary negativities.

### **III. *Ostjuden*: Exemplary Negativity Exemplar**

Exemplary negativities are leaky analytics. Locating them involves porous and ambiguous forms of relationality between what they are meant to index and how they are defined in reference to that index. For instance, the relation between the moments of Jewish history and the political was defined by could be but not, rather than a simple Boolean assessment.

Before getting to the *Ostjuden* as an exemplary negativity, it may help to elocute more specifically what I wish for the concept to connote. Exemplary negativities are not simply examples of actions or events that Arendt finds objectionable. Arendt's critique of totalitarianism or of the French Revolution do not function as exemplary negativities. While clearly not examples that Arendt would find worthy of replication, such phenomena, when discussed by Arendt, follow a similar semiotic logic to how she narrates events that she would arguably consider to be worthy of exemplary validity. This shared logic is most clear in the level of analytic scrutiny. It includes not just immense detail, but the presumption that the event or topic must be fleshed in its relationality as a bounded iconic presence. She applies the same theoretical sophistication when championing the delineation of work, action and labor in the polis as when she finds such divisions radically, and negatively, altered during the reign of terror or during the rise of fascism.

In contrast to these examples, as well as those that Arendt would describe with positivity, exemplary negativities, as narrative moments, serve a different purpose in Arendt's performative logic of storytelling. Instead of being direct opposites, or pedagogical demonstrations to avoid, exemplary negativities are indexically related to Arendt's political, in that their rhetorical use is indirect but signaling, not well explained but presented as if clear.

Their relation to Arendt's concept of politics, or failure to live up to that notion, is seen as largely assumed and not in need of in-depth exposition. Instead, they are used for interrogating other aspects of the narrative or analysis she's articulating. With that lack of exposition, Arendt assumes her reader, and community of judgment, can still extract how such examples point toward, or at least are in a conversation with, her concept of a political community, without explanation or analysis.

Katherine T. Gines, in her excellent book *Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question* adroitly deconstructs Arendt's abysmal views on the American civil rights movement and certain philosophies of black radicalism. Gines locates how Arendt's perspective on what were current events of political importance in the latter half of the twentieth century, notably salient in works such as *On Violence* and Arendt's essay "Reflections on Little Rock", was inconsistent with how Arendt had used the concepts of the political and social in reference to Jewish history earlier in her career. While Arendt had emphasized the need for radical, even violent, Jewish resistance and activism as a political necessity, she did not extend such measures to Black American resistance or post-colonial movements. She claims that those latter movements were fundamentally "social", which for Arendt, always had a negative valence. She argued that such perspectives, notably from Black activists and thinkers, notably for the latter, Franz Fanon, were based around a misconstrual of their oppression. That assumptive claim of misconstrual allowed Arendt to not actually engage with the substance presented by such post-colonial or Black radical or even activist claims.

It is not within the scope of this paper to elaborate on Gines' sophisticated argument and in-depth analysis of Arendt's shortcomings when engaging with these issues and thinkers. Never-

theless, I want to reflect on one of Gines' comments in her conclusion. Gines explains that

Arendt:

claims that she forms opinions considering different viewpoints (including those that are absent). But she does not make the case that the absent view-point should be made present (that is, should be brought into the space of deliberation). rather, she asserts that she can represent the absent viewpoints. and while this might be less problematic if those absent were actually consulted about their viewpoints, the problem is that the absent viewpoints are summarily dismissed[.] (Gines, 125)

Gines' analysis of Arendt's conceptual flaw, and its ethical implications, especially in reference to Arendt's theory of storytelling and political judgment, gestures toward certain ways that exemplary negativities function. Importantly, such function is theoretical, rhetorical, and as pointed out by Gines, inevitably ethical. This triangulation is especially salient in terms of Arendt's political. Her use of the concept is not only marked by theoretical ambiguity and a loose reliance on historical examples but is also highly categorical in its rhetorical presentation and philosophical origins.

In what follows, I wish to explore what I suggest to be a central exemplary negativity for the theoretical development of Arendt's notion of politics: the *Ostjuden*. While there are other exemplary negativities in Arendt's work, and due to the porous boundary of the concept, many such examples are conceptually overlapped through certain rhetorical tropes and assumptions, I would suggest that the figure of the *Ostjude* operates as pivotal exemplary negativity in the way Arendt thinks out a concept of political action. Therefore, analyzing the narratological, citational, and at times, trivial, function of the *Ostjuden*, can help to elucidate the role that exemplary negativities play within Arendt's implicit theoretical framework.

The first location of the *Ostjuden* as exemplary negativity I will assess can be found through Arendt's direct engagement with Zionist politics. The second is interspersed throughout

Arendt's implicit assumptions surrounding culture, acculturation and European history. Arendt abstracts notions of culture, taste and context in order to deliver a categorical, rather than historical, theory of politics and political judgment while simultaneously trying to balance historicity with speculation. The two locations, which can be seen as operating as heuristics in order to locate and compare different intertextual webs that engender exemplary negativities, thus allow for that balance between a context dependent but categorical theory of politics. Furthermore, as two loose heuristics, the two intertextual locations correspond to Arendt's two registers wherein she articulates her theory of political judgment, described by Pitkin earlier. The former, her engagement with Zionist politics, which will be filtered through her relationship to the Zionism of Bernard Lazare, refers to the more communal register and capacity for action. The latter, her ruminations of cultural history, and how she considers notions of taste and ideology, correspond to the register associated with her ruminations on the individual political judge as produced within a community of judgment. Within the intertextual conversation that I will organize around these two heuristics, the *Ostjuden* continually perform an indexical function in how Arendt relates her more grounded historical analysis to the abstract categories that buttress her political philosophy.

### **The *Ostjuden* as Index of the Pariah and the Politics of Zionism**

In order to decipher the exemplary negativity of the *Ostjuden*, through Arendt's analysis of the politics of Zionism, I want to begin with the citational relationship between Arendt's figure of the conscious pariah and the French Jewish anarchist Bernard Lazare, who coined the term. Arendt explicitly derived her theory of the conscious pariah as a particularly Jewish "hidden tradition" in European modernity, from Lazare. As well, while she might have not been using as

much Kantian terminology when writing on Lazare, he is arguably her most prominent exemplary validity of Jewish politics. When she first started exploring Zionism, it was Lazare's ideas that arguably helped her remain invested in the movement despite her antipathy toward the Herzlian orthodoxy.

Before getting to Arendt's uptake of Lazare, I want to examine Lazare's intellectual development in relation to his Jewish identity. This process began with him as a member of a certain group of French Symbolist literati, filled with antipathy toward Jews and Judaism, and culminated in his adoption of his own Jewish identity as a politically significant apparatus. Along with this narrative, I will also examine certain of Lazare's writings on Jewish identity, nationalism, and Arendt's response to these concepts, particular in how both authors used the *Ostjuden* to critique Herzl's Zionism and articulate what they considered an alternative vision for world Jewry.

Lazare's shift and development into a spokesperson for a certain concept of Zionism is articulated by Michael Lowy in the penultimate chapter of his book *Redemption and Utopia*. While much of the book deals with German-speaking Jewish intellectuals, who had produced a series of highly philosophical works that combined tenets of anarchism, German neo-romanticism and certain theories of Jewish mysticism, Lazare is the lone French thinker discussed in Lowy's analysis. For Lowy, Lazare's difference in ideas, and origin, confirm Lowy's thesis about the generation of German Jewish thinkers that are the central focus of his text. His biographical snapshot of Lazare's Jewish identity, politics and ideology provide a useful narrative.

