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**“ALTERNATIVE FACTS” AS *THE* CRISES OF THE REPUBLIC
ACCORDING TO HANNAH ARENDT IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA:
*A Phenomenological-hermeneutic Approach***

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TO ALL LOVERS OF TRUTH

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ABSTRACT

During times of universal propagation of fake news and falsehoods, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act. Confrontations in politics lead to distrust, wilful manipulations of facts and struggles for power, and even turned into an excuse for exploitation and oppression. These dire situations in politics are its distorted presentations, which obscure the fact that the existence of politics is to facilitate universal well-being and promote the common good beyond cultural, linguistic, racial, tribal, religious and ideological differences. In 2016 the Oxford dictionary declared Post-truth as the word of the year while in 2017 the Trump administration promoted the word “Alternative Facts”, thus fanning into flames the already existing debates surrounding the nature of truth. Yet, we must not conclude that truth no longer matters in the gloomy, degenerating politics and social constructionism. A deepening and widening concern for the promotion and protection of truth on all fronts is now urgent. In fact, no other period in human history has been so linked to the quest for truth as the 21st Century. Any analysis of “Alternative Facts” would be incomplete without a reading of Hannah Arendt’s magnificent essay, “*Truth and Politics*” from 1967. Arendt, in this essay, examines carefully the relationship between truth and politics and makes a few observations that educate us that “Alternative Facts” is but an aspect of that greater challenge of how we reconcile truth and politics. Our whole enterprise is provoked by the overwhelming spread of fake news, falsehoods and the uncontrollable desire of politicians to anchor their entire political trajectory on lies telling to suit their whims and caprices. This outright disregard for truth, the common good, human rights all generate conflict. The cycle of violence that is recently perpetrated in various parts of Africa attest to this fact. We wish, in this work, to show that political power, if used properly, associated with morality and virtue, could bring forth rectification of society, thus facilitating universal well-being and happiness of the people, as the ideal cause of politics. To bring our objective to a logical conclusion, the Phenomenological-Hermeneutic approach is used to investigate on the question: how can political power be used properly in order to bring forth rectification of society and facilitate universal well-being of the people as the ideal cause of politics? We are going to follow the methodological structure of three parts each of which constitutes three chapters: the first part constitutes Arendt’s consideration of truth and politics which she concludes that they are two inseparable phenomenological realities of human existence; the second part logically follows with special attention on the notion of “Alternative Facts” as a modern warfare against truth in politics in the post-truth era; the third part recommends that a recommitment to truth as core ethical value in contemporary political discourse is a categorical imperative; an unconditional moral obligation. With all these, we realise Hannah Arendt is the philosopher of our times with far-reaching pertinence.

Keywords: Truth, Alternative Facts, Post-truth, Politics, Post-truth Politics

RÉSUMÉ

En période de propagation universelle de fake news et de mensonges, dire la vérité devient un acte révolutionnaire. Les confrontations en politique conduisent à la méfiance, aux manipulations délibérées des faits et aux luttes pour le pouvoir, et se transforment même en excuse pour l'exploitation et l'oppression. Ces situations désastreuses en politique sont ses présentations déformées, qui occultent le fait que l'existence de la politique est de faciliter le bien-être universel et de promouvoir le bien commun au-delà des différences culturelles, linguistiques, raciales, tribales, religieuses et idéologiques. En 2016, le dictionnaire d'Oxford a déclaré la post-vérité comme le mot de l'année tandis qu'en 2017, l'administration Trump a promu le mot "Alternative Facts", attisant ainsi les débats déjà existants autour de la nature de la vérité. Pourtant, nous ne devons pas conclure que la vérité n'a plus d'importance dans la politique sombre et dégénérée et le constructionnisme social. Il est désormais urgent de se préoccuper de plus en plus et de plus en plus de la promotion et de la protection de la vérité sur tous les fronts. En fait, aucune autre période de l'histoire humaine n'a été aussi liée à la quête de la vérité que le XXI^e siècle. Toute analyse des « faits alternatifs » serait incomplète sans une lecture du magnifique essai de Hannah Arendt, « Vérité et politique » de 1967. Arendt, dans cet essai, examine attentivement la relation entre la vérité et la politique et fait quelques observations qui nous enseignent que «Alternative Facts» n'est qu'un aspect de ce plus grand défi de concilier vérité et politique. Toute notre entreprise est provoquée par la propagation écrasante de fausses nouvelles, de mensonges et de la volonté incontrôlable des politiciens d'ancrer toute leur trajectoire politique sur des mensonges racontant au gré de leurs caprices. Ce mépris pur et simple de la vérité, du bien commun, des droits de l'homme génère des conflits. Le cycle de violence qui s'est récemment perpétré dans diverses parties de l'Afrique en témoigne. Nous souhaitons, dans cet ouvrage, montrer que le pouvoir politique, s'il est bien utilisé, associé à la moralité et à la vertu, pourrait engendrer le redressement de la société, facilitant ainsi le bien-être universel et le bonheur du peuple, comme cause idéale de la politique. Pour amener notre objectif à une conclusion logique, l'approche Phénoménologique-Herméneutique est utilisée pour enquêter sur la question : comment le pouvoir politique peut-il être utilisé correctement afin de provoquer la rectification de la société et de faciliter le bien-être universel du peuple en tant que cause idéale de la politique ? Nous respecterons la structure méthodologique de trois parties dont chacune constitue trois chapitres : la première partie constitue la considération d'Arendt sur la vérité et la politique dont elle conclut qu'elles sont deux réalités phénoménologiques inséparables de l'existence humaine ; la deuxième partie suit logiquement avec une attention particulière sur la notion de « faits alternatifs » en tant que guerre moderne contre la vérité en politique à l'ère de la post-vérité ; la troisième partie recommande qu'un réengagement envers la vérité en tant que valeur éthique fondamentale dans le discours politique contemporain soit un impératif catégorique ; une obligation morale inconditionnelle. Avec tout cela, nous réalisons qu'Hannah Arendt est la philosophe de notre temps avec une pertinence considérable.

Mots-clés : Vérité, Faits alternatifs, Post-vérité, Politique, Politique post-vérité



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

It is often argued that the confrontations in politics lead to distrust, wilful manipulations of facts and struggles for power. As a result, the pursuit of ideal society becomes in vain. It may even be potentially turned into an excuse for exploitation and oppression via deceitful means and the rise of totalitarianism. One must admit, to a large extent, that these dire situations do exist in the society throughout human history. These “dark sides” of politics are its distorted presentations, which obscure the fact that the existence of politics is to facilitate universal well-being of human society and promote the common good beyond cultural, linguistic, racial, religious and ideological differences. As such, we can shout truth to power and it will never be heard, because truth and politics do not stand on common ground. However, we must not simply conclude that truth no longer matters in the gloomy, degenerating politics.

Whatever the current attitudes and policies of governments, the reality that there is a popular immanent relationship between truth and politics, including the greater right to economic justice and political freedom is beyond debate. A deepening and widening concern for the promotion and protection of truth on all fronts is now unmistakably woven into every fabric of contemporary world affairs. In fact, no other period in human history has been so linked to the quest for truth as the 21st Century. This century stands out as the century of truth but also, the century of the most abject denial of truth as the disregard for truth in politics in this century has skyrocketed and falsehoods and deceit have become political virtues. Yet, it must be stated categorically clear that, truth is the noblest objective of all political endeavours and philosophies. In principle, the primary aim of states is to promote and protect the truth in all forms of political endeavours because it fortifies good governance. However, some state leaders have trampled truth underfoot. This explains why sages throughout the history of philosophy like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Kant, have taken the pain to philosophize on the ideal relationship between the truth and politics from varied viewpoints as well as politics and morality. Nevertheless, this subject is not an antiquated piece in the museum of philosophical ideas. The recent decades saw the rise and fall in the popularity of different political philosophies on this subject ranging from the wholeheartedly totalitarian views to the totally liberal and anarchic ones.

The ideal way for states to minimize the degeneration of truth in the political enterprise is by setting a framework in which the universal well-being and the common good are the ultimate goal of the state. Hence, political philosophy is chiefly concerned with the pursuit of the ultimate

goal of politics. Examples of Contemporary Philosophers who have philosophized on the goal of politics are: Hannah Arendt, Fagothey, P. Huntigton, Foucault, Fonlon, P.L.O. Lumumba, and just to name a few. Arendt's perspective forms the crux of our enterprise. Hannah Arendt does not leave the burden of guessing about the relationship between truth and politics to our sagacity. She philosophizes on this subject and makes an acute analysis of the concepts of "Lying in Politics" which has taken a new jargon: "Alternative Facts."¹

As a result, any analysis of "Alternative Facts" would be incomplete without a reading of Hannah Arendt's magnificent essay, "Truth and Politics" from 1967. Arendt, in this essay, examines carefully the relationship between truth and politics and makes a few observations that remind us of why the issue of "Alternative Facts" is neither new nor uniquely digital. It is but an aspect of that greater challenge of how we reconcile truth and politics. Arendt anchors the entire discussion solidly not only in a broader context, but she reminds us that this is a tension that has been with civilization since Socrates. "Alternative Facts" is nothing else than yet another challenge that meets us in the gap between dialectic and rhetoric, and Socrates would even be surprised and dismayed to find us thinking we have discovered a new phenomenon.

The issue of truth in politics is one that has always been at the heart of our civilization and our political tradition. In thinking about the relationship between truth and politics, Arendt makes a decisive and radical turn towards the direction of political idealism. The almost brutal tone of her whole enterprise, in this direction, is sounded in the very opening lines of her Essay which expresses her conviction that truth and politics are essentially inseparable with each other. Arendt resuscitates the idea of political idealism, of truth in politics by upholding 'virtue politics' which has long been slaughtered and sacrificed on the altar of political realism by the Machiavellian and Hobbesian political traditions and even by present day politicians; where the value of truth has been shipwrecked in the whole project of politics and morality ruled out as an essential political virtue and placed secondary to serve the interest of despotic political authorities. In disapproval of unwarranted political realism, Arendt asserts:

No one has ever doubted that truth and politics are on rather bad terms with each other, and no one, as far as I know, has ever counted truthfulness among the political virtues. Lies

¹ This concept denotes falsehoods and fake news in a post-truth era where truth no longer matters. Where truth has been shipwrecked and compromised by politicians to suit their whims and caprices.

have always been regarded as necessary and justifiable tools not only of the politician's and the demagogue's but also of the statesman's trade.²

It is interesting to think about how Arendt is read here. Today, as political ideal is under attack and one suffers from an increase of rhetoric and the decline of dialogue, one almost immediately becomes defensive. It is worth noting that politics should not be disparaged and that it deserves respect. For this reason, one should be careful and ensure that one does not further increase people's loss of faith in the political trajectory.

Arendt recognizes in our political systems, a philosophical analysis that has remained constant over time. She quotes Hobbes saying that if power depended on the sum of the angles in a triangle not being equal to the sum of two angles in a rectangle, then books of geometry would be burnt by some in the streets. This is what politics is; power. That is why the education of politicians is so important and urgent, and their character, key. Socrates' insight of this importance and urgency when he tries to educate Alcibiades is fundamental.

In her seminal 1961 Essay on "Truth and Politics", Hannah Arendt distinguishes 'factual' from 'rational' truths, arguing that the former are "much more vulnerable" and susceptible to distortion in politics.³ She notes; "*Dominion (to speak Hobbes' language) when it attacks rational truth, oversteps, as it were, its domain while it gives battle on its own ground when it falsifies or lies away facts.*"⁴ It is this distortion of factual truth in politics that has today resulted in the concept of "Alternative Facts" which is excruciatingly perpetuated by the 'sophists' of the 21st Century who prefer rhetoric and image making to truth in politics. But Arendt also offers a solution and hope and it is evident even in this rather grim quote. She speaks of a politically immature public, and as she closes the essay, she takes great pains to say that these lies, these falsehoods, in no way detract from the value of political action. She says, our respect, as citizens, for truth is what preserves the integrity of the political realm. As in the platonic dialogues, as in Hobbes, as everywhere in history, truth is a matter of character.

In order, to have a better grasped of a philosopher's thought, one needs a clear appreciation of the problems and issues with which he or she was concerned, and the context in which they presented themselves to him or her. This certainly is an important requirement for understanding Arendt's consideration of truth in politics. Her philosophical viewpoint was occasioned and shaped

² H. ARENDT, "Truth and Politics" in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Penguin Books, New York, 2006, p.223.

³ *Ibid*, p.227.

⁴ *Ibid*.

by the events of her days. Let us begin by examining some information about Arendt. Hannah Arendt, widely recognized as one of the most original and influential political thinkers of the twentieth century, was born to the Jewish family in Königsberg, Germany on the 14th October 1906. She was the only child of Paul and Martha Arendt. Arendt went on to study philosophy, first under Heidegger and Bultman at Marburg and then under Husserl at Freiburg and finally she obtained a doctorate in Philosophy at the Heidelberg University under the guidance of Karl Jaspers. The Nazi rise to power enhanced her academic ambitions and she became active in Jewish politics. She was arrested and detained in south-west France in May 1940, she did one of the most sensible things you can do when you are trapped in a real-life nightmare: she read Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, Clausewitz's *On War* and, compulsively, the detective stories of Georges Simenon. Today people are reading Arendt to understand our own grimly bewildering predicament. While in France, she worked for the immigration of Jewish refugee children in Palestine.

Thinking was Arendt's first defense against a perplexing world. But thinking was always going to be more than something you did with your mind; it was to be her way of being in the world. This was the lesson she took from her teacher, Martin Heidegger. She regularly wrote on Public issues but was not otherwise politically active. She is prominent for works like *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Crisis in the Republic*, *Men in Dark Times*, *Eichman in Jerusalem* and *The Human Condition*. She died in December 1975.⁵ Shortly after Trump's inauguration, Arendt's 1951 masterpiece *The Origins of Totalitarianism* entered the US bestseller lists. Tweet-size nuggets of her warnings about post-truth political life have swirled through social media ever since. Arendt, the one-time "illegal emigrant" as she describes in her own words, historian of totalitarianism, analyst of the banality of administrative evil and advocate for new political beginnings, is currently the go-to political thinker for the second age of fascist brutality. Power, according to Arendt, "becomes dangerous exactly where the public ends." It is true that Arendt loved the public space of politics for the robust clarity it gave to the business of living together. It is also true that she argued for a political republic based on common interest. These are both reasons why we should be reading her today. Arendt wanted politics dragged into the light so that we might see each other for what we are. But that did not mean we had to accept what was evidently ruinous to politics itself, merely that we had to acknowledge that what we find most repellent actually exists, and then resist it.

⁵ H. ARENDT, "Truth and Politics" in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.xii.

It is precisely at such moments, Arendt teaches, that we must think politically, resist populism: “When everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because... thinking becomes a kind of action.” Arendt wrote these words in 1971. The Pentagon Papers scandal had broken earlier that year. One year later came Watergate, and the essay that many are turning to now, “Lying in Politics”. There has always been lying in politics, she wrote; what was new and dangerous to the American republic was not lying, but a situation in which lies had become indistinguishable from the truth. Without grounding, facts run as free as the chuntering of the latest narcissist, and what seemed impossible; children in camps, indefinite detention, thoughtlessly crass nationalism becomes possible again. Arendt supported the anti-Vietnam and student movements of the early 1970s because of her convictions that their actions were making something new; she always had time for those she called the “new people” out of an essentially good political tradition.⁶

Politics, in the past and present, unfortunately, is often understood to be the wasteful competition for and the reckless exercise of power and authority. False information and partial facts are purposely manipulated by politicians to incite irrational sentiments of the masses and thus strengthen their positions. In the midst of the post-truth politics that emerged in recent years, a call to stay vigilant and conscious about the claims made by politicians is urgent, no matter how attractive or appealing they seem to be, in order to avoid these expressions, potentially supported merely by lies or speculations, being used as a tool for exploitation and oppression of the people’s freedom and livelihood. The history of humanity is characterized by a rational quest for standards which embed values in the human person. In a society where these values are debased through falsehoods and open lies telling in political discourse, the rejection of alternative values and uphold of essential values like truth and morality becomes a revolutionary imperative to guide human actions in the society. So that the disregard for truth can be avoided and peaceful-coexistence in the world at large and in Cameroon in particular be promoted.

To ensure that no stone is left unturned or that we do not leave any burden of guessing or ground for misunderstandings to the sagacity of our readers, it is imperative that we clarify some basic jargons used recurrently in very technical sense in the work.

⁶ L. STONEBRIDGE, *Why Hannah Arendt is the philosopher for now*, Oxford University Press, Birmingham, 2019, p.4.

The Notion of “Alternative Facts”

The 2017 U.S. presidential inauguration introduced the world to the concept of “Alternative Facts” a term that quickly became synonymous with a willingness to persevere with a particular belief either in complete ignorance of, or with a total disregard for, reality.⁷ The concept of “Alternative Facts” is a very crucial concept and needs to be treated with a lot of caution, if not, it will be misunderstood or misrepresented. As such, giving the various understandings of the concept is important. The term “Alternative Facts” can be understood to have at least two principal meanings. First, it can refer to a statement known to be false but deliberately presented as being true, that is, a lie. Second, “Alternative Facts” can refer to an error or something mistakenly accepted as true. This can be a claim that is possibly true or a claim that could be true, but is not.⁸ The notion of “Alternative Facts” can also be understood as the probability of a claim and its opposite. Weather forecast is a concrete example that predicts a 50 % chance of rain. Thus, it is equally probable that there will be no rain. Raining and not raining are alternative possibilities in terms of equal probabilities, and only the future shows which prediction is more reliable.

“Alternative Facts” is uncertain. The most plausible way to understand “Alternative Facts” is to take it to refer to different points of view or perspective. One of the best-known demonstrations of different points of view is the story about the blind men and an elephant. The story illustrates how knowledge acquisition is dependent upon one’s point of view. The story also teaches that the limitations of a point of view can easily lead to misunderstandings, mistakes of scale and excessive simplification. This story teaches us that our point of view is always limited and the same phenomenon can appear differently depending on what the focus of examination is and what the tools of examination are. Different but compatible views can therefore be “partial truth-claims”, complementing each other, rather than “Alternative Facts”. Moreover, people who see only one side of things are apt to engage in quarrels and disputes. The term “alternative facts” is also used to describe competing facts for the two sides of the case.⁹

⁷ E. BRADNER, *Conway: Trump White House Offered “Alternative Facts” on Crowd Size*, CNN (Jan. 23, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/22/politics/kellyanne-conway-alternative-facts/> [<https://perma.cc/67JJ2NPR>].

⁸ T. LEHTONEN, *The Concept of Alternative Facts*, In L. Kääntä, M. Enell-Nilsson, & N. Keng (Eds.) *Työelämän viestintä: VAKKI-symposiumi XXXVIII*. Vaasa 8.-9.2.2018, 213-224. Retrieved from http://www.vakki.net/publications/no9_fin.html.

⁹ F. NICHOLAS, *Dictionary of Law*, “White House pushes ‘alternative facts’. Here are the real ones”. New York, 2017, 2392, p.99.

In another sense, “Alternative Facts” can refer to what is called “white lies”. A much used example of a “white lie” is related to the question of whether the truth should always be told (no matter the cost) to a terminally ill patient.¹⁰ Depending on the person and situation, we may have a strong desire and need to tell an “Alternative Facts” for example, that there is always hope or that miracles can happen. Such selected facts, white lies cannot be condemned outright because they are intended for encouragement or consolation of the patient or are presented due to one’s own anxiety or helplessness. More on “Alternative Facts” will be seen in Chapter IV of this work but it should be stated clearly here that “Alternative Facts” is used in this work within this understanding: that it is telling lies or propagating falsehoods via various social media with the intention of deceiving and achieving a hidden political agenda. This already highlights the post-truth era of disregard for facts.

Post-Truth Politics

It is always a problematic task to define a historical period while being part of it. At its best, such work of classification is usually done afterwards with the benefit of hindsight. And yet, following the rise of nationalism and xenophobia in the West, and other places around the world, aided by the spread of lies through populist propaganda, some distinctive ways of referring to current events emerged. ‘Post-truth’ is chief among them. In fact, the notion of ‘post-truth politics’ even entered the dictionaries recently, a term used to define a period in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.

The existence of propaganda and its mission to conquer ‘hearts’ over ‘heads’ is not new here. Neither is the fact that public opinion is shaped by emotions and personal meaning-making. If anything, it would be hard to be otherwise. What is particularly important and particularly troubling about this new era is the dismissal of or disregard for “objective facts”. And, more than this, the fact that we live in a completely different informational and technological landscape than a few decades ago. The use of the Internet and social media as main sources of information and arenas of socialization had consequences few could foresee. The great hopes of the founders of such projects were that they would serve as spaces of free dialogue and exchange, increase communication and, with it, mutual respect and tolerance. The reverse has often been the case. ‘Social media bubbles’ in which “Alternative Facts”, including alternative histories, circulate as

¹⁰ JONES, W. & ROBERT J., *A History of Western Philosophy: The Twentieth Century to Quine and Derrida*. 3 (eds) Belmont, CA: Wardsworth, 1997, p. 116.

true, are of concern today for policy makers, media experts, educators and psychologists alike. Post-truth politics is characterized by totalitarianism.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is a form of government that theoretically permits no individual freedom and that seeks to subordinate all aspects of individual life to the authority of the state. Italian dictator Benito Mussolini coined the term *totalitario* in the early 1920s to characterize the new fascist state of Italy, which he further described as “all within the state, none outside the state, none against the state.” By the beginning of World War II, totalitarian had become synonymous with absolute and oppressive single-party government. Other modern examples of totalitarian states include the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler, the People’s Republic of China under Mao Zedong, and North Korea under the Kim dynasty.¹¹ In the broadest sense, totalitarianism is characterized by strong central rule that attempts to control and direct all aspects of individual life through coercion and repression. Historical examples of such centralized totalitarian rule include the Mauryan dynasty of India (c. 321–c. 185 BCE), the Qin dynasty of China (221–207 BCE), and the reign of Zulu chief Shaka (c. 1816–28). Nazi Germany (1933–45) and the Soviet Union during the Stalin era (1924–53) were the first examples of decentralized or popular totalitarianism, in which the state achieved overwhelming popular support for its leadership. That support was not spontaneous: its genesis depended on a charismatic leader, and it was made possible only by modern developments in communication and transportation.¹²

Totalitarianism is often distinguished from dictatorship, despotism, or tyranny by its supplanting of all political institutions with new ones and its sweeping away of all legal, social, and political traditions. The totalitarian state pursues some special goal, such as industrialization or conquest, to the exclusion of all others. All resources are directed toward its attainment regardless of the cost. Whatever might further the goal is supported; whatever might foil the goal is rejected. This obsession spawns an ideology that explains everything in terms of the goal, rationalizing all obstacles that may arise and all forces that may contend with the state. The resulting popular support permits the state the widest latitude of action of any form of government. Any dissent is branded evil, and internal political differences are not permitted. Because pursuit of the goal is the only ideological foundation for the totalitarian state, achievement of the goal can

¹¹ W. PETER, *Political Philosophies in Moral Conflict*, McGraw-Hill Company, San Francisco 2007, p. 548.

¹² *Ibid.*

never be acknowledged. As pluralism and individualism diminish, most of the people embrace the totalitarian state's ideology. The infinite diversity among individuals blurs, replaced by a mass conformity (or at least acquiescence) to the beliefs and behaviour sanctioned by the state.¹³

Large-scale organized violence becomes permissible and sometimes necessary under totalitarian rule, justified by the overriding commitment to the state ideology and pursuit of the state's goal. In Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, whole classes of people, such as the Jews and the kulaks (wealthy peasant farmers) respectively, were singled out for persecution and extinction. In each case the persecuted were linked with some external enemy and blamed for the state's troubles, and thereby public opinion was aroused against them and their fate at the hands of the military and police was condoned.¹⁴

Modernity

From the root meaning, the word modern comes from the Latin word "*modus*" which means "now". It is an adjective which specifies a point in time, whatever is current. Also, it involves the possibility of a new beginning based on human autonomy and consciousness of the legitimacy of the present.¹⁵ *Ipso facto*, it signals a certain tension within modern society given that it stands for a process by which society constantly renews itself.¹⁶ Little agreement is established about its cultural features and it is often associated with the "tendency of fragmentation of experience, commodification, rationalization of all aspects of life and a speeding up of the speed of daily life".¹⁷ In the same vein, Bauman associates modernity with, the modes of social life and changes in Europe beginning from the 17th century, which became more or less worldwide in their influence".¹⁸ Citing Theodore Adorno, Bauman adduces that the "modern spirit" originated specifically in the aftermath of the Lisbon disaster in 1755,¹⁹ an event he posits provoked an enormous reaction from *Le Philosophe* of the time.²⁰

¹³ W. PETER, *Political Philosophies in Moral Conflict*, p. 548.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ G. Deranty, "Modernity" in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia Of Sociology*, G. Ritzer (ed.), Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2007, p.3068.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ N. Abercrombie *Et Alii* (Eds.), "Modernity" In *The Penguin Dictionary Of Sociology*, Third Edition, Penguin Books, London, 1984, pp.269-70.

¹⁸ A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stamford University Press, Stamford, 1990, p.1.

