Harald Lemke

Michel Foucault
In Konstellationen

(Critique of political reason

The foundation of the political
in the practical philosophy of
Foucault, Lyotard, and Arendt)

Inhalt

Critique of political reason
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I agree with Dews when he argues[1] that Lyotard and Foucault are not at all denying the possibility of (political) discussion - a human relationship in which its participants are situated equally and where they share rights that are both the result of their mutual agreement to debate and the very condition of the possibility of their conversation. Stating this and trying to justify it subsequently I simultaneously disagree with Dews: the fact to be proven that Lyotard and Foucault grant the possibility of communication and its transcendental pragmatics does not at all lead necessarily to the assertion that the two finally admit that they were "wrong" and Habermas was right from the very beginning It proves rather that Lyotard, Foucault and Habermas haven't been counteracting at all and that they were rather operating on the two sides of the same coin[2].

Despite Lyotard's obtrusive attempt to detach his philosophy from any possible resemblance with Habermas's theory and in spite of Habermas's somehow embarrassing attacks against the alleged neo-conservatism of French "salon" thinking their positions are closer than one tends to assume. Honestly speaking, should we wonder why no philosopher is pleased to become identified as somebody who thinks like … and who looses thereby his entire uniqueness?

But after all, this is not really what I am concerned with. What I rather focus on is a position where all three philosophies come together, and that is, to be sure, Arendt's position. Consequently, I am going to discuss in the following the points of contact between Lyotard and Foucault with Arendt according to a critique of political reason. What I cannot appropriately pursue in the frame of this paper are the displayable advantages of Arendt's theory of political action over Habermas's theory of communicative action[3].

…"Some talking has to be done"

Lyotard faces a well-known problem of political and moral philosophy: we cannot conclude from the "is" to the "ought". To overlook the categorical distinction between descriptive (theoretical) and prescriptive statements would lead to a "differend" (conflict) or would be a case of (unjust) domination. The question for Lyotard, then, becomes: from where do we get our prescriptions and criteria for what could count as just and what ought to be done. Lyotard mentions two possible solutions to this question: the Jewish and the Greek.

In the Jewish solution "the just comes to us from elsewhere"[4], we are always already addressees of prescription without making them . Lyotard drops this solution however immediately by hastily adding that "for us moderns, prescriptions are not received." This leads him to the Greek solution: to be under the condition of modernity means that a society must decide what is obligatory by its own, and this, Lyotard says, begins with "some Greeks": "Here are people for whom prescriptions are subject to discussion, not in the sense that the discussion will lead to the most just, but rather to the extent that a prescription cannot be founded. Therefore, there is always *some talking to be*

done […]. One is without criteria, yet one must decide."[5] Arendt, as we will see, describes the difference between the descriptive discourse and the prescriptive discourse in terms of a change regarding two different types of life styles: the bios politikos and the bios theoretikos. In the discussion about prescriptions the participants have no criterion to decide a priori whether something is just or unjust. Opposed to the theoretical discourse, one must judge, i.e. reasoning without the possibility to refer to knowledge or the technique of logical syllogism. The "some talking" which has to be done never transcends the realm of opinions. The people who are acting in such a realm by judging without criteria about what should be obligatory Lyotard calls "pagans". Their knowledge is therefore not episteme but phronesis; they are "prudent individuals" (Lyotard). In short, the Greek way to figure out what can be judged as just presupposes discussion, "some talking". Both demand a certain (pagan or political) attitude and exclude the possibility to refer to knowledge or any kind of deducible concepts and laws.

This raises the following two questions: "How do I decide among opinions if I no longer accept as legitimate the appeal to science? [And secondly, HL.] the question must be asked: Where do I get this capability to judge? […] For instance, in the name of what do I lean toward Aristotle rather than toward Plato?"[6]

The mimesis of justice

Why is it, firstly, that Lyotard does not like to lean toward Plato? He points out that Plato and with him "an entire political tradition (that includes Marx as well)"[7] try to derive prescriptions from descriptions, the criteria of justice from a theoretical or scientific knowledge – they all make the "fault" of ignoring the incommensurability of politics and rationality. Lyotard argues that the "political theorists" of this tradition were convinced that there is a true being of society and of justice, and that society will be just if it is brought into conformity with this true being. The legitimacy of political decisions and institutions can thus be guaranteed by the relentless approximation towards or the mimesis of a pre-existing and intelligible essence of justice or truth of society. By virtue of their theoretical (or contemplative) discourse the philosopher (Plato) or the theorist (Marx) pretend to possess an access to this true essence. The relation of their scientific discourse on political justice to the essence of justice is consequently the opposite of what Lyotard calls paganism: the question of the ultimate criteria of political decisions is no longer a question of "some talking" between prudent pagans based on mere opinions but rather of (logical) necessity and mimetic correction achieved by solitary theorizing. Politics understood as science, presupposes that if the denotation of its discourse which describes justice is correct, i.e. if its discourse is true, then the social practice can be just insofar as it respects the distribution implied in the scientifically based politico- rational discourse.

In short, Lyotard states that the tradition of political theory from Plato to Marx was seeking to ground the social practices of justice on a theoretical discourse by legitimating the claimed grounding at the expense of the subordination and domination of political discussion. Lyotard calls the Platonic-Marxian model of a science of politics the "rational politics". Translated into the political development of the nineteenth and the twentieth century he draws the following diagnosis: "For me rational

Justitia, Albrecht Dürer zugeschrieben.
Die Versinnbildlichung der Gerechtigkeit mit verbundenen Augen, in der
einen Hand eine Waage, in der anderen ein Schwert. Die verbundenen
Augen symbolisieren die Unparteilichkeit, die ihr zentrales Merkmal ist; die
Waage repräsentiert die Idee der Ausgewogenheit, des gleichen Maßes, das
'jedem das Seine gewährt'; das Schwert unterstreicht die Endgültigkeit und
die Autorität ihres Urteils. Aber wer ist der Mann mit der Narrenkappe;
der, der ihr diese Autorität zu verleihen scheint?

politics, in the sense of the concept, is over, and I think that is the swerve of this *fin-de-siècle*. We have had an attempt, since the Jacobins, to elaborate and implement a rational politics; this attempt has been pursued throughout the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth; it is presently collapsing. And that is a very good thing. When I say 'pagan politics', I am obviously turning very explicitly toward the 'lesser Greeks', that is, the Sophists: they have always indicated that we are dealing with what they called *phantasmata*, that is, representations, and that it is not true that a rational *knowledge* of social and political facts is possible, at least insofar as they imply judgments and decisions."[8]