Lowy points out that the central episode in Lazare's Jewish identity, which one could use to mark his life into segments before and afterward, was the Dreyfus affair. Early in Lazare's ca-

reer, while a member of the French literary Symbolist movement, he was drawn far more to Catholic mysticism than his own Jewish background. In fact, Lowy notes that before Dreyfus, Lazare spoke on Judaism and Jews in a valence that could be considered anti-Semitic. For instance, in an article written by Lazare from “September 1890” presented by Lowy, Lazare “argues that one must avoid at all costs confusing the ‘Israelite of France’ with the Jews, the worshippers of the Golden Calf. The ‘Israelites of France’ reject ‘an alleged solidarity grouping them with Frankfurt money-changers, Russian usurers, Polish innkeepers or Galician pawnbrokers, with whom they have nothing in common’.” (Lowy, 187) In another article written soon after this one, Lowy cites a diatribe from Lazare wherein he announces:

What do Russian usurers ... Polish horse-traders, Prague middlemen matter to me, an Israelite of France ... By virtue of which supposed fraternity shall I concern myself over measures taken by the Tsar against subjects who seem to him to be doing harmful things? ... If they are suffering, I feel for them the pity naturally owed to everyone who suffers, irrespective of who they are. ... The Christians of Crete have as much right to move me as do the many others who are pariahs in the world – and who are not Israelites. (Lowy, 187)

Similar to Arendt, Lazare felt uncomfortable and at times indignant about the presumed association of Jewish identity. Indeed, Lazare makes bigoted comments about Eastern European Jewry, which are ostensibly poetic trivialities, emanating from his frustration with an imagined expectation of allegiance. Lowy notes that Lazare was “proud of his identity as an assimilated ‘French Israelite’ ... [and] spurned any association with the unworthy throng of Ashkenazim Jews, with their ‘bizarre Judeo-Germanic patois’”. Lowy comments that “[t]his type of complicitous attitude to anti-Semitism on the part of the assimilated Jew, was exactly what Lazare would pillory once he had become a ‘conscious pariah’.” (Lowy, 187)

As noted, it was the public anti-Semitism that emerged with the Dreyfus Affair that produced Lazare’s more convivial attitude toward Jewry. Although before the Affair he had devel-

oped a softer attitude toward the Jewish religion, finding in it certain revolutionary traces that he admired, it was the media spectacle of Dreyfus that shifted his thinking on Jewish history, demography and identity. Lowy explains that:

If 'The Affair' confirmed Lazare in his anarchist convictions, the mass anti-Semitic hysteria against the 'traitor Dreyfus' led to a new turning-point in his ideas on the Jewish condition: his complaisant and ambivalent attitude to anti-Semitism was gone once and for all, as was his optimistic illusions about the 'Israelites of France'! He engaged in open battle against anti-Semitism[.]...From that point on, he regarded Dreyfus as the symbol of the Jews, victimized by anti-Semitic hatred throughout the world, and in particular of the East European Jews whom he had previously treated with so much contempt [...Dreyfus] embodied not only the age-old suffering of the nation of martyrs, but also the present grief. Through him, I saw the Jews cooped up in Russian hard-labour prisons ... the Romanian Jews whose human rights had been denied, the Galician Jewish proletarians starved by financial trusts.' (Lowy, 192-193)

Demonstrated by Lowy and the sentiment of the quote at the end, Lazare's views on his Jewish identity were continually expressed in reference to the trope of different Eastern European Jewish communities. When negative, the primitivism of such *Ostjuden* was thrown as reference. When outraged at anti-Semitism, it is the victimhood of such communities that was underscored -- an oppression that was distant but, due to circumstances, revealed symbolically through Dreyfus' persecution.

Motivated by such newly found fervor, Lazare became active within certain Zionist circles, and while an active member in the movement wrote:

in a letter to Chaim Weizmann in 1901 that critiqued Herzl's image of the Jewish Nation State, ... 'I understood that Herzl's Zionism would not yet give Jews their basic freedoms. Leading a herd of slaves into Palestine is not a solution to the problem.' What was important was to organize the people into Jewish centres in Galicia and Russia, and to develop the Jewish culture, not in the sense of 'narrow nationalistic sentiment', but by starting from 'Jewish tendencies that are human tendencies in the highest sense of the word'. Such a task could be achieved only by 'breaking with the political-diplomatic and bourgeois Zionism that is currently on stage'. (Lowy, 195)

Writing a year later, after he had seemingly broken from the Zionist ideology, Lazare

advocated that Jews should participate in social libertarian movements within their respective countries. At least, that was what he proposed in his article on Jews in Romania, published in 1902 by the *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*. If, he argued, the fiercely anti-Semitic bourgeoisie of the Romanian landowners and officials' drives the Jew to desperation and pushes him to his limits, the Jew, in spite of his passivity, in spite of the counsel given him by the fearful rich of his own people, will join. (Lowy, 196)

In both these quotes, Lazare is resting his critique of Herzl's Zionism on the conceptual assumptions that underlie his notion of the conscious pariah, which would go on to be the foundation for Arendt's appropriations and abstraction of the term. In contrast to Herzl's Zionism, which sought to politically respond to Jewish marginalization with the protection of Jewish communities through the granting of liberal rights in the form of a nation-state, Lazare sought for the construction of a Jewish politics not driven by the impetus for protection, but instead driven by empowered radical Jewish marginality. Lazare insisted that because of their oppression, Jewish communities and individuals held the responsibility to participate in broader struggles, from a place of Jewish identity, that were not confined by Jewish participation.

In espousing this alternative to Herzlian Zionism, Lazare did adopt some messianic ideals, or metaphors, albeit with far less interest than the neo-romantic Jewish messianism of some of his German peers. He may not have been as directly sentimental or romantic about the messianic impulse as others, but Lazare still viewed such traditions and intellectual horizons as perhaps holding some liberatory promise. In fact, Lazare shared Arendt's fascination with the political potential of Sabbatianism, rather than its mystical orientation. (Lowy, 197-198) Nevertheless, while Lazare may have been somewhat interested, Lowy explains that, "Jewish messianism was more a historical and a cultural reference than a transcendental religious promise [for Lazare]." (Lowy, 199)

Yet, analogous to figures like Martin Buber that found the Eastern European Chassidic movement as providing the cure for an alienated modernity, a pattern that is clear in the selections from Lazare presented above is that his theory of the conscious pariah was continually articulated through reference to the struggles of Eastern European Jewish communities. Lazare does not explicitly locate emancipatory potential in the *Ostjuden*, as if it were a simulacrum of revolutionary primitivism. Instead, Eastern European Jews seem to comprise the majority of the examples used to convey Lazare's vision of where a potential true Jewish "emancipation" could occur, albeit a form distinct from the kind achieved in Western Europe.

In fact, in an 1899 lecture, "Nationalism and Jewish Emancipation" he makes a stark criticism of Western European Jewry. To Lazare, Western European Jews fundamentally failed, if one could use that description, in their response to anti-Semitism and assumption of legal citizenship. He asserts that "the mistake and the sin of the Western Jew" was that "he was not able worthily to enjoy his freedom; he did not look upon it as something which was due him, which had been stolen from him and which he was recapturing, but as a thing granted to him, of which he must make himself worthy." (Lazare, 94) This attribution of "failure" would be echoed in Arendt's writings. Arendt had found in Lazare, because of his attributive rhetoric, a writer on Jewish history that saw Jews as agents, who could react improperly to emancipation, instead of a population completely subject to the whim of gentile society.

In addition to this criticism of Western European Jewry, as possessing a failed autonomy, Lazare positively infused a wide spectrum of non-assimilated, largely Eastern European Jewish communities as containing a certain Jewish essence and set of attributes lost by assimilated Jew-

ry. Describing these attributes in his 1899 article, “Judaism's Social Concept and the Jewish People” he explains:

when I speak of the Jews, I refer to the mass of Galician, Rumanian, Russian and Oriental Jews, and not to the occasional Christianized and Hellenized Jews of the West -- although the better sort among the latter have preserved, nevertheless, their Jewish characteristics. In this mass a special intellectuality derives from a like education, a like way of life, material, religious, and moral. From the threefold, ethnological, ethical, and intellectual point of view, the Jews are undeniably a people, among whom single individuals, as among all peoples, are perfectly able to acquire another nationality (Lazare, 124)

While these non-emancipated Jewish communities are at one level championed by Lazare, there is something static in how Lazare grants them a trans-national identity and affiliation. Lazare does portray Eastern European Jews with an ostensibly positive valence, in their encapsulation of a true Jewish nationality, and lack of agentive failure. Yet that lack of failure is rhetorically marked not by successful decisions or actions, but by a depiction where agency is absent, or at best, a potentiality. Lazare approaches his contemporaneous Eastern European, or rather, non-emancipated Jewish communities, as uniformly representative of a pristine Jewish nationality. He does not comment on the diverse kinds of historical effort and action differently engaged with by these non-emancipated Jewish communities: activities, events and figures that engendered these historically dynamic “authentic” Jewish traditions. Lazare’s assessment and description of this “authentic” Jewish nationality is thus marked not as a success but as a matter of fact situation.