¹⁹ Z. Bauman, *Lessons of the Holocaust*, 2012. [Online] Available on: <https://www.Youtube.Com/Watch?V=EHeqz7ejo2c>.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

Postmodernity

As a reaction to modernity, postmodernity stands for a worldview that emphasizes the existence of different worldviews and concepts of reality, rather than one ‘correct’, ‘true’ one.²¹ These two epochal terms portray certain fundamental differences that generate endless quarrels about their true meaning which denote constant war of definition and counter definition.²² According to Beilharz around the eighties, Bauman felt that the term “postmodern” was problematic and started using the term liquid modernity to better describe the global condition of constant mobility and change he saw in relationships, identities, within contemporary society.²³ To him, postmodernity was the result of modernity’s failure to rationalize the world and to amplify its capacity for constant change. Instead of referring to modernity and postmodernity, he writes of a crisis transition from solid modernity to a more liquid form of social life.²⁴ He argues that we have moved from a period where we understood ourselves as “pilgrims” in search of deeper meaning to one where we act as “tourists” in search of multiple fleeting social experiences.²⁵

Liquidity

Contemporary thinkers are disconcerted as to whether to call this rapidly globalizing age postmodern. Bauman situates himself at the very heart of this debate by coining the term “liquidity” a quality of liquids and gases in contradistinction to “solidity” (to stand for a predictable and manageable world).²⁶ In other words, it is an observation of social change that attempts to uncover the consequences of advanced social differentiation and alienation.²⁷ Bauman observes that, “fluids” are bound to “undergo continuous change in shape when subjected to such a stress”.²⁸ They travel easily, flow, spill, run over, splash, ooze unlike solids that are easily stopped and signify stability and resistance.²⁹ He uses it as a metaphor for grasping the uncertain, unstable nature of values and social systems in our contemporary times. This is in fact not an entirely new idea, in the *Communist Manifesto* a century and a half ago, the “melting of solids” was coined by

²¹ Wouter De Vries *et Alii*, “Bauman’s (Post)Modernism and Globalization”, in *Geographical Approaches*, 2005, p.13.

²² M. Bradbury, “What Was Postmodernism”, In *International Affairs*, 71(4), 1995, p.764.

²³ P. Beilharz, “Bauman And Heller: Two Views Of Modernity And Culture”, in *Comparative Literature: East & West* 1(1), 2017, p.54.

²⁴ R. Dreher, “What Are We Conserving?” in *The American Conservative*, 2017. [Online] Available on: <https://www.Theamericanconservative.Com/Dreher/What-Are-We-Conserving/>. (Page Consulted On 1/23/20, 945pm).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ P. Beilharz, “Bauman And Heller: Two Views Of Modernity And Culture”, In *Comparative Literature: East & West*, 1(1), 2017, p.54.

²⁷ R. Lee, Reinventing Modernity: Reflexive Modernization Vs Liquid Modernity Vs Multiple Modernities, *European Journal Of Social Theory*. 9 (1), 2006, pp.355-368.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ M. Bradbury, “What Was Postmodernism”, In *International Affairs* 71, 4, 1995, p.767.

Marx and Engels to refer to the treatment which the exuberant modern spirit awarded society it found too “stagnant and frozen in her habitual ways”.³⁰

Our whole enterprise is provoked by the overwhelming spread of fake news, falsehoods and the uncontrollable and insatiable “desirata” of politicians to anchor their entire political trajectory on telling only what is far away from truth to suit their whims and caprices. Contemporary politics has been essentially a kind of sophistry. Deception has become a justified means towards attaining hidden political agenda. Truth instead of being the end of politics, it has become the means. Looking at the history of the African people, in the face of colonial imperialism, we must not forget true African leaders who stood up against such pernicious enterprise like Marcus Garvey from Jamaica who talked of “Africa for the Africans” whom Bob Marley describes as “buffalo soldier”; Dr William Dubois, who sought to end discrimination against the black race in the United States; we must not forget Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta and Houphouet Boigny, Julius Nyerere and Mohamar Khadaffi. These African leaders promoted various African Philosophical ideologies that will help in the decolonization process and in the gaining of the African independence. The reason they were pressing forth for the independence of Africa is because they wanted Africans to be in charge of their affairs, for our own people to be the governors, for our young people acquire education, for us to control the production of our food through agriculture, for us to build our infrastructure, for us to improve the quality of life of our people by improving their health, to eliminate poverty. They were clear about what they wanted and it was clear all over Africa.

In the earlier days of post-colonialism, most our African political leaders were people who value the good of the African people, they were true leaders who were sensitive to the needs of their people and they developed philosophies that promote these African values. In this light, we saw the development of Pan-Africanism, Negritude, Consciencism, Communalism, “Ujama’a” according to Nyerere. In recent years, as African politicians began to emerge in different parts, politics took a different turn. They begin to show characters that are totally inimical to our expectations. They started getting used to the trappings of power. And we started having countries which we thought will liberate us and talking about truth in politics, it started disappearing. Many of them started thinking they were demigods suffering from what P. L. Otieno Lumumba calls the “Messiah Complex.” Africa started producing leaders that one cannot recognise. No one can forget

³⁰ Z. BAUMAN, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000, p.3.

Jean Abedel Bokassa of Central African Republic, the man who murdered little children in the streets simply because they did not buy uniforms from his wife, Mobutu Seseseku, Idi Amin of Uganda. One can go on and on because truth has started disappearing from African politics. We could see the effects of the disappearance of truth in African politics in Coup d'Etat started vising Africa; Modibbo Keyitta in Mali, Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria, Kwame Nkrumah, Paul Milton Obote, Patrice Lumumba were all consumed.³¹ It has been essentially lies telling and for self-gratification.

As such, there is a total disregard for the truth, the common good, human rights all of which generate conflict. There is a complete absence of internal and external peace. For example, the cycle of violence that recently erupted from xenophobic attacks in South Africa in the later part of 2019 attests to this. In the case of Cameroon, the violence perpetuated by separatists in the Anglophone regions in Cameroon speak eloquently on the need for governments whose sole aim will be to protect its citizens. On the other hand, governments are not immune to the temptations of abusing the rights of its citizens. In Cameroon, Human rights organizations have documented several acts of human rights abuses perpetuated by the states' soldiers. A glaring case is the example of the "Ngarbuh massacre." Because such intrusion on human right seem to require justification; because it is palpable that we need states at least for our safety in a dangerous world; a proper relationship between truth and politics is good so that the abuse of truth can be avoided and peaceful-coexistence in the world at large and in Africa in particular be guaranteed.

Truth lies at the very essence of the political agenda. It constitutes a political trajectory which is in tandem with the virtuous life. It is the way for us to have a political system that values and promotes the universal well-being throughout the world. If we have to move away from this diabolic and pernicious political manifestation, then we must have recourse to Arendt's philosophical insight established in *Truth and Politics*.

We wish, in this work, to show that political power, if used properly, associated with morality and virtues, could bring forth rectification of society, thus facilitating universal well-being of the people, which is the ideal cause of politics. It is the objective of this thesis, therefore, to wage a revolution against political realism as a crisis of human values in liquid modernity and from a phenomenological Hermeneutics stance, demonstrate the inseparability of politics and morality through the valuing of truth in politics. This leads us to investigate the metaphysical and

³¹ P. LUMUMBA, "The Magufulification of African Politics", in Hygiene in African Politics, YouTube.

ethical foundations of morality, of politics and of political ideals with Hannah Arendt as a model of truth in politics. This objective is accomplished following the guiding questions; how can political power be used properly with morality and virtues in order to bring forth rectification of society and facilitate universal well-being of the people as the ideal cause of politics? Or are truths or morality and politics separable? In addition to these, we raise further questions to be answered like; what are the metaphysical and ethical foundations of morality, politics and political ideals?

Our whole trajectory in this thesis will be decisively focused on responding to the aforementioned problems and intend to incorporate a critically analytical method of two key approaches: phenomenological and hermeneutical, in respect of the methodological framework of three parts each of which constitutes three chapters.

The first part constitutes Hannah Arendt's consideration of truth and politics. This is elaborately structured into three chapter. In the first chapter, Arendt's consideration of the human condition and the active life is presented. This leads us to discover that what Arendt finds so unique about the modern age is that it is characterized by aggressive ideologies that confidently assert that man can make and live in his own self-made world where certain activities necessary for his condition can be despised or even done away with. In this regard, she cross-examines the possibility by which man, through his scientific discoveries and technological knowledge can escape or change his human condition, and with it, basic activities that help him fulfil this condition. In considering the human condition, she gives pride of place to life, which as she notes, is bounded by birth and death. This life must be lived in the world and in communion with others. She maintains that the fulfilment of the human condition can only be realized through an active life which consists of three activities namely labour, work and action, each corresponding to the three fundamental aspects of the human condition. Since the human condition is characterized by certain aggressive ideologies and violent activities, the second chapter anchors on the concepts of power and violence. Most politicians view the notion of violence in contemporary politics as the basis of or a substitute for power which has also become a rather "quick" means that some citizens are tempted to use for the government to grant their requests. Arendt challenges this linguistic gap and looks at violence as distinct from power, force (used to indicate the energy released by physical or social movements), or strength and always needs implements (which take the form of instruments like knives, guns and bombs). To use these terms as synonyms indicates a certain deafness to linguistic meanings and has also resulted in a kind of blindness to the realities to which

they correspond. The prevalence of violence echoes the conflict between truth and politics which constitutes the crux of the third chapter. The conflict between truth and politics is neither a new event nor a fact people are unaware of. Even the common man whose opinion is easily shifting finds it hard to believe a political speech. In tracing the history of this fact, Arendt carries her readers into the politics of deception and mostly its impact and place in contemporary societies. Her conclusion to the relationship between truth and politics settles on the idea that they are two inseparable phenomenological realities of human existence. That will furnish us with foundational background intended to buffer our understanding of the whole project and thus, the second part of the work.

The second part logically follows with special consideration of the concept of “Alternative Facts” as a modern warfare against truth in politics in the post truth era. This part, just like the first, constitutes three other chapters in progression from the first part. As such, chapter four will be anchored specifically in clarifying the concept of “Alternative Facts” from the epistemological viewpoint depicting it as a form of moral relativism. Jacques Derrida initiated the term deconstruction which is a theory that exposes contextual limitations of concepts of certainty, identity and truth. Moreover, deconstructionism asserts that words can only be interpreted in context independent of our thinking about them.³² Deconstructionism also attempts to demonstrate how statements in any text undermine their own meanings. Especially in the context of deconstructionism and postmodernism, one can be afraid that the beast of relativism prowls behind the idea of “Alternative Facts” as this chapter hopes to establish. Chapter five will be focused on an understanding of the political dimension of “Alternative Facts” as a crisis of human values and thus constituting the crises of the republic as Arendt considers it. Truth has always been a value which ought to be upheld at every given point in human existence. This chapter will aim at supporting the contention that we live in a post-truth era where there are no objective facts and reality. We will see that confrontations in politics lead to distrust, willful manipulations of facts and struggles for power which makes the pursuit of ideal society a futile endeavour. It may even be potentially turned into an excuse for exploitation and oppression which obscure the fact that the existence of politics is to facilitate universal well-being of human society.³³ Hannah Arendt, in the

³² D. JACQUES, “Hospitality, justice and responsibility”: *A dialogue with Jacques Derrida*. In *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, Richard Kearney & Mark Dooley (eds.), Routledge, London, 1999, pp.65–83.

³³ T. LOK PAN, *The Degenerating Post-Truth Politics: How We Respond to It?*, Hickman/Neubert/Reich, 2009, p.7.

face of this pernicious reality, does not remain unperturbed reason why the next chapter will be anchored on a critical appraisal of her thoughts. One thing that is clear about this chapter is that Hannah Arendt thought finds a lot of relevance in present-day politics that has degenerated due to absence of truth. It is therefore recommended that her suggestions should be implemented.

After all these have been said, what is left for us in the final part is to recommit ourselves to truth as core ethical value in contemporary political discourse. The seventh chapter expounds on the ontological question. It captures ontological truth with the objective to enhance the contention that truth exists in the things themselves as an attempt which goes against relativism, falsehood and against “Alternative Facts”. It attempts to promote the contention that truth exists independent of our knowledge of it, thus truth is discovered. The eighth chapter focuses on the philosophical pertinence of Arendt’s thought in the face of “Alternative Facts” in in the post-truth era. If one were to describe political life today in one word, it will be captured as ideological gridlock, frustration, partisanship, self-interestedness and impotence. In any case, there is a general feeling that there is something seriously wrong with politics today. The final chapter: the ninth concludes our inquiry by providing philosophically sounding solutions to the crisis of human values in the republic. All this gives us the greenlight to proceed and have a thirst of Arendt’s insight.

PART I

**HANNAH ARENDT'S CONSIDERATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN TRUTH AND POLITICS**

To be able to apply the thoughts of Hannah Arendt on the relationship between “truth and politics” to our existential peripheries in contemporary world in general and Africa in particular, we first need to have a mastery of Arendt’s well-reasoned out philosophical insights. This explains why we shall begin in the first chapter by presenting Arendt’s consideration of the human condition and the active life. As such, we shall discover that what Arendt finds so unique about the modern age is that it is characterized by aggressive ideologies that confidently assert that man can make and live in his own self-made world where certain activities necessary for his condition can be despised or even done away with. In this regard, she cross-examines the possibility by which man, through his scientific discoveries and technological knowledge can escape or change his human condition, and with it, basic activities that help him fulfil this condition. In considering the human condition, she gives pride of place to life, which as she notes, is bounded by birth and death. This life must be lived in the world and in communion with others. She maintains that the fulfilment of the human condition can only be realized through an active life which consists of three activities namely labour, work and action, each corresponding to the three fundamental aspects of the human condition.

Since the human condition is characterized by certain aggressive ideologies and violent activities, the second chapter shall be anchored on the concepts of power and violence. Most politicians view the notion of violence in contemporary politics as the basis of or a substitute for power which has also become a rather “quick” means that some citizens are tempted to use for the government to grant their requests. Arendt challenges this linguistic gap and looks at violence as distinct from power, force (used to indicate the energy released by physical or social movements), or strength and always needs implements (which take the form of instruments like knives, guns and bombs). To use these terms as synonyms indicates a certain deafness to linguistic meanings and has also resulted in a kind of blindness to the realities to which they correspond.

The prevalence of violence echoes the conflict between truth and politics which constitutes the crux of the next chapter. The conflict between truth and politics is neither a new event nor a fact people are unaware of. Even the common man whose opinion is easily shifting finds it hard to believe a political speech. In tracing the history of this fact, Arendt carries her readers into the politics of deception and mostly its impact and place in contemporary societies. Her conclusion to the relationship between truth and politics settles on the idea that they are two inseparable metaphysical and phenomenological realities of human existence.

CHAPTER ONE

HANNAH ARENDT'S CONSIDERATION OF THE HUMAN CONDITION AND THE ACTIVE LIFE

Living on earth has been a basic human condition which has stood unchallenged until the present day era of space travel which potentially offers people a way of escaping the terrestrial reality and thus cutting the last tie through which man relates to nature.³⁴ These recent discoveries for Hannah Arendt propagate a kind rebellion against human existence which is a free gift but which man wishes to exchange for something he himself has made. Amidst these attempts to escape the earth, the autonomous man sometimes called the modern man, is no longer willing to accept in his being, anything even the basic activities of life, but what he himself consciously puts in the world where he lives. In so doing he sees himself as a being in a world, which to him, though once made, still needs remaking or reconstruction. What H. Arendt finds so unique about the modern age is that it is characterized by aggressive ideologies that confidently assert that man can make and live in his own self-made world where certain activities necessary for his condition can be despised or even done away with.³⁵ In pondering the above situation she questions the possibility by which man, through his scientific discoveries and technological knowledge can escape or change his human condition, and with it, basic activities that help him fulfil this condition.

The concept of the human condition, as used by Hannah Arendt, depicts the limitations within which human beings must contend with. Her point of contention here has to do with the conditions of being human; that is, the conditions that frame human existence without determining it. These consist of life itself, natality and mortality, worldliness and plurality and the earth, which, as she says, constitute the boundaries and limits of human existence.³⁶ This condition, as she asserts, is in itself limited as seen in the fact that it is bounded by birth and death. Thus she notes that natality corresponds to the experience of birth or beginning from which other necessary human capacities develop. Mortality on the other hand sets an ultimate limit to human existence³⁷. The human condition goes far beyond the mere conditions under which life on earth has been given to

³⁴ E. Y. BRUEHL, *Why Arendt Matters?*, Yale University Press, London 2006, p.78.

³⁵ D. VILLA (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002, p.10.

³⁶ P. BAEHR, *The Potable Hannah Arendt*, Penguin Books, New York 2003, p.XXVII.

³⁷ I. JEFFREY, "Hannah Arendt on Human Dignity and the Politics of Human Rights," In *The American Political Science Review*, 1, (1996), pp.5-8.

man such that anything that man comes in contact with gradually becomes a condition of his existence. In effect, the human condition consists of the general features of the human being by means of which elementary human dignity is possible. This consideration reflects a kind of historical and existential consideration of humanity following the footsteps of K. Jaspers and M. Heidegger, according to who humanity should not be taken to possess any permanent essential nature but a certain condition, which as she asserts, is not the same as human nature. The fulfilment of this human condition, as it stands, is deeply rooted in an active life.³⁸ H. Arendt sees the active life as an indispensable part of the human condition. To this effect we shall proceed to explore what she implies by the active life.

H. Arendt in considering the active life distinguishes it from the contemplative life, stating that these are two distinct ways of life. The contemplative life, she notes, is a life dedicated to study and the search for truth lived in solitude. On the other hand the active life is a life of easy engagement in social affairs and which is practically engaged in doing something³⁹. In bringing forth this distinction, she states that the active life can be properly understood only in relation to the contemplative life.

1.1. LABOUR

Looking at the history of these two lives, she remarks that the contemplative life has always been ranked higher than the active life thus pointing out that Christianity with its belief in a hereafter, whose joys announce themselves in the delights of contemplation, relegated the active life to the background thus giving it an inferior value. Looking at this situation one may tend to wonder whether one can go through life without contemplation and on the other hand whether one can remain in the contemplative state all through life. Reacting to this, Arendt points out clearly the reality that the active life is not only what people engage in but also what no man can escape. In its nature contemplation remains dependent on an active life.⁴⁰ The active life consists of three fundamental human activities: labour, work and action and it is through these that the human condition is properly fulfilled. The question one might ask then is, how is the human condition fulfilled is these activities?

³⁸ D. MORAM, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London 2000, p.306.

³⁹ E. Y. BRUEHL, *Why Arendt Matters*, p.79.

⁴⁰ P. BAEHR, *The Potable Hannah Arendt*, p.167.

It is quite difficult to bring out any clear definition of labour in Arendt's philosophy. However, in her analysis of this activity a definition is implied. Labour could be defined as a biological process of the human body and a life sustaining activity noted for its remorseless repetition.⁴¹ In relation to this she maintains that it is man's oldest and most natural burden and through it man finds the most basic way of relating to nature.⁴² Labour she notes is quite unique and noted for its value in the human condition as it is dedicated to the production of basic necessities for immediate consumption. The value of labour in the human condition rests in its relation to life. Thus according to her the human condition of labour is life itself.⁴³ By virtue of this, it not only partakes in life's toil and trouble but also serves as man's way of experiencing his being alive through which he becomes part of nature. The blessing of life is therefore inherent in labour.⁴⁴ Arendt finds Karl Marx definition of labour an apt expression of the place of labour in the life process. According to this definition, labour is man's metabolism with nature, in whose process; nature's material is adapted by change of form to the wants of man.⁴⁵ Given this primacy of labour in the life process, man's survival can be viewed as deeply rooted in labour.

1.1.1. Labour as a means of Human Survival

The kind of relationship between labour and life as seen above is such that without labour, survival becomes impossible for man. Expounding on this, Arendt contends that labour's productivity is measured and gauged against the requirements needed for the survival of the life process and for its own reproduction.⁴⁶ By implication, labour is the lone human activity which produces consumer goods through which life assures the means of its survival. It is worth noting that the least durable of tangible things are those needed for the life process itself. In more precise terms, the cycle of biological life needs to be sustained only through consumption and it is only labour that provides for the means of consumption.⁴⁷ Arendt stipulates that "whatever labour produces is meant to be fed into the human life process almost immediately and this consumption, regenerating the life process, produces or rather reproduces new labour power needed for the further sustenance of the body."⁴⁸ Labour is an eternal necessity imposed on man by nature and

⁴¹ D. MORAM, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p.309.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.310.

⁴³ E. Y. BRUEHL, *Why Arendt Matters*, p.81.

⁴⁴ P. BAEHR, *The Potable Hannah Arendt*, p.172.

⁴⁵ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1958, p.99.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.93.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

constitutes the most human and productive of activities.⁴⁹ As such, it assures humanity not only of individual survival but also the life of the species.

1.1.2. Labour and Fertility

The question at stake here is: what are the experiences inherent in the labouring activity that render it so precious and closely connected to fertility? From the foregoing consideration, labour, because of its apparent endlessness, can be understood as a natural process which forms the basis of the natural fertility of life. In fact, of all human activities, only labour is unending. In this light, H. Arendt, like Karl Marx, identifies labouring and begetting as two modes of the same fertility process. Karl Marx, in his philosophy, equated productivity with fertility such that the development of man's productive forces through which the necessities of life are supplied is seen to have obeyed no other law but the divine command to be fruitful and multiply.⁵⁰ Labour here is considered as the reproduction of one's life since through it individual life and the begetting of species is assured.⁵¹ She further notes that "he, who in toil and trouble has done his part, remains a part of nature in the future of his children and of his children's children"⁵² In more precise terms, the force of life, which is fertility, depends heavily on labour such that the living organism is never exhausted when it has provided for its own reproduction and its surplus lies in its potential multiplication.⁵³

1.1.3. Human Dignity in Labour

There is no doubt that as the natural process of life is located in the body there is no immediately life-bound activity than labour. In order for it to preserve man's dignity, the privacy of its products must be stressed not in terms of amassing wealth but in terms of appropriation that is keeping just the appropriate quantity necessary for survival. Given that labour in every respect makes use of the body, H. Arendt posits that nothing is more private than the bodily functions of the life process, its fertility not excluded.⁵⁴ At first glance, labour, because of its being an activity and not a function, seems not to be something private yet when we consider its closeness to the life process, then we can assert the privacy of appropriation which is the freedom to keep the

⁴⁹ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.99.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.126.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.106.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.107.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.108.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.111.

appropriate goods needed for survival. Arendt affirms with John Locke that the property of man is his own person, that is, his body. Ensuing from this is the fact that the product of labour which is an activity of the human body is thrown back upon itself aiming at keeping it alive. Worthy of note, however, is the fact that privacy has to do with the right to own an appropriate amount of consumer goods necessary for survival. The value of labour is demolished if at the end it does not promote life.⁵⁵ Life which for man is the very essence of his being is so dependent on labour that tampering with it or its products is robbing life of its dignity.

The pain and toil of labour remains for man something which if it is possible, should be eliminated by whatever means possible. To remedy the situation, instruments have been employed to ease the pain of labour while increasing its productivity. They are prominent and indispensable in providing for man's ever increasing necessities but the question is: can pain and toil be eradicated completely from the human condition such that man is liberated from labour? According to Arendt instruments as they are, are of great importance but the human condition is such that pain and effort are not just symptoms which cannot be removed without changing life itself, they are rather the modes in which it is bound, makes itself felt.⁵⁶

Further, she contends that "for mortals, the easy life of the gods would be a lifeless life"⁵⁷ The truth which is revealed in this statement is, that though instruments can ease the pain of labour, they cannot replace it. This implies that to perfectly eliminate pain would not only deprive biological life of its most natural pleasures but deprive human life also of its very liveliness and vitality. Furthermore, Arendt maintains that instruments have made the twofold labour of life, the effort of its sustenance and the pain of giving birth easier and less painful than it has ever been.⁵⁸ This however has not eliminated compulsion from the labouring activity or the condition of being subject to need and necessity from human life. According to Arendt, the limitation of instruments in easing the toil of labour is further affirmed by the fact that the services of one servant can never be fully replaced by a hundred gadgets in the kitchen and half a dozen robots in the cellar.⁵⁹ Having considered this, we now move to an understanding of work as part of the human condition and the active life.

⁵⁵ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.115.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.120-121.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.122.

1.2. WORK

There are as many senses of work as there are writers on the subject. H. Arendt's understanding of work is quite unique and brings to light a different dimension of work. She says:

Work is the interaction between the natural world and human artisanship, involved in the creation of lasting things... the production of things with an end, a final goal or service in mind. All work involves violence against nature, as part of the human transformation of the natural world.⁶⁰

The above definition presents work as that activity of man through which he is able to create lasting things that make up the world in which he lives. Here, Arendt singles out a basic distinction between work and labour which as she says has escaped the grasp of many in the past and still persists in the present but which many languages stubbornly preserve. To use the terms labour and work synonymously indicates a kind of deafness to linguistic meaning that does not do justice to the meaning of these words. In German we have *arbeiten* (labour) and *werken* (work), *laborare* (labour) and *fabricare* (work) in Latin and *ponein* (labour) and *ergazesthai* (work) in Greek.⁶¹

1.2.1. Work as a Process of Reification

According to Arendt, the word "reification" refers to the act of converting something into a material thing or simply to materialize.⁶² It is in this light that Arendt sees work as consisting in reification. The point here is the fact that the worker acts on what is already in existence. Arendt considers material here as already a product of human hands which has been removed from its natural condition whether by killing a life process for example a tree, or interrupting one of nature's slower processes, for example iron.⁶³ This process of fabrication takes place under the guidance of a model according to which the object is constructed. Worthy of note here is the fact that this model could be in the form of an image in the mind or a blueprint of the image already materialized tentatively through work. It is in this process of reification that man builds for himself a world

⁶⁰ D. MORAM, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p.312.