The phantasmatic nature of the political

Now we comprehend what Lyotard means when he prefers to lean toward Aristotle or the "lesser Greeks" rather than toward Plato. But what is the criterion for this preference, he asked in his second question? What are the criteria of judgments that are rooted in the divers opinions of the people (pagans)? And aren't these opinions inherently contaminated with accepted decisions, customs, values, and criteria which are themselves enforced by mere tradition and cultural "pre-judice"?
What bothers Lyotard is that restricted to the realm of phantas-mata, the criterion constituting the just and the unjust, finds its grounding in politically problematic and the extraordinarily " dangerous position"[9] of common opinion. It turns out that even the Greek model of a politics of opinion lacks a satisfactory solution. Lyotard concludes that concerning questions of politics and justice one cannot do without an *Ideal of justice*. He

therefore appeals to a Kantian position where "we have a regulator, that is a safekeeper of the pragmatics of obligation."[10] This safekeeper seems finally to offer a solution for the question of justice: the ultimate criterion for a politically just judgement stems thus no longer from the phantasmata of extraordinarily dangerous common opinions, it rather derives from the *regulatory* **Ideal** of a "totality of reasonable beings" (Kant). But even with this Kantian solution Lyotard is not content. It implies a new problem: "Whereas the problem that faces us, even if it is put in terms of Idea and reflective judgment, is that it is no longer a matter, for us, of reflecting upon what is just or unjust against the horizon of a social totality, but, on the contrary, against the horizon of a muli or of a diversity."[11] With the *Idea of multiplicity* which regulates the criterion of political judgment Lyotard finally offers his solution.

In one word, the Aristotelian answer (i.e. in our context generally the position of the reflexively judging pagan) to the question of justice and politics risks to entangle itself in the problematic thicket of "mere" common opinion. Its advantage, however, is that it avoids scientific domination over political "talking": in the sphere of opinion and discussion judgment is based on "an ethics of prudence"[12]. The Kantian answer, now, guarantees by invoking the Idea of totality, the society of free and responsible beings, that one regulates one's judgment according an ultimate criterion. A Kantian position of the Second Critique), however, swallows the realm of the "politics of opinion". Responding this paradox Lyotard seeks to inherit only the positive sides from Aristotle's and Kant's position: a "critique of political reason" would then ground justice on the faculty of reflexive judgment (embodied in the phronesis of the pagan or bios politikos – the Aristotelian "politics of opinion"[13]) whose

regulatory horizon could be found in the Idea of multiplicity or diversity – the Kantian "politics of Idea". Surprisingly, Lyotard mentions, however, at the end of his conversation with Jean-Loup Thebaud that this combination of opinion and multiplicity can nevertheless already be discovered in the Aristotelian position, or precisely speaking, in the political praxis of the "lesser Greeks": "This is perhaps where one would have to reintroduce the notion of opinion that comes to us from the Sophists, but not with its load of past, custom, and received authority that has been focused on until now, but with its other load, multiplicity."[14]

The Greeks know, as we have already heard, very well that there is neither judge nor political justice without there being someone who decides or has the capacity of deciding, the capacity of judging, and that one does not decide well without phronesis. Now, Lyotard emphasizes another previously overlooked aspect in this capacity: the capacity of prudent judgment and consequently the horizon of justice differ from Polis to Polis; the very capacity of political judgment leads itself to the plurality of justices. Lyotard finally conceived of the Idea of justice as the plurality of language games analogous to the plurality of ancient Polis'. Like the sovereign incommensurability of a multiplicity of ancient Greek constitutions and city- states, Lyotard suggests a justice of multiplicity of incommensurable and sovereign "territories of language games."[15] A just society would consequently be one in which no game dominates upon the others, the sovereign territories could live in peaceful co-existence. Lyotard however then asks quite rightfully: "Can there be justice without domination of one game upon the others?" Furthermore, it is not by accident, one would think, that Lyotard questions almost desperately the possibility of

such a just society: the ancient world with its plurality of city-states was anything but harmonious; to be sure, it was the very opposite – one big bloody battle. There was not only constant battle between the "incommensurable" territories; but injustice also occurred through conspiracy or constraint within these territories.

Terror and Pleonexia

Lyotard outlines two ways in which injustice occurs: firstly, the domination comes from outside; the threat here is terror (or battle). Terrorism excludes the games of the just. It denies the multiplicity of games by producing the "fear of death" in all of its forms: "imprisonment, unemployment, repression, hunger, anything you want."[16]

Briefly stated, terrorism entirely destroys the (language) gaming. The constant battle between the ancient city- states, I just mentioned, and the scientific treatment of politics, as we have already seen and will further see, count as such a terror. The second sort of injustice Lyotard points out, he calls pleonexia. Pleonexia does not deny the multiplicity of games which are different among themselves, each with its own pragmatic efficacy (constitution) and its capability of positioning people in precise places in order to have them play their parts; it just "wants to have too much of it."[17]

Yet in the last analysis Lyotard lets these two types of domination converge: a pleonastic language game meta-morphizes immediately into a form of terrorism because even the "mere" attitude to want more is "assisted by the sword" (Lyotard). Contemporary injustice, Lyotard states, operates in

the guise of the domination of one language game, namely the "economic discourse"[18], over others thus rendering speechless and marginalizing to minorities.

With his notion of a multiplicity of justices Lyotard, however, risks to take the problematic position of a "great prescriber himself". As his friend Thebaud objects at the very end of their conversation: in order to argue for a multiplicity of justices he must state the Idea of a justice of multiplicity. And this position must be "ensured, paradoxically enough, by a prescription of universal value."[19]

Ironically enough[20], Lyotard himself seems ultimately to conspire with the threat of terrorism: his prescribing opinion and language game with its prescription of the *regulatory Idea* of a justice regarding multiplicity seeks to *regulate* other language games – Lyotard reveals himself to be nothing else than a new Robespierre, this time in the postmodern guise of a compulsive Idea of plurality and paganism: "Robespierre intends to prescribe upon everything, that is, he intends to extend the sway of the Idea of justice to the totality of discourses and conducts. He does not respect the plurality of language games."[21]

The praxis of politics

Lyotard's attempt to ground the politics of opinion on the regulatory Idea of multiplicity seems to fail dramatically.[22] The question, then, remains whether there is a thinkable way to resist the temptation to subordinate questions of justice and politics by emphasizing the practice of political talk *without* both being urged to take a universalistic, Jacobinistic

standpoint or getting caught in the relativism of historical customs and their problematic opinions.

Before I, however, discuss these problems of a positive notion of Politics, I seek to exploit Arendt's much more thorough thematization of such a positive concept of Politics (A.) and her version of the threats and consequences in the case of a substitution of another type of prescription-making (B.). In the chapter following this, Foucault will serve us as an even further dramatization of these consequences and their "demonic" technology: the political rationality of bio-power (6.). His positive notion of Politics and its problems I too discuss in the frame of the general discussion of this theme in the last chapter (7.).