Making clear the static form of identity and agency Lazare attributes to Eastern European Jews is his criticism of the Western Jewish insistence on emancipation. In an 1897 lecture given to Russian Jewish students in France, he satirizes the emancipatory intention, or valorization of the emancipatory process of Western Jewry, asking “[w]hat, at the present moment, can you show the Jew of Eastern Europe, who so keenly desired to attain the position of his Western

brothers? You can show him the Jew pariah. Is that not a beautiful ideal for him to achieve?" (Lazare, 65) In response, Lazare imagined Eastern European Jews, in more direct kin with his audience, answering "[w]hat will your emancipation give me? It will afford me a social situation which will allow me to refine myself; thanks to this I shall acquire new capacities for feeling...it will make a sensitive being who will doubly feel every pinprick and whose existence becomes a thousand times less tolerable. Out of an unconscious pariah it will make a conscious pariah. What advantages shall I gain from this changed position? None." (Lazare, 66)

In this quote, Lazare navigates a balance of degradation and subtle elevation when delineating the notion of Jewish pariah hood. While emancipated Jews may signify a class of individual "pariahs", Eastern pariahs constitute a pariah community, caste, or class. The latter maintain a semblance of national identity, yet are unconscious, and in their present state, lack the ability to attain conscious pariah hood, which Lazare implies is the best possible, albeit not ideal, existential state for an emancipated Jew. His conscious pariahs, are of course, explicitly anomalies amongst the assimilationist majority of emancipated Jewry. The conscious pariah is therefore an optimal position only in that its aware of its dismal positionality, particularly in reference to one's political capacity as a Jew.

With this satirization of the emancipatory instinct, and Lazare's rebuke of emancipated Jews for lacking a national affiliation, he also implicitly grants them a capacity to fail, which therefore, implies a misuse of autonomy. This capacity for autonomy was tied to legal emancipation, which Lazare, even with his misgivings about the liberal state inherent in his anarchist leanings, still considered an opportunity, although one that was squandered by emancipated Jewry. In

contrast to their Western European counterparts, Eastern European Jews are neither to blame nor given reward for their relation to political freedom or their contemporary political situation.

These positions of Lazare, his binary appraisal of Western and Eastern Jewry, dovetail with one of Lazare's central critiques of Herzl's Zionism. Herzl, according to Lazare, viewed the solution to the marginalization of Eastern European Jews to be a widespread exodus. That exodus, for Lazare, was merely replicating the failed process of emancipation, albeit on a mass scale instead of individually. It would, for Lazare, presumably just be another form of assimilation, albeit into the form of a nation state and individual pariahdom.

Such assimilation by exodus was not the kind of social justice advocacy envisioned by Lazare's Zionism. Lazare concluded that Herzl's Zionism, without this emphasis on social justice, could not be inclusive of Eastern Jewish communities as agents in their own advocacy. For Lazare, the assumption of such agency by *Ostjuden* would require political mobilization in their own geo-political sites of oppression, instead of following emancipated Western Jews in the quest for a traditional liberal nation-state.

Arendt championed this critique of Herzl by Lazare and considered it to be a "bottom up" theory of Zionism. She believed this "bottom up" approach to be a superior prescription for Jewish politics than the mainstream Zionist movement she encountered. That prescription, in its reception and locution, is made continually through references to Eastern European Jews. While his advocacy may proclaim a different trajectory, Lazare's Zionism nevertheless shares with Herzl's the notion that the *Ostjuden* exist in a state of "unconscious pariahdom", and that the salvation of world Jewry, including emancipated Western Jewry, would emerge from the illumination of that "Eastern unconscious"-- an illumination that some, but not all, Western Jews have

achieved; the conclusion of which being the realization of their own negative condition. What for Arendt qualifies Lazare's vision of "bottom up" then is precisely the determination of who and what is a "conscious pariah" and how they can inaugurate the "unconscious" Jews into their vision of politics.

Describing what she saw as the tragic failure of Lazare's ideas to gain traction, in contrast with those of Herzl's, Arendt explains that Lazare:

[f]aced with the alternative of remaining politically ineffective or of including himself among the elite group of saviors, ... preferred to retreat into absolute isolation[.]...The only element of Western Europe which might have responded to his message, the Jews who had outgrown the petty trader's haggling, the intellectuals in the liberal professions, were virtually nonexistent in the country. On the other hand, the impoverished masses, whom he had loved so deeply, and the Jewish oppressed, whom he had championed so devotedly, were separated from him by thousands of miles as well as by a difference in language. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 340)

In Lazare's framework, the *Ostjuden*, as the figurative majority in his notion of non-assimilated Jewry, the imago of his beloved masses described by Arendt, contains the seeds of some sort of pragmatic salvation-- in terms of the establishment of a national Jewish identity. The gulf in consciousness described by Lazare, which Arendt phrases as one of linguistics and geography, proved tragic, according to Arendt, both for Lazare's legacy as well as for those to whom his message was directed.

Lazare's attitude toward the *Ostjuden*, was one which Arendt perhaps held some sympathy for, albeit in far less salvational tones. While Lazare may have sought to de-spiritualize, and to some extent, de-Judaize such messianism, locating it more in a striving for universal political aims, he shared with Arendt the same use of Eastern European Jewry as reference. Arendt was attracted to and found affinity with Lazare's de-spiritualized, even de-messianic account of politics and critique of Western Jewish emancipation. What she saw in Lazare's insistence on Jewish participation in emancipatory efforts, and failures, was a political theory that restored agency to

Jewish communities and individuals, particularly as it saw the answer to the *Ostjuden* problem as one of restorative agency, and not assimilation or fascinated primitivism.

Arendt therefore derived her article on the Jewish pariah as a hidden tradition from Lazare's work. Along with Kafka, he is implied as one of the examples of this tradition most worthy of being bestowed some approximation of exemplary validity. In that article, she describes his work as a "heroic effort to bring the Jewish question openly into the arena of politics[.]" (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 283) She considered Lazare to be prescient and "the first Jew to perceive" how, in a legally emancipated society, Jews were still in a somewhat marginal space, and that marginality was in fact, embraced by many upwardly mobile Jews in order to assimilate at the cost of the political potential of the Jewish community, and marginalized people at large. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 284) Arendt theorized that Lazare's:

experience of French politics had taught him that whenever the enemy seeks control, he makes a point of using some oppressed element of the population as his lackeys and henchmen, rewarding them with special privileges, as a kind of sop. It was thus that he construed the mechanism which made the rich Jews seek protection behind the notorious general Jewish poverty, to which they referred whenever their own position was jeopardized. This, he divined, was the real basis of their precarious relationship with their poorer brethren on whom they would be able, at any time it suited them, to turn their backs. As soon as the pariah enters the arena of politics and translates his status into political terms, he becomes perforce a rebel. Lazare's idea was, therefore, that the Jew should come out openly as the representative of the pariah, 'since it is the duty of every human being to resist oppression'....he wanted him to feel that he was himself responsible for what society had done to him. He wanted him to stop seeking release in an attitude of superior indifference or in lofty and rarefied cogitation about the nature of man per se. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 284)

Clearly in admiration of Lazare, Arendt meant to emphasize his insistence on Jewish culpability, responsibility and agentive potential; the triangulation of such elements creating the conditions for communal politics and individual political action. Such a perspective was clear for Arendt in the disagreements between Herzl and Lazare. Arendt explains:

[H]erzl's solution of the Jewish problem was, in the final analysis, escape or deliverance in a homeland... To Lazare, on the other hand, the territorial question was secondary -- a mere outcome of the primary demand that 'the Jews should be emancipated as a people and in the form of a nation.' What he sought was not an escape from anti-Semitism but a mobilization of the people against its foes. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, lv-lvi)

In contrast to Herzl's view of the eternal anti-Semitism of gentile Europe, Arendt describes Lazare as viewing:

anti-Semitism [as] neither an isolated nor a universal phenomenon and that the shameful complicity of the [people] in the East European pogroms had been symptomatic of something far deeper, namely, the threatened collapse of all moral values under the pressure of imperialist politics. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 339-340)

Arendt would be greatly influenced by this view of Lazare. Her situation concept of anti-Semitism would shape her own way of approaching "the Jewish question." Her analysis of the problem would center around locating its political, rather than social or cultural modes of discrimination, in both origins and ramifications. She employs language slightly more clinical than Lazare's in references to both Eastern European Jewish marginalization and the refusal of most Western European Jews to adopt the conscious pariah position. Still, this "refusal" is critiqued by Arendt and Lazare in similar terms. It's a mix of both external conditions, the context of changing legal situation mixed with social discrimination, and the internal decisions of Jews, to view the latter as something which needed to be combatted by social, instead of political, assimilation and agitation. Or with the case of Herzl's Zionism, segregation while absorbing those liberal nation state ideologies.