⁶¹ The above words in German, Latin and Greek have the connotation of pain in relation to labour like *albeit* in German which originally is referred only to farm labour as opposed to *werken* which has to do with the work of the craftsman. In like manner, the Latin word *faber* from *facere* means to make something. This pertains to a fabricator and an artist who works upon hard material. H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, pp.80,136.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.139.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.139.

without which his life will not make meaning.⁶⁴ To do this man does not build out of nothing but works on what nature itself has provided.

1.2.2. Work as Worldliness

Nothing seems to be more obvious to us in reading Arendt's work on the human condition than the reality that man lives in the world where everything seems to have been made available for him by nature. Nevertheless, he has made use of nature's material to build the world of material things that go a long way to make life comfortable for him.

Man's effort to build a world for himself, H. Arendt contends, is achieved by means of work. Work therefore, is for her an activity through which the human condition of worldliness is attained. To buttress this point, she holds that "if nature and the earth generally constitute the condition of human life, the world and the things of the world constitute the condition under which this specifically human life can be at home on earth."⁶⁵ Here, we notice an intimate connection between human life and the world of things. Arendt captures this connection by noting that "in their natural earthly surrounding, people must build a world whether of portable shelters, farms, settlements, villages, cities, states, empires or nations which they can inhabit and cultivate."⁶⁶ This basically is the result of work without which such a world is impossible.

In an important sense we note here that work, whose central figure is the craftsman, is oriented to utility rather than mere survival; production rather than consumption, to transformation of man's environment rather than simple adaptation to it. By it, man, through various tools, creates the world with a multiplicity of cultural, technological and political artefacts that offer human existence a degree of permanence denied to us mortals.⁶⁷ It is in affirming that man must build for himself a world that we realize with Arendt that "no human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature's wilderness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings."⁶⁸ This affirmation situates human life within a world of man-made things which go a long way to support his life.

⁶⁴ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition.*, p.140.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁶⁶ E. Y. BRUEHL, *Why Arendt Matters*, p.81.

⁶⁷ P. BAEHR, *The Potable Hannah Arendt*, p.XXVIII.

⁶⁸ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.22.

1.2.3. *Permanence of the World in the Works of Art*

Though seemingly useless, works of art are the most durable things human hands can produce.⁶⁹ Unlike other tangible things, works of art are apparently removed from ordinary use objects, the exigencies and wants of life. Because of their outstanding permanence she posits that:

Works of art are the most intensely worldly of all tangible things; their durability is almost untouched by the corroding effect of natural processes since they are not subject to the use of living creatures, a use which indeed far from actualizing their own inherent purpose.... as the purpose of a chair is actualized when it is sat upon...., can only destroy them.⁷⁰

The above statement upholds the idea that works of art are not subject to use and so are more durable than other tangible things. There is a durability of a higher order as she further notes:

Nowhere else does the sheer durability of the world of things appear in such purity and clarity; nowhere else therefore does this thing-world reveal itself so spectacularly as the non-mortal home for mortal beings. It is as though worldly stability had become transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality, not the immortality of the soul or of life but of something immortal achieved by mortal hands, has become tangibly present, to shine and to be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read.⁷¹

Arendt posits that the works of art give the world a kind of durability which no other man-made object can give. The kind of reification here is more than mere transformation, it is transfiguration. The work of art is not only limited to building a physical world but preserving its history. Here Arendt notes that while labour needs instruments of work to ease pain and while mortal men need work to erect a home on earth, acting and speaking men need work highest, “that is the help of artists, of poets and historiographers, of monument builders or writers, because without them, the only product of their activity, the story they enact and tell, would not survive at all.”⁷²

1.3.ACTION

Action can be defined as the interaction of people without the intermediary of things or matter.⁷³ This is a basic condition for human existence which as it were cannot be replaced by anything without turning human life into something else from what it is. In reality, no two human beings are the same so people are bound to relate to one another, exchange opinions and negotiate differences.⁷⁴ It is in the light of this understanding of human nature that Arendt regards plurality

⁶⁹ P. BAEHR, *The Potable Hannah Arendt*, p.177.

⁷⁰ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.167.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.168.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.173.

⁷³ D. MORAM, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p.189.

⁷⁴ E. Y. BRUEHL, *Why Arendt Matters*, p.81.

as the condition for human action. Through action, man is capable of initiating a new course of events. Here plurality, considers “the existence of diverse human agents in front of whom the action takes place and whose presence confers on it some meaning.”⁷⁵ In this regard, it is worth noting that action unlike labour, where one may labour alone or work where one may fabricate in isolation is highly dependent on the presence of others.

To solve the problem of human plurality, Arendt sees action as indispensable because through it people are able to relate with one another. Here, two apparently contradictory qualities are considered in man: equality and distinction. To clarify this, she writes:

If men were not equal, they could neither understand each other and those who came before them nor plan for the future and foresee the needs of those who will come after them. If men were not distinct, each human being distinguished from any other who is, was or will ever be, they would need neither speech nor action to make themselves understood.⁷⁶

Having defined action and established the fact of human plurality, we shall examine below how action fulfils the human condition of plurality.

1.3.1. Disclosure of the Agent in Speech and Action

Action and speech in Arendt’s thought play a very primordial role in an attempt to answer the question often asked of every new comer “who are you?” In affirming the disclosure of the agent in speech and action, Arendt holds that:

In every action what is primarily intended by the doer whether he acts from natural necessity or out of freewill, is the disclosure of his own image. Hence it comes about in everything one does insofar as he does take delight in doing since everything that is, desires its own being and since in action the being of the doer is somehow intensified, delight necessarily follows... thus nothing acts unless by acting it makes patent its latent self.⁷⁷

The giant achievement of action as revealed in this statement is, that it is only in acting that men show who they are, that is, reveal actively their unique personal identities, qualities, gifts, talents and shortcomings. In effect, without the disclosure of the agent in act, action loses its specific character and becomes one form of achievement among others.⁷⁸ Action here is quite different from behaviour which is repetitive and habitual showing what people have become, not who they can become in the performance of action.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ P. BAEHR, *The Potable Hannah Arendt*, p.XXIX.

⁷⁶ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, pp.175-176.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.175.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.180.

⁷⁹ E. Y. BRUEHL, *Why Arendt Matters*, p.87.

1.3.2. Action as a Precondition for History

Whenever men live together, there tends to be a web of human relationships created by the deeds and words of innumerable persons both living and dead. In this light, Arendt contends that “the disclosure of the “who” through speech and the setting of a new beginning through action always falls into an already existing web where the immediate consequences can be felt.”⁸⁰ This implies that every deed and new beginning, falls into an already existing web where it in a way starts a new process that will make an impact on others even those with whom one does not come in contact. It is within the context of this web that action produces stories of humanity as a whole which eventually sum up to its history. While these stories reveal an agent, this agent is not an author given that he is simply a part of the human story and it is through these stories that the actual meaning of human life reveals itself in its history. To this effect, she states that: “every individual life between birth and death can eventually be told as a story with a beginning and an end is the pre-political and pre-historical condition of history.”⁸¹ This means that while every human life through action creates its own story, history ultimately becomes the story book of mankind without any recognizable author but all being the result of action.⁸²

1.3.3. Power and the Space of Appearance

The space of appearance refers to the coming together of men through action and speech and through which power is generated. Such an appearance disappears not only with the dispersal of men but with the disappearance of the activities themselves and with it power.⁸³ Power as used in this context, is not the same as strength; for while strength is the natural quality of an individual seen in isolation, power springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse.

It is only in living together in action and speech that power is generated and whoever isolates himself from the group forfeits power and thus becomes impotent no matter his strength. H. Arendt vividly expresses this by noting that power is generated only “where words and deeds have not parted company, wherever words are not empty and where deeds are not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities and where deeds are not used to violate

⁸⁰ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.179.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.184.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.180.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.199-200.

and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities.”⁸⁴ If power does not spring from being together, that is, from the temporary agreement of many wills and intentions, then it is force which eventually results in violence. In a bid to clarify this she affirms that “the only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where men live so close together that the potentialities of action are always present can power remain with them.”⁸⁵ Power is what keeps men together after the fleeting moment of action has passed and they also keep power alive by remaining together.

Arendt’s consideration of the active life as a fulfilment of the human condition which has been the central task of this chapter is outstanding and unique in existential philosophy and remains a blessing to the contemporary society in particular. She was very much concerned with the task of reconsidering the human condition based on our recent experiences and of bringing forth ways in which it is fulfilled. In this regard we noted that the human condition consists of life, worldliness and plurality. We further examined the active life which constitutes the means by which the human condition is fulfilled. Labour assures mankind of the basic necessities that sustain life, while work assures man of a world in which he can live and realize his human possibilities. Action offers man the possibility of fulfilling his natural instinct as a social being. To fully actualize this, we shall proceed in the next chapter to elaborate Arendt’s notion of power and violence.

⁸⁴ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.200.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.201.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NOTIONS OF POWER AND VIOLENCE IN HANNAH ACCORDING TO HANNAH ARENDT

This chapter logically follows after Hannah Arendt's presentation on the human condition in the foregoing chapter. Here, Arendt presents violence in contemporary politics as the basis of or a substitute for power according to most politicians. This has also become a rather "quick" means that some citizens are tempted to use for the government to grant their requests. Violence is distinct from power, force (used to indicate the energy released by physical or social movements), or strength and always needs implements (which take the form of instruments like knives, guns and bombs). Because of this, Arendt thinks that, the revolution of technology, a revolution in tool making, was especially marked in warfare. The very substance of violent action is ruled by the means-end category. Thomas Hobbes' prediction, as Arendt quotes him, has been fulfilled, "covenants without a sword, are but words." We will therefore turn our attention to these concepts (power, force and violence) while trying to sort out the philosophies which surround the minds of leaders applying them. Arendt is much concerned with violence and decides to bring to our notice certain terms, like power, which are mostly misunderstood by politicians so as to avoid a kind of tempting misunderstanding of these terms. We shall first consider her view on power.

2.1. ARENDT'S CONTENTIONS ON POWER

Looking at Arendt's essay, *On Violence*, very closely, one cannot fail to point out the fact that her essay was primarily concerned with the differences between power and violence, which she argues amounts to an almost diametrical opposition. Power, according to Hannah Arendt, is that which "corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert."⁸⁶ Power is what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence. She proceeds by giving the etymological meaning of the word. The word itself, its Greek equivalent *dynamis*, like the Latin *potentia* with its various modern derivatives indicates its "potential" character.⁸⁷ Therefore, power is always, as we would say, a power potential and not an unchangeable, measurable and reliable entity like force and strength. With this, Arendt states:

⁸⁶ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, A Harvest Book Harcourt, Inc. London 1970, p.44.

⁸⁷ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.200.

While strength is the natural quality of an individual seen in isolation, power springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse. Because of this peculiarity, which power shares with all potentialities that can only be actualised but never fully materialised, power is to an astonishing degree independent of material factors, either of numbers or means.⁸⁸

By this, Arendt brings out the distinction between power and strength. In this light, strength is distinguished from the fact that it is natural to man viewed in isolated from the others.

Power, Arendt asserts, is never the property of an individual, it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together.⁸⁹ If we limit power just to the property of an individual, then one will be tempted to think that power consists in making others act as one chooses. For one to be in power, we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. In this case, he is acting as a facilitator, and therefore should seek what is good for all. Arendt therefore states clearly that the moment the group, from which the power originated begins to protest (*protestas in populo*), power also disintegrates.⁹⁰ This is because without a people or group there is no power as power will in this case turn to vanish.

To show the dependence of power on the people, Arendt states that “*the only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people.*”⁹¹ Only where men live so close together that the potentials of action are always present can power remain in them. Therefore, whoever isolates himself and does not partake in such being together, forfeits power and becomes impotent, no matter how great his strength and how valid his reasons.⁹² Therefore, we can say with Arendt that power depends on people.

Hence she continues by saying that the word “power” can also be used metaphorically. This is seen especially nowadays, when we speak of a “powerful man” or a “powerful personality.” In this case, the word power is used metaphorically; because what we refer to without metaphor is “strength.”⁹³ This brings to mind the fact that what prompts Arendt to be making this distinction is the fact that politicians, like Mao Tse-tung, strongly believed, as she quotes him in her book, that “*Power grows out of the barrel of a gun.*”⁹⁴ What they mean here is not power worth the name but

⁸⁸ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.200.

⁸⁹ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.44.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.201.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.44.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.11.

a form of violence. In this case, violence is nothing but the most flagrant manifestation of power.⁹⁵ Therefore, a gross misuse of power is an indirect way of calling for violence. Power needs to be exercised through the use of instruments like authority.

2.1.1. Authority and Force

Although Arendt uses the term ‘authority’ she nevertheless does not give a definition to this word. The term ‘authority,’ etymologically is derived from the Latin word “*auctoritas*” which has its roots in the verb “*augere*” that is, to increase or to enrich.⁹⁶ It can be viewed as a moral power that exercises an essential function as a cause of united action. According to A. Fagothey, it is “*the right of the society to direct and control the members so that they co-operate towards the attainment of the end of that society.*”⁹⁷ Therefore, to be in authority entails being for the people and acting on their behalf and not doing things that are merely for one’s benefit.

Authority, in Arendt’s view, can be vested in persons – there is no such a thing as personal authority. She then gives an example as found in the relation between parent and child, between teacher and pupil. It can equally be vested in offices, as, for instance, in the Roman senate (*auctoritas in senatu*) or as in the hierarchical offices of the church whereby, a priest can grant valid absolution even though he is drunk.⁹⁸ One can lose one’s authority either by behaving in a way that is contrary to the way he ought to behave, or by acting like a tyrant or by not treating others as equals. In this light, he has to keep a certain distance between himself and the people governed. A person in authority has a right to make decisions, issue pronouncements, give commands and perhaps perform certain sorts of symbolic significant acts.⁹⁹

The main function of the term authority in the analysis of a social situation, for Arendt, is to stress these ways of regulating behaviour by certain types of utterances in contrast to other ways of regulating behaviour. This is to reject the more usual attempts to analyse authority in terms of power. The concept of authority is necessary to bring out the ways in which behaviour is regulated without recourse to power or to force. To remain in authority requires respect for the person or the office. The greatest enemy of authority, according to Arendt, is contempt.

⁹⁵ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.35.

⁹⁶ K. PESCHKE, *Christian Ethics*, Vol 2, Goodlife Neale Ltd, Alcester 1994, p.227.

⁹⁷ A. FAGOTHEY, *Right and Reason*, Mosby Company Ltd, London 1980, p.249.

⁹⁸ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.45.

⁹⁹ A. QUINTON, *Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, London 1967, p.92.

On the other hand, Arendt posits that force which we often use in daily speech as a synonym for violence, especially if violence serves as a means of coercion, should be reserved, in terminological language, for the “forces of nature” or the “force of circumstances”, that is, to indicate the energy released by physical or social movements.¹⁰⁰ This is not to be identified with violence because force does not necessarily need instruments to implement it.

2.1.2. Effectiveness of Command as the Essence of Power

Here, Arendt starts developing this view from that of philosophers like Voltaire who, as Arendt asserts, thinks that power consists in making others act as “I choose.”¹⁰¹ From what Arendt presents, it is clear that in the mind of Jouvenel,¹⁰² power means to command and to be obeyed: without that there is no Power and with it, no attribute is needed for it to be. Therefore, its “essence is command.”¹⁰³ If we view power solely this way, it will not be too wrong for one to assert that these authors quoted above will not hesitate in defining power as a kind of mitigated violence.

In this light, Arendt points out the futility of the above argument with her belief that if the essence of power is the effectiveness of command, then there is no greater power than that which grows out of the barrel of a gun.¹⁰⁴ This is because, when it comes to using a gun, many people are bound to respect although this respect might only be out of fear of the consequences. Power conceived in this way is not different from violence. Therefore, according to Arendt, the claim put forward by T. Hobbes and Austin, that law is command can be right in stressing the connection between law and authority but wrong in conceiving of commands as the only form of authoritative utterances. In foreign relations as well as domestic affairs, as Arendt contends, violence appears as a last resort to keep the power structure intact against individual challengers (the foreign enemy, and the native criminal).¹⁰⁵ The leader in this case uses violence to achieve his goal – that of keeping the power structure intact against those who may wish to threaten the governed. This calls for a need to examine the relationship between power and revolution.

¹⁰⁰ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, pp.44-45.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.36.

¹⁰² A French philosopher, politician and economist.

¹⁰³ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.37.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.47.

2.1.3. Relationship Between Power and Revolution

Although Arendt does not define what a revolution is all about, we can deduce from her explanation that a revolution is a political uprising. The kind of relationship that exists between power and revolution is an exclusive relationship. In other words, for Arendt, where power has disintegrated, revolutions are possible but not necessary.¹⁰⁶ An understanding of this can be that revolutions only set in when power begins to break down. We can understand this from the point of view of people who believe that the essence of power is to command and to be obeyed as seen above. In this light, obedience is portrayed as something done out of fear of punishment, so much such that when power starts disintegrating, people no longer show respect or obedience for the person who has been entrusted with this function of leadership.¹⁰⁷ That is, a sudden misuse of power ushers in revolutions; hence this can only show how civil obedience – to laws, rulers, or even to institutions – is but the outward manifestation of support and consent. Amongst others, revolutions can also set in when the government turns to act in ways that violate citizens' rights.

On the other hand, to say that where power has disintegrated, revolutions are possible but not necessary means, in other words, that at times a decline in power does not serve as an opportunity for revolutions to set in.¹⁰⁸ That is, there is no law (that states) that a decline in power must always be marked by a proportionate increase in revolutions. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left on its own course it ends in power's disappearance.¹⁰⁹ Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it. Arendt next examines the nature of power.

2.2. ARENDT'S PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATION OF VIOLENCE

After examining Arendt's contentions on power, there is need for us to turn to her concept of violence. She begins by an analysis of violence and power.

2.2.1. Violence and Politics

With the knowledge of what power, authority and force are all about, one can now turn to look at violence in relation to these as well as the basic distinction between violence and these

¹⁰⁶ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.49.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.48

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.56.

other political ideologies.¹¹⁰ The term violence comes from the Latin *violentia*, itself from *Vis*, “force” (Greek *Bia*), and usually denotes great force, excessive force, or constraint. The first two meanings (great force and excessive force) are taken from the standpoint of an agent’s activity, though the second also implies a norm.¹¹¹ Phenomenologically, Arendt maintains that it is close to strength, since the implements of violence, like all other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength until, in the last stage of their development, they can substitute for it.¹¹² This now brings us to what Arendt considers as the basic distinction between violence and the three terms mentioned above (power, authority and force). It is clear in Arendt’s mind that violence is distinguished in this light by its instrumental character.

Hannah Arendt, however, maintains that no government exclusively based on the means of violence has ever existed.¹¹³ In this light, even a totalitarian ruler, whose chief instrument of rule is torture, needs a power basis. This shows that there is a certain kind of relationship between power and violence. That is, for a totalitarian to start torturing people, he must have been conferred with some power.¹¹⁴ The unfortunate thing in this case, however, can be that this totalitarian ruler is using his power *via negativa* instead of using it for the good of the people. Arendt continues by saying that violence is by nature instrumental and always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues.¹¹⁵ The end of war – end taken in its twofold meaning - according to Arendt is peace and victory. To engage in a war therefore, some people do so in view of achieving peace at the end and those who embark on war have no other intention in mind than that they should come out victorious.

The only distinction of violence from other terms that we have seen, is thus its instrumental character. By being instrumental we mean involving the use of weapons ranging from knives, to guns and even bombs which eventually lead to bloodshed. Arendt contends since when we act we never know with any certainty the eventual consequences of what we are doing, violence can remain rational only if it pursues short-term goals. Violence according to Arendt can serve to

¹¹⁰ According to D. Braybrooke in his “Ideology” in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 3 & 4, 124-125, in current usage, a political ideology embraces any subjectively coherent set of political beliefs. For Karl Marx, ‘ideology’ signified a false consciousness of social and economic realities, a collective illusion shared by the members of a given social class.

¹¹¹ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1967, p.XIV.

¹¹² H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.46.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.50.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.51.

dramatize grievances and bring them to public attention.¹¹⁶ In this case, it is from the people who are reacting against an unjust government.

As a solution, Arendt proposes that the danger of violence, even if it moves consciously within a non-extremist framework of short-term goals, will always be that the means overwhelms the end.¹¹⁷ With this solution, she proceeds to point out the negative effect of violence in a state or country. Such an effect is that, if goals are not achieved rapidly, the result will be not merely defeat but the introduction of the practice of violence into the whole system of body politic. This is because action is irreversible, and a return to the *status quo* in case of defeat, is always unlikely. The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, as Arendt says, but the most probable, is to a more violent world. We must therefore, pay attention to the means being employed. This calls to mind the question of whether violence has something to do with strength.

2.2.2. Strength

Strength is viewed unequivocally to designate something in the singular, an individual entity; it is the property inherent in an object or person and belongs to its character, which may prove itself in relation to other things or persons, but is essentially independent of them.¹¹⁸ Arendt further states in her *Conditions of Human Life* that strength is nature's gift to the individual which cannot be shared with others, and can cope with violence more successful than with power.¹¹⁹ Here we see that the strongest individual can always be overpowered by the many, who often will combine for no other purpose than to ruin his strength precisely because of its peculiar independence. Arendt further maintains that the almost instinctive hostility of "the many" towards "the one" has always, from Plato to Nietzsche, been ascribed to resentment, to the envy of the weak for the strong, but this psychological interpretation misses the point. It is in the nature of a group and its power to turn against independence, the property of individual strength.¹²⁰ By saying this, it leads us again to consider whether violence is natural to man.

¹¹⁶ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.79.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.80.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.44.

¹¹⁹ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.202.

¹²⁰ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.44.

2.2.3. Violence as a Natural Reaction

Here, Arendt states that the research results as presented by both the social and natural sciences, tend to make violent behaviour even more of a “natural” reaction than we would have been prepared to grant without them.¹²¹ This is compared with aggressiveness which is an instinctual drive, and is said to play the same functional role in the household of nature as the nutritive and sexual instincts in the life process of the individual and the species. The instincts in animals are activated by compelling bodily needs on the one hand, and by the external stimulants but aggressive instincts in the animal kingdom seem to be independent of such provocation.¹²² We have to note here that violence is distinguished from aggression by its instrumental character.

This lack of provocation, apparently, leads to instinct frustration, to “repressed” aggressiveness, which according to psychologists, causes a damming up of “energy” whose eventual explosion will be all the more dangerous.¹²³ This ties with the day to day saying that when you push somebody to the wall, at a certain point he will have to fight back. In the interpretation above, violence without provocation according to Arendt is “natural”; if it has lost its *rationale*, basically its function in self-preservation, it becomes “irrational,” and this is allegedly the reason why men can be more “beastly” than other animals.¹²⁴

2.3. POWER AND VIOLENCE

Arendt analysis the concepts of violence and power and makes a few remarks concerning the misunderstandings that have resulted in understanding this relationship.

2.3.1. Collective Violence

Collective violence means a type of violence that is undertaken by a group of persons. Although, Arendt underlines the fact that the effectiveness of violence does not depend on numbers,¹²⁵ it is still very necessary to state the exceptions to this rule. Arising from this, she maintains, is the fact that one machine gunner can hold hundreds of well-organized people at bay. However, in collective violence, its most dangerously attractive features come to the fore and this

¹²¹ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.60.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.61.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.60-61.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.67.

by no means because there is safety in numbers. Arendt asserts that violence needs justification: but to what extent can violence be justified? Flowing from this, we can deduce that in military as well as revolutionary action “individualism is the first value to disappear.” In short, success in this case needs cooperation without which it will be very difficult to succeed.

It should be noted that at times those rebelling form a common “brotherhood” among themselves. This common brotherhood, because of the end they wish to achieve, turns to see death as a lesser evil. It is true that the strong fraternal sentiments which collective violence engenders have misled many good people into the hope that a “new community” together with a “new man” will arise out of it.¹²⁶ For such people, as Fanon says, life is an unending contest, and violence is an element of life. This, for Arendt, that sounds plausible because as men always equate death with “eternal rest,” it follows that where we have life we have struggle and unrest and that clearly manifests lifelessness.¹²⁷ This echoes the action of Socrates glorifying death. For such people, violent action is the prerogative of the young – those who presumably are still alive.