A Primus inter pares

Like Lyotard's distinction of "pagan politics" and "rational politics", Arendt differentiates between the practice of political deliberation (Politics) and a political concept of rulership based on theoretical contemplation. She argues that the Greeks discern between a private life and a life that is devoted to the public, the Polis. To achieve the latter men must have freely chosen it, "that is, in full independence of the necessities of (their private) life and the relationships they originated."[23] Only if they decide to transcend their private life and its biological imperatives, they obtain a *bios politikos*. To devote one's life to the organisation of the commonly shared community by virtue of the practice of Politics means, however, not to choose an arbitrary type of political organisation just to keep men together in an orderly fashion: "Not that the Greeks or Aristotle were ignorant of the fact that human life always demands some form of political organisation and that ruling over subjects might constitute a distinct way of life; but the despot's way of life, because it was "merely" a necessity, could not be considered free and had no relationship with the *bios politikos*."[24]

"The Greeks or Aristotle", as Arendt says, not only perceive a clear difference between the "despot's way of life" and the "bios politikos", they also realize that these two types of "political organisation" evoke two considerably different types of human relationships: the relationship of compulsive necessity and a relationship of freedom. Like Lyotard, Arendt uses the reference to the Greeks and Aristotle to demonstrate that at the very beginning of the Western tradition of politics two different options were still present and that since this beginning the bios politikos and its conditions has to fear being substituted by the governmentality of rulership, i.e. the coercive ruling of the few over the many – "the despot's way of life".

As we have already seen, Lyotard points out that the theoretical (descriptive) and the political (prescriptive) discourse are incommensurable with the former because it seeks universal truth and the latter defines a sphere of opinions. Arendt adds to this distinction a further aspect: the difference between the bios theoretikos and the bios politikos consists also in the circumstance that the former's discourse is performed in solitude; scientific thinking presupposes "the presence of the self" rather than the presence of others.[25] A contemplative life aims ultimately at absolute quiet. Political action, on the contrary, means to act in concert; acting that is in plural. Action is the commonly shared activity to organize together the natural, merely social companionship by means of public deliberation; action as the transcendence of factual inter-

subjectivity always constitutes a normative intersubjectivity. The willingness to make oneself a bios politikos includes thus for the Greeks, as Arendt argues, at least two aspects: A, the readiness to transcend the realm of biological necessity and the compulsive relations prevailing the household. Arendt describes this decision as the *courageous* move to leave behind one's slavish life behind oneself, to which one is cowardly attached to, in order to attain a new life – the life of the "hero" of political action. By means of this second birth the bios politikos enters into a commonly shared world[26] of peers: every actor is equal in the respect that all of them decide freely to participate in their common attempt to solve questions of justice and political decision- making. In the public realm of common deliberation the bios politikos gain a world in which they achieve freedom and equality by overcoming factual violence, force and domination and, first of all, the possibility to distinguish themselves by striving for outstanding achievements, glory and greatness of their "words and deeds": "To be political, to live in a *polis,* meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence. In Greek self-understanding, to force people by violence, to command rather than persuade, were prepolitical ways to deal with people characteristic of life outside the *polis,* of home and family life, where the household head ruled with uncontested, despotic powers[27] […] To belong to the few "equals" (*homoioi*) meant to be permitted to live among one's peers; but the public realm itself, the polis, was permeated by a fiercely agonal spirit; where everybody had constantly to distinguish himself from all others, to show through unique deeds or achievements that he was the best of all (*aien aristeuein*) ."[28]

To persuade, to act with words, consists however not in the attempt to produce truth "proved by argument compel agreement", but rather to become aristocratic by "wooing consent of everyone else."[29] Close to Lyotard's experimental paganism, Arendt displays how in the political praxis of freedom the "homoioi" are battling for the recognized glory of performed deeds and created speeches; what is important is sheer, "noble action" (Nietzsche). Inasmuch as their agon is held through persuasion and wooing consent the bios politikos are acting essentially in the sphere of contested opinions. The ultimate criterion of political action is thus aesthetic: "Unlike human behaviour – which the Greeks, like all civilized people, judged according to ,moral standards', taking into account motives and intentions on the one hand and aims and consequences on the other – action can be judged only by the *criterion of greatness* because it is in its nature to break through the commonly accepted and reach into the extraordinary, where whatever is true in common and everyday life no longer applies because everything that exists is unique and *sui generis*. "[30]

But, as we remember, Lyotard uttered the suspicion that if the justice of Politics is based only on an aesthetic criterion which emerges essentially from the commonly accepted opinions this would lead to an extraordinarily dangerous position: "It is not true that one can do an aesthetic politics […]. Aesthetic judgment allows the discrimination of that which pleases from that which does not please. With justice, we have to do, of necessity, with the regulation of something else."[31]

Arendt's point, however, is to say that in Politics we have only an aesthetic criteria because the game of Politics *is* an aesthetic game, and yet we are not condemned to judge what is just according only to commonly shared opinions and thereby getting caught in an extraordinarily dangerous position. Quite

the opposite, each performed act in Politics challenges the commonly shared beliefs and opinions; its capacity of "posing a problem to politics" (Foucault) and its cutting effects in the lifeworld, i.e. the commonly accepted, renders action to an *essentially critical practice*.[32] Political judgment appeals to aesthetic criteria that are defined not by the commonly accepted but rather by its opposite – that what questions merely customary convictions and unreflected prejudices.[33]

The condition for the practice of Politics is, as we have seen, that its "heroes" insert themselves into an agonistic world of mutual persuasion by which they become what they are – *primus inter pares*[34]. Their "winning" is an extraordinary game which is played by them for its own sake as the very condition to maintain what otherwise would throw them back into the slavish narrowness of life reproduction and the iron grammar of consumption. This paradoxical characteristic, what one could call, the enteleological pragmatics of Politics renders it, first of all, to a game: "It is from the experience of this full actuality that the paradoxical "end in itself" derives its original meaning; for in these instances of action and speech the end (telos) is not pursued but lies in the activity itself which therefore becomes an *entelecheia* […]."[35]

B Omnes et singulatim

After I have discussed Arendt's positive concept of Politics and some differences to that of Lyotard we will now turn to what I previously marked as, "the threats and the consequences" of the substitution of Politics that Arendt draws.