In Arendt's discussion of this division between Herzl and Lazare, Eastern European Jewish communities function as an exemplary negativity. They are a trope indexically engaged with in order to help deploy her concept of politics. The trope is not directly engaged with, in order to

illustrate politics. Instead, it persists less as a direct example, but more as a narrow kind of reference. These narrow references seem to always circulate around Arendt's use of the notion of the political; functioning as supplemental citations deployed with an already assumed notion of the political, rather than in terms of explanation or exposition of the political, or the relation of Eastern European Jewry to that political.

Similarly, Arendt's distinction between Western social anti-Semitism and Eastern political anti-Semitism before the rise of the Nazis is another key point wherein the exemplary negativity function of Eastern European Jewry is apparent. In this case, her category of the political is utilized for the historical analysis of the Jewish question. She places the reference of Poland in the heuristic context of politics in order to construct a certain historical narrative and comparative framework. She explains that "Poland, for instance, is an example of a country with a genuine Jewish question" which she contrasts with the "best example of an antisemitic country that has no Jewish question to solve is in those regions of present-day Spain that are in fascist hands. Spain is an obvious example of how the Jewish question can be artificially posed even where there cannot be any genuine interest in the question." (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 44)

With these two markers set, she analyzes her area of arguably more specific knowledge, the history of German anti-Semitism. She argues that "[b]ecause Germany stands between those two extremes, it has perhaps become the classic land of anti-Semitism". (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 44) While she states that Poland has a real Jewish question, she uses Germany as the reference to illustrate what qualifies such a situation. She asserts that:

Germany was once a country with a genuine Jewish question that is, during the period of emancipation, which for all of Germany lasted less than eighty years. Until 1869 there was no total emancipation, but there was already complete assimilation, a complete infusion of Jews into all branches of the country's

bourgeois economy with known exceptions a steadily expanding amalgamation of various segments of the population, and a recognition that Jews had equal rights, even though the factual reality of equal economic rights had not yet been given political or juridical legitimacy. The modern Jewish question arose out of the struggle for such legalization, and it was a genuine question, at least to the extent that it was a struggle about the acceptance of a people who until then had been a community closed completely in on itself, with other traditions and historical developments. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 44)

Arendt is typically ambiguous about what her political alludes to, avoiding conflating it with legal or governmental affairs. Yet, in this passage, she asserts that the Jewish question is a political question and stems from the dissymmetry that occurred in the historical process of assimilation and emancipation, due to government-based forces. After excavating the German example, she returns to Poland and narrates, in more abstract terms, what constitutes the Jewish question in general, as well as this specific context:

The Jewish question is a genuine question or a genuine problem which means that there can be historical solutions wherever truly large masses of people reside in the midst of another people from whom they are clearly set off by custom, wardrobe, the monopolization of certain professions, and historical development. This is the case, however, only in countries that are still more or less industrially underdeveloped, in which either the Jews are still a closed community a caste originating in the Middle Ages or for various reasons they have become the bearers of a certain progress, as for example in Poland where for a long time they have literally taken the place of an indigenous bourgeoisie, only to be thrown out now on the basis of what Schiller tells us happens to the Moor Othello once he has done his duty. In Poland, then, Jews are truly still recognizable in both instances, that is, as a "nation within a nation" and to a certain extent as a class set apart. In Poland there can be both hatred of Jews and a historical solution that is, a solution that goes hand in hand with a particular historical development. An example of the former are pogroms of the sort that have marked the agenda of czarist Russia and present-day Poland; an example of the latter is total integration as is found in Soviet Russia. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 44-45)

While Arendt argues that the Jewish question in Germany *was* a political one, or one that sits at the intersection of political and social forces, these terms are utilized alternatively in reference to Poland. They are no longer deployed as heuristics, that situate historical dynamics within an analytic frame. Instead, Arendt uses historical periodization itself as a heuristic, using the binary "medieval" and "modern" as a way to understand how Polish Jewry is situated in relation to the political.

What exactly does Arendt's analysis of Poland say about her definition of politics and political action (particularly, due to its assumed, rather than expository, presentation)? How does this type of passage gesture to the philosophical assumptions and frameworks behind those terms and concepts? I would argue, with the concept of exemplary negativity, that this passage, and her use of the *Ostjuden* in general, reveal certain ways Arendt deploys historicity, temporality, and cultural context in what would be, in other pieces, her more developed and explicit theory of politics and political judgment. In order to do so we must examine another, perhaps more subtle, distinction between Arendt's analysis of the German Jewish and Eastern European Jewish question.

In the German example, it is a problem not of German society, but of Jewish inhabitants. Arendt implicitly grants German Jews the responsibility to provide the answer to the "Jewish question", although that responsibility, or capacity, was grounded in the historical conditions of emergent assimilation and divergent legal citizenship. In the Polish example, she first argues that many Jews still occupy the "caste" position, which, in contrast to the German Jews, renders them dependent politically on their surrounding structures of governance. The historical moment, between "medieval" and "modern" bifurcates not just the socio-political dimensions of the Jewish question, but also the agentic capacity of Jewish individuals within those disparate populations.

This temporal binary obfuscates Arendt's rhetoric, which is ostensibly a clear, categorical and comparative analysis of historical and political-economic conditions. At the socio-political level, the Jewish question, as one relevant to gentile and Jew, is only "legitimate" within Arendt's "medieval" temporality, since it is a political question posed toward a Polish public. But at the individual level, Arendt implies that the responsibility for individuals at least, to truly engage

with that question requires the “modern” temporality. Yet, as seen earlier, it is this very individuality, and the socio-ideological conditions of its emergence, that, for Arendt, produces a political incapacity, for Jew and Gentile alike.

This temporal distinction in agentic responsibility and opportunity illuminates and indexes certain components of Arendt’s political. It requires two factors that are either lacking or held in the Polish and German situations described above. On one level, it requires a geo-political context whose public contains a recognition of plural identities and the historical identities behind those different identities. Although that abstract situation may exist in Poland, due to either a lack of development, or because of the integration of those identities and political economy, it fails to attain political capacity. In Germany, individuals have a certain level of distance from the history of economic determinacy, according to Arendt, and thus can exhibit political judgment, even if there is no political community to engage in. These moments of lack echo the two different registers of exemplary validity in relation to the social, communal vs personal, discussed by Pitkin earlier.

Arendt’s insistence on the political responsibility of the Western European Jews, like Lazare, despite her insistence on the lack of political viability of the Jewish question in the post-emancipation context, presumably stems from the intention underlying Arendt’s approach to narrating history. Her explicit meta-performative goal is to restore theories of Jewish agency in the past, in contrast with narratives of victimhood, in order to bring into the present a Jewish community with the capacity for political action. Similar to Lazare, she identifies present Eastern European Jewish communities as the location where that political action could emerge, while still

describing them with the victim narratives that she tries to explicitly avoid when discussing Western, particularly German, Jewish history.