2.3.2. *The Emergence of Terror*

Terror is not the same as violence; it is, rather, the form of government that comes into being when violence, having destroyed all power, does not abdicate but, on the contrary, remains in full control.¹²⁸ In this light, one can say that terror is the outcome of violence. According to Arendt, nowhere is the self-defeating factor in the victory of violence over power more evident than in the use of terror to maintain domination, about whose weird success and eventual failures we know perhaps more than any generation has known. It has been noticed that the effectiveness of terror depends almost entirely on the degree of social atomization.¹²⁹ This atomization (an academic word for the horror it implies) is maintained and intensified through the ubiquity of the informer, who can be literally omnipresent because he no longer is merely a professional agent in the pay of the police but potentially everyone one comes into contact with.¹³⁰

The decisive difference between tyrannies and dictatorships, established by violence, is that the former turns not only against its enemies but against its friends and supporters as well,

¹²⁶ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.69.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.69.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.55.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

being afraid of all power, even the power of its friends. The crux or the apogee of terror is reached when the police state begins to devour its own children, when yesterday's executioner becomes today's victim."¹³¹ This is also the moment power disappears entirely. This aspect then directly or indirectly involves the aspects of emotion and hypocrisy among the people.

2.3.3. *Emotions and Hypocrisy*

In the context of emotions and hypocrisy, Arendt says that in most cases if we enquire historically into the causes of violence, it is not injustice that causes violence but what ranks first is hypocrisy. For her, the strongest motives in today's violence are: To tear the mask of hypocrisy from the face of the enemy, to unmask him and the devious machinations and manipulations that permit him to rule without using violent means, that is, to provoke action even at the risk of annihilation so that the truth may come out.¹³² The violent reaction against hypocrisy, however justifiable in its own terms, loses its *raison d'être* when it tries to develop a strategy of its own with specific goals; it becomes "irrational" the moment it is "rationalized."

Looking back into history, Arendt pointed out that it was this hypocrisy that played a momentous role in the later stages of the French Revolution. The French Revolution had been declared long before the French Moralists who saw in hypocrisy the vice of all vices and found it ruling supreme in "good society," which somewhat later was called bourgeois society. Arendt notes that not many authors of rank glorified violence for violence's sake; but in the case of France – Sorel and Fanon – were motivated by a much deeper hatred of the bourgeois society and were led to a much more radical break with its moral standards than the conventional Left, which was chiefly inspired by compassion and a burning desire for justice.¹³³ Some of these people who glory in violence also argue that war is so essential to the functioning of our society. This, as they say, will only shock those who have forgotten to what extent the unemployment crisis of the Great Depression was solved only through the outbreak of the Second World War. Here, they see force and violence as successful techniques of social control and persuasion, especially when they have wide popular support.

¹³¹ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.55.

¹³² H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, p.65.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

There is no doubt that Arendt gives an influential discussion of the significance of violence in politics, pointing out its instrumental character, violence in relation to strength, the causes of violence, among others. Arendt, therefore, calls for the means to be taken into consideration. Non-violence which is really committed and creative enables its practitioners to oppose and filter out the negative social forces which characterize the structures and the people in them, while reinforcing and developing the positive forces in all the people. We must not use violence to achieve political goals, but a peaceful means that respect human life and dignity. This does not however, presuppose violence is completely morally unjustifiable. Violence at times becomes the only means in a society where truth has been trampled upon to suit the whims and carprices of political leaders. It is due to this that the next chapter concluding this part will dwell on the relationship between truth and politics with the aim of portraying that truth remains a political virtue.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INSEPARABILITY OF TRUTH AND POLITICS ACCORDING TO HANNAH ARENDT

The conflict between truth and politics is neither a new event nor a fact people are unaware of. Even the common sense whose opinion is easily shifting finds it hard to believe a political speech. In tracing the history of this fact, Arendt carries her readers into the politics of deception and mostly its impact and place in contemporary societies. For the purpose of exposing Arendt's views, this chapter will consider the following points: Arendt's understanding of politics, truth, the relationship between truth and politics, the historical development of the conflict and finally the solutions she brings forth. In order to articulate better the contribution of Arendt, it is important to consider in a preliminary fashion, the common conception of politics.

3.1. THE NOTION OF POLITICS

To depict an acute understanding of the notion of politics, we shall elaborate on the common understanding of politics, Hannah Arendt's understanding of politics as well as validity and thought pattern.

3.1.1. Common Definition of Politics

Etymologically, *politics* is derived from the Greek word *polis* meaning a "city-state." It is coined out as there is true need for government to regulate the relationship between an individual member of a society and another.¹³⁴ In this case when a group of people is organized as a unit for the purpose of government, one says that it is politically organized and may as well be called body politics.¹³⁵

Therefore, politics is the science and art of government. As a science, it concerns the state and the conditions essential to its existence and development.¹³⁶ In this case, a study of politics must naturally include an analysis of government and its working agents, with its subject-matter

¹³⁴ C. EJIMOFOR, *The Idea of Human Freedom in John Stewart Mill: A Critical Examination in Socio-Political Philosophy*, Pontifical Urban University, Rome 1988, pp.83-84.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

closely related to history, economics and ethics.¹³⁷ It is closely to this common definition that Arendt also develops her own understanding of politics.

3.1.2. Arendt's Understanding of Politics

In order to understand Arendt's view on politics one has to bear in mind three things: consensus of plurality, freedom and equality of individuals. For Arendt, it is only when these three elements come together that one can boast of living in a *polis*.¹³⁸

To start with, Hannah Arendt's definition of politics clings on the fact of human plurality.¹³⁹ She writes: "Politics deals with the coexistence and association of *different* men. Men organize themselves politically according to certain essential commonalities found within or abstracted from an absolute class of differences."¹⁴⁰ These words are further emphasized when she reiterates: "Politics arises *between men* and is established as relationships."¹⁴¹ Referring herself to the very context of the origin of political life in Ancient Greece,¹⁴² where words and deeds gave way to action,¹⁴³ Arendt found that neither philosophy nor theology can give an adequate definition to politics.¹⁴⁴

Moreover, Arendt considers politics to be established only among individuals who recognize themselves to be *equal*: "*Man*, as philosophy or theology knows him, exists, or is realized, in politics only in the equal rights that those who are most different guarantee for each other."¹⁴⁵ Or,

¹³⁷ C. EJIMOFOR, *The Idea of Human Freedom in John Stuart Mill: A Critical Examination in Socio-Political Philosophy*, p.83-84.

¹³⁸ A. WELLMER, "Arendt on Revolution" in D. VILLA (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, D. VILLA (ed.), Cambridge University Press, New York 2000, p.226.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.93.

¹⁴⁰ A. WELLMER, "Arendt on Revolution" in D. VILLA (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, D. VILLA (ed.), p.226.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

¹⁴² N.B.: "Arendt is one of the few contemporary political and social theorists for whom ancient Greece retains its hold as a point of reference and inspiration" (J. P. EUBEN, "Arendt's Hellenism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, 151.)

¹⁴³ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, p.25.

¹⁴⁴ H. ARENDT, *The Promise of Politics*, J. Kohn(ed.), Schocken Books, New York 2007, 94-96.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.4.

Authentic politics can exist only if numbers of people are brought up to want to take part in political life and do so in the “right spirit” or finding themselves in a fluid situation because of insurgency discover for themselves the right spirit in which to take part.¹⁴⁶

It is this relation that gives rise to freedom which is at the very heart of political life and in which politics has its meaning.¹⁴⁷

In other words, Arendt considers the public realm as the place of true freedom just like in the case of the inhabitants of the Greek *polis*, for whom freedom was located in the political sphere.¹⁴⁸ However, for her, freedom is an act of being free manifest in the performance of action within a context of equal yet diverse peers.¹⁴⁹ It is out of freedom that man performs the miracle she calls *action*:

The miracle of freedom is inherent in this ability to make a beginning, which itself is inherent in the fact that every human being, simply by being born into a world that was there before him and will be there after him, is himself a new beginning.¹⁵⁰

It is by virtue of action carried out by free individual in a community that a people can create a new world of their own: A sphere of their autonomy and sovereignty.

3.1.3. Validity and Thought Pattern

According to Hannah Arendt, whenever a statement is perceived as true, and is pronounced to be so, it acquires a certain character that makes it to be beyond agreement, dispute or opinion: “They are not changed by numbers or lack of numbers who entertain the same proposition; persuasion or dissuasion is useless, for the content of the statement is not of a persuasive nature but of a coercive one.”¹⁵¹ Hence, seen from the political perspective, Arendt says, truth becomes a despot for both the tyrant as well as for the liberalist or democrat who will find it hard to do away with it. Even fact despite their political nature are not exceptions;¹⁵² Why? because, truth as a whole, ascertains itself, or makes itself valid beyond deliberation or consent.¹⁵³ Henceforth, Arendt brings in the second argument that deals with the ‘thought pattern’.

¹⁴⁶ D. VILLA (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, p.135.

¹⁴⁷ H. ARENDT, *The Promise of Politics*, pp.116-117.

¹⁴⁸ H. ARENDT, *The Human Condition*, pp.50-58.

¹⁴⁹ H. BRUMKHORT, “Equality and Elitism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, 180.

¹⁵⁰ H. ARENDT, *The Promise of Politics*, pp.113.

¹⁵¹ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.235.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* p.237.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

Political thought pattern, for Arendt, differs from the pattern of truth in that it is *representative* (it is about creating in one's mind the interest of all). This is clearly expressed in the formation and holding of an opinion as we have already talked about. By putting themselves reciprocally in the shoes of others, each individual forms opinion considering all the others who are confronted with the same problem. He or she uses his imagination. Hence, his or her solitude space is still habited by the crowd.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, opinion being not self-evident because of the discursive nature of the mind in the process, finds itself sharing the same realm with facts which “have no conclusive reason whatever for being what they are.”¹⁵⁵ In other words, facts as well as any statement of truth, in addition to its opacity,¹⁵⁶ are subordinated to opinion-holders, testimony, and dependence on majority.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, this distinction is emphasized by the fact that truth has been considered as a resistant element to political action. Strangely enough, Arendt observes, action in politics have been at odds with truth. What does Arendt understand by truth?

3.2. HANNAH ARENDT'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF TRUTH

Arendt is not interested in seeking out a systematic definition of truth as Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas does. Rather, she is mostly concerned with the phenomenon of political rejection of truth and its impact on man and society. That is why in *Truth and Politics*, she approaches the truth via two ways (which she borrows from some of her predecessors): *rational* and *factual*.

3.2.1. Rational Truth

By *rational truth*, Arendt means the truth of the philosopher. That is why she also calls it *philosophical truth*. It is the truth of the mind, of reflection or contemplation as in Plato. In philosophy, the definition mostly held for truth is the *adequatio rei et intellectus* (the conformity between a thing and the intellect).¹⁵⁸ Thus, truth is different from any other form of knowledge, distinct by virtue of its certitude, directness, or infallibility.¹⁵⁹ Worth noting here, is the fact that

¹⁵⁴ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.237.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 238.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Veritate*, I, 9, Marietti, Romae.

¹⁵⁹ PLATO, *The Republic*, A. D. LINDSAY (trans.), J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd., London 1950, pp.VI –VII.

truth is considered to be given in solitude though it is meant to be universal and absolute.¹⁶⁰ In other words, this truth is obtained through contemplation of the philosopher but it imposes itself on every mind. For Arendt, this truth is apolitical by nature when it opposes the people's opinion and sets itself above consent and deliberation. The traces of this opposition are found first in Plato and down the ages to the modern period.

As mentioned above, Arendt contends that Politics arose in the context of freedom and action. The philosopher as portrayed by Plato lives in solitude¹⁶¹ and it is in this solitude that he contemplates *the* truth. In coming down into the world of the people dominated with opinions, in the cave, the philosopher's eternal truth finds itself mingled and transformed into opinions, suited for the world of consent, of ever changing opinions of the people.

According to her, the ambiance of the modern period engendered a shift in the discussion on the opposition between truth and politics, or more precisely, truth and opinion. Hence, in Hobbes, for instance, she says, one still reads of an opposition of two contrary faculties: that is, "solid Reasoning" and "powerful eloquence."¹⁶² According to Hobbes, the first is rooted on principles of truth whereas the other bases itself upon opinion.¹⁶³ At this point, Hannah Arendt brings in Lessing for whom man is incapable of knowing *the* truth.¹⁶⁴ Arendt also cites Kant and his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Madison, and Spinoza.¹⁶⁵ All these authors, Arendt points out, criticized man's lonely power to be infallible; hence, according to them, man needs to communicate his thoughts.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, Arendt proposes a further discussion that leads into the contemporary period. For Arendt, with the relegation of religion and philosophy to the background of human affairs, the debate becomes no longer one of rational truth and opinion, but it concerns more the fact or events which are known almost to everybody and which the contemporary politician wants to deny and destroy. This is what led her to ponder on *factual truth*.

¹⁶⁰ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.225.

¹⁶¹ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.228.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.229.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p.230.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

3.2.2. *Factual Truth*

Traditionally, a fact is defined as “the worldly correlate of a true proposition, a state of affairs whose obtaining makes that proposition true.”¹⁶⁷ In other words, a fact is the state of a thing as it cannot be denied, once it has happened. If rational truth is disclosed rightly in solitude or individual thoughts, a factual true statement is not at all. Arendt observes that factual truth has three qualities:

Factual truth... is always related to the people: it concerns events and circumstances in which many are involved; it is established by witnesses and depends upon testimony; it exists only to the extent that it is spoken about, even if it occurs in the domain of privacy.¹⁶⁸

Hence factual truth belongs to the public realm and is known by the people. It is political by nature, where it shares the same realm with opinion. Factual truth, according to Arendt seems not to be opposed to opinion. This is so because they depend, contrarily to the philosophical, to the realm of the public: they depend for their existence on human testimony. However, Arendt says, lying is the very opposite of facts.

For Arendt, “the danger to the political world in modern times is the loss of the factual world that emerges, paradoxically, at the heart of the political realm that ordinarily creates, and depends on historical remembrance.”¹⁶⁹ “The role of action in the political is conundrum to the grasping of the momentous use of lie in politics.”¹⁷⁰ Lies, Arendt says, distinguish themselves from other forms of epistemological mishaps by the fact that they are intended and willed. A person lies when despite the fact that he knows the fact, wilfully rejects or denies it. Despite the fact that the phenomenon of lies-telling is not of recent, Arendt however, points out new forms of deception which arise out the events of totalitarianism.

¹⁶⁷ HONDERICH Ted (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, New York 2005, p.287.

¹⁶⁸ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, pp.233-234.

¹⁶⁹ C. CARUTH, “Lying and History” in *Thinking in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics*, R. BERKOWITZ-J. KATZ-T. KEENAN (eds.), Fordham University Press, New York 2010, p.61.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

According to her, lying at first had two characteristics: in the first place it concerned “either *true secrets*, data that had never been made public, or *intentions*, which anyhow do not possess the same degree of reliability as accomplished facts...;”¹⁷¹ traditionally, lies-telling dealt with “*particulars* and was never meant to deceive literally everybody...”¹⁷² It is this question of modern lie that constitutes the essence of Arendt’s reflection of the *Pentagon Papers*.¹⁷³

3.2.3. *The Pentagon Papers*

According to Arendt, among the many ideas that run throughout people’s minds about the reports, the major lesson of the Papers is centered on deception, “a fundamental factor in the decision-making process shaping the development of the war”¹⁷⁴:

The Pentagon Papers...tell different stories, teach different lessons to different readers...But most readers have now agreed that the basic issue raised by the Papers is deception...The quicksand of lying statements of all sorts, deceptions as well as self-deceptions, is apt to engulf any reader who wishes to probe this material, which, unhappily, he must recognize as the infrastructure of nearly a decade of United States foreign and domestic policy.¹⁷⁵

Thus for her, on reading the *Pentagon Papers*, one cannot but realize the aspect of deception and self-deception: how an abyss has been drawn between the public version and the political version of the stories or problems in Vietnam. She considers deception and self-deception, in other words lying, in the reports, to have taken the place of politics as the driving force behind policy-making. This process of deception in the war is understood in Arendt as the more recent form of lies-telling which she refers to as *image-making*.

Arendt dates the history of this more recent form of deception from the dropping of the atomic bomb and the ideologies that preceded the Second World War. This new art of deception and self-deception involves two categories of people: the *public-relation managers* and the *problem-solvers*.

¹⁷¹ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.247.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.248.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.68.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.84.

¹⁷⁵ H. ARENDT, “Lying in Politics: A Reflection on the Pentagon Papers”, in *The Crises of the Republic*, Harcourt Brace & Company, New York 1969, pp.3-4.

The first set of people is concerned with advertising, selling opinions and political views: Public relation is a variety of advertising; hence, this practice has its origin in the consumer society, with its inordinate appetite for goods to be distributed through market economy.¹⁷⁶ For Arendt those people believe that “half of politics is “image-making” and the other half the art of making people believe in the imagery.”¹⁷⁷ Hence, as Cathy Caruth explains, Arendt’s point foresightedly touches the role of the media in the description of the war, and political decision-making process.¹⁷⁸

3.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUTH AND POLITICS

The problem of truth in politics constitutes the essence of Arendt’s reflection in *Truth and Politics*. In the first place, Arendt looks at the problem in regard to the mode of asserting the validity of these two entities.

3.3.1. *Truth and Political Action*

Because truth-tellers do not more or less change things by just stating what *is*, fact as opposed to lying is used by the politician as a means to action.

The hallmark of factual truth is that its opposite is neither error nor illusion nor opinion, (...), but the deliberate falsehood, or lie. Error, of course, is possible, and even common, with respect to factual truth, in which case this kind of truth is in no way different from scientific or rational truth. But the point is that with respect to facts there exists another alternative, and this alternative, the deliberate falsehood, does not belong to the same species as propositions that, whether right or mistaken, intend no more than to say what is, or how something that is appears to me. Political statement (...) acquires political implications only by being put in an interpretative context.(...) it is clearly an attempt to change the record, and as such, it is a form of *action*.¹⁷⁹

Hence, political lies far from being a mere negation of truth, is according to Arendt an act intended to change the world, like a political action.¹⁸⁰ In this way of acting, the liar, is expressing his freedom:

While the liar is a man of action, the truth-teller, whether he tells rational or factual truth, most emphatically is not. (...) He is an actor by nature; he says what is not so because he wants things to be different from what they are, that is, he wants to change the world.(...)

¹⁷⁶ H. ARENDT, *Crises of the Republic*, pp.7-8.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹⁷⁸ R. BERKOWITZ-J. KATZ-T. KEENAN (eds.), *Thinking in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics*, p.84.

¹⁷⁹ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.245.

¹⁸⁰ R. BERKOWITZ-J. KATZ-T. KEENAN (eds.), *Thinking in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics*, p.81.

In other words, our ability to lie, but not necessarily our ability to tell the truth-belongs among the few obvious, demonstrable data that confirm our freedom. That we can change the circumstances under which we live at all is because we are relatively free from them, and it is this freedom that is abused or perverted through mendacity.¹⁸¹

In other words, a liar is still in the realm of public sphere since his denial of the world is still a form of action. His action is a political one. At the same time, he is expressing his freedom by creating for the public realm something new. This view is also summarized in the words of Caruth when she writes:

Like the political actor, the political liar wishes to change the world, to be free from things as they are given. Since his denial of the world is also a form of action, the act of lying is in itself, a demonstration of freedom. The lie does not appear in the political realm only as the denial of the historical acts of the past, then, but also a kind of *action of beginning* that, potentially, has its own political and historical unfolding.¹⁸²

It is thus the political unfolding embedded in action that Arendt describes as the place of the danger of the lies when she narrates the passage of the lie from its traditional to a wholly independent and all-consuming activity that replaces action altogether.¹⁸³

3.3.2. The Limits of Politics and The Fate of Truth

Now, it is better, after this long journey to come back to the Arendtian standpoint on the conflict between truth and politics. In *Truth and Politics* as well as in *Lying in Politics*, Arendt concedes that the politician can never do away with the totality of truth either from the philosophical or historical point of view.¹⁸⁴

In *Truth and Politics*, she recognizes the “one-sided” objectivity of her analysis.¹⁸⁵ It is in this connection that she will talk of the aim of her article as a look at politics from outside.¹⁸⁶ This depicts Edmund Husserl’s “*phenomenological epoché or bracketing*.” For Arendt, it still remains an illusion for the politician to relegate philosophical truth to the background as long as human beings that constitute the *polis* are still thinking.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, pp.245-246.

¹⁸² R. BERKOWITZ-J. KATZ-T. KEENAN (eds.), *Thinking in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics*, p.82.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ H. ARENDT, *Crises of the Republic*, p.45.

¹⁸⁵ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.258.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Arendt's analysis of the *Pentagon Papers* in *Lying in Politics*, carries one into the understanding of the involvement of mass media in the art of political deception.¹⁸⁸ However, the leaking of this paper by one of the members of the group itself, represents for Arendt man's incapacity for total defactualization.¹⁸⁹ Thus, the question in these Arendt's articles is for man or the politician to recognize their limit.¹⁹⁰

3.3.3. *The Dangers of Telling the Truth*

We need factual truth in order to safeguard humanity - like the knowledge of doctors who can help stop the spread of Covid-19. And we need to be able to take some of these factual truths for granted so that we can share the world in common and move freely through our daily lives. But today uncertainty is fueled by self-doubt and fear of self-contradiction. When we can no longer trust ourselves we lose our common sense - our sixth sense - which is what allows us to co-exist. Truth is not political. If anything it is anti-political, since historically it has often been positioned against politics. Truth-tellers have always stood outside the political realm as the object of collective scorn. Socrates was sentenced to death.

Thoreau was thrown in jail. Martin Luther King was assassinated. This is possibly the reason why people laugh when we repeat Arendt's observation that truth and politics have never been on good terms. We know that there is truth in that observation, yet we still hope that truth will save us. It is a desperate cry and a plea for recognition: it is the sound of a democracy in mourning.¹⁹¹

It is important to remember that Arendt wrote "Truth and Politics" as a response to the reaction she received from publishing *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. What most worried her was a form of political propaganda that uses lies to erode reality. Political power, she warned, will always sacrifice factual truth for political gain. But the side effect of the lies and the propaganda is the destruction of the sense by which we can orient ourselves in the world; it is the loss of both the commons and of common sense.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ H. ARENDT, *Crises of the Republic*, p.44.

¹⁸⁹ H. ARENDT, *Crises of the Republic*, p.44.

¹⁹⁰ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, p.256.

¹⁹¹ S. Hill, Hannah Arendt and the politics of truth, 25 October 2020, 8.16pm, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth-the-politics-of-truth>

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

As Arendt herself realized, telling the truth in the public sphere is very dangerous. She thought she was offering a record of her experience and sharing her judgment in writing Eichmann. But what she received in return was an indictment against her personhood and a litany of lies that responded to a book she had never written. Nevertheless, the perennial danger of truth-telling made Arendt more, not less, determined to oppose lying in politics.

In a synopsis, Hannah Arendt considers the conflict between truth and politics to be an inherent conflict which opposes both the philosopher and the historian's truths to the power system in place. In the course of the discussion however, Arendt makes mention of many ideas worth noting. At this juncture, the question of the relationship between philosophy, politics and the use of lies in politics still remains a major concern and a "crisis of the republic" as lying in politics is made to appear as authenticity. Lying in politics today has been dubbed "Alternative Facts" which constitutes the crux of politics in the post-truth era. As such, the ensuing part shall focus on the concept of 'Alternative Facts' as falsehood in the political arena.

PART II

**“ALTERNATIVE FACTS” AS A MODERN WARFARE AGAINST
TRUTH IN POLITICS IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA**

Any analysis of “Alternative Facts”¹⁹³ would be incomplete without a reading of Hannah Arendt’s magnificent essay, *Truth and Politics* from 1967. Arendt, in this essay, examines carefully the relationship between truth and politics and makes a few observations that remind us of why the issue of “Alternative Facts” is neither new nor uniquely digital. It is but an aspect of that greater challenge of how we reconcile truth and politics. Arendt anchors the entire discussion solidly not only in a broader context, but she reminds us that this is a tension that has been with civilization since Socrates. “Alternative Facts” is nothing else than yet another challenge that meets us in the gap between dialectic and rhetoric, and Socrates would even be surprised and dismayed to find us thinking we have discovered a new phenomenon.

Truth is therefore, the conformity between the intellect and reality, i.e. the noumena and the phenomena. In fact, phenomenology is truth. “Alternative Facts” is a deviation from this phenomenological reality that destroys our existential values. *A lie can run around the world before the truth has got its boots on.* It is now said that we live in a post-truth era; an era in which audiences are increasingly likely to believe information that appeals to their emotions and their personal beliefs, as opposed to seeking and accepting information that is regarded as factual and objective. People’s information consumption is being increasingly guided by the affective, or emotional, dimension of their psyche, as opposed to the cognitive dimension. This post-truth reality is one of the reasons why fake news has become so inescapable, and consequently, why it is so hard to combat and interrupt the production and dissemination of deliberately false information. The phenomenon of fake news is not new, nor is the concept of post-truth. The Colbert Report introduced us to the concept of “truthiness” over a decade ago, warning us, albeit comically, of the danger of accepting information and stories because they appeal to our emotions and not because they are supported by any real evidence or facts. Now, in 2018, journalists and the media remain on high alert and are warning their constituents about the “production of confusion” that surrounds the current presidential administration and encourages the industry that is fake news. “Alternative Facts” are disseminated daily and fact-based information or reporting that is negative or objected to is quickly and erroneously labelled as fake news, further obfuscating and suppressing information that citizens should be aware of and prioritizing.