We have already seen that Lyotard "complains" that starting with Plato the political tradition was concerned with the stubborn subordination of the prescriptive under the theoretical. Arendt makes a similar observation: since Plato and especially since the modern age, the political organisations of the Western societies substitute Politics by rationally organized rulership or despotism: "The modern age, in its early concern with tangible products and demonstrable profits or its later obsession with smooth functioning and sociability, was not the first to denounce the idle uselessness of action and speech in particular and of politics in general [...]. Escape from the frailty of human affairs into the solidity of quiet and order has in fact so much to recommend it that the greater part of political philosophy since Plato could easily be interpreted as various attempts to find theoretical foundations and practical ways for an escape from politics altogether. The hallmark of all such escapes is the concept of rule, that is, the notion that men can lawfully and politically live together only when some are entitled to command and the others forced to obey. The commonplace notion already to be found in Plato and Aristotle that every political community consists of those who rule and those who are ruled (on which assumption in turn are based the current definitions of forms of government rule by one or monarchy, rule by few or oligarchy, rule by many or democracy) rests on a suspicion of action rather than on a contempt for men, and arose from the earnest desire to find a substitute for action rather than from any irresponsible or tyrannical will to power."[36] This seductive substitution of action by rulership (in any of its forms) Arendt demonstrates with Plato's *The Statesman* where Plato combines in the "head" of the philosopher-king the two incommensurable practices of thinking (knowledge) and organizing (compulsively prescribing rulership). Plato distinguishes between those who know and do not "act" and

those who "act" and do not know. Only those who know, i.e. contemplate about the essence of justice, the true being and the beautiful) and only because they know they were competent to *make* politics. Inasmuch as Politics is no longer the aesthetic joust between heroes and their mutual effort to achieve the greatest deeds and words (opinions) but rather a ruling like the ruling of the household head, it reintroduces violence and domination into political practices. For making (instead of acting) presupposes always certain domination and coercion in order to achieve the conceptually formulated ends. The relationship between ruling and being ruled, between command and obedience, is according to the "lesser Greeks", as we have already seen, identical with the coercive relation between master and slave and therefore precludes all possibilities of action or, in return, this way of handling people is essentially pre-political or anti-political. Political deliberation is opposed to rational rulership the realm of freedom where all are equal and peers by definition. The "head" of the Oikos knows, on the contrary, what to do and to give order to the slaves and the rest of his subjected family (wife and children) who consequently executes blindly without knowing. Plato consciously substitutes and renders politics to a matter of life- administration: "Plato was still quite aware that he proposed a revolutionary transformation of the polis when he applied to its administration the currently recognized maxims for a well-ordered house-hold."[37]

Yet the legitimacy of the Platonic ruler rests ultimately upon the successful domination of himself. For only if the ruler is capable to govern his body and his (sexual) desires, his extensive household and precarious relationships to his younger friends[38] he proves to be fit enough and morally legitimated for ruling others. He thus rules "his" city like one rules one's household or like the sculptor makes a statue[39].

While Politics understood as the enteleological game of mutual persuasion and common acting implies the moral standard of "friendship" (Aristotle uses the denotation "*philia politike*"[40]) or "partnership" (Lyotard, p. 8), rational governmentality pre-supposes a relation of domination with oneself and others. The practice of Politics makes individuality possible while rulership compels one to conformity. Arendt adds that the technology of political administration that treats the community like a family blurs thoroughly the distinction of the private and the public – the bastard "social" is born.

From Plato's time, however, to the modern age, the ultimate good remained to live like a bios theoretikos, a way to live that despises and seeks to escape the slavish rhythm of mere oiko-nomical life. Arendt makes a crucial observation which will concern us in more details when I turn to Foucault. She describes that although Plato and Aristotle substitute Politics by rulership, as we have seen, they both agree that the best life is that which tries to free itself from the necessities of life; in their understanding the living body is the prison of the soul. This ancient hierarchy was taken up by Christianity (and thus con-veyed into modern society). But though they share the ancient emphasis that the highest good for men is to live a contemplative life, they stress at the same time *life itself*: "The reason why life asserted itself as the ultimate point of reference in the modern age and has remained the highest good of modern society is that the modern reversal operated within the fabric of a Christian society whose fundamental belief in the sacredness of life has survived […]."[41]

In a society which is centred on life and its ever-recurring cycle

of production and consumption a governmentality that operates analogously to household organisation becomes most applicable and highly efficient. Arendt finally draws the historical consequences when "the enter of life into history" (Foucault) becomes combined with the political practice of rational governmentality: "With the emergence of mass society, the realm of the social has finally after several centuries of development, reached the point where it embraces and controls all members of a given community equally and with equal strength. But society equalizes under all circumstances […]." And understood as an enormous family, "the society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behaviour, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to "normalize" its members in order to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement."[42]

Bio-Politics and Bio-Power

I now turn to the "revealing-expert" of the political technologies of this normalizing bio-power in order to let him repeat in more detail what Arendt previously thematized. That means, to be sure, that I read Foucault as an Arendtian: however, not only concerning her empirical investigations, he also shares with her what one could call the normative foundation (i.e. the positive notion of Politics). This presumptuous assertion I try to prove in the last chapter.

Foucault follows Arendt in showing that in the modern society life itself – *bio* – becomes the highest good. This indicates for both of them the same: a radical "reversal" (Arendt) and, paradoxically, a far-reaching continuation of political concepts

and techniques. The capitalistic state places (A.) the already elaborated power technologies of Hebraic-Christian pastorship and the political strategies of "Plato-Greek" rulership together (B.) into an unique political technology-regime: the rational governmentality of bio- power.

A   The political concept of pastorship

Foucault shows in his analysis[43] of the history of political technologies from the Hebraic tradition to the modern welfare state that Plato uses in his *The Statesman* not only uses the metaphor of the master-slave relationship or the sculptor-statue to exemplify his notion of ideal rulership, he also discusses the shepherd-flock metaphor. By tracing the origin of this metaphor of a concept of political rulership back to the ancient Oriental societies (Egypt, Assyria, Judaeo) Foucault argues that Plato's use of the metaphor was somewhat exceptional and that he therefore would "like to point out the contrast with Greek political thought, and to show how important these themes became in Christian thought and institutions later on."[44]
He states that although Plato discusses the shepherd-flock conception of political power, Plato rejects this art of government in the last instance. The difference between Plato-Greek master-slave rulership and Jewish shepherd- flock pastorship, Foucault stresses, lies in the fact that in the former political power is wielded to bind "different virtues, contrary temperaments (either impetuous or moderate), using the 'shuttle' of popular opinion" while the latter operates indivi-dualizingly: "First, he (the shepherd) acts, he works, he puts himself out, for those he nourishes and who are asleep. Second,

he watches over them. He pays attention to them all and scans each one of them. He's got to know his flock as a whole, and in detail. Not only must he know where good pastures are, the seasons' laws and the order of things; he must also know each one's particular needs." And Foucault sums up: "In short, the *political problem* is that of the relation the one and the many in the framework of the city and its citizens. The *pastoral problem* concerns the lives of individuals."[45]

While Arendt's reading of Plato's substitution of action through making, i.e. Politics by political rulership, tends to blur the considerable difference between rulership and pastorship, Foucault seeks to stress the aspect that Plato's *Statesman* presupposes the knowledge of the essence of justice and that his governing therefore centres essentially on divine or human laws. Yet Foucault follows Arendt in illuminating that in the frame of the political technology of rulership the process of decision-making (or prescribing) is authoritarianly defined by the One (including also, as Arendt said, monarchy, oligarchy and democracy) and no longer through the interaction of political deliberation of agonistic-minded friends. He, however, and here Foucault bridges to Lyotard's emphasis that the philosopher-king (or the given ruler) governs his city according to laws revealed by his contemplative reflection – that is the concrete reason why this activity remains the highest good for Plato- Greek. Furthermore, inasmuch as the bios theoretikos obtains an access to the Reason (nous) as the pre-existing order of the world he is able to govern his city according to this law (nomoi); his power is, as Foucault emphasizes, essentially centred on law.