### **The *Ostjuden* as Index of Taste, History, Ac-culture-ration**

These different attributions of agency, and their indexical relation toward what context would support an Arendtian politics make salient a key aspect of the exemplary negativity played by the *Ostjuden* in Arendt's analysis. The terminology of judgment, that Arendt found so essential to not just political action, but to her own practices of narrative storytelling, become a key point of such rhetorical distinction, albeit implicitly, for the examples described above. Political action requires sufficient political judgment, which accrues the kind of agency for historical subjects which, at the level of individual agents, can be narratively rebuked or championed. One avenue to explore this is looking at one of the few Eastern European Jewish individuals Arendt describes with the level of individuality, and arguably, exemplary validity, that she does for Western Jewish figures: Rosa Luxemburg. Discussing Luxemburg's heritage, Arendt describes the unique

Polish-Jewish 'peer group' and Rosa Luxemburg's lifelong, close, and carefully hidden attachment to the Polish party which sprang from it ...This milieu... consisted of assimilated Jews from middle-class families whose cultural background was German (Rosa Luxemburg knew Goethe and Morike by heart, and her literary taste was impeccable, far superior to that of her German friends), whose political formation was Russian, and whose moral standards in both private and public life were uniquely their own. These Jews, an extremely small minority in the East, an even smaller percentage of assimilated Jewry in the West, stood outside all social ranks, Jewish or non-Jewish, hence had no conventional prejudices whatsoever, and had developed, in this truly splendid isolation[.] (Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 40-41)

This quote, while a biographical description, intersects heavily with how Arendt discusses notions of judgment, aesthetics, and inevitably, political judgment and action. Arendt herself championed the philosophical potency present in the rhetoric of biographical writing, and ar-

guably conceived of her politics, at least the individual register, as best understood within that aesthetic. Accordingly, Arendt affirms the sociological position of Luxemburg's peer group as existing in an ideologically liminal space between German and Eastern European (Russian) Jewry. While Arendt does not include Luxemburg explicitly among her conscious pariahs, she approaches Luxemburg with an admiration that could suggest at least a similar positive assessment.

Arendt situates and labels Luxemburg's peer group within this polarity with little to no hesitation or clarification. Arendt positions this group as culturally German, and thus, heir to that tradition, which includes philosophical and aesthetic components, while politically Russian, and thus presumably engaged in the kind of radical movements that would presumably emerge in those less "developed" countries. For Arendt, this polarity is both unique and generative.

Presumably, the "Russian" label of Arendt's reference has to do with the socialist/communist movement and party. Still, Arendt emphasizes the Jewish heritage of this group. This group therefore sits at an auspicious intersection within Arendt's intertextual analysis of the "Jewish question." Being "Russian" politically, when read in the context of Arendt's writings on the Jewish question, indexes that this group emerged from a community that holds a "legitimate Jewish question" -- one of demography and political-economy. They are distinct because they are "culturally German", and as individuals, they are elevated above their originary context. This originary context, containing a legitimate political Jewish question, is therefore indexed as opposed to modes of cultural prominence and aptitude.

Importantly, Arendt's depiction of Luxemburg as "thoroughly German" is inaccurate. Although Luxemburg was decidedly not a member of the Eastern European Jewish proletariat that Arendt seems to imagine as being a caste-like ubiquity among those whose origin was East of

German speaking Europe, Luxemburg's cultural background was not German. Luxemburg's cultural habitus was embedded in a Polish Jewish tradition and culture that self-reflexively was neither German nor a part of the imagined masses of Eastern European "*Ostjuden*".

Luxemburg's political orientation, and, notably, her ambivalence toward the "Jewish question" was not the result of some imagined meeting of "East " and "West" or of Russian demographics of political-economy and German acculturation, as Arendt would assert. Rather, Luxemburg's relation to any Jewish politics was the result of, as described by political scientist Jack Jacobs, "a specifically Polish variant of maskilish ideology" (Jewish Enlightenment) "to which Luxemburg was first exposed in her childhood home." (Jacobs, 85) Arendt's misconception then results in a misreading of Luxemburg, which posits Luxemburg as possessing an individual and uniformly "German" horizon, functionally erasing Luxemburg's actual genealogical background. The particulars of Luxemburg's upbringing are obscured and reduced to her proximity to the mass proletariat of Russian Jewry, which are transcended by her "German" orientation. In turn, the complex relationship to issues of assimilation and Jewish identity held in Luxemburg's Polish Jewish home are reduced to a binary opposition of "German" ideas and "Russian" context.

Arendt's misreading of Luxemburg's background, as well as the extensive biography of Luxemburg by J.P Nettl, of which Arendt's essay is a review, are arguably a projection of Arendt's own views concerning the capacity for personal judgment, action and the background of acculturation. What Arendt finds salient about Luxemburg is her cultural "Germanness", which allowed her a unique perspective on her "Russian" background, and the capacity for political potential embedded in that background. Yet, Arendt's assumption of Luxemburg's proximity to *Os-*

*tjuden* is also inaccurate. In addition to being reared in a Polish-influenced Jewish secular enlightenment household, Luxemburg was disdainful and presumably saw as much, or even more, distance between herself and the imaginary of the *Ostjuden* as Arendt would assume for her own self-perception and genealogical origin. Luxemburg “found unassimilated East European Jews distasteful, and... was uncomfortable in the presence of such people.” (Jacobs, 83)

Therefore, although it can be surmised that Luxemburg was highly assimilated, but somewhat conversant in Jewish culture, and thus distant from the Russian valence of Arendt’s assessment, such assimilation did not necessarily engender Luxemburg culturally “German”. Arendt’s assumptive leap and misunderstanding in locating the socio-cultural backdrop of Luxemburg’s character contains an index of how certain imaginaries of cultural inheritance shade the regulative ideals that would contour Arendt’s theory of politics. Noticeable especially is the subtle influence of the *Ostjuden* as ideographically tangled with binary assumptions about assimilated or “Western” Jewry.

This misreading of Luxemburg by Arendt can therefore illuminate a key theoretical binary within Arendt’s concept of politics. The conditions of a community with legitimate political questions, those that are legally in a pariah position, are distinct, if not antithetical towards, the capacity for individuals to possess political judgment and be judged as political actors. That capacity requires a cultural legibility that in this case, Arendt assumes, must be “German”. Arendt’s misunderstanding of Luxemburg’s proximity toward and distance from the ideographs of “Western” and “Eastern” Jewry reveals more about Arendt’s own assumptions of these ideographs than the role those ideographs played in Luxemburg’s political development.

Arendt's politics is then buttressed by the discordance between individual conscious pariahs, and supposed pariah peoples, the former connoting certain Western European Jews and the latter referring largely to the *Ostjuden*. Although neither of these groups actually conform to her political, the process of mutual definition allows Arendt a certain backdrop in order to formulate either positive or negative modes of exemplary validity; which neither type of Jew seems to populate, whether as examples to be emulated or avoided. The *Ostjuden*, as her central index of a readily observable pariah people, performs the exemplary negativity function that I have been describing. It is deployed in reference to certain more abstract concepts in terms of heuristic analysis, without directly using that context being referenced as evidentiary.

For instance, in the introduction to her book *Men in Dark Times*, which includes her essay about Luxemburg, Arendt tries to describe the ethical form mobilized by a pariah people. Despite the fact that Eastern European Jewry is commonly cited by Arendt as the group that is a contemporary demonstration of this very type of demographic marginalization, she does not reference *Ostjuden*, demographically, or as imaginary trope, in this piece devoted to the philosophy of a pariah community. In contrast to much of Arendt's intertextual analysis, which focuses specifically on the individual conscious pariah as perspective and lived reality, this passage elucidates more in depth the ostensible ideological background toward which such a conscious figure is in opposition, or from which they emerge. Accordingly, with this background elucidated, Arendt's temporal perception of the conscious pariah becomes clearer; it is not the end of, or optimal form of political action, and thus not a pure exemplary validity. Rather, it is a transition, or implied transition, that can serve as an intermediary between a pariah group, and its pitfalls, and the eventual achievement of a political public.