¹⁹³ This concept denotes falsehoods and fake news in a post-truth era where there is no more absolute truth.

CHAPTER FOUR

“THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF “ALTERNATIVE FACTS” AS A FORM OF MORAL RELATIVISM IN POST-MODERNITY

The notion of “Alternative Facts” is another moral challenge that moral philosophers of the 21st Century are battling with. It should be recalled that the philosophy behind this history-making concept: “Alternative Facts” is not new except for the concept itself. Right from the time of Socrates, lies in politics have been evident. This explains why Socrates spent much of his time combatting this moral gap in politics which deviated from political ideals. This unappetizing tradition of political realism has been continually evident in politics right up till date. Politics is made to be thought of as essentially characterized by lies, falsehoods. This falsehood that exists in politics is aptly justified as “Alternative Facts” and it is a warfare against the long established tradition of truth. The concept of “Alternative Facts” is philosophically interesting, because it seems to call into question a set of widely accepted, folk-psychological standards of truth and knowledge. These standards include the following: there is only one truth about every single issue and the opposite of truth is not another truth, but falsehood. In 1960s, a 20th-century school of philosophy by Jacques Derrida initiated the term deconstruction. Deconstructionism is a theory that exposes contextual limitations of concepts of certainty, identity and truth. Moreover, deconstructionism asserts that words can only be interpreted in context independent of our thinking about them.¹⁹⁴ Deconstructionism also attempts to demonstrate how statements in any text undermine their own meanings. Especially in the context of deconstructionism and postmodernism, one can be afraid that the beast of relativism prowls behind the idea of “Alternative Facts”. In view of this and other philosophical considerations, the concept of “Alternative Facts” is discussed and seen as a form of moral relativism.

4.1. THE NOTION OF “ALTERNATIVE FACTS”

To have an understanding of the concept of “Alternative Facts”, looking at the proper understanding of its origin, Newspeak and Trump’s inauguration is imperative. Let us begin with the origin of “Alternative Facts”

¹⁹⁴ D. JACQUES, *Hospitality, justice and responsibility: A dialogue with Jacques Derrida*. In *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, Richard Kearney & Mark Dooley (eds.), Routledge, London, 1999, pp.65–83

4.1.1. *The Origin of “Alternative Facts”*

The 2017 U.S. presidential inauguration introduced the world to the concept of “Alternative Facts” a term that quickly became synonymous with a willingness to persevere with a particular belief either in complete ignorance of, or with a total disregard for, reality.¹⁹⁵ The increasing incidence of “Alternative Facts” in the popular and political arena creates a critical conundrum for lawyers, judges, legislators, and anyone interested in deliberative democracy, since it is unclear how rational debate can proceed if empirical evidence holds no persuasive value.

Although the concept of a “post-truth society” only truly entered the cultural consciousness of recent,¹⁹⁶ social scientists from a variety of fields, most notably political science and psychology, have long been interested in how and why individuals and institutions adopt behaviours or beliefs that are patently at odds with observable reality. These scholars’ often startling conclusions provide important insights for lawyers and policymakers struggling to adapt to unprecedented legal and political challenges. Traditionally, scholars have characterized political misperceptions as “information deficits” arising out of individuals’ “lack of interest in or knowledge of politics.”¹⁹⁷

4.1.2. *The “Newspeak”*

Here is where we get to the origin of the idea of an “Alternative Facts”. In 1949, George Orwell wrote the novel *1984*, which portrays a totalitarian state that limited freedom of thought by creating its own language called “Newspeak.” The political purpose of Newspeak was to reduce the English language to simple concepts that reinforced the totalitarian dominance of the State. Moreover, words with negative meanings were removed and given different connotations to make them sound better, such that “bad” became “ungood”.

In the current “Newspeak” that Ms Conway called “Alternative Facts” on Sunday, falsehoods lose their negative connotation and become facts, albeit “Alternative Facts”. The new administration’s efforts at mind control begins. According to *Oxford Dictionaries*, “Newspeak” in

¹⁹⁵ E. BRADNER, *Conway: Trump White House Offered “Alternative Facts” on Crowd Size*, CNN (Jan. 23, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/22/politics/kellyanne-conway-alternative-facts/> [<https://perma.cc/67JJ2NPR>].

¹⁹⁶ A. B. WANG, “Post-Truth” Named 2016 Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries, WASH. POST (Nov. 16, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/16/post-truth-named2016-word-of-the-year-by-oxford-dictionaries/?utm_term=.12aaa7361b38 [<https://perma.cc/V75E-LTLH>].

¹⁹⁷ B. NYHAN & J. REIFLER, *The Roles of Information Deficits and Identity Threat in the Prevalence of Misperceptions* 1, 3 (Nov. 11, 2016) (unpublished manuscript) [hereinafter Nyhan & Reifler, Roles], <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~nyhan/opening-political-mind.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/T36Q-HG59>].

Orwell's novel is "designed and controlled by the state in order to suppress free thought, individualism and happiness." The new language shapes peoples' minds to what the State wants them to think, feel and even see.

4.1.3. "Alternative Facts" in Trump's Inauguration

"*Alternative Facts*" has been called many things: falsehoods, untruths, delusions. A fact is something that actually exists what we would call "reality" or "truth." An alternative is one of the choices in a set of given options; typically, the options are opposites of each other. So, to talk about "*Alternative Facts*" is to talk about the opposite of reality (which is delusion), or the opposite of truth (which is untruth).

The question that arises here is, where does "Alternative Facts" come from? Kellyanne Conway, an advisor to President Donald Trump, used the euphemism "Alternative Facts" when she was a guest on NBC's *Meet the Press* on January 22, 2017 in a conversation with the show's moderator Chuck Todd. Conway used this term to describe false statements made by. Todd challenged her use of "Alternative Facts" immediately, saying "Alternative Facts" are not facts. They are falsehoods." The term caught on widely with critics of the Trump administration.¹⁹⁸

Trump administration is thus accused of being guilty of manipulation of facts. The term "Alternative Facts" has been a hot topic in the current position of the United States. To put it more clearly, the phrase was coined during a *Meet Press* interview in January 2017 with Kellyanne Conway, Trump's advisor. In an interview, she defended Sean Spicer the former White House Press Secretary statement about the attendance numbers at Trump's inauguration. When challenged during the interview about the statement, Conway said that Spicer was giving "Alternative Facts".¹⁹⁹ Conway later defended her choice of words, defining "Alternative Facts" as "additional facts and alternative information."²⁰⁰

The term "Alternative Facts" can be understood to have at least two principal meanings. First, it can refer to a statement known to be false but deliberately presented as true. Secondly, "Alternative Facts" can refer to as an error or something mistakenly accepted as true. In relation to the latter meaning, the concept of "Alternative Facts" could also be favourably interpreted as

¹⁹⁸ M. WEDGE, *The Origin of Alternative Facts*, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/post-truth>

¹⁹⁹ SEINPEL, BROOKE, "Conway Seek's to Define Alternative facts" In the Hill, March, 2018, p.18.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p.22.

follows: if a claim and its negation are both equally justified or equally valid and having strong evidence in support of either claims then both can be understood to express “Alternative Facts”.

In conversations about “Alternative Facts”, the words post-fact and post-truth often come up. Post-fact and post-truth refer to an environment in which objective facts are a thing of the past. In a post-fact society, facts are viewed as irrelevant and emotional appeals are used to influence public opinion. This is not unlike Stephen Colbert’s concept of truthiness, which is trusting your gut feelings over facts. As his comical Colbert Report persona says, “*Anyone can read the news to you. I promise to feel the news at you.*”

In addition to Trump and his staff seriously using the word when speaking to the media or about the media, “Alternative Facts” can be used by anyone to poke fun at the Trump administration. Many memes have also been created using an image of Conway on television with the phrase “Alternative Facts” written on top of the image. And, many people tag “Alternative Facts” on social media to poke fun at someone who has said something controversial or ridiculous.

Groucho Marx once said: “Who are you going to believe, me or your own eyes?” It seems that President Trump’s press secretary Sean Spicer, as well as Trump himself and one of his senior advisors, recommends the former. They insist that we believe what they say, rather than what our own eyes tell us.

Looking at aerial photographs of Trump’s inauguration and Obama’s 2009 inauguration, our eyes tell us that the crowd at Trump’s was nowhere near as large as the crowd at Obama’s. Obama’s inaugural crowd reached all the way back to the Washington monument, whereas Trump’s reached nowhere near that marker.

In the era of Trump and Brexit, Oxford Dictionaries have declared post truth to be its 2016 international word of the year. It is defined by the dictionary as an adjective representing a circumstance in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief,²⁰¹ everyone has the truth.

In the same light, fake news has acquired certain legitimacy after being named word of the year 2017 by Collins dictionary which calls it “omnipresent presence.”²⁰² This phrase frequently

²⁰¹ G. ORWELL, ‘*The Guardian*, 15 November 2016, “*Post Truth, Name Word of the Year, 2016*”’ In Oxford Dictionary, 2016, p.4.

²⁰² G. ORWELL, *The Guardian*, 15 November 2017, “*Fake News is Very Real, Word of The Year For 2017*” In Collins Dictionary vol 3, p.10.

features in Trump's speech-making. In relation to the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election, Trump has used the term frequently, and has claimed to have invented it as he maintains "the terms I have come up with, is 'fake News' ... *I guess other people have used it perhaps over the years, but I have never noticed it.*"²⁰³ However, this etymology was disputed by the Collins dictionary, which holds that "fake news" started being used in the naughtiest on US television to describe "false, often an information spread under the guise of news reporting".

Not wanting the public to recognize this fact, Trump senior advisor Kellyanne Conway told Chuck Todd on Sunday's Meet the Press that Spicer was not telling a falsehood when he insisted that Trump's crowd was larger than that of Obama's. He was simply giving "Alternative Facts". This led to a detonation on the social media with a newly minted meme, "*Alternative Facts.*" Come Monday morning, the media worldwide is aghast at the notion that Trump's press secretary told the press a falsehood on day 1.

The expression, "Alternative Facts," evokes Newspeak, the language of the fictional ruling party's propaganda in George Orwell's *1984*. In the book, Newspeak leads to doublethink, which is when a person holds two contradictory beliefs in their mind at the same time, and accepts them both. An example of doublethink from *1984* is the idea that "war is peace."

4.2. UNDERSTANDINGS OF "ALTERNATIVE FACTS"

The concept of "Alternative Facts" is a very crucial concept and needs to be treated with a lot of caution, if not, it will be misunderstood or misrepresented. As such, giving the various understandings of the concept is important.

4.2.1. "Alternative Facts" as a Probability

The concept of "Alternative Facts" can also be understood as the probability of a claim and its opposite. A concrete example of this is a weather forecast that predicts a 50 % chance of rain. Thus, it is equally probable that there will be no rain. Raining and not raining are alternative possibilities in terms of equal probabilities, and only the future shows which prediction is more reliable.

²⁰³ G. ORWELL, *The Guardian*, 15 November 2017, "*Fake News is Very Real, Word of The Year For 2017*" In Collins Dictionary vol 3, p.23

It is said that Trump considers climate change as a Chinese deception and sees his own view as an “Alternative Facts”.²⁰⁴ He let people understand that researchers of climate change are wrong. He also seems to assume that a claim can possibly be paraded as true if there are at least a handful of persons who support it. Trump shares this view and underestimates the value and reliability of scientific research. In the light of scientific knowledge, denying climate change is as far from the truth as the east is from the west. Trump shows opportunism because he also makes a clear-cut distinction between truth and falsity when it serves his own goals. This becomes clear in his criticism of fake news that is, in reality, facts that put his own words and politics in a questionable light.

4.2.2. “Alternative Facts” based on Points of View

Based on what is presented so far, the concept of “Alternative Facts” is uncertain. The most plausible way to understand “Alternative Facts” is to take it to refer to different points of view or perspective. Figuratively, “Alternative Facts” refers to the perspective from which a subject or event is perceived or a story narrated. But however, there must be a common ground.

One of the best-known demonstrations of different points of view is the story about the blind men and an elephant. The story illustrates how knowledge acquisition is dependent upon one’s point of view. The story also teaches that the limitations of a point of view can easily lead to misunderstandings, mistakes of scale and excessive simplification. The story goes like this:

Once there was a certain king who said to a certain man, “Gather together all the people who have been blind from birth.” “As you say, your majesty”, the man replied and, rounding up all the people who had been blind from birth, he went to the king and said, “Your majesty, the people who have been blind from birth have been gathered together”. “Very well then, show the blind people an elephant”. To some of the blind people he showed the head of the elephant, saying, “This, blind people, is what an elephant is like”. To some of them he showed an ear of the elephant, saying, “This, blind people, is what an elephant is like”. To some of them he showed a tusk ... the trunk ... the body ... a foot ... the hindquarters ... the tail ... the tuft at the end of the tail, saying, “This, blind people, is what an elephant is like.” Then, the man went to the king and said, “Your majesty, the blind people have seen the elephant. May your majesty do what you think it is now time to do”. Then the king went to the blind people and asked them, “Blind people, what the elephant is like.” The blind people who had been shown the head of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like a water jar”. Those who had been shown the ear of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like a winnowing basket”. Those who had been shown the tusk of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like an iron rod”. Those who had been shown the trunk of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like the pole of a plow”. Those who had been shown the body of the

²⁰⁴ LEHTONEN, TOMMI (2011) “*The concept of a point of view*”. *Northern European Journal of Philosophy* 12011, pp.237–252.

elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like a granary”. Those who had been shown the foot of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like a post”. Those who had been shown the hindquarters of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like a mortar”. Those who had been shown the tail of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like a pestle”. Those who had been shown the tuft at the end of the tail of the elephant replied, “The elephant, your majesty, is just like a broom.” Saying, “The elephant is like this, it’s not like that. The elephant’s not like that, it’s like this”, they struck one another with their fists. That gratified the king.²⁰⁵ (*Udâna* VI.4)

This story teaches us that our point of view is always limited and the same phenomenon can appear differently depending on what the focus of examination is and what the tools of examination are. Different but compatible views can therefore be “partial truth-claims”, complementing each other, rather than “Alternative Facts”. Moreover, people who see only one side of things are apt to engage in quarrels and disputes.

4.2.3. “Alternative Facts” as White Lies

In another sense, “Alternative Facts” can refer to what is called “white lies”. A much used example of a “white lie” is related to the question of whether the truth should always be told (no matter the cost) to a terminally ill patient.²⁰⁶ Depending on the person and situation, we may have a strong desire and need to tell an “Alternative Facts” for example, that there is always hope or that miracles can happen. Such selected facts, white lies cannot be condemned outright because they are intended for encouragement or consolation of the patient or are presented due to one’s own anxiety or helplessness.

However, it is very problematic if the president of a superpower advances “Alternative Facts” and goes against the Scientific community. Such “Alternative Facts” deserve to be revealed to be what they really are which is evasive lies. Thus, Trump’s “Alternative Facts” do not ultimately appear to be white lies rather, they are deliberate deceptions designed to persuade ideologically sympathetic voters.

4.3. RELATIVISM: THE PREVAILING PHILOSOPHY

After President Trump’s press secretary Sean Spicer made a series of false claims in his first official statement to the press, high-ranking White House official, Kelly Conway, defended him by saying that he presented not falsehoods, but rather “Alternative Facts”. This phrase has been widely criticized. But some people might also be tempted to connect what Conway said with

²⁰⁵ TITTHA SUTTA, , *Udâna* VI 4, In *Various Sectarrians*, 2017, p.10.

²⁰⁶ JONES, W. & ROBERT J., *A History of Western Philosophy: The Twentieth Century to Quine and Derrida*. 3 (eds) Belmont, CA: Wardsworth , 1997, p.87.

relativism, and criticize relativism as a result. The Merriam-Webster dictionary, emphasizes the connection between “fact” and “objective reality” thus: “A fact is a piece of information presented as having objective reality.”²⁰⁷

4.3.1. Moral Relativism

These culturally-conflicting standards of behavior directly challenge the idea that there is a fixed standard of morality for everyone, and they make us wonder whether morality reduces to mere social convention. For centuries, moral philosophers have reflected on the philosophical problems raised by clashing social values. The key question is whether moral standards exist independently of human social creations, and there are two competing answers to this question. The theory of moral objectivism holds that moral standards do indeed exist independently of human social creations, and moral relativism holds that they are just human inventions. This is not simply an issue of anthropological curiosity concerning how different people and cultures view morality. Instead, it is an issue of whether my and your specific moral obligations are grounded in nothing other than cultural approval. Moral objectivism says that they are, and moral relativism says that they are not.

The essential differences between moral relativism and moral objectivism hinge on their answers to these three questions (a) Is morality objective? (b) Are moral standards unchanging? and (c) Are moral standards universal?

Regarding the first question, relativists hold that moral standards are purely human inventions that are created either by individual people or human societies. Objectivists, by contrast, hold that moral standards are not created by human beings or human societies, but instead are grounded in some facts that are external to people and society. According to many objectivists, they exist in a higher spirit-realm that is completely apart from the physical world around us.

Regarding the second question, relativists hold that moral standards change throughout time and from society to society. For objectivists, though, genuine moral truths are eternal and do not change throughout time or from location to location. No matter where you are in the world or at what point in history, the same principles apply.

Regarding the third question, relativists hold that moral standards do not necessarily apply universally to all people or social groups, and their application depends on human preference. But

²⁰⁷ M. WEBSTER, *Alternative Facts*, , January 22, 2017, <https://t.co/gCKRZZm23c>

for objectivists, there is a uniform set of moral standards that is the same for all people, regardless of human differences like race, gender, wealth and social standing. This said, we will first look at the theory of moral relativism then moral objectivism.

The issue of moral relativism was one of the first hotly debated topics in Western moral philosophy and the views of early relativists remain even today largely unchanged. We will begin by looking at their theories. Then, as now, there are two distinct versions of moral relativism. One, called individual relativism²⁰⁸ and cultural relativism.²⁰⁹

Protagoras, until date, remains the most famous champion of moral relativism enshrined in his popular dictum: “*man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not.*” Most simply, this means that people set their own standard of truth in all judgments. Plato and Sextus Empiricus offer us some guidance in the following passages from their writings:

Does Protagoras not say that things are to you such as they appear to you, and to me such as they appear to me. . . are we to say, with Protagoras, that the wind is cold to him who is cold, and not to him who is not?²¹⁰

On his part, Sextus explains the above quote in the following words: “*By “measure” he means the standard, and by “things” objects; so he is implicitly saying that human beings are the standard for all objects, of those that are that they are and of those that are not that they are not. For this reason he posits only what is apparent to each person, and thus introduces relativity.*”²¹¹

Protagoras’s individualism is just one approach to relativism and it probably is not the best. It assumes that each person is his or her own island, independent of other people, regarding the perspectives of the world that each of us formulates, and moral standards that we adopt. On this view, I am the principal creator of truth and morality for myself. But we are not islands, and, instead, our perspectives of the world are shaped by the larger communities in which we are raised. It is through our families, friends, schools, religious affiliations, political institutions, and vocational connections that we collectively shape our standards. My personal views on the subject of proper sexual behavior, for example, were not fashioned by me, but rather instilled into me by

²⁰⁸ It refers to the view that each person creates his or her own moral standards. In other words, it is the view that moral obligations are grounded in each person’s own approval.

²⁰⁹ This is the view that societies, not the individual person, creates moral standards which are then authoritative over everyone within that society. Put differently, it holds that moral obligations are grounded in the approval of social cultures.

²¹⁰ PLATO, *Theaetetus*, 152a, Thomas Gilby (trans.), Blackfriars, London, 1964

²¹¹ S. EMPIRICUS, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 1.32

those around me, particularly during an especially impressionable period of my development. Far from being independent creators of truth, we are instead clones of each other within our respective cultures and sub-cultures. Thus, if the concept of moral relativism is to be a plausible theory of the origins of moral standards, it is the cultural version that shows the most promise.

Sextus and other skeptics have a particular goal in mind in advancing cultural relativism. That goal is personal tranquility. He says, suppose I believe that there exists a fixed and objective standard of truth; suppose further that this standard guides all my actions. Since I see myself on the side of moral truth, I become morally outraged by those who do not follow these moral standards. Ultimately, I make myself miserable through my extreme convictions. However, once I seriously reflect on the wide diversity of cultural practices that Sextus describes, I will be more inclined to see that my own cultural practices are rooted in social customs. I will then get off my moral high horse and be content to accept the moral diversity that I see in other cultures.²¹²

4.3.2. Moral Objectivism

We turn now to examine moral objectivism, the rival theory to moral relativism. Again, moral objectivism holds that standards are “objective” in that they are not created by human beings or human societies, but instead are grounded in some facts that are external to human society. Further, genuine moral truths are unchanging throughout time or location, and these truths are universal in the sense that they are same for all people. Over the centuries, philosophers have proposed a variety of theories of moral objectivism, arguing that morality is grounded in the creative will of God, or the laws of nature, or in eternal truths. Our focus here will be on Plato’s moral objectivism.

4.3.3. Plato’s Theory of the Moral Forms

Plato’s basic position is that moral standards are grounded in a higher and more perfect realm of moral truth that exists outside of human society and the physical world around us. The heart of his account is his theory of the Forms. According to Plato, the universe consists of two distinct realms. First, there is a visible world of appearances, which contains physical objects such as rocks, chairs, cars, and people. Second, there is an intelligible world of the Forms, which contains universal abstractions such as mathematical principles and the moral principle of justice. “Form”, for Plato, is like a perfect pattern, model, or blueprint.

²¹² S. EMPIRICUS, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 1. p.14.

To better explain, imagine that we could take a tour of the higher spirit-realm, assuming that such a place exists. We might first encounter spirits of the gods, of deceased people, and even of unborn. These are all conscious entities and are typically what people think of as inhabiting that realm. But as we move further along, we will encounter other things which are not conscious spirits. These would include the Forms (or perfect blueprints) of physical things of rocks and chairs and also mathematical Forms such as $2+3=5$. Perhaps the strangest part of Plato's theory is his explanation of how we obtain knowledge of the Forms. He describes this as a recollecting process (anamnesis): In a previous existence in the spirit-realm, we were directly acquainted with all of the Forms, but over the years we've suppressed our knowledge of them. To know the Forms, then, we must try to recollect them. His most graphic description of it is this:

Thus the soul, since it is immortal and has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in the other world, has the knowledge of virtue or anything else which, as we see, it once possessed. All nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, so that when a man has recalled a single piece of knowledge-learned it, in ordinary language-there is no reason why he should not find out all the rest, if he keeps a stout heart and does not grow weary of the search, for seeking and learning are in fact nothing but recollection.²¹³

He states here that the soul "has seen all things both here and in the other world"; it is in the "other world" that we encountered the Forms, and is a world in which our souls were not restrained either by our bodies or by physical things.

Our focus in this chapter has been to present the concept of "Alternative Facts" and unveil its various facets. As such, apart from looking at the origin of the concept, we also saw "Alternative Facts" as a modern form of relativism. It should be clarified here that there is nothing such as "Alternative Facts" or truths; there is only one truth in every single issue, what is known as "Alternative Facts" are various falsehoods. What exist as "Alternative Facts", are only a contradictory opposite of a truth. Contradictory opposites cannot be simultaneously true and cannot be simultaneously false. For example, white and non-white are contradictory opposites. Therefore, anything is either totally white or not and nothing totally white can simultaneously be totally not white. Accordingly, if something is totally white, it cannot simultaneously be totally black, but if totally repainted for example in blue, it is then both not-white and not-black. From the above justification therefore there is nothing such as "Alternative Facts", instead they are infinite set of truths and an infinite set of falsehoods.

²¹³ PLATO, *Meno*, 81d, *Meno*, 81d, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London 1950, p.56.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF “ALTERNATIVE FACTS” AS A CRISIS OF HUMAN VALUES IN LIQUID MDERNITY

The political dimension of “Alternative Facts” as a crisis of human values forms the nitty-gritty of this chapter. Truth has always been a value which ought to be upheld at every given point in human existence. This is aimed at protecting the contention that we live in a post-truth era where there are no objective facts and reality. It is often argued that the confrontations in politics lead to distrust, willful manipulations of facts and struggles for power. As a result, the pursuit of ideal society is in vain. It may even be potentially turned into an excuse for exploitation and oppression. One must admit, to a large extent, that these dire situations do exist in human history and society. These “dark sides” of politics are its distorted presentations, which obscure the fact that the existence of politics is to facilitate universal well-being of human society.²¹⁴ However, we must not simply conclude that truth no longer matters in the gloomy degenerating politics. In this chapter, we will first examine the ultimate cause of politics: the promotion of well-being; then explain how the aforementioned political phenomena reflect distortion and degeneration of the said ideal cause which in effect, is a clash of civilization and a crisis of human values from a general perspective and in Africa in particular.