Christianity, then, does not so much adopt the ancient governmentality of rational rulership, as Arendt suggests, but

rather the Hebraic theme of the pastorship, or precisely speaking: Christianity refines Plato-Greek rulership by *combining* its political power that works within a state (city) as a "legal" framework of unity with a pastoral power whose role is to constantly ensure, sustain, and improve the *lives* of each and every one: "We can say that Christian pastorship has introduced a game that neither the Greek nor the Hebrews imagined. A strange game whose elements are life, death, truth, obedience, individuals, self-identity; a game which seems to have nothing to do with the game of the city surviving through the sacrifice of the citizens. Our societies proved to be really *demonic* since they happened to combine those two games – the city-citizen game and the shepherd-flock game – in what we call the modern states."[46]

Both Arendt and Foucault define the characteristics of modern society as the preservation of *individual life*. Understood as an "enormous family which has only one opinion and one interest" (Arendt), namely the "naked question of survival" (Foucault), the sum of individual lives becomes problematized as *population*. The "demonic" of the modern labour society consists, thus, in its capacity to apply the legal and the pastoral art of governing. The doctrine of "the reason of state" which develops parallel to the modern state reflects and formulates, as Foucault shows, the rationality of state power: its task is to administrate the life of the individuals and of the population by applying the newly created procedures of political power technologies. The instruments and strategies by virtue of which the governmental rationality of the state enforces and "cares for" the health and "happiness" of the giant household of modern labouring society are revealed by Arendt (as was illustrated earlier) and by Foucault too as the normalizing practices of discipline and

regulatory controls: "In concrete terms, starting in the seventeenth century, this power over life evolved in two basic forms; these forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted, rather, two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of the poles – the first to be formed, it seems –centred on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines: an anatomo- politics of the human body*. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, birth and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population*. The disciplines of the body and the regulation of the population constituted the two poles around which the organisation of power over life was deployed."[47]

This power over life, or bio-power, installs and is efficient through the constitution of a new type of know-ledge: "statistics". Arendt interprets the constitution and application of statistics both as the mathematical treatment of reality and as a part of a broader characteristic in the field of knowledge: both she and Foucault reveal the genealogical 'origin' of the truths of "behavioural sciences" in its conspiracy with a power-regime that substitutes behaviour for action by equalizing under all circumstances and that cynically objectifies and reduces "man as a whole, in all his activities, to the level of a conditioned and behaving animal."[48] The normalizing power/knowledge of the "sciences of man" is tied up with the conformism of a society which makes itself intelligible as the historical outcome of a technology of power centred on life.[49]

Foucault as our expert on political technologies of power practices finally offers an answer for the question remaining open of who precisely enforces the governmental rationality of capitalistic state and its agenda to administrate life ensuring. both the productivity and the order of its individuals. His answer is "the police" who function as the *demonic rhizome* of bio-power: "Now, ‚the police' is the term covering the whole new field in which centralized political and administrative power can intervene […]. In seeing to health and supplies, it (the police) deals with the preservation of life: concerning trade, factories, workers, the poor and public order, it deals with the conveniences of life. In seeing to the theatre, literature, enter-tainment, its object is life's pleasures. In short, life is the object of the police: the indispensable, the useful, and the super-fluous."[50]

B. Genocide – The dream of modern Bio-Politics

Departing from the historical point of the Western political tradition where the "lesser Greeks" practice of political action becomes substituted through a calculating governmentality, and by drawing the "demonic" consequences which the combination of (knowledge based) rulership and (life oriented) pastorship in the guise of the political rationality of bio-politics of the modern state we are now in the position both to evaluate the catastrophic expense of this political tradition and to emphasize the need for a reformulation of the free practice of

Politics. To be sure, there are signs that one could agree with what Lyotard stated earlier, namely that this tradition "is presently collapsing", and yet a critical ethos of suspicion remains highly appropriate and needed.

In the prescriptive language game we are dealing with the question of what is just and what is unjust; in the descriptive language game we are concerned with the question of what is true and what false. Questions of politics remain thus always already in a realm of opinion – what ought to be done cannot be deduced or enforced by rational criteria or authoritarian decision-makers (be this the philosopher- king, "the" party, or economical forces). Foucault drags the culmination point of this – ultimately demonic – political tradition to light: "The atomic situation is now at the end point of this process: the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence [...]. If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large- scale phenomena of population... Wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations. But this formidable power of death – and this is perhaps what accounts for part of its force and the cynicism with which it has so greatly expanded its limits – now presents itself as the counterpart of a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations."[51]

... we have to go back to (the future of) the *polis* where the

fragile practice of Politics was not sacrificed in the name of the political cynicism of stability and compulsive order in the heterogeneous field of human affairs. But how, then, can we ensure that the multiplicity of (ancient) city-states is guaranteed? What makes a harmonious coexistence of sovereign territories of Politics possible?

Critique of political judgement

Lyotard's answer to this question was that each of these territories *ought* to regulate its search for the ultimate criteria of justice according to the regulatory Idea of multiplicity, that is, that every language game (polis) *ought* to respect the incommensurable sovereignty of the others. But that is, as it were, to say that Athens declares and therefore prescribes that Sparta, Macedonia, Theben, Euboeo, etc. have to obey the Idea of a peaceful coexistence and multiplicity –Lyotard's answer makes him a new Robespierre who "intends to prescribe upon everything, that is, he intends to extend the sway of the Idea of justice to the totality of discourses and conducts. He does not respect the plurality of language games."[52]

Arendt though she too seeks to resurrect the sovereignty of the game of Politics, does not share Lyotard's concept of the multiplicity of incommensurable language games. She could have asked whether the theoretical language game really is a game or perhaps more of a rule-governed behaviour basically performed in solitude? And Who could be interested in "gaming" human relations like that between the analyst and the analysand, the commander and the subjugated, the culture industry and the consumer, needs and capitalism, the health

and the mad, the "negro" and "the white", "der "Führer" and "das Deutsche Volk"? Can one say that the players involved are positioned in such games as they are when they freely choose and constitute only in concert a game of mutual persuasion and friendship?