Arendt in no way suggests that a political public must emerge from a pariah group. Far from it, since she details the negative aspects of such marginalized communities when developing a framework of legitimate political action. It is still telling that her analysis of the “pariah” as an abstract type is one of the few places where she discusses the intricacies of political action. Although emerging from her analysis of Jewish history, Arendt’s pariah is an ideal type and is rhetorically tangled with her theories of personal political judgment. (Bernstein, 29) Yet, as will be seen in the passages below, Arendt contends that the philosophical horizon of pariah people has become normalized to some extent, without the attendant marginalization. Thus, any type of actual trajectory toward her political proceeds theoretically from, and in opposition to, that pariah ideology, which is an ideal type that, as we have shown, is continually associated with the *Os-tjuden*.

Arendt articulates the idealized version of pariahness, or pariah ideology, through her critique of the French Revolution. The event of the French Revolution, in the theoretical story told by Arendt, played a significant role in the formation of certain modern ethical ideologies, and narratively, functions as an inverse exemplary validity, but not an exemplary negativity. The ideology that is ushered by this event, which Arendt finds disastrous, is guided by two principles: fraternity and compassion. She explains that:

Humanity in the form of fraternity invariably appears historically among persecuted peoples and enslaved groups; and in eighteenth-century Europe it must have been quite natural to detect it among the Jews, who then were newcomers in literary circles. This kind of humanity is the great privilege of pariah peoples; it is the advantage that the pariahs of this world always and in all circumstances can have over others. (Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 14)

Arendt’s concept of fraternity is thus an imperfect adaptation to marginalization. It sits in an ambivalent ground between Arendt’s “political and social modes of conduct”, since the former

implies “autonomous agency” while the latter implies being a “victim to historical forces”.

(Pitkin, 20) This ambivalence echoes Arendt’s description of the dynamic between how the Jewish question was situated in Germany and Poland. Curiously, in the passages discussed before, Arendt seems to argue that in the German, or emancipated case, there was a certain lack of some level of *fraternitas*. In that analysis, she implies that *fraternitas* may have catalyzed a future politics, and that its absence among emancipated German Jews was detrimental. Still, although maybe a catalyst, Arendt in no way considered politics and fraternity to be interchangeable.

Arendt distinguishes this fraternity attitude from political action, near poetically, when she explains that the attitude of fraternity:

is dearly bought; it is often accompanied by so radical a loss of the world, so fearful an atrophy of all the organs with which we respond to it starting with the common sense with which we orient ourselves in a world common to ourselves and others and going on to the sense of beauty, or taste, with which we love the world that in extreme cases, in which pariahdom has persisted for centuries, we can speak of real worldlessness. And worldlessness, alas, is always a form of barbarism. (Arendt, *Men in Dark times*, 14)

World, or worldlessness is arguably one of Arendt’s more abstract concepts, and while not identical to Heidegger’s use of the term, is a direct reference to her former mentor. It is not exactly a heuristic. Neither a personal experience, nor an intersubjective situation, having a “world” is an integral condition for the situated emergence of Arendt’s concept of legitimate political action. Because fraternity, in Arendt’s analysis, does not recognize plurality, it is incapable of producing a legitimate type of World, and thus inevitably is implicated in a condition of worldlessness. Arendt’s book *The Human Condition* constructs the arguably most systemic philosophic doctrine of her career in order to diagnose the worldlessness of Western European modernity, although she does not discuss fraternity in depth as a contributing factor. That diagnoses, for Arendt, is co-existent with the rise of the social, a hindrance for the development of

political action, and in many ways, a precursor to the rise of totalitarianism. Arendt's theory of the pariah experience, associated with the experience of pre-modern European Jewry, is in her framework a precursor for this general modern condition of worldlessness.

Arendt's condition of wordlessness and her concept of fraternity are therefore historically, if not conceptually, intertwined. Arendt narrates the shift of these attitudes from being a property of pariah groups, like Jews, to making its way into mainstream European ideology, as concurrent with modern scientific materialism and other intellectual movements. The French Revolution serves as a centrifugal historical event for the story of that transformation. (Bernstein, 64-65) Analyzing this transition, or rather, tension, between historical pariahdom and its emergence as a dominant ethical ideology, she notes that this ideal of a:

humanitarianism of brotherhood scarcely befits those who do not belong among the insulted and the injured and can share in it only through their compassion. The warmth of pariah peoples cannot rightfully extend to those whose different position in the world imposes on them a responsibility for the world and does not allow them to share the cheerful unconcern of the pariah. But it is true that in "dark times" the warmth which is the pariahs' substitute for light exerts a great fascination upon all those who are so ashamed of the world as it is that they would like to take refuge in invisibility. And in invisibility, in that obscurity in which a man who is himself hidden need no longer see the visible world either, only the warmth and fraternity of closely packed human beings can compensate for the weird irreality that human relationships assume wherever they develop in absolute worldlessness, unrelated to a world common to all people. In such a state of worldlessness and irreality it is easy to conclude that the element common to all men is not the world, but "human nature" of such and such a type. What the type is depends on the interpreter; it scarcely matters whether reason, as a property of all men, is emphasized, or a feeling common to all, such as the capacity for compassion. The rationalism and sentimentalism of the eighteenth century are only two aspects of the same thing; both could lead equally to that enthusiastic excess in which individuals feel ties of brotherhood to all men. In any case this rationality and sentimentality were only psychological substitutes, localized in the realm of invisibility, for the loss of the common, visible world. (Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 16)

Arendt's rhetoric in this quote subtly shifts between a descriptive and polemic tone. In her three-step process, the exclusive and emotionally invested feeling of fraternity or brotherhood emerges from the inability to engage in a common world. Such engagement is what Arendt defines as politics. Fraternity can be a survival strategy for marginalized communities, but what happens when it moves from those populations to institutions with sovereign authority? Instead

of referring to the common, and shared world of human plurality and individual singularity, human nature becomes a blank lexeme, reference point, and substitute for what was previously for the ethical intention that had defined a non-pluralistic pariah community.

This absent signifier of human nature, which Arendt argues is at the core of romantic and enlightenment horizons is essential to the emergence of the pariah standpoint as a mode of sovereignty, instead of survival. The effect of compassion allows a sovereign form of *fraternitas*, with its denial of plurality, an ability to present an image of public authority in a plural socio-political context. For Arendt, compassion is not only an anti-political emotion, but one that produces worldlessness while also originating from a lack of world. Arendt opposes compassion to her theory of politics, since in her analysis, compassion ideologically denies the capability of humans to produce a world of mutual responsibility and autonomy, which she considers to be hallmarks of the latter.

Nevertheless, while she is critical of affective ideologies such as compassion and *fraternitas*, presumably categorical modes of socio-emotional experience, there are some ambiguities in how Arendt produces her theory from historical communities, events and situations. Is she arguing that the lack of custodial responsibility and thus, worldlessness, possessed by pariah people, is a circumstance or a choice? What are the differences in agency when such an attitude is oriented from a historical position of pariah personhood in contrast to one of sovereignty, not in terms of philosophical outlook or affect, but in historical demonstration? Arendt's analysis, in this case, does not exist in terms of binary situation, rhetorically or philosophically, although there is definitely a categorical tinge to Arendt's description. She is less interested in origins than affects, and thus, devotes comparatively more categorical analysis and attention to the latter.

Arendt's insights, but also oversights, are arguably the result of this kind of ambiguity and analysis wherein the historical and theoretical are blended in order to narrate her desired story. These rhetorical alloys, I would assert, are in conversation, directly, indirectly, marginally or emphatically, with Arendt's exemplary negativities. Such a structure is speculatable because I am treating Arendt's different ideas as collating into some kind of specific narrative, and thus different texts can be read as not in a direct conversation, but as mutually interlocuting through and, with exemplary negativities that serve as threads of narrative/philosophical co-production.

At this nexus of Arendt's intertextual narrative that includes her critiques of worldlessness and compassion, as well her ideal of the political, that directly or indirectly mobilize certain exemplary negativities, is Arendt's theory of taste and judgment. In reference to her Kantian exposition, notions of cultural or aesthetic taste provide an intertextual uptake in how Arendt articulates both the capacity for, and her theory of, agency and political action. In her short piece "Creating a Cultural Atmosphere", Arendt uses Eastern European Jewry as an exemplary negativity in order to put all these different aspects of her thought into conversation.