5.1. THE ULTIMATE CAUSE OF POLITICS

The idea of politics has been elaborated on by many philosophers right from antiquity. For Aristotle, Politics can be defined as the activities associated with government, especially those concerning the organisation and administration of a state. In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle uses the relationship between different sciences, the collective science and politics to illustrate how the pursuit of goods in human activities, based on rational choices, is better than the activities themselves. (1094a–1094b) Here, politics serves as the “highest master science” with the good of polis and its individuals as its end, since it determines the adoption and employment of such faculties as military science, domestic economy, rhetoric and laws in the polis. (1094b) According to Aristotle, the pursuit towards the good is not an “infinite progress” or it would be “fruitless and vain”. (1094a) The concept of “*summum bonum*” “the chief good” is therefore introduced as the supreme end of the said pursuit. The chief good, *eudaimonia* (also known as “well-being”), is defined as “living and acting well”, and is determined by the characteristic activities of human

²¹⁴ T. LOK PAN, *The Degenerating Post-Truth Politics: How We Respond to It?*,

which are in accordance with virtues. (1095a, 1097b–1098a) As mentioned earlier, the good of a community and its individuals serves as the end of politics, a human activity. If it is exercised properly with virtues, it shall serve the well-being of its individuals. Thus, it may be concluded that, in Aristotle’s view, politics shall determine the well-being of the people.

Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, claims that in a well-governed society, guided by division of labour, universal opulence may extend to the lowest ranks of the people. (bk. I, ch.1, para.10). From such a concern for “universal opulence”, Smith, in the later part of the work, proposes the theory of “political economy”, as a way to enrich both the people and the sovereign. On one hand, it is to provide a plentiful revenue for the people; and on the other, to supply the commonwealth with a revenue sufficient for the public services. Under this theory, sufficient revenue should be generated for state to provide and maintain public services, in order to enrich people’s life. From this, we may notice the continuity of the idea that the original cause of politics is to facilitate universal well-being. This will be an arduous task to achieve if stakeholders do not commit to truth as a principle. Truth thus remains fundamental in our political outreach and should not be downplayed to serve the whims and caprices of politicians. It is imperative to uphold it at all times.

5.1.1. “Alternative Facts” As a Distortion of Politics’ Ideal Cause

On a practical, or even derogatory term, however, politics also refers to actions concerned with the acquisition or exercise of power, status or authority. And it is the emphasis of such acquisition and practices of political power that causes the degeneration of politics, from the facilitation of universal well-being to the pursuit of self-interest amid intense confrontation of beliefs and the desire of domination of power.

In the light of the exercise of political authority, it is widely said that power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. For instance, the political ideal of traditional China, much influenced by moral ideas of Confucianism, stressed the importance of ruler empathising the people under him and adopting policies which strove for the common good. Ming-Qing scholar Huang Tsung-hsi, who was critical of the arbitrary rule of emperors after the Three Dynasties, illustrated how such rule emerged and eventually overridden the said common good with the emperor’s will and self-interest: the emperor at first might feel some qualms about this, but as their conscience eased with time, he would forget his moral duty as the ruler of the All-under Heaven, and regard it as his enormous private estate, for the perpetual pleasure of the sole imperial

family.²¹⁵ Even the political meritocracy Huang advocated is not without critics. If political power, no matter who held it, is not limited by a system of accountability or checked by society, there is no guarantee that such corruptness of power is under control and that degeneration of politics would never happen.²¹⁶

5.1.2 “Alternative Facts” in The Trump Regime

This section focuses on rhetorical strategies employed in right-wing populist discourses like the talk about “fake news” and “Alternative Facts” most prominently used in the Trump campaign and in the first year of his presidency. We discuss what is at stake in current politics regarding the relation between power and truth and propose some perspectives for critical reflection. First, we explore the concept of truth from a pragmatist and constructivist perspective. Second, we consider the role of facts and scientific results in culture and society and the role that markets play in the distribution and dissemination of information and beliefs in a consumer society. We refer to Foucault’s critical concept of the “will to truth” in order to argue that there are standards and procedures regarding facts and beliefs in modern society like practices that have shown their relative success in the hard and soft sciences – that must be defended against arbitrary assaults by right-wing propaganda.

5.1.3 Global Crisis

In the contemporary global crisis of democracy and a rising right-wing populism, claims to truth appear as hotly contested stakes in political struggles with strong tendencies to define true and false views in one-sided and partial ways, paint the world in black and white, privilege opinion over argumentation, insinuation over justification, and use labels like liar as weapons against critics and divergent views. All these tendencies are characterized by the attempt to dominate social and political realities by selective interests and redefine the reading of these realities through highly simplified perceptions. They are moved by wishes, emotions, demands and desires of individuals confronted with the ambiguous life conditions of societies moving back and forth between solid and liquid modernity²¹⁷. We observe today right-wing populism on a global scale as growing political movements that seem to appeal to the needs of a growing number of people who

²¹⁵ T. LOK PAN, *The Degenerating Post-Truth Politics: How We Respond to It?*,

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000, p.14.

are getting lost in the flows of social life and direly look for orientation, identity, escape from ambivalence and insecurity and stable forms of belonging.

5.2 THE PRAGMATIST AND CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVES OF TRUTH

Liquid modernity is characterized by a cultural drift towards diversity, on the one hand, and growing economic dominance combined with social and political power of the super-rich and strong, on the other hand. Donald Trump appears as the almost perfect symbol for the latter. These tendencies seem to have led to a dramatically new constellation in democratic societies, in some places more dominant than in others, in which democratically elected leaders implement populist policies and undermine democratic pillars like the division of forces, freedom of speech and press and other human rights, freedom of movement and other liberal rights, respect for diversity, participation, exchange and negotiation across borders, openness to the opinion of others, etc., and thereby put democracy itself at risk.

It is striking to observe that one problem reappears in populism, on a political level, that had already earlier emerged in philosophical and scientific debates around subjectivism; namely the problem of arbitrariness. Yet this development, upon closer examination, is not all too astonishing. After all, science is itself part of society involved in the transition from solid to liquid modernity. It is important to get back to some debates around the problem of arbitrariness in the more recent history of philosophy and sciences.

5.2.1. Fundamental Tension Between Capitalism and Democracy

Donald Trump, who claims to lead his country like a big boss leads a company, obviously believes that market mechanism in a consumer society including the dimensions of illusion, deception, and fraud equally apply to politics. Unfortunately, he is not the only one but only one very extreme example of tendencies also shown by others. It shows an inherent pattern of capitalism that indicates a fundamental tension between capitalism and democracy, and can, at times, constitute an eminent threat to democratic society itself. One of the strongest dangers that we can see in Trump's presidency, so far, is that it helps to establish a right-wing hegemony that demolishes democratic culture to an extent that democracy can no longer defend itself against the mechanisms of illusion, deception and fraud.

Speaking with Foucault, what is at stake here is the right-wing attempt to establish a regime of truth. The rhetoric strategies of "Alternative Facts" and "fake news" are part and parcel of this regime and they help to undergird its fundamentals. Seen in a larger perspective, the recent

renaissance of nationalism and the global wave of right-wing populism have dramatized a challenge that has always been embedded in the tensional relations between capitalism and democracy. The core of this challenge consists of the tension between selective interests as produced, articulated and realized by practices of capitalism, on the one hand, and general interests and claims to human rights as constitutive for the democratic project, on the other hand. In a globalized world, this tension clearly appears, for example, in the conditions of migration.

Consider the case of refugees, some of them struggling for bare survival, others seeking for a better future without being marginalized, exploited, and discriminated, still others looking for wealth and social ascent. At least, those committed to democratic principles must defend the human right of the first group to achieve shelter, asylum, nurture, and a safe perspective of living. But the lines cannot be drawn so neatly anyway. In all democratic societies the selective interests and vested rights of the populace and powerful economic and political groups and agents must be balanced with the general claims to human rights lest democracy loses its openness and adopts traits of a corral. Or consider the example of the right to work to earn a living that is independent and sustainable. It is striking that even though this right might be considered as self-evident from a democratic standpoint, it has not yet achieved the status of recognized human right in the history of capitalist societies. Again, selective capitalist interests stand against general democratic claims. Combining Dewey's idea of democracy and Bauman's description of ambivalence in liquid modernity, we may distinguish between democracy *de jure* and democracy *de facto*.

Against this background, the democratic challenge that the present global political crisis shows is a twofold one: First, democracy *de jure* consists of legal, economic, social, cultural, educational and political claims and institutions achieved in long struggles, exemplarily represented by the human rights, that must be defended against attacks on the very grounds they rest on. These grounds include a will to truth that considers facts, beliefs, interpretations, opinions as the product of democratic negotiations among diverse perspectives and observations in a pluralistic society. Among these grounds are further the warranted procedures, institutions and practices, as manifested in the division of forces, independent courts and press, pluralistic formation of opinions, responsible and open journalism, scientific communities, inclusive education, all of which participate in the necessary constant reconstruction of democracy.

5.2.2. *Democracy Under Attack*

The populist attack on democratic culture by means of claims to “Alternative Facts” and “Fake News” charges must be seen as an attack on these very fundamentals of democracy de jure. From a democratic standpoint, we can detect and denounce these attacks as anti-liberal even if from a constructivist standpoint we concede that the democratic standpoint is itself a cultural construction de jure. What is more, with Dewey we need to remind ourselves that the most important thing about democracy is not its claim de jure, but its realization de facto. We might even suppose that the very gap between de jure and de facto, in this case, is what causes the susceptibility of many people for reductionist and illusionary answers given by populists. The democratic response can only be twofold as well: We need to defend and further develop the grounds of democracy de jure, and we need to intensify and diversify the struggles for genuinely democratic conditions de facto of life on all levels. But in our view democracy is not a tale of reconciliation. The tension between democracy and capitalism and with it the contrast between claims de jure and conditions de facto remains and we can hardly expect that it will easily dissolve in the future.

5.2.3. *Nightmare of Postmodernism*

For some observers, this situation may easily call forth the nightmare of postmodern arbitrariness, because we can no longer make unambiguous truth claims with universal validity for everyone and in every context. But constructivists and pragmatists alike do not plea for arbitrariness. They rather attempt to inquire into the viability of reality constructions and their practical consequences. This implies that they also look for instrumental and experimental ways of constructing realities, lest viability turns into mere opinion, but leads to relevant, resourceful, and problem-solving constructions.

Following the argumentation in Reich, we emphasize that constructivists do not look for copies of an outer reality in the human mind.²¹⁸ Rather, they see humans as observers, participants and agents who actively generate and transform the patterns through which they construct the realities that fit them. Although in everyday practices these constructions often appear to be merely subjective, we must not forget the social contexts in which they are always embedded; thus there

²¹⁸ REICH K., *Constructivism: Diversity of Approaches and Connections with Pragmatism*, Hickman, L.A., Neubert, S., & Reich, K. (Eds.), 2009, pp.40-42

is no such thing as purely subjective constructions, but constructions and versions of realities are always mixtures emerging from transactions with already existing (cultural and other) realities.

5.3 THE REALITY OF “ALTERNATIVE FACTS” IN AFRICA AS A TRANSVALUATION OF VALUES

The quality of law and the just application of law are the two pointers of good governance. It is on this that legitimacy rests. Legal means what conforms to law and legitimacy connotes the just application of the laws which forms good governance. Authoritarian dictators crave control. If they can control what people believe and even what they think they see, then their power over you is total. One thing is clear. “Alternative Facts” is an attempt by despotic leaders to twist the norms of democracy to their own will. They try to tell us to believe what they and their advisors and collaborators say rather than what our eyes tell us.

5.3.1. The Question of Appearance and Reality

The concept of “Alternative Facts” remains an issue from time immemorial as historical records may present to us. Many writers like George Orwell, Plato, Aristotle and many others, have written from various dimensions on the topic of “Alternative Facts” across the ages. Considering the definition of “Alternative Facts” in the previous chapter as falsehoods, we shall look at the political dimension of this ethical ordeal as the crises of human values within the African political scope. According to C. Rowe, Plato explains in *The Republic* with the Myth of the Cave saying:

The prisoners in the cave seeing the images or shadows of the things that are cast on the wall by the fire behind them will turn to think that they are seeing the true things meanwhile they are only viewing the images of the true things cast by the fire on the wall.²¹⁹

For Plato, what we gather with the aid of our senses is what he describes as falsehood or “Alternative Facts”. He holds this view because what we know through our sense is not real but mere appearances or Images of the real things in the world of Forms. Plato explains that we cannot know being in itself from our sense perception since our senses are deceptive. For him, *to know is to know the Forms, to have knowledge is to have knowledge of the Forms, to know something is to know the form of that thing.*²²⁰ True knowledge is attained through the contemplation of the Forms. Thus, the concept of “Alternative Facts” highlighted by Plato in his writings as “appearance” is very realistic in the political life of our African society. Many African politicians have taken leis telling as a *modus oprandi*, as a rule for doing politics in Africa. Hence, the results of the growing

²¹⁹ PLATO, *The Republic*, C. ROWE (Trans), Penguin Books Ltd, London, England, 2012, 240,515a p.01-05.

²²⁰ PLATO, *The Republic*, 195-202,475c-480a.

crises across many Republics in the African Continent. “Alternative Facts” is a reality that is destroying the African society. Plato could pick this destructive mentality in his time as in *the Republic* he expresses his thoughts on politicians getting angry with philosophers ruling by saying:

‘will they still be angry when we say that until society is controlled by philosophers there will be no end to the troubles of states or their citizens, and no realization in practice of the institutions we have described in theory?’²²¹

For Plato, as in the above quotation, this crisis of human values is thus an age problem that has persisted till present days. He understands “Alternative Facts” as the way in which politicians do politics, thus, African politicians are just a direct example of what Plato explained in *The Republic*. Most politicians in many African countries like, Nigeria, Equitorial Gueane, Cameroon and many others, constantly use deceitful means to gain public trust but end up destroying the society more. The present Biafra war in Nigeria is a good example of the consequences of “Alternative Facts” in Africa, the government of Nigeria has been telling lies for many years that has yielded chaos as fruits in the Nigerian society in Africa. We also have the Boko Haram the terrorist group that has kept three African countries at panic, that is, The republic of Chad, The Federal Republic of Nigeria and Cameroon.

5.3.2. The Destructive Facet of Alternative Facts

Historical records have proven the extent to which “Alternative Facts” can be destructive in the African society. According to I. Okechukwu, in the 1960s when African countries within a period of 22, 10 years, many African countries experienced coup d’etat, about seventeen of them from both Military and others.²²² If the Africa of the 1960s and 1970s was a continent of coup d’états for various reasons, after which we hoped to see a new Africa emerged by the 1980s and 1990s as civil government came to power, today it is hotbed of insurgencies as the democratic institutions have failed in restoring good governance in many African states due to falsehood. He therefore proposes that philosophers become politicians to attempt a solution to the problem of “Alternative Facts” as human crisis in the era of liquid modernity.

According to Abiero Opondo, the adoption of “ethnic actions and nationalism” in Africa by some African leaders for political and economic objectives has always led to political instability in the African continent. Opondo makes us to reflect on the concept of “Alternative Facts” from another dimension in the political life of Africa as a continent. To him, this crisis is so serious that

²²¹ PLATO, *The Republic*, 224-225,501d-502a.

²²² I. OKECHUKWU, *Political Instability and the Challenge of Democratization in Africa*, 2015, p.1-2.

we are almost short of words to describe it and it is a crisis of human values. The crisis of human values that Africa is experiencing in its political sphere is as a result of some politicians instead of looking at the common good, they look at their private goals to achieve while in authority and positions of power. Hence, when conflicts begin in a vicious circle, it has no end like in the case of Liberia. Falsehood has been a prerequisite activity of African politicians. What African leaders find easy doing is to lie to their people for decades without any shame or remorse of what they are doing. For him, the form of alternatives in politics is from the ethnic actions perspective, where the society is made to be unequal, ideological inequalities are propagated to cause more chaos and wars in the African society. Hence, the many wars and conflicts in African countries across Africa.

5.3.3. *“Alternative Facts” in the Anglophone Crisis*

According to Francis Fukuyama, “Alternative Facts” is the sole cause of political unrest in Cameroon, as he maintains that the falsehood told concerning the governance of Cameroon is terrifying.²²³ Fukuyama approaches corruption as lies telling in politics which remains a crisis of human values and of the republic. Lies telling or falsehood entails using false mean to achieve political goals by individuals or groups of individuals as he posits. To him, the issue of corruption is a reality that can be seen in most African countries and in the Cameroonian society of every activity concerning the public life of Cameroonians. Corruption is visible in every dimension of public life in Cameroon and sadly enough, even in the educational field.

The reality of “Alternative Facts” in Cameroon in its optimum form is made evident in an interview granted by the Equinox TV station in Douala on September 30, 2017, where Issa Tchiroma Bakary, Former Minister of Communication in Cameroon, tells a very frustrating and shameful lie to the Cameroonian people in defense of the Government regarding the existence and non-existence of the Anglophone Problem. In his response to the first question posed to him on the existence of the Anglophone Problem, his response was a categorical “NO”. The journalist asks, “*is there an ‘Anglophone Problem’?*” His response goes in the following lines:

No! There is no Anglophone Problem in this nation. Please, you have a handful of people who have decided to blackmail, to take hostage the duration and consequently, the ten Regions in our Nation. There is no “Anglophone Problem” as such. Each region has its own problems, there is no doubt about it...”²²⁴

²²³ F. FUKUYAMA, *Global Corruption Report*, 2005, p.224.

²²⁴ EQUINOX TV, *Issa Tchiroma Bakary is talking about Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon, September 30, 2017 Equinox tv.*

The response of the minister was cynical and outrageous. His total refusal brings on board a lot of issues. But again, how is it that the government goes on to solve a problem that does not exist. It is interesting to know that the existence of the Anglophone Problem is now accepted worldwide because it is more evident.

Politically, the term “Alternative Facts” has its origin from George Orwell’s novel titled “*Eighteen Eighty-Four*” where he speaks about the language of a totalitarian regime known as newspeak. He tries to explain a situation whereby the systems of governance had turned into the opposite of what they are supposed to be before nineteen eighty-four, instead of democratic regimes we have totalitarian governments presenting themselves as democratic in nature. Thus we can see the appearance of the democratic government but their substance is absent because they are telling a lie to the public. They claim to be for public interest and service meanwhile they are for personal and private interest in their positions of authorities. For example, during the corona virus pandemic, most African countries asked their citizens to get vaccinated against the corona virus pandemic which they could still contract. In Nigeria, the Government was firm on this point as people who refused the vaccines could not go for work. Thus the dictatorship of the government that claimed to be democratic was made visible to the world. Some few months back in the middle of the year, the Minister of Health in Cameroon issued an order saying all civil servants will present a card of vaccination against covid-19 in order to get to work if not they would not be permitted to work. “Alternative Facts” is a reality that is not only visible and destructive in Africa but other parts of the world. On Saturday the 13th of October 2021, the Supreme Court in the United States of American ruled by saying there are no vaccine mandates after the president of the united states pressured citizens and civil servants to get vaccinated, by using Machiavellians tactics like speaking very softly as a fox while doing much harm. Many lies have been told about the disease that have even made some people to lose their lives.

According to Marilyn Wedge, a lie is the complete disregard for the difference between the truth and falsehood in order to survive in a complex situation. Lies is about a new form of thinking known as doubting according to Orwell. People are conditioned to think in a particular direction as the regime in power wants them to think. It is a sad situation in Africa whereby the issue of “Alternative Facts” has so much gained roots that it is becoming a normal system, we can clearly visualize that the abnormal has become the normal in Africa. Politicians in Africa have the right to lie without any remorse or accountability to anyone as they do so without any questioning or

judgment. Modern African man with the corruption of the western culture and disregard for the African culture has learned how to despise facts and pay more attention to “Alternative Facts”. For example, in Cameroon the mistakes made by public government workers in Grammar have become new terms that both intellectuals and citizens use for various purposes which is accepted by the society. During the Sunday debates on CRTV Cameroon on the 21th of November 2021, one of the speaker said “the boyeses in the bushes” which was a grammatical error made by the Minister of Territorial Administration. It is a mistake that is been made to look not like a mistake. It is a grammatical error that is been used with the awareness of the erroneusness in it, which becomes something else from what is supposed to be which is the correct grammatical phrase.

John Mbitti the African philosopher says that the Africans are “notoriously religious”, from this perspective, we can understand that emotions of Africans have contributed marvelously to the displacement of reason as in many political structures, the great wonder concerning the African leadership in various African States and Republics. Africans have almost forgotten their natal languages as a result of modernism. Many Africans prefer to speak in foreign languages which they lack a mastery than their natal languages. Many African youths prefer to travel abroad and stay in western countries than to stay in Africa and think of how to develop their home towns and countries. The issue of language is very serious as many people in the modern African society now make good use of alternative terms that are not found in the dictionary. The degradation of language and misuses and representation of language has also contributed to the birth of “Alternative Facts” in African societies. Politicians in Africa use applicable vocabulary of their choice so long as it has a contextual meaning and not a grammatical meaning and soundness. Many African politicians lack the basis of good language as they depend on foreign language from their colonial masters. Thus, the corrosion of language in African politics is a reality and a major contribution for “Alternative Facts” or falsehood in the African societies.

This chapter was focused on an understanding of the political dimension of “Alternative Facts” as a crisis of human values and thus constitutes the crises of the republic as Arendt considers it. Truth has always been a value which ought to be upheld at every given point in human existence. It was aimed at supporting the contention that we live in a post-truth era where there are no objective facts and reality.

CHAPTER SIX

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF HANNAH ARENDT'S PHILOSOPHY

From the foregoing part, we elaborated on the political dimension of “Alternative Facts” paving the way for a critical appraisal of Arendt’s philosophy. One thing that is clear about this chapter is that Hannah Arendt thought finds a lot of relevance in present-day politics that has degenerated due to absence of truth. It is therefore recommended that her suggestions should be implemented. We are going to evaluate her assertions both positively and negatively in order to assess the tenability of her thoughts.

6.1. LABOUR AS AN INDISPENSABLE VALUE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Following Hannah Arendt’s Notion of the Human Condition and the Active Life, life can be lost not only by deliberate killing but also, as Austin Fagothey notes, by lack of proper care and maintenance.²²⁵ H. Arendt’s conception of labour brings to light the fact that it is a means by which man provides for his needs that make life possible. As such, we come to realize that labour is a means by which man caters for his needs and thus preserves his life in being. This, without doubt, points to the fact that without labour human existence is likely to perish.

In this respect, Austin Fagothey opines that “man cannot live his life on earth without using the material goods with which the earth abounds.”²²⁶ He further notes that the material goods of the earth are naturally fitted to support man’s life and it is only by means of labour that man can acquire these goods to support his life and minister to his needs.²²⁷ It is true that labour is not the only activity by means of which man acquires his basic needs that assure him of survival, but in a way, it supersedes other activities like work that render human existence possible and goes a long way to enhance them. In this regard, Thomas Hodgkin stipulates that “what the worker needs to keep him alive while he is working is itself the product of labour.”²²⁸

6.1.1. *Labour as a Means of Entitlement to Property*

H. Arendt’s stance on labour establishes an inseparable link between the labourer and the product of his labour whereby, by means of labour, one claims ownership of what nature provides. To better understand the value of this consideration, it would be apt to consider John Locke’s notion of property in relation to ownership. In an earlier text, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*,

²²⁵ A. FAGOTHEY, *Right and Reason*, The C.V Mosby Company, London 1976, p.234.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.324.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.325.

²²⁸ J. PLAMENATZ, *Man and Society*, Longman Group Limited, London 1963, p.97.

John Locke affirms that “God hath given the world to mankind in common and with it reason to make the best out of it for a good life, that is, that the earth and all in it have been given to man for the support and comfort of his being.”²²⁹ Given that these are given to man in common, he maintains that for them to be helpful to mankind, it is necessary to have a means by which man appropriates these and claims exclusive ownership of them. What justifies man’s ownership over anything therefore is labour as he states that “the labour of his body and the work of his hand are properly his.”²³⁰ He further asserts that “whatsoever he removes out of the state that nature hath provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with and joints to it what is his own and thereby makes it his property.”²³¹ By his labour and pain, man removes these things from the common state of nature and thus makes them his. As such, Jean Jacques Rousseau postulates that all men have a natural right to whatever is necessary for them but the act which renders a man a positive proprietor of any property is labour among other things.²³² Our stress here is not the conditions of acquiring land but on the priority given to labour in the acquisition of property whereby one’s ownership is justified by the fact that man has laboured to have what he has. Herbert Marcuse affirms this clearly when he notes that “the individual is a proprietor not merely in the sense of possessing material resources, goods and services necessary for the realization of his freedom in his society but in the sense of having acquired these things by virtue of his own labour.”²³³

6.1.2. The Exigency of Work in Human Existence

It is quite difficult if not impossible to think of a dignified human existence without work. This is because the influence and the role of work in man’s life cuts across different dimensions of his existence. These range from the personal level to the communal level as we shall see below. The value of work in relation to man does not end merely at the fact that through it man’s dominion over nature is achieved. H. Arendt’s view of work portrays it as a good for human existence through which man builds a world and in it attains a dignified existence. Pope John Paul II carefully points out in *Laborem Exercens*, that in order to define work, we must bear in mind that “work is a good thing for man, a good thing for his humanity because through work, man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed in a

²²⁹ J. LOCKE, *Second Treatise on Government*, Hafner Press, New York 1947, 5, p.26.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5, p.26.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 5, p.27.

²³² J. J. ROUSSEAU, *the Social Contract*, Hafner Press, New York 1947, p.19.