From Arendt's point of view we realize that there is only one true game. This game and its structuring of human relationships transcends every other human relationship which nonetheless might be grounded on different and incommensurable pragmatics. The problem is not whether one game dominates the others but rather that what can dominate can not be a game[53]. Arendt stresses constantly the extraordinary character of the game of political action. In a strict sense, Politics can never collapse in itself. The reason for this we found already in its enteleological "pragmatics". A human encounter that pre-supposes the willingness to insert oneself only into the commonly shared in-between where one gains the new life of

Genocide – The dream of modern Bio-Politics

hero (instead of remaining the coward slave of economical imperatives and the pleasure industry), and where one becomes a primus inter pares, can be understood as a game that both paradoxical and frivolous: "The infinite game is as much *paradoxical* as it is *frivolous*: the goal of the players of the infinite being the *continuation* of play, they do not play for themselves – and the paradox of an infinite game is that the players wish to continue to play in others."[54]

Arendt makes a similar distinction when she discerns between the power of political action and relations of domination in any other types of merely rule-governed activities. The bond of the friends who seek to debate about what is just and what to do, and who strive therefore to persuade one another to create a capacity that they could not have *received* otherwise. – Arendt calls this capacity "power".

Whereas relations of domination can be found where people rule over people or where people are forced into behaving, speaking, obeying, commanding, loving, etc. in *a certain dictated way*. According to a thus suggested abyss between factually given relations of domination and the normative power of the game of Politics, Foucault must inevitably articulate his suspicions. He asks whether Arendt's distinction between domination and power "is not something of a verbal one"? And yet, may be surprisingly for some of us, Foucault nonetheless, or precisely because of this suspicion, aligns himself finally to Arendt's distinction: "[…] so I would say yes on the whole with the reservation that all the details have to be examined … we have to be both extremely prudent and extremely empirical."[55]

Foucault stresses in concert with Arendt (and Habermas) that the distinction between the Power of Politics and the relations of domination must be made. The ultimate criterion of justice

becomes thus the "Idea of consensual politics."[56]

A   The (post-) modern taste

Now, what do we have? While Lyotard draws the picture of a multiplicity of language games to which he adheres the Idea of plurality, Arendt and Foucault (and Habermas) extract only one game that they combine with an Idea of consensual politics. It seems as if their positions ultimately and unexpectedly converge. Yet there remain two differences: it is Lyotard who at least faces the possible danger of pleonexia, i.e. a danger that originates within the boundaries of a language game as such, whereas the "consensual politics" is solely confronted with a danger that comes from the outside. In short, Lyotard problematizes the possibility of the internal impurity of language games (including the political discussion) while Arendt at least seems to make herself blind against this problem. And although we have briefly discussed the enteleological (being both paradoxical and frivolous) pragmatics of gaming Politics, not all suspicions are dispelled as if yet. The second difference is marked by Foucault: while Lyotard conceives of his notion of an Idea of multiplicity as a regulatory principle, Foucault stresses the crucial distinction between the concept of consensual politics as being a critical Idea and the somehow pleonastic tendency of a regulatory Idea: "I perhaps wouldn't say regulatory principle, that's going too far, because starting from the point where you say regulatory principle, you grant that it is indeed under its governance that the phenomenon has to be organized, within limits that may be defined by experience or context. I would say, rather, that it is perhaps a critical idea to maintain at all times: to ask oneself what proportion of

nonconsensuality is implied in such a power relation, and whether that degree of noncensensuality is necessary or not, and then one may question every power relation to that extent."[57]

This distinction enables Foucault to avoid Lyotard's Jacobinism. But ironically enough, he risks to maneuver himself into Habermas's camp and its problems; problems that grow only in the frame of Habermas's theory of communicative action and not at all in Arendt's theory of political action. For what the former understands as the "transzendentale Gefälle" which the critical idea of consensuality opens up or implies the intuition. Although we never achieve empirically a consensus free from any domination, we nevertheless assume that the consensus is a goal still to be sought rather than one that we simply throw away and say it's impossible to achieve. From this perspective one can never *be* a bios politikos; the situation of the mutual persuasion of friends remains practically unachievable; the players of the game discussion solely act *as if* they were bios politikos and only as if they were gathered together as friends. The feeling of friendship (or partnership) and the unique experience of common action becomes imaginary.

In the final instance, Foucault, however, seeks to detach himself from this Habermasian position by saying that "the farthest I would go is to say that perhaps one must not be for consensuality, but one must be against nonconsensuality." But even this step is not enough to escape Habermas's tentacles. It is through a second move that Foucault finds himself back to Arendt's position: political action and the situation of discussion is essentially practiced, an empirical practice and an extra-ordinary game both pleasant and difficult: "In the serious play of questions and answers, in the work of reciprocal elucidation, the

rights of each person are in some sense immanent in the discussion. They depend only on the dialogue situation. The person asking the questions is merely exercising the right that has been given him: to remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning, etc. As for the person answering the questions, he too exercises a right that does not go beyond the discussion itself; by the logic of his own discourse he is tied to what he has said earlier, and by the acceptance of dialogue he is tied to the questioning of the other. Questions and answers depend on a game – a game that is at once pleasant and difficult – in which each of the two partners takes pains to use only the rights given him by the other and by the accepted form of the dialogue."[58]

The at once pleasant and difficult game of the dialogue situation is achievable and as real as the Greek Polis was – owing to the fact that the transcendental pragmatics of the practice of discussion does not function as a critical Idea but rather as a real and essentially *critical practice*. The frailty of the praxis of Politics witnesses both the circumstance that it either exists and that one must destroy or substitute it in order to get rid of it. Once again: the extraordinary character of this freely chosen game both pleasant and difficult mirrors the fact that it is either really practiced or non-existent[59], in any case it never functions as an Idea. In other words, Foucault agrees with Arendt that there *are* relations of power which exist beyond domination and these, Foucault says, "are consensual disciplines" or pragmatics.[60]

B   The political ethos of critique

To come back to Lyotard's question concerning the impurity of

games and their internal dangers we can respond, first of all, that one can follow Arendt's point that in a strict sense there exists only the game of Politics. Now, can we still hold that it is not threatened by hubris or pleonexia?

To argue for the practice of Politics presupposes that the utterer (the player) takes a political attitude, because this attitude first of all makes it possible, as discussed earlier, that one can attempt to convince others of what is just and unjust according to *one's* opinion. Furthermore, in the respect that the bios politikos (the one who articulates his opinion) owes this possibility, i.e. the condition of the possibility of his own existence as a bios politikos, to the enteleological character of the game he thereby plays, his main concern is to try to act in a way that this game remains maintained. In short, the players of Politics seeks to avoid pleonexia, hubris[61] or domination by terror in order to ensure the continuation of their game. The essential agonistics of mutual persuasion hold thus the unity of difference. The players of Politics recognize each other as peers. This recognition both guarantees the purity of their game and constitutes a normative intersubjectivity. Consequently, one can say that Lyotard's suspicion that a destructive danger emerges out of gaming as such proves to be appropriate only according to all rule-governed activities – apart from the unique, at once pleasant and difficult game of Politics. As far as the former are concerned one has to agree with (Lyotard and) Foucault "that all the details have to be examined" and that their concrete domination strategies must become revealed. Needless to remind that our initial problem has been that political action structurally fears being substituted by the political rationality of domination practices and their technologies of power.