Since the location of exemplary negativities are indexical, within this text and Arendt's larger theoretical framework, they engage with the production of that framework through intertextual communication, and are best understood at this intertextual level. They produce such theories and concepts not through directly stating, even when present in the form of a statement or proposition, but in how they signal toward the use, enactment, function, and meaning of the larger theory. While exemplary validities are evidentiary, exemplary negativities tend to be rhetorically presented as trivial or assumed.

Even when they are used as propositions, they typically come from a position of authority that is not in need of explanation. These statements or uses of exemplary negativities can therefore be considered inconsistent or underthought, as noted by Gines in her analysis of Arendt's analysis of the civil rights movement. Still, I would contend that, metaphorically, in a Godelian sense, those inconsistencies are generative of the very theoretical system.

The article "Creating a Cultural Atmosphere" demonstrates the interplay of exemplary negativities, as an intertextual mechanism, since it not only contains Arendt's assessment of Eastern European Jewish cultural products, but also comments on how those cultural assessments emerge from a historical situation, and are framed together in relation to her ideas of "world", "judgment" and more implicitly, "action" and "plurality". In this piece, published by *Commentary* magazine in 1947 and intended for an educated English-speaking Jewish audience, she meditates on the concept of "culture", albeit not as in depth as some of her other essays like "The Crisis in Culture." In both pieces, she relies on a similar definition for culture, treating the category as an explicitly historically situated concept, that rhetorically can blend into a seemingly universal category.

Arendt's definition of culture refers to a mode of communal experience that emerged in what was previously Christendom during the process of secularization. She intersperses her exposition on the distinction between religion and culture, with moments of philosophical rumination. In these moments, Arendt reflects on issues such as transcendence, the ethereal and how agency can be ideologically narrated. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 298)

Arendt's contextual definition of culture is connected with Arendt's theories of the social and the political. In contrast to the latter two, she devotes less analytic and philosophical atten-

tion to culture throughout her work, other than perhaps in the “Crisis of Culture”, which itself is arguably more of meditation on how the concept has played out in relation to the social and political. Still, in this piece, her focus on culture has a pragmatic purpose, grounding her intention to start the development of a Jewish culture. Written relatively early in her thoughts on this political, and before her later disillusionment with Jewish politics, Arendt’s position in “Creating a Cultural Atmosphere” relies on the presumption that for Jewry to possess the kind worlding necessary for political action, there would need to be the creation of a Jewish “culture” that heretofore had not existed.

In accounting for this lack of existence, Arendt draws, directly or not, on many of her ideas of pariahdom, assimilation and the post-emancipation history of Western European Jewry. In a passage which I consider to contain her diagnosis of the problem in the essay, she explains that:

It so happened that the Jewish people not only did not share in the slow process of secularization that started in Western Europe with the Renaissance, and out of which modern culture was born, but that the Jews, when confronted with and attracted by Enlightenment and culture, had just emerged from a period in which their own secular learning had sunk to an all time low. The consequences of this lack of spiritual links between Jews and non Jewish civilization were as natural as they were unfortunate: Jews who wanted "culture" left Judaism at once, and completely, even though most of them remained conscious of their Jewish origin. Secularization and even secular learning became identified exclusively with non Jewish culture, so that it never occurred to these Jews that they could have started a process of secularization with regard to their own heritage. Their abandonment of Judaism resulted in a situation within Judaism in which the Jewish spiritual heritage became more than ever before the monopoly of rabbis. The German *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, though it was aware of the danger of a complete loss of all the past's spiritual achievements, took refuge from the real problem in a rather dry scholarship concerned only with preservation, the results of which were at best a collection of museum objects. While this sudden and radical escape by Jewish intellectuals from everything Jewish prevented the growth of a cultural atmosphere in the Jewish community, it was very favorable for the development of individual creativity. What had been done by the members of other nations as part and parcel of a more collective effort and in the span of several generations was achieved by individual Jews within the narrow and concentrated framework of a single human lifetime and by the sheer force of personal imagination. It was as individuals, strictly, that the Jews started their emancipation from tradition. . . . a remarkably great number of authentic Jewish writers, artists, and thinkers who did not break under the extraordinary effort required of them, and whom this sudden empty freedom of spirit did not debase but on the contrary made creative. Since, however, their individual achievements did not find reception by a prepared and cultured Jewish audience, they could not found a specifically Jewish

tradition in secular writing and thinking—though these Jewish writers, thinkers, and artists had more than one trait in common. Whatever tradition the historian may be able to detect remained tacit and latent, its continuance automatic and unconscious, springing as it did from the basically identical conditions that each of these individuals had to confront all over again for himself, and master by himself without help from his predecessors. There is no doubt that no blueprint and no program will ever make sense in cultural matters. If there is such a thing as a cultural policy it can aim only at the creation of a cultural atmosphere that is, in Elliot Cohen's words, a "culture for Jews," but not a Jewish culture. The emergence of talent or genius is independent of such an atmosphere, but whether we shall continue to lose Jewish talent to others, or whether we will become able to keep it within our own community to the same extent that the others do, will be decided by the existence or nonexistence of this atmosphere. It is this that seems to me to be the problem. One may give a few suggestions on how to approach it. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 299-300)

There is a lot to unpack in that lengthy passage, including certain themes that have appeared in other of Arendt's writings that have been examined. Her admiration of the conscious pariah is clearly present, yet as well, her sentiment that such an attitude is too context dependent to become an actual stable ground for a world necessary for political action. She's adamant that these artists, writers, and thinkers produced as individual Jews, rather than from a Jewish tradition. Such actors sit ambivalently in the mode of exemplary validity, demonstrating that the narration of such events does depend on the correct context and public space, in both the event and iteration as a positive example.

Due to the importance of exemplary validity for how Arendt evaluates argumentation, especially in such a direct prognostic form, one would assume that positive events, artists or cultural artifacts that could ground a Jewish cultural world would, to some extent, appropriate the rhetorical form of an exemplary validity. Yet, her positive examples do not contain such rhetorical valence. Instead, she applies a less direct form of appraisal when referencing what could potentially be a bedrock of Jewish culture. She notes that:

There is on the other hand the much smaller body of Jewish secular writings dating from all periods, but particularly from the nineteenth century in Eastern Europe; this writing grew out of secular folk life, and only the absence of a cultural atmosphere has prevented a portion of it from assuming the status of great literature; instead it was condemned to the doubtful category of folklore. The cultural value of every author or artist really begins to make itself felt when he transcends the boundaries of his own nationality,

when he no longer remains significant only to his fellow Jews, fellow Frenchmen, or fellow Englishmen. The lack of Jewish culture and the prevalence of folklore in secular Jewish life has denied this transcendence to Jewish talent that did not simply desert the Jewish community. The rescue of the Yiddish writers of Eastern Europe is of great importance; otherwise they will remain lost to culture generally...Last but not least, we shall have to make room for all those who either came, and come, into conflict with Jewish Orthodoxy or turned their backs on Judaism for the reasons mentioned above. These figures will be of special significance for the whole endeavor; they may even become the supreme test of its success or failure. Not only because creative talent has been especially frequent among them in recent times, but also because they, in their individual efforts towards secularization, offer the first models for that new amalgamation of older traditions with new impulses and awareness without which a specifically Jewish cultural atmosphere is hardly conceivable. These talents do not need us; they achieve culture on their own responsibility. We, on the other hand, do need them since they form the only basis, however small, of culture that we have got a basis we shall have to extend gradually in both directions: the secularization of religious tradition and rescue from folklore of the great artists (mostly Yiddish) of secular folk life. (Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 300-301)

Arendt deploys a complex array of rhetorical positions, allegiances and hierarchies in this passage. The “we” in this text refers to a contemporaneous public, who can assess, extract, and curate an archive of historically situated cultural objects. The Yiddish writers are separate from this “we”, temporally and geo-culturally. Their cultural products have immense value and are an essential part of the apparatus for Arendt’s future Jewish cultural public, but only in the context of Arendt’s audience, or “we”. The cultural objects of “Yiddish secular folk life”, in their present form, which is as a past object, is not apt for the production of a world. Although these cultural products do seem to uniquely contain a potential for such world-building value, in their current status they are perhaps tainted by, in Arendt typology, a fraternity-based attitude, or other shadings of a pariah peoples’ existential horizon.