²³³ H. MARCUSE, *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London 2001, p.69.

sense becomes more human.”²³⁴ He further contends that “work is not only a good in the sense that it is useful or something to enjoy, it is also good as something worthy, that is to say something that corresponds to man’s dignity, that expresses this dignity and increases it.”²³⁵ The dignity of man in relation to work is founded on the personal value of work. Battista Mondin in conformity with this posits that “work, the specific activity of man finds its essence and the measure of its value in man himself because work is made for man and not man for work.”²³⁶ While rejecting the view of many, that work is an absolute value for man by virtue of the fact that his whole being is conditioned and determined by it, he, by considering man as an incarnate spirit contends that work is certainly an important fundamental activity of man since it determines his material as well as his spiritual conditions but cannot be raised to the level of an absolute value.²³⁷ It suffices to assert here that work proceeds from man and tends towards his liberation. To further articulate the personal value of work, Voltaire contends that work is at the centre of human freedom and goes further to postulate that through work, three great evils are avoided: boredom, vice and want.²³⁸ In another respect, A. Schopenhauer posits that:

Certain it is that work and labour form the lot of almost all men their whole life long. But if all wishes were fulfilled as soon as they arose, how would men occupy their lives... if the world were a paradise of luxury and ease, a land flowing with milk and honey.... and without any difficulty, men would either die of boredom or hang themselves.²³⁹

From these considerations, it is evident that man’s dignity cannot be separated for his activity like work which does not only constitute part and parcel of his existence but contributes a great deal to his well-being and dignity as man.

6.1.3. The Social Value of Work

Aristotle rightly posits that man by nature is a social animal and as such the work man does is likely to affect the community either positively or negatively. This is reflected in H. Arendt’s consideration of work whereby through it man builds a world not to live in it alone but with others. In this connection, Pope John Paul II asserts that “work has as its characteristic that, first of all it unites men and this consist its social force, the force to construct a community. Definitively, in

²³⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14th september 1981), nn.9.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ B. MONDIN, *Philosophical Anthropology*, Theological Publications in India, Bangalore 1985, p.180.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.181.

²³⁸ VOLTAIRE, *Candide or Optimism*, W.W.Norton and Company Inc, New York 1966, p.169.

²³⁹ A. SCHOPENHAUER, *Suffering, Suicide and Immortality*, Dover, New York 2006, p.3.

this community those who work must in some way unite themselves as much as do those whose dispose of the means of production or who are its proprietors.”²⁴⁰ In the same regard B. Mondin maintains that the social character of man is revealed in work. According to him this is evident in the industrial era as in any form of work; man works not only for himself but also and above all for and with others. He states that “work puts men in contact with each other both in the moment of production and in the moment of consumption. Today almost all work is done in community and it is impossible that what is produced is used only by the person who produced it.”²⁴¹ Jeremy Rifkin capture this clearly when he asserts strongly that work is a means to man’s development and mutual co-existence. According to him, because human beings inevitably need one another, and have to work for and with one another, man acquires a spirit of solidarity through work.²⁴²

6.2. ARENDT’S CONTENTIONS ON VIOLENCE

H. Arendt draws our attention and reminds us that however unpredictable the ends may be, we would do well to pay close attention to the means being employed. Therefore, it will be better to confront directly the important and disturbing claim that violence is sometimes morally permissible than to settle it by definitional fiat. In discussing violence, it helps to begin with some obvious pre-theoretical examples, such as knife attacks, shootings, bombings and torture. Offering such cases may be insufficient for the definitional clarification of the concept that we seek as philosophers, but these paradigms can fix our attention on at least part of what is to be made clear. Thus, it behooves us to consider the notion of power in relation to violence.

6.2.1. The Implication of Power

Power is the capacity to make and enforce decisions, rules and regulations affecting the behaviour of individuals and groups.²⁴³ Individual interests no less than those of corporate bodies within the state must bow to the legitimate broader ends of the state. Arendt is in tandem with this when she asserts that power is never the property of an individual. Yet there are limits to this exercise of coercive power, and these are usually spelled out by a constitution, that forms the basis for government and specifies the conditions for governing. Thus, the selection and the acceptance of contractual limitations by the people is what legitimates power.²⁴⁴ To invest political power

²⁴⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n.20.

²⁴¹ B. MONDIN, *Philosophical Anthropology*, p.191.

²⁴² J. RIFKIN, *The End of Work*, G. Putnam’s Sons, New York 1995, p.248.

²⁴³ W. WALLACE, *The Elements of Philosophy: A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*, The Society of St. Paul’s, New York 1977, p.258.

²⁴⁴ W. WALLACE, *The Elements of Philosophy: A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*, p.259.

with authority, or make it legitimate by meeting the expectations of the governed concerning the wielding of authority, is the central goal of all government and politics.²⁴⁵

6.2.2. *The Role of Authority*

Authority is an institution meant for the enrichment and promotion of those over whom it is exercised. To understand the role of authority, we need to differentiate and bring forward the two senses of authority. The first type of authority is the capacity or competence to make judgments which persons of lesser competence will accept as true. A dictionary can be a good example in this case. In the second sense, it is the capacity in a social setting to give directions which others have a real, though not absolute, moral duty to obey.²⁴⁶ Our focus has been on the second sense of authority which is in tandem with Arendt's contentions that authority is that which is vested on persons to act on their behalf. In this case, authority can and should be a form of service to the community rather than a method of exploitative control and control over them.

Arendt argues that power is not simply about domination, that obedience and command go hand-in-glove, so that individuals who are willing to obey are also willing to give orders to others, and vice versa, and conversely individuals who resist obedience to authority also resist being placed in a position of authority over others. One can acknowledge this view as tenable in the sense that if authority is not backed by obedience from the governed, the state runs the risk of turning into an anarchic state. R. Peter shares the same view as "Commands," he says, "roughly speaking, are sorts of regulatory utterances for which no reason needs to be given."²⁴⁷ For as an occupant of an office or as a status holder a man has a right to make decisions which are binding and to issue orders. According to him, Commands are the type of regulatory utterance where questions of justification are ruled out.²⁴⁸ In this light, command and obedience go together.

According to R. MacIver, without authority, force is destructive violence.²⁴⁹ The force of government is but an instrument of authority. As MacIver then quotes Rousseau who says, 'force does not create right,' and 'the strongest is never strong enough to be always the master unless he transforms strength into right.'²⁵⁰ Authority in his own view is not different from that considered by Arendt which is 'being power.' Power for him is the capacity in relationship to command the

²⁴⁵ W. WALLACE, *The Elements of Philosophy: A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*, p.259.

²⁴⁶ G. GRISEZ & R. SHAW, *Beyond the New Morality: The Responsibility of Freedom*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1988, p.160.

²⁴⁷ R. S. PETER, "Authority," in A. QUINTON, *Political Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, London 1967, p.95.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.95-96.

²⁴⁹ R. MACIVER, *The Web of Government*, The Free Press, New York 1965, p.13.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.63.

service or compliance of others.²⁵¹ By authority we mean established right, within any social order, to determine policies, to pronounce judgments on relevant issues and to settle controversies. When we speak of authority, the assent is on right, not power. Power alone has no legitimacy, no mandate, and no office. Authority and power are two different things: power is the force by means of which you can oblige others to obey you.²⁵² Authority, then, implies right.

6.2.3. Authority, Right and the Common Good

Authority is the right to direct and command, to be listened to or obeyed by others. Authority requests power, but power without authority is tyranny. Thus authority means right. According to J. Locke, what makes political authority legitimate is that which gives rulers the right to command. In this light, Arendt is not far from the truth when she states the necessity of commands. A legitimate monarch, according to Locke, was essentially not the owner of those he ruled, but a servant to them.²⁵³

For Maritain, if in the cosmos, a nature, such as human nature, can be preserved and developed only in a state of culture and the state of culture necessarily entails the existence in the social group of a function of commandment and government directed to the common good, then this function is demanded by Natural Law, and implies a *right* to command and govern.²⁵⁴ Once put in charge of the direction of the community, the leader has a *right* to be obeyed for the sake of the common good. By this we do not mean that with authority, *some* in particular must command and *some* in particular must obey but authority must be taken as yet indeterminately.²⁵⁵ That is, in the general sense that there must be people who command and people who obey, the mode of designation of those who shall command being a different matter to be determined later and according to reason.²⁵⁶ Therefore, since authority means *right*, it has to be obeyed by reason of conscience, freely, and for the sake of the common good. Also, authority is necessary not only because the realization of common ends by a self-determining group requires coordination, but also because a governing power must determine concrete objectives pertaining to the common good as well as methods to attain them.²⁵⁷ One can, therefore, come to the conclusion that a person in authority has the right to command and to be obeyed for the sake of the common good.

²⁵¹ R. MACIVER, *The Web of Government*, The Free Press, New York 1965, p.63.

²⁵² J. MARITAIN, *Man and the State*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1951, p.126.

²⁵³ J. DUNN, *Locke*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1984, p.45.

²⁵⁴ J. MARITAIN, *Man and the State*, p.126.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.127.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.128.

²⁵⁷ W. WALLACE, *The Elements of Philosophy: A Compendium for Philosophers and Theologians*, p.238.

The domestic polity, then, like the international, is based on the traditional triad of persuasion, negotiation, and the threat of force which is brought to bear on those violating the rights of others. Hence, force cannot be understood as the antithesis of power, but as one of its constitutive features. The threat, or use, of force is morally legitimate, domestically or internationally, provided only that it remains an instrument of political power, an effective safeguard of political identity.²⁵⁸ Where persuasions have failed or where the people have become stubborn, it is necessary to use force and not violence in order to maintain peace and order.

As Arendt pointed out, the tragic history of the use of violence to achieve political goals is that, more often than not, violence becomes an end in itself and devours the political goal which had legitimated the resort to violence in the first place. F. Winters quotes George Kennan, who has drawn attention to the same tendency – the tendency of the momentum of violence to replace political power as the governing force during warfare²⁵⁹: Commenting from another perspective, that of the moral philosopher, John Courtney likewise drew attention to the consistent failure of reason to maintain control of violence during warfare.²⁶⁰ Violence then is neither identical with power, nor antithetical to power, but remains an instrument which may be employed for the sake of maintaining or restoring the social relationships among peoples. Rather than contributing to the creativity which is the purpose of politics, violence is often destructive of political relationships.²⁶¹ This view of Arendt can be credited because violence which is used as a means to achieve some political goals in most cases turns out to be the end.

In the light of violence being used for the achievement of certain goals, Arendt points out that in certain circumstances, violence seems to be the only remedy. This according to philosophers who argue for the justification of violence will be feasible if the three major conditions needed for violence to be morally correct are present. That is: the end that the act is intended to achieve is a morally desirable one such as more freedom for an oppressed group. Secondly some violent act is the only effective means which may eliminate an existing wrong and finally, if the good consequences of the act will outweigh the bad consequences.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ F. WINTERS, "Ethics, Diplomacy and Defense," in *Ethics and Nuclear Strategy?*, Harold Ford & Francis Winters (eds.), Orbis Books, New York 1977, p.35.

²⁵⁹ F. WINTERS, "Ethics, Diplomacy and Defense," in *Ethics and Nuclear Strategy?* p.35

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² R. AUDI, "Dimensions of Violence," in *Social Ethics Morality and Social Policy*, Thomas A. Mappes and Jane Zembaty (eds.), McGraw-Hill Inc., New York 1997, pp.262-263.

In keeping with the Arendtian approach, one may not be wrong to think that it is correct to say that violence is not war. In fact, it would be normal to say that there can be war without violence. A state of war can exist without any violent battles actually taking place. This has been the case in the Middle East between Israel and various Arab states since Israel declared its independence. And of course it was the situation we referred to as the Cold War. War, as K. Burke points out, requires a massive amount of cooperation within each society at war and a certain amount of agreement on the ground rules for war. War is violence constrained by rules, therefore akin to a game, whereas violence itself knows no rules, and is no game.

Then arises the question of the justification of violence. Justifications are links between ends and means. An end is the goal of one's violence while after its enactment, the means becomes the act we have judged.²⁶³ Among the reasons for justification, immanent self-defense, if true, is always justified by the rights of the self. With legitimate self-defense the provocation and thus the initial threat lie on the other side.²⁶⁴ On the other hand, an unjust means, deliberately carried out decreases the relevance of any end to the justifiability of the act which invokes it, and may nullify even the best end. This may lead to an unjust violence where means, ends or both fail to meet legitimacy's standard. The general rule is that violence cannot be justified even by the noblest end should the means be ineffective.²⁶⁵ The nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki might have been at least arguably justifiable (by immanent self-defense), but not without reason to believe that its use should save lives by shortening the war.²⁶⁶ We hold to the fact that violence cannot be justified by any standard of morality. Given that nuclear conflict is unjustifiable, we need to move towards disarmament peace sake.

6.3. THE NOTION OF FREEDOM

Freedom so fundamental to the human person. It is a moral power of a person and must be encouraged. Arendt understands this violence and we dare to make a few remarks concerning her views.

6.3.1. Labour as Antithetical to Freedom

H. Arendt's position as concerns labour emphatically points to the fact that the sole aim of labour is to provide man's needs. From this, we realize that man the process of labour is constantly

²⁶³ W. VOLLMANN, *Rising up and Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means*, Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., U.K 2003, p.452.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p462.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.455.

²⁶⁶ W. VOLLMANN, *Rising up and Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means*, p.455.

driven by necessity. Philosophers who classify labour under the realm of necessity, that is, as an activity which is driven by necessity and aims at producing mere human needs have regarded labour as a source of man's alienation and unfreedom. Arendt, views labour as a prime site of human self-realization, a sphere of life imbued with meaning and fulfilment and through an activity through which man attains freedom. This is contrary to the views that had prevailed in the history of philosophy according to which labour is antithetical to freedom and the good life of man.

Prior to Arendt, Plato and Aristotle viewed the contemplative life as the highest form of life which to them should be free from labour.²⁶⁷ In *The Republic*, Plato holds that the philosopher king by virtue of his superior rational endowment should be free from necessary labour.²⁶⁸ Aristotle in the same light asserts that though the maintenance of the *polis* relies on labour, labour is antithetical to a life of the highest form of excellence. By so doing, he cautions that a citizen, whom he considers as a free man, must not lead a life of artisans for such a life is ignoble and inimical of excellence.²⁶⁹ E. Kant in this regard holds that labour is an activity aimed at needs and as such represents a form of unfreedom.²⁷⁰

H. Arendt's consideration of labour could be classified under what Karl Marx calls labour in the realm of alienation. This is the kind of labour that aims at satisfying needs. To this effect he posits that the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane consideration ceases.²⁷¹ This points to the fact that a truly free activity can only take place outside of necessary labour. Marx's position here is not in line with the central idea of Plato and Aristotle that the supreme life is that of contemplation. He contends rather that a good life consists in creative activity. Though there can be freedom in the realm of necessity, the highest aspects of man's nature are developed outside the realm of necessary labour.²⁷²

6.3.2. Improvement in Labour

Arendt's in propounding her views on labour presents labour as that activity of man that must always be accompanied by pain and physical exhaustion. This notion is problematic when we consider the recent developments in the sphere of labour which have gone a long way to ease the pain and toil that accompanied labour in the past. Pierre Teilhard De Chardin rightly posits that

²⁶⁷ J. KADIYA, "Freedom and Necessity in Marx Account of Communism," In *The British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, 1 (2014), p.114.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.115.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.116.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ J. KADIYA, "Freedom and Necessity in Marx Account of Communism," p.106.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, p.118.

there is no incontrovertible evidence that mankind has just entered upon the greatest period of change the world has ever known.²⁷³ Scientific development and with it many improvements in different spheres of life bear witness to this assertion. The impact of this growth can be noticed clearly in relation to the improvement in the sphere of human labour.

6.3.3. *Philosophy and Politics*

Hannah Arendt holds that politics is based on the consent of the people through a process of validation of their various opinions. What validates these opinions is their conformity to reality. Basing themselves on the claims of the enlightenment enthronement of reason and the freedom to think for oneself, thinkers like John Rawls and Richard Rorty defend the views that politics should be liberal and dependent upon the consent of individuals.²⁷⁴ This has many impacts on the political thought of the ancient and medieval philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas. In other words, philosophy, religions and ultimate values are no longer to have a say in human affairs. The ultimate truth of the gods and the philosophers have to leave room for deliberation or have merely to become an opinion among many to be deliberated upon.

In an essay entitled “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical” Rawls asserts: “*philosophy as the search for truth about an independent metaphysical and moral order cannot...provide a workable and shared basis for political conception of justice in a democratic society.*”²⁷⁵ On his side, Rorty claims: “Democracy is more important than philosophy.”²⁷⁶ These positions claim a total relegation of philosophy and standard values to the background of human affairs thus advocating for existential and pragmatic consideration of democracy and society.²⁷⁷ From these, democracy becomes secular and must have its beginning and end in the interests of individuals. Henceforth, politics is talked about in terms of power and interest.

However, the forgoing leaves one thing unsaid: that politics is limited in itself and must have recourse to a discipline and principles out of its realm in order to lead men to their final destination. In order to spell out the contrast between these attempts that stay on the surface,

²⁷³ P. T. DE CHARDIN, *Building the Earth*, Dimension Books Inc, Wilkes- Base 1965, p.12.

²⁷⁴ T. F. K. SHAFAK, *An Analysis of the Rawlsian Notion of Public Reason*, Université Catholique D’Afrique Centrale, Yaoundé 2011, p.5. (Unpublished).

²⁷⁵ J. RAWLS, “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical,” in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, (1985), p.230.

²⁷⁶ R. RORTY, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth: Philosophical Papers (Vol. 1)*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1991, p.177.

²⁷⁷ C. J. VOPARIL-R. J. BERNSTEIN (eds.), *The Rorty’s Reader*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 2010, p.243.

philosophically speaking,²⁷⁸ and in order to go back to the traditional attempt is; “to dig down the philosophical foundations of Democracy.”²⁷⁹

The foregoing chapters have been able to establish the concept of ‘Alternative Facts’ as a crisis a human values in the post-truth era. “Alternative Facts” stand as an anti-thesis of the long established regime of ethics that recognizes truth as a political virtue. This part was structured under three chapters. The first tackled the concept of epistemological dimension of “Alternative Facts” as a modern form of moral relativism. The second was able to establish the political dimension of “Alternative Facts” as a crisis of human values. To this end, we elucidated on the ultimate course of politics, that is, the *raison d’être* of politics. This having been established, “Alternative Facts” appears as a distortion of this political ideals. The third was based on a critical assessment of Arendt’s thought and this was tackled from three dimensions: on the human condition, on power and violence and on truth and politics. The successful establishment of the above gives the greenlight for the final part the crux of which is to recommit to key ethical standards. We shall begin by establishing the ontological basis of truth in view of acclaiming truth metaphysically as reality and which exists independent of our knowledge of it. This implies truth is being discovered. We shall proceed to see the philosophical relevance of Arendt’s thought in contemporary politics especially in a post-truth world. And finally, we shall make philosophical remarks on the concept of “Alternative Facts” as a means of recommitting to core ethical standards.

²⁷⁸ C. J. VOPARIL-R. J. BERNSTEIN (eds.), *The Rorty’s Reader*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford 2010, p.245.

²⁷⁹ *IBID.*

PART III

**A RECOMMITMENT TO CORE ETHICAL VALUES IN
CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

This part is focused on three key areas; the ontological basis of truth, the philosophical relevance of Arendt's thought on contemporary African politics and a philosophical response to the notion of "Alternative Facts" as a return from the post-truth era to the era of ethical body politic. As such, it is to be suggested that vigilance and consciousness towards truth is the way we situate in and respond to the current age of degenerating, "post-truth" politics, as reflected by the said phenomena.

The seventh chapter is encapsulated on the ontological basis of truth with the objective to enhance the contention that truth exists in the things themselves as an attempt which goes against relativism, falsehood and against "Alternative Facts". It attempts to promote the contention that truth exists independent of our knowledge of it, thus truth is discovered. We shall focus on the phenomenological and Hermeneutical approaches to assert the ontological basis of truth.

Chapter eight elaborates on the philosophical pertinence of Arendt's thought in the post-truth era. While much of Hannah Arendt's essay, *Truth and Politics* is devoted to an examination of the disintegration of political life that sounds all too familiar to a contemporary reader, she concludes by defending what she calls the actual content of political life. Associating with others in public with the goal of making something new together for Arendt, can give rise to feelings of joy and gratitude.

The final chapter herein gives a radical turn in response to this very pernicious enterprise contemporary politics has adopted; "Alternative Facts." The Degeneration of African politics can be encapsulated in the notion of "Alternative Facts" which is deliberate falsehood. In a political milieu where truth does not matter, where lies telling and deceit have become political virtues in gaining and maintaining power, the need for virtue politics becomes urgent and indispensable. Consequently, this chapter focuses on a call for virtue in African politics as a relentless effort to respond to the very pernicious degeneration of truth within the African political enterprise. It is a call for a virtuous political agenda as a response to the very dangerous "Alternative Facts."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ONTOLOGICAL BASIS OF TRUTH

This chapter is encapsulated on the ontological basis of truth with the objective to enhance the contention that truth exists in the things themselves as an attempt which goes against relativism, falsehood and against “Alternative Facts”. It attempts to promote the contention that truth exists independent of our knowledge of it, thus truth is discovered. We shall focus on the phenomenological and Hermeneutical approaches to assert the ontological basis of truth. According to Husserl, all philosophical problems arise after the world is being subjected to a phenomenological reduction. The big question that arises here is; what is Ontology? Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being. In philosophy, ontology is the study of what exists, in general. By this, we mean what is real. Specifically, ontological metaphysicians seek to answer the question, *what does it mean to be?* When you think about it, this question is not so easy to answer. We know intuitively that certain things exist, but how can we categorize the reasons they do? What differentiates objects that exist from those that do not? This makes us to evaluate the importance of ontology in the philosophy world at the very beginning of the chapter. Philosophers use the concept of ontology to discuss challenging questions to build theories and models, and consequently, to better understand the ontological status of the world as well as the notion of truth that is trampled upon in politics. This connotes the need of the interpretation of reality which we term hermeneutics.

7.1. KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH

Thought and sensation, science and philosophy, as well as consciousness, are only a few of the various forms or types of knowledge. The question arises: what is the element that is common to these forms and in deed to all forms of knowledge? In a first approach, one can say that knowledge is a relation between two beings. Between a knowing subject and a known object. We restrict ourselves here to the knowledge of things outside ourselves. Because of this link or relation, the knowing subject or knower does not remain a being that is closed in on itself like a stone. Rather, it begins to communicate, to relate with other realities, to use a spatial metaphor, the knower opens itself to the world, for the knower in a certain sense goes out of itself and addresses other beings that are around it. In reality, knowledge happens in the opposite direction. It is the thing known that penetrates the knower insofar as knowledge happens inside and not outside of the knowing subject.

When one knows, the object makes itself present to the subject. The thing known reproduces itself in a certain sense in the knower. It is present in another way in the subject. Thus when the colour blue is known, the blueness of the thing penetrates the subject. Such penetration is not physical, rather there is the immaterial reproduction of the object in the subject for the object known remains unchanged even after it is known. Knowledge is not a physical action like running. It is true that in sensitive knowledge, the thing grasped affects the sense organs physically. However, this simple physical relation is not an adequate explanation of what knowledge is.

7.1.1. The Nature and Different Meanings of Truth

From our knowledge of gnoseology, truth is the conformity between the intellect and the reality,²⁸⁰ *adequatio intellectus ad rem*. In the realists' (Aristotelian-Thomistic) conception of truth, it is always necessary to acknowledge some distinction between these two elements, thought and reality, subject and object which in the act or knowledge must unite with one another as we see in formal logic even the acts corresponding to sensation or to simple apprehension possess a material truth. Nevertheless, truth, understood as the knowledge of the conformity between knower and known, is achieved only in judgment. In fact: only in this does the mind reflect on the content of apprehension in order to affirm their correspondence with reality.

The conformity occurs in both directions, that is, between the mind and reality and vice versa, making way for different sense of the word 'truth'. The conformity of the intellect to things conforming itself to that which they are, is *logical truth* or the truth of the mind. Ontologically, this kind of truth is based on the intentional possession of the form of the thing. In an inverted sense, one speaks of *ontological truth* or the truth of things which is the order or conformity of being to some intellect.

7.1.2. Truth in Relation to the different types of Intellects

The doctrine that we have explained with regards to truth becomes clearer if we classify the intellect in the following manner. The human speculative intellect of man gets its knowledge from things and is in a certain way moved by them. We can therefore say that in this case, things measure the intellect. In speculative knowledge, the intellect contemplates things as they are, so these things are the measure and the rule of truth of the speculative intellect.

²⁸⁰ J. SANGUINETTI, *Logic and Gnoseology*, Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1988, p.42

This is the intellect of the artisan, who is the cause of the becoming of artificial things. The artisan is the measure of their truth but only in as much as the things are artificial and not in as much as they are beings. The artisan produces his artefact according to the model or idea which he has in mind. The truth of the artefact depends on its conformity to the model or paradigm that the artisan has in mind.