A last point remains to be discussed. Lyotard, Arendt, Foucault and other thinkers are agreeing in at least one observation: in contemporary society there is no Polis, no public, no "we", no common space that could be read as a *manifestation* of the praxis of Politics. Lyotard even adds that pagan politics not even look for others to be recognized as co-players (or reader). But what "game", then, are these political thinkers playing? Is their common discourse which suggests political prescriptions as a *theoretical* discourse only once again an (almost cynical) example for what they are verbally critizing?

Well, one would say that it is not too difficult for them to escape this objection: they just have to emphasize the political and narrative character of their writing. Lyotard, for instance, does not hesitate for a moment to grant that he acts for political reason: "I answer without a second's hesitation that I have always given myself as an excuse for writing a political reason. I have always thought that it could be useful."[62]

To articulate political prescriptions or opinions and to judge what could be a just type of political organisation presupposes as I said a short while ago, the practice of political gaming, and that is nothing else as to say that one appeals to a "we", to the public realm of an intangible in-between and to the existence of co-playing friends (reader). The circumstance that in contemporary society no institutionalized common space, and that no "Agora" can be found is of course correct but does not lead necessarily to the conclusion that the political actors and writers are not nonetheless addressing their critical judgments to an "enlarged" and "imaginary" (intangible) public sphere of others' opinions – Kant, for instance, addressed his writing to the community of world citizens.[63]

As we have seen, the phronesis as the "savoir-jouer" consists in the faculty of judging. The faculty, now, to imagine or to enlarge one's own reasoning defines a crucial aspect of the very faculty of judgment, namely to take into account the opinions of others (in their absence) and to think enlargedly by putting oneself in the place of the co-players. The judging of Foucault, Arendt and Lyotard is thus essentially the public use of their reason because "by the public use of one's reason I understand the use which a person makes of it as a scholar before the reading public" (Kant). And Arendt adds: "Hence, critical thinking, while still a solitary business, does not cut itself off from "all others". To be sure, it still goes on in isolation, but by the force of imagination it makes the others present and thus moves in a space that is potentially public, open to all sides; in other words, it adopts the position of Kant's world citizen."[64]

One can hear how Foucault perceives himself as such a bios politikos or an enlightened and enlightening world citizen when he situates his critical thinking into this imaginary and anticipated "we": "Because it seems to me that the "we" must not be previous to the question; it can only be the result – and the necessarily temporary result – of the question as it is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it. For example, I'm not sure that at the time when I wrote the history of madness, there was a preexisting and receptive "we" to which I would only have had to refer in order to write my book, and of which this book would have been the spontaneous expression."[65]

Insofar as Lyotard, Arendt, Foucault and others are making their opinions public, seeking to persuade or seduce others and formulating prescriptions they are already playing the game of Politics: a game, Arendt reminds us, which is open for all and that means "the more people participate in it, the better."[66]

[1] P. Dews, *Logics of Disintegration*. Post-structuralist thought and the claims of critical theory, London/New York, 1987, p. 221 f.

[2] Admittedly, it is obvious that between the early Foucault and the early Lyotard and their later positions some "developments" took place: see, for instance, Foucault's attempt to put himself explicitly in the tradition of critical thinking that leads from Kant to the Frankfurter Schule, or Lyotard when he writes in 1989 that post-modernity is a rereading of modernity: "Die Postmoderne ist keine neue Epoche, sondern das Redigieren einiger Charakterzüge, die die Moderne für sich in Anspruch genommen hat […]. Dieses Redigieren ist, wie gesagt, schon seit langem in der Moderne selbst am Werk." in: Lyotard, *Das Inhumane. Plaudereien über die Zeit*, Wien, 1989, p. 51 f.

[3] Siehe dazu meine Arbeit: "*Die Praxis der Freiheit*. Zum normativen Fundament kritischer Theorie", Hamburg 1992

[4] J-F. Lyotard and J-L Thebaud, *Just Gaming*, Minnesota, 1985, p.17. We will see later on that Foucault investigates this "elsewhere".

[5] Ibid., p. 17; my italics.

[6] Ibid., p. 81

[7] Ibid., p. 20

[8] Ibid., p. 75

[9] Ibid., p. 75

[10] Ibid., p. 76

[11] Ibid., p. 87

[12] Ibid., p. 88

[13] The faculty of judgment of Kant's *Third Critique* epitomizes in the context of a search for a "critique of political judgment" something like the combination of Aristotle's judge and Kant's Practical Reason. Arendt's Politicizationof aesthetics (or the aesthetization of politics) follows the same equation: Aristotle + *Second Critique* of Kant = Politicization of *Third Critique* of Kant or, as Lyotard says, the missing "third part to the *Third Critique*." (p. 88) According to this equation see also: M.Jay, *The Aesthetic Ideology* as Ideology, or What does it mean to aesthetize politics?, ms. Berkeley, April 1991.

[14] Ibid., p. 95

[15] Ibid., p. 95

[16] Ibid., p. 99

[17] Ibid., p. 99

[18] What he displays in his book *Le differend*.

[19] Ibid., p. 100

[20] See also Weber's *Afterword* who traces this "paradox" between two laughters.

[21] Ibid., p. 98

[22] We will see that there is a way to rescue Lyotard. By the way, why all this fuss, isn't Lyotard's universalistic concept strong enough to be recognized as something very similar to Habermas's universal standpoint rather than its opposite?

[23] H.Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, 1959, p. 12

[24] Ibid., p. 13.

[25] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, New York, 1954, p. 221. As we will see, Arendt following Kant argues that judging is an enlarged thinking that though also performed in solitude nevertheless takes the others into account: "The power of judgment rests on a potential agreement with others, and the thinking process which is active in judging something is not, like the thought process of pure reasoning, a dialogue between me and myself, but finds itself always and primarily, even if I am quite alone in making up my mind, in an

anticipated communication with others with whom I know I must finally come to some agreement … Judging is one, if not the most, important activity in which the sharing-the-world-with-others comes to pass." p. 220 f.