Her specific reasoning for why this ability is a potentiality and future directed, rather than presently available, or realized in the past, is her assessment of “folklore”. The definition of folklore Arendt uses denotes a secular corpus, consistent of literary or aesthetic artifacts and stories, but untouched by the development of what she narrates as culture. Despite this shortcoming, Arendt contends that Eastern European Jewish folklore contains the bedrock for what her “we”

could extrapolate into a world necessary for a Jewish cultural community, a cultural community that Arendt would consider a house of political action.

If a cultural tradition is necessary to house political action, since it can provide a plural bedrock for the performance, narration, and deployment of exemplary validity, folklore then becomes a designation of cultural atmospheres wherein political viability is, at present, unrealizable. Her use of folklore is similar to a notion in the work of Lazare, except that Arendt is using the term folklore instead of nationality to mark the capacity for political agency and rhetorically presenting agentive capacity through its failure. Arendt's geo-cultural limit on legitimate "world" or politics is also a key site of political potentiality; intertextually constructing an ambiguous mode of limitation. Such ambiguity leads to an obvious question: Where does folklore end and storytelling begin? Perhaps, in just the connotative reference, there is a simple grammatical answer, since folklore refers to objects, while storytelling refers to the action of agents. In common parlance the difference between the act of storytelling and the objects of folklore lacks the kind of historical, or philosophical modes of heuristic distinction that Arendt intertextually deploys, laying temporal, cultural, or historical taxonomies onto that grammatical division.

Although Arendt does not directly contrast storytelling and folklore, her intertextual framework relies on rhetorically distinguishing the former from the latter, in that one can be embedded in a legitimate politics, while the other cannot. Even though a grammatical distinction, the modes of validation and repudiation mobilized by Arendt constitute a very micro-level exemplary negativity, taking a grammatical distinction with historic association, and extracting it into an assumed historical or cultural delineation that she posits to contain legitimate ontic substance. Storytelling is necessary for the production of a world, but folklore is essentially world-

less, and hence, the act of storytelling must be separate from its objects. Arendt uses her ambiguous heuristic separation in order to posit categories that are neither purely grammatical, nor purely historical. In doing so, she can oscillate between those heuristic orientations dependent on the context and purpose of her analysis, although such oscillation operates from a rhetorical position premised on the stability of its current use, and thus, is built upon the kind of inconsistency that exemplary negativities theoretically stabilize.

Additionally, Arendt's cultural analysis, built upon this intertextual binary of storytelling and folklore, provides a certain substance to the implicit boundaries that upheld Lazare's rhetoric, in which non-emancipated communities were both valorized and denied certain capacities. For instance Lazare's theoretical ambivalence, wherein his rebuke of emancipated Jewry simultaneously grants them certain agencies and his valorization of non-emancipated Jewry has the opposite effect, can be elucidated with Arendt's cultural analysis. It is no coincidence that the *Ostjuden* are at the center of both the author's ambivalence and modes of justification.

Arendt's use of the *Ostjuden* as an exemplary negativity is both contextualized by and context for her assessment of folklore as an asymptote of political viability, particularly when read in the context of her theory of political judgment and storytelling. This feedback of justification and demonstration, in terms of cultural judgment, interpolates Arendt's broader elucidation about the political potentiality, or lack thereof, historically associated with marginalized groups, or as she terms them, pariah peoples. Pariah peoples, in addition to being able to only produce culture at the level of folklore, since they presumably hold an ideology antithetic to the individual capacity for storytelling-based action, are, due to their traditional lack of access to widespread governmental authority, simultaneously, in Arendt's framework ill equipped to deal with

political realities and action. The exemplary negativity of the *Ostjuden* associates this sociological marginality with a lack of cultural value. In turn, that cultural value reflects a certain capacity for “taste”, indexing certain kinds of judgment, which then becomes the de-facto standard for political action.

If Arendt’s goal in narrating Jewish history is to restore agency to Jewish actors in the past, and complicate the tale of uni-directional victimhood, she seems to eschew that project when it comes to the *Ostjuden*. Political agency, as iterated through the historiographic orientation of Arendt’s writing, is *shown* to be dependent, semiotically, on a historical concept of culture, and thus with it, the situational context to develop the ability for Arendt’s forms of judgment and storytelling, which grounds politics and political viability. Shown is the important word, since the intertextual relation of exemplary negativities, particularly that of the *Ostjuden*, reveal not through argument or demonstration, but through assumptions, ambiguities and inconsistencies.

## Conclusion:

Arendt's boundaries and categories were meant to provide a theoretical architecture for a framework of politics that, at her time of writing, did not exist. She intended for her politics to provide categories of meaning for a modernity marked by a lack of stable meanings. These categories are presented through, upholstered by, and understood with, exemplary negativities.

Arendt's categorical analysis was meant not only to be productive, guiding, and innovative but was also supposed to elide an easy insertion into present political ideologies, or past paradigms. In fact, despite her emphasis on exemplary validity, and her valorization of the Athenian polis, she adamantly warned against a politics based around narratives of historical re-enactment, not just considering those pasts irretrievable but that any attempt to re-enact the past with exactitude would be misguided if not dangerous.

She does not deny historical import and influence in her political theory, but in her Kantian sympathy, Arendt wishes to produce something that can quietly claim a novelty or even perhaps, transcendence. In mediating these goals for her theory of politics, that theory inevitably is articulated with rough theoretical edges and contradictions, which, instead of acknowledged, repudiated or defended by Arendt, become subsumed in certain tropes and modes of comparison within her intertextual framework. I have used exemplary negativity as a way to provide some heuristic clarity for those intertextual spaces that are defined by fuzzy boundaries, inconsistency and lack of exposition.

The *Ostjuden*, as I have tried to demonstrate, are a central exemplary negativity for Arendt's concept of the political. What allows that centrality is precisely her lack of narrative focus on that imaginary or demographic. She treats them in terms of matter of fact and historical

neutrality, even when such depictions are clearly incorrect or bigoted. Such “matter of fact” analysis allows her to ostensibly isolate from her German Jewish peers, who were far more animated in their tones toward their Eastern European counterparts. Arendt does not approach the *Ostjuden* as relics of some spiritual primitivism whose supposed lack of alienation holds the key for those emancipated Jews suffocated by modernity. Neither does she depict them as throngs of barbaric cousins, whose presence is a threat to the secular modernity that Jews of Western Europe have come to ideologically hold dear.

While the presence of the *Ostjuden* may analytically swell up when Arendt is discussing the intricacies of Jewish politics, they are seemingly absent when her focus is explicitly the political or political judgment. Eastern European Jewry is one of, if not her most referenced, example of a sociologically legitimate pariah people, yet it plays little role when she attempts to construct a general ideology of pariah communities. This division, between a Jewish politics or specific pariah situation, which many have observed to be an intertextual laboratory for Arendt’s later political theory, and the “political” or “pariah” in general, I have tried to demonstrate, is upheld by the exemplary negativity of the *Ostjuden*, through its representation as straightforward analysis or citations of Eastern European Jewish history, sociology, or culture.

Although Arendt’s assessment of Eastern European Jewish history lacks the intertextual valence of universality, exemplary validity, or even refutation, her treatment of that history also lacks the scrutiny, accuracy and nuance that would presumably come from her assertion of specificity. In applying this uniform rhetoric to Eastern European Jewry, Arendt missed the opportunity to engage with the diversity of methods, modes, and orientations toward politics exhibited across the demographic diversity of Eastern European Jewish communities. Perhaps, if she had

analyzed, with detail and nuance, the wellspring of events, individuals, organizations and theories that mark the political history of Eastern European Jewry, her theory of politics might have benefited. Maybe, instead of just mobilizing Eastern European Jewry as an exemplary negativity, in the pursuit of persons and politics, that, in her framework, were worthy of exemplary validity, Arendt could have articulated a theory of political storytelling that was more novel and sophisticated than her revision of certain Kantian concepts and categories. If she had more respectfully interrogated the histories and humans that inhabited a political past, which she assumed she knew so well, perhaps she could have crafted a more generative model of politics for the future.

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