It measures things radically because it is the origin of their entire reality. Things created by the divine intellect are conformed to it. In the divine intellect are found all created things as their cause, just as all his artefacts are in the mind of the artisan. Thus, the divine intellect has a certain similarity to the human practical intellect but differs from it in that the divine artisan is the cause of the entire being of things whereas the human artisan is only the cause of their coming to be or their becoming. The human agent always uses some pre-existing material and so he is not the origin or cause of the being of the finished product, but only of the process by which this matter comes to acquire a new form. Thus the divine intellect and its truth measures and is not measured, *mensurans non mensurata*. The thing and its truth is measured by the divine intellect and in its turn measures the human intellect, *mensurata et mensurans*. And so to conclude, our intellect is measured, *mensurata*, by the natural things which we know speculatively. It is the measure, *mensura*, of the coming to be of artificial things.²⁸¹ According to Augustine, the truth of things which is a property of the being of each thing and the truth of the created intellect, are a participation in the full and unrestricted truth.²⁸² Since our focus is on ontological truth, we shall not get to concern ourselves with logical truth.

7.1.3. Logical Truth

Leaving aside ontological or material truth, which is the truth of being or of things let us concentrate on logical truth and which formally considered, consist in the conformity of the knowing subject with the thing known. What we want to determine now is the operation or the level of knowledge in which we fully attain the truth.

Truth, strictly and formally considered, does not occur in sense knowledge. This is not to say that our senses deceive us or that sensation does not correspond to the thing which the senses know. To possess the truth, it is to be insisted, is to know that one knows and when the senses

²⁸¹ Note that truth exists independent of our knowledge of it. It is discovered and that is why the human being is in constant quest for truth.

²⁸² , AUGUSTINE, *City of God*, JOHN HEALEY (Trans.), John Grant, Edinburgh, 1909, p.110.

grasp an object, they do not strictly know that they possess the object in question. For example, even though the sense of sight possesses the image of what it sees, it does not know that conformity exists between the thing seen and the image which it perceives. The word ‘apprehension’ comes from the Latin ‘*prehendere*’, which means ‘to seize’ something. The word is applied to a mode of consciousness in which nothing is affirmed or denied of the object in question but the mind is merely aware of it. Simple apprehension can neither be true nor false. We are simply aware of an object without making any judgements. It is like you listen to a piece of music and just take it in without really deciding whether it is good or bad, i.e. without making any judgements.

Truth happens when the intellect knows of its conformity to the reality known. If this is not true of sense knowledge, it is also not true of the first operation of the intellect, simple apprehension, in which the intellect grasps the essence of a thing and then forms a corresponding concept of or from it. It is worthwhile to quote Aristotle here, ‘the true and the false are not in things but in the mind and in the case of apprehension of what is simple or of definition, the true and the false are not in the mind either.’²⁸³ Just as the truth, formally considered, is found in a more principal sense in the intellect than in things, so too it is found more principally in the intellect which judges, forming a proposition than in the act by which the intellect forms concepts, knowing the essences or quiddities (essences) of things. The intellect can be true or false sense only when it judges the thing apprehended and therefore truth is found primarily in the intellect composing and dividing: in judgements. The truth is found only secondarily when the intellect forms concepts.

Truth is the identification of the knower with the known. In simple apprehension, in knowing what a thing is, the intellect apprehends the essence of the thing by means of a certain comparison with the thing itself since it grasps the essence as the quiddity of this specific thing and no other. In judgment or a proposition, there is a comparison between that which is apprehended and the thing, since the proposition affirms or denies that the thing really has in the order of being, the form which is attributed to it in the predicate. Judgment includes the construction of a proposition, the knowledge of the conformity between the terms of a thing and the assent. The force of assent refers the content of the proposition to reality, conferring upon it the relevance of truth. Judgment bears within itself a declaration about the reality of things, therefore, it must be true or false.

²⁸³ ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, Bk 5, Chap. 4, 1027b, pp.25-28.

True knowledge which is attained in judgment automatically involves the intellect turning back upon itself, a *reditio*. Thomas Aquinas explains the metaphysical reason behind this return upon itself, typically true of all intellectual knowledge. The reason for this is that, those things which are the most perfect of all things in reality as are intellectual substances, return upon their own essence, with a complete return, *reditione completa*: by the very fact that they know something which exists outside of themselves, they must in some way go out of themselves. But when they know that they know, they are beginning to turn back upon themselves, because the act of knowledge is an intermediate act between the knower and the known and this return is completed to the extent that they know their own essences.²⁸⁴

7.2. THE PROPERTIES OF TRUTH

And, there are well defined principles that help one to recognize truth in knowledge, among them we have the aspect of truth knowable by man, the aspect of truth being one, being indivisible, being immutable and being absolute.²⁸⁵ The truth, according to the various meanings which we have accorded to it, has certain characteristics and properties which belong integrally to it.

7.2.1. *Knowability and Oneness of Truth*

The first principle of gnoseology is that the human being can know the truth just as ethics affirms as its first principle, a possibility of doing good and avoiding evil. The former regards the truth, the latter, the good, two transcendental properties of being that arise from its relation with the intellect and the will. As soon as a person actually knows, he also is aware, maybe in a confused manner also of the nature of his knowledge and thus he takes note of the possibility of conforming to reality. He is aware of a certain conformity between his mind and the reality known. Since knowledge exists formally in judgment, in every judgment, the human mind implicitly knows the truth. We cannot deny this universal principle without contradicting ourselves for whoever denies it must at least affirm one truth: the truth of his or her denial of the principle, and the person who says he or she doubts it, must at least be certain of a truth, namely, that he or she is doubting. Our capacity for knowing the truth can also be argued from the standpoint of the nature of the cognitive faculties themselves. That we can and do know is evident. If knowledge has an object, if to know is always to know something, what is known by definition always includes the truth. To know always entails a certain conformity of the knower to the known. To know is to know the truth. For

²⁸⁴ AQUINAS, *De Veritate*, q1.a. 9. (question 1 article 9), SPIAZZI Raymundi (ed.), Marietti, Romae.

²⁸⁵ J. SANGUINETTI, *Logic and Gnoseology*, Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1988, P.42.

Thomas Aquinas, the cognitive faculties are essentially infallible when it comes to knowing the truth. He says, ‘when any cognitive faculty errs in knowing the truth, it is because that faculty is defective or corrupted in some way since in virtue of its proper nature, it is ordered to the knowledge of that object. In fact, sight does not err in the knowledge of colours except it is somehow corrupted but every defect or corruption is unnatural since nature is directed towards the being and the perfection of things. Therefore, it is impossible that a cognitive faculty err naturally in the correct judgment of its object. Since the object of the intellect is truth, it is not possible that there exist an intelligence that naturally errs with respect to the knowledge of the truth.’²⁸⁶

Evidently, there exist as many truths as there are judgments. Said differently, there is a unique truth, the truth of God, the Eternal Truth, which is contrasted through the multiplicity of temporal truth. The point here however, is that there do not exist many truths which reciprocally contradict each other as relativism holds. The theory of a double truth is not admissible either for there cannot exist contradictions between scientific, philosophical or theological truths. Rather, each science has a truth proper to its nature, the pursuit of that truth in the end always reveals something, another face of the Eternal Truth, which is God himself. A rejection of the oneness of truth could be criticized for affectivity and subjectivism²⁸⁷ so as to force coherence in his argumentation; what Karl Popper calls the subjectivist epistemology based on personal psychological thought.²⁸⁸

7.2.2. Indivisibility, Immutability and Absoluteness

This means that there are no grades of truth. We are not referring here to knowledge which can be more or less extended, more or less penetrating, more or less deep or shallow. We are talking about what a judgment expresses objectively. Error on the other hand admits of grades in relation to true judgment for it is more false to say, for example, that a man of thirty is eight, than to place him at twenty-nine years of age. On the other hand, it does not make sense to say that a judgment like two and two makes four is more or less true. As we have seen in formal logic, a proposition is either true or false. There is no middle ground between the truth and the falsity of such propositions except in the case of future contingent judgments. We often hear in ordinary day to day language expressions such as, ‘there is only a little truth in what he/she is saying. What this

²⁸⁶ AQUINAS, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG), III, VERNON Bourke (trans.), Image Books, New York, 1956, p.107.

²⁸⁷ J. SANGUINETTI, *Logic and Gnoseology*, Theological Publications in India, p.255.

²⁸⁸ K. POPPER, *Objective knowledge: an Evolutionary Approach*, Oxford Clarendon Press 1972, p.140.

and other similar statements mean is that the proposition is false or too generic or not clear or improbable. We could also say the same thing about approximative truths which express judgments with regard to quantity insofar as they may have negligible margins of error.

Necessary truths are always true because they refer to an immutable reality or to an immutable aspect of a changeable reality under the condition that the thing exists. The existence of immutable truths is indispensable to science and morality. Contingent truths become true when the proclaimed event happens. To say that truth is necessary, immutable, or eternal is to say that it is not historical, that is, it cannot change, it does not become, neither can it transform itself into error with the passage of time. Human knowledge is historical. It evolves progressively. There are certain things that without recourse to previous knowledge or an adequate mental situation but the truth itself is immutable.

Truth is absolute in the sense that it is not relative to the human being or to the various situations in which human beings find themselves. This property of truth is derived from the principle of non-contradiction. Thus, I do not possess my truth which is contrary to your truth. In other words, if two human judgments are contradictory, the truth must be found in one of them. There is no doubt that the particular situation in which the person finds himself favours more or less the acquisition of a particular type of truth. But the truth which is acquired is always independent of the person. Let us remind ourselves here that the truth is a property of things and it is independent of what we think of it.²⁸⁹ When we come across apparently contradictory judgments about sense data, these are relative to the point of observation or measure. In reality, in some cases, the object is a being of reason of a positional character. For example, 'the white board for me is to my back while it is in front of you'. Sometimes, such contradictory judgments are due to error when two senses work on the same data as when the same object is seen from different sides, as when the sight perceives a fast moving will as stationary whereas the sense of touch knows it is moving.

7.2.3. Certitude and Error

To be certain is to be confident that one possesses the truth. Certitude is a subjective mental state which always accompanies authentic judgment and so it is identical with the unhesitant assent given by the mind to a proposition. It is a judgment wholly confident completely without fear of

²⁸⁹ H. GADAMER, *Truth and Methods*, J. Weinsheimer-G. Marshall (trans), Sheed and Ward Ltd, London, 1975, p.78.

being in the wrong, whereas in doubt one does not know what to say. Whereas in suspicion one is inclined to think, whereas in opinion one believes it to be thus – all of these uneasy states where the mind does not rest but instead moves in search of a truth that is still hidden – in certitude, one knows. The security which certain knowledge of the truth carries with it is itself founded. If one is to be reasonably sure of the truth, that truth must be evidenced. It is clear that the only knowledge worth striving for or acquiring is certain knowledge of the truth. The human mind naturally wants truth; it wants true knowledge. It wants to hold true knowledge with certainty.

The question however arises: can a man be certain of what is not true? The answer is yes and the technical name for such certitude is error. In other words, certainty corresponds to real or to apparent truth since one can also be erroneously certain. Error is assent given to a false proposition. It is certitude about what is wrong. It is thus a mental act while falsity is properly a quality of a proposition that affirms something which contradicts reality. We can distinguish error from ignorance in which one cannot judge. However, ignorance is involved in error since the person who judges wrongly really has no knowledge about what he is judging. This involvement however is unconscious since as we have said, the act of judging falsely includes certainty; truth.

We can also distinguish between error and a lie. A lie is a voluntary affirmation of what is not true with the intent of deceiving. It is speech which does not correspond to thought; *locutio contra mentem*. One knows the truth but speaks its contrary with the expressed intention of leading others into error. If, as Thomas Aquinas tells us, sin is the evil of the will, error is the original sin of the intellect. If truth is the conformity of thought with reality, error is the privation of this conformity. If truth manifests itself formally in judgment as opposed to simple apprehension and sensation, error enters into judgment when what the mind affirms is contrary to reality. Lastly, where true judgment signifies awareness or consciousness of the conformity between the mind and reality, an erroneous judgment entails a diminution or lack of this consciousness.

As with any evil, error does not happen per se because the intellect tends naturally to achieve its end which is the knowledge of the truth. It is only per accidens that it errs in a way similar to what happens with the operations of non-intellectual beings which habitually attain their end and only fail occasionally. Insofar as it is an act, error implies a certain absence of understanding since an erroneous judgment affirms something that is not and that which is not cannot be understood. In erroneous thought, there appears materially true concepts even if they are

ordered in a mistaken fashion. Precisely here in this disorder is produced the privation of thought, that of not having understood something.

Error is a being of reason. It has no formal contents since it does not contain any point of contact with reality. It lacks a metaphysical foundation because it does not possess the necessary evidence and because it proceeds from incorrect reasoning. But the fact of error should not lead to scepticism. Because the mind can reflect on its own act of knowledge, it can discover error and so correct it. Thus, error is not inseparable: the bottom line here is that the mind can realize it is ignorant and suspend judgment.

7.3. HERMENEUTICS AS TRUE PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

Hans-Georg Gadamer claimed that “hermeneutics and Greek philosophy remain the two main foci of his work”,²⁹⁰ and has made hermeneutics central to the practice of philosophy itself. This field of practice depends on concrete situation. So, according to Gadamer, hermeneutic philosophy is the heir of an older tradition of practical philosophy. Hermeneutics traditionally, is the art of interpretation. The art of interpreting so as to understand texts, speeches, acts and words whose meanings are not immediately clear to us. Its main question is, ‘how is understanding possible?’ and in relation to phenomenology which pushes us to allow reality to speak to us as it is, how is understanding made possible? Gadamer comes to an insight that the historical character of every understanding is a principle of hermeneutics. The aim of the hermeneutics is to establish a universal method for texts interpretation or a way in which we relate to the world.²⁹¹ It should be clarified here that Gadamer’s Phenomenology was influenced by *Being and Time*, the ground breaking work of his teacher and friend Martin Heidegger.²⁹² The book served him as “an essay in human *self-understanding*.”²⁹³ He was captivated both by the phenomenological approach of Husserl and Heidegger and, at the same time, by the studies of Wilhelm Dilthey on the history of hermeneutics, specifically Dilthey’s reconstruction of the earlier hermeneutics of Schleiermacher.²⁹⁴ “Hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditional text

²⁹⁰ D. MORAN, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Routledge, New York, 2000, p.248.

²⁹¹ T. NEGRU, *Gadamer-Habermas Debate and Universality of Hermeneutics*, Piatra Neamt, Romania 2000, p.144.

²⁹² P. REGAN, “Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics: Concepts of reading, understanding and interpretation” in *Meta: Research In Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, And Practical Philosophy 2 (2012)*, p.286.

²⁹³ D. MORAN, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p.250.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.248.

and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which it speaks.”²⁹⁵

7.3.1. Criteria for Discerning Error

The same criteria for knowing the truth also serve as the yard sticks for discerning error. The evidence availed of and the coherence of argumentation are indispensable prerequisites in the attempt to ascertain a possible error or to check the foundations of our judgments. Some indicators of error are the following:

- Inconsistencies: A contradictory conclusion means that there is some error in the premises.
- A counter proof of experience which denies our affirmations.
- The denial of other more certain truths: a conclusion which is contrary to some well-established principle is the fruit of a fallacious reasoning. A conclusion, for example, which is opposed to the principle of non-contradiction, is certainly false.
- A clash with other opinions especially if the latter are more authoritative.

Physical error is easily noticeable since the facts speak for themselves. Likewise, mathematical error can easily be spotted without much difficulty. Moral and metaphysical error are subtler and treacherous as experience attest. Error in these matters, however, becomes clear when affirmations oppose some very certain data of experience such as the reality of the world, the freedom of man and the existence of morality or if such affirmations do not respect the first principles of knowledge.

7.3.2. Phenomenological Method

The phenomenological method is the key approach used in this work as it looks at reality as it is. It is a method developed by Edmund Husserl within the framework of philosophical hermeneutics to let reality speak to us as it really is independent of our thinking it. That is why Husserl talks of phenomenological bracketing, a way of withholding judgements based on our prejudices and emotions.

7.3.3. Prejudices and Presuppositions

The interpreter working out their own presuppositions (fore-having, fore-sight, fore-conception) should be the first, last and constant task when attempting to understand the relevant

²⁹⁵ D. MORAN, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, p.248.

issues.²⁹⁶ Gadamer identifies the concept of prejudice or *praejudicium* as a good starting point to affect the hermeneutic circle, defining a temporal judgment that is “rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined”²⁹⁷. The term *praejudicium* refers to judgements, pre-supposition, bias, prejudices from cultural traditions, whether positive or negative²⁹⁸. They are necessary springboards towards better understanding where even vague notions of a text’s meaning are important because they ensure the familiarity of words and construal of its meaning. The expectation of what has been experienced before gives the interpreter a working hypothesis from which to further develop understanding²⁹⁹. When returning to the text as an interpreting researcher, understanding may be heightened by the temporal distance and time to think about how the text makes sense with what one already knows.

Gadamer suggests that understanding is ultimately self-understanding and any unchallenged presuppositions only serve to maintain a restrictive interpretation of the text.³⁰⁰ The search for understanding requires the interpreter’s awareness of their own bias and preconceptions affecting the habit of projecting a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as initial meaning is grasped.³⁰¹ The main issue therefore identifies that in order to read a text, the interpreter has to have an understanding of their own expectations about what a word or phrase means in relation to the parts and the whole of meaning. A search for understanding is therefore the working out of pre-conceptions, the openness of the hermeneutic process overcoming the limitations of bias. We must understand the whole in terms of the detail and vice versa.³⁰² The given text is more like a real conversation between the author and reader and like any real conversation hermeneutics binds both together, not because the text is a tool for reaching understanding but because of the interpreter’s motivation to engage in the conversation until understanding is satisfactorily accommodated. If one fails to understand the nuances of narrative meaning, then the hermeneutic conversation fails to reach its full potential to grasp the whole of meaning, with the interpreter’s own understanding remaining at a fixed level.

²⁹⁶ H. GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, Sheed-W. Stagbooks, London 2004, p.269.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.269.

²⁹⁸ H. GADAMER, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, D. Linge (ed.) ,University of California Press, Berkeley 2004, p.61.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.291.

³⁰⁰ H. GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, p.251.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.269.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p.191.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RELEVANCE OF HANNAH ARENDT'S THOUGHT IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA

This chapter elaborates on the philosophical pertinence of Arendt's thought in the post-truth era. If one had to describe political life today in one word, what would it be? Popular responses might include variations on ideological gridlock, frustration, partisanship, self-interestedness and impotence. In any case, there is a general feeling that there is something seriously wrong with politics today. There is worry that men are growing increasingly tolerant of the dysfunctional at worst, frustrating at best, and political life. While much of Hannah Arendt's essay, *Truth and Politics* is devoted to an examination of the disintegration of political life that sounds all too familiar to a contemporary reader, she concludes by defending what she calls the actual content of political life.³⁰³ Associating with others in public with the goal of making something new together for Arendt, can give rise to feelings of joy and gratitude. So what has gone wrong? Why is it that any attempt at political engagement today leaves men frustrated, resentful, and cynical? Arendt makes a strong case that the quality of political environment has deteriorated because of the lack of understanding of what it means to tell the truth.

8.1. ARENDT AND TRUTHTELLING

It is the tendency to blur the lines between truth and opinion that Arendt believes undermines the common and factual reality which gives meaning and balance to live together in public. In a world where opinions are held to be true and truths debated with as if they are opinions, it becomes increasingly difficult to tell the truth, and the common ground on which one stands erodes even further.³⁰⁴ A disinterested truthteller, who tries to make facts known to the public with no motives besides the desire to establish the existence of a common world, finds himself or herself in danger of being swept up into politics. If one political group or another notices that the truthteller's facts either support or oppose their personal convictions, the facts themselves are disagreed with as matters of political opinion. To the extent that one locates the truth with one's political interest or another, one finds oneself in danger of destroying the concept of truth altogether. Arendt thus suggests the shocking reality of the disappearance of truth in the world.

³⁰³ H. ARENDT, *Between Past and Future: Eighth Exercises in Political Thought*, p.258.

³⁰⁴ M. ATAKI, "What Does It Means to Think About Politics?" in *Thinking in Dark Times*, p.65.

Further, Hannah Arendt understands that people living in a political environment that is not grounded in apolitical facts will eventually lose faith in the existence of any truth whatsoever. Without the firm ground of truth, one literally loses bearings in the real world that one shares with others. In search of stability, one tends to strengthen ones belief in a consistent narrative of opinions and lies that provide a satisfying explanation for the way things are. In this situation, conversation between opposing groups becomes nearly impossible. Without reference to a shared factual reality, individual or group that is convinced of his or her political opinions literally lives in a different world than someone who holds a different opinion.³⁰⁵ This provokes a loss of human communication.

8.1.1. Maintenance of Institutions Devoted to Truth

Philosophers, scientists, artists, judges, and reporters must forfeit their roles in political life in order to be faithful truth-tellers, Arendt strongly holds. But unless everyone cultivates their own sensitivity to the world that men share as it is, either through solitary contemplation or through dialogue with someone who has a different perspective, they will cease to live in one common world and all attempts at renewal will fail.³⁰⁶ Nothing less is at stake here than the continuation of the world of human affairs. As political debate reaches into more and more aspects of one's lives, from health care and taxes to which television channels one watches and which newspapers one reads, one loses more and more of the already rare opportunities to lay aside politics and be alone long enough to be overtaken by the world as it is. If everyone experienced a little more non-partisan care for and commitment to the world and a little less conviction that one knows what is best, one might rediscover the joy and gratitude that Arendt tells, are meant to come with the task of renewing our common world. These are Arendt's statements in the years 1960s. However, the importance of this reflection is still of relevance for the present societies in which we live.

8.1.2. Truthfulness and Trust as Social Foundations

A clear understanding of man shows that lies-telling is contrary to political life in general and democracy in particular. The modern conception of state as it is practiced today, originated from the French revolution and influenced by Jean-Jacque Rousseau's book, *The Social Contract*.

³⁰⁵ A. MACINTYRE, *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays, (Vol. 2)*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2006, p.140.

³⁰⁶ A. T. KRONMAN, *Education's End: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life*, Yale University Press, London 2007, pp.15-18.

In brief, the idea of sovereignty and the people are two dominant factors of these revolutions.³⁰⁷ A state, Rousseau says, originates in the freedom each person has and of which each makes sacrifices of a part in order to obtain a greater good.³⁰⁸ In other words, it is not to annihilate one's freedom that one becomes a member of a society. Both Rousseau and Hobbes agreed on that. But Rousseau's conception of sovereignty still bears much weight when it considers that the people after the erection of a government still remain the source of ultimate power.

The problem of lies-telling in a nutshell endangers the ground for all human freedom and makes politics a jungle of survival; a place where one hardly makes a free choice except the one dependent on the various false propositions one is made to believe in. This destroys the foundations of human relationship especially truthfulness and trust. It is this fact that Arendt's essays echo. The fact that the very meaning of man's social life is lost when the population is victim of deception. Deception destroy the people freedom to decide knowingly and willingly of the facts. The leader owes everything to the people. And it is out of trust and the love individuals have for each other that society holds together. It is in relation to this that Sissela Bok asserts:

I can have different kinds of trust: that you will treat me fairly, that you will have my interest at heart, that you will do me no harm. But if I do not trust your word, can I have genuine trust in the first three? If there is no confidence in the truthfulness of others, is there any way to assess their fairness, their intentions to help or to harm? How, then, can they be trusted?³⁰⁹

This emphasis of Sissela Bok ends with this conclusion: "*Whatever* matters to human beings, trust is the atmosphere in which it strives."³¹⁰ This prospect opens up to the fact that the value of trust in society has as its spring board truthfulness. In other words, "trust in some degree of veracity functions as a foundation of relations among human beings; when this trust shatters or wears away, institutions collapse."³¹¹

8.1.3. The Dissolution of Human Communication

The loss of the ability to communicate with one another is largely responsible for the loss of the joy and gratitude that political life offers. As men feel more and more that they are living in differing realities, the opportunities for coming together, affirming the existence of a common

³⁰⁷ J. J. ROUSSEAU, *The Social Contract*, M. CRANSTON (trans.), Penguin Books Ltd., London 1968, pp.62-64.

³⁰⁸ J. J. ROUSSEAU, *The Social Contract*, M. CRANSTON (trans.), Penguin Books Ltd., London 1968, pp.60-61.

³⁰⁹ S. BOK, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, Quartet Books Ltd., London 1980, p.31.

³¹⁰ *IBID.*

³¹¹ S. BOK, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*.

world and taking action to make our new contribution to it become fewer and fewer.³¹² By associating more and more with people who share one's political opinions, one makes it more difficult to exchange opinions with someone with whom one is likely to disagree. How, then, in today's political climate can one reclaim some of the joy in doing something together and gratitude for living in a world in which one acts with others? Obviously, one will not find that all differences will vanish if one just starts talking with one another. The emphasis on civility in politics today may change the tone of a debate, but it will not help men find a common ground. In fact, speaking nicely to each other may just make it more pleasant to stay in separate worlds, convinced that one's view is the right view, but polite enough to let others believe in their views.³¹³ For Arendt, one thing that can begin to reverse the trend of defactualization, is increasing the awareness of the limits of political action and the sensitivity to the non-political experiences in life.

8.2.ARENDT'S ANALYSIS AND AFRICAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The present analysis on