26 To prevent a general misunderstanding: even if Arendt herself contributes partly to the confusions when she explains this common world with the Greek Polis one must heed that this Polis was the unique institutionalisation of a common world. A common world, however, needs no institutionalisation to become what it is: "world" in Heideggerian tradition tries, on the contrary, to undermine any tendency to objectify or hypostasize it. World is, or properly speaking, world worlds, first of all and essentially, as an intangible "in-between", as Arendt says (p. 182). Seen in this light the notion of public is maybe even more confusing. But here once again: "public" signifies a human relation whereby the emphasis lies on its strict relational, non-objectifiable character. And yet, that does not mean that one utopian goal could be a society which is focused in a re-institutionalized Agora.

27 Ibid., p. 26/27.

28 Ibid., p. 41.

29 See for both quotations: Ibid., p.222; whereby the second sentence is a quotation of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. The original says: "Man wirbt um jedes anderen Beistimmung […]" (§ 19).

30 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 205.

31 Lyotard, ibid., p. 90.

32 Arendt discusses the crucial connection between action and critique in her "Lectures on Kant". According to her, it was Socrates who brought critical thinking into life: "If we now

consider once more the relation of philosophy to politics, it is clear that the art of critical thinking always has political implications […]. To think critically, to blaze the trail of thought through prejudices, through unexamined opinions and beliefs, is an old concern of philosophy, which we may date, insofar as it is a conscious enterprise, to the Socratic midwifery in Athens. What he actually did was to make *public* […]." (p. 36 f.) I will come back to this in the last chapter.

33 Lyotard too faces this possible criterion for justice. But here again he associates the extraordinary in the last analysis with the idea (of regulation). Arendt's point slides thereby again through his hands: "What allows us to decide in not that which has been attained, but that which remains to be attained; it is ahead of us, *like an idea.*" (p. 83) The criterion of the extraordinary, i.e. the critical ethos of reflectivity, is however not even "ahead of us" but rather intrinsic to political action itself.

34 See Arendt, ibid., p. 189.

35 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 206. See Lyotard for a simular observation: "What is pagan is the acceptance of the fact that one can play several games, and that each of these games is interesting *in itself* […]" (p. 61) The crucial difference between Arendt and Lyotard here, however, is that the latter claims that every game is enteleological (or pagan) while the former would have rejected that this is valid only for political action: who is interested in perpetuating the language "game" of the despot and his subservients or that of the professor and her students? As we will see, the enteleogical pragmatics of gaming Politics is also the reason why the dangers of this game, namely "pleonexia" and "hubris" can be mastered.

[36] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, ibid., p. 200 f.

[37] Ibid., p. 223.

[38] See for an mesmerizing scrutiny of the Greek concept of the self-mastering as an aesthetic of existence and its development Foucault's last two books.

[39] Arendt discovers this metaphor in Plato's *Republic*. Anticipatingly, this metaphor symbolizes the demonic attempt of the entire history of political thinking of the Western tradition to substitute Politics through rational domination. If Adorno once said that there is no world history but a universal history from the "Steinschleuder zur Megabombe" than one can analogously claim that there exists a horrible universal history from Plato's use of the metaphor of the political sculptor to Mussolini's boast that "when the masses are like wax in my hands, or when I mingle with them and am almost crushed by them, I feel myself to be a part of them. All the same there persists in me a certain feeling of aversion, like that the modeler feels for the clay he is molding. Does not the sculptor sometimes smash his block of marble into fragments because he cannot shape it into the vision he has conceived?" Cited by: M. Jay, ibid.

[40] See Arendt, ibid., p. 243.

[41] Arendt, ibid., p. 313 f.

[42] Arendt, ibid., p. 41, 40.

[43] M. Foucault, *Omnes et singulatim*: Towards a Criticism of Political Reason"; in: Politics, Philosophy, Culture, New York/London, 1988, p. 57-85. Foucault was especially concerned with question of the political governmentality during 1976-1980. Surprisingly, he never published his detailed analysises in the form of a book. It is therefore comprehensible that Dreyfus and Rabinow at the end of the Foucault-book stress the demand of a book on bio-power.

[44] Ibid., p. 61.

[45] Ibid., p. 62 and 67; my italics.

[46] Ibid., p. 71.

[47] Foucault, *Right of Death and Power of Life*, in: (ed) P. Rabinow, The Foucault Reader, p. 261/2.

[48] Arendt, ibid., p. 45.

[49] See, in general of course, Foucault, "Discipline and Punish". To be sure, "The birth of man" as the effect of an unique constellation between human experiences, knowledge and power in the modern age was Foucault's general theme throughout his life.

[50] Foucault, *Omnes et singulatim*, p. 81. Marx gives an illuminating example for such a 'scene' and thereby controlled entertainment: "They (the English gin-shops) are rightly the only Sunday enjoyment of the people, treated mildly at least by the English Police." By the way, it is worth noting that Foucault interprets bio-power as an essentially ambiguous phenomenon which enables him to avoid the self-contradicting consequences of Adorno and Horkheimer's version of a "totally administrated society": "It is not that life has been totally integrated into techniques that govern and administer it; it constantly escapes them." (*Right of Death and Power over Life*, p. 265) … A somehow frequently overlooked aspect in Foucault's whole enterprise.

[51] Foucault, *Right to Death and Power over Life*, p. 259 f.

[52] Lyotard, ibid., p. 98.

[53] Isn't it somehow ironic that in the catastrophic state of our society which is far from being a situation of play that the term "game" is applied. Of course – who is not "just" gaming? But are we gaming like baseball teams game or like

one can game war as the mere continuation of politics, as von Clausewitz thought (See: C. von Clausewitz, *On War*, 1984, Book I, Ch. I, 21, p. 116)? In any case, a clear definition of game is necessary. Carse, for instance, offers a helpful approach. He differentiates between the finite games and infinite games. See J.P. Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games*, New York, 1986.

[54] H.Parret, *The Aesthetics of Communication*. Going beyond Pragmatics, Berkeley Press, forthcoming, p. 14; Carse's distinction following.

[55] The Foucault Reader, p. 378 f.

[56] Foucault, ibid., p. 378.

[57] The Foucault Reader, p. 379.

[58] Ibid., p. 381 f.

[59] Arendt grounds the uneraseable possibility of men to act and discuss in an ontology of initium: man as a beginner *is* essentially action: "Because they are *initium,* newcomers and beginners by virtue of birth, men take initiative, are prompted into action." (p. 177) And: "The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, "natural" ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is *ontologically* rooted." (p .247; and see also p. 323)

[60] Ibid., p. 380.

[61] This is how Arendt (p. 191) and Weber (*Afterword,* in: Lyotard,ibid., p. 107) call the danger "to what too much" in a game.

[62] Lyotard, ibid., p. 16 f.

[63] This imaginary community of world citizens is, however, not regulated by an Idea of reasonable beings (including men).

[64] Arendt, *Lectures on Kant*, p. 43.

[65] The Foucault Reader, p. 385.

[66] Arendt, ibid., p. 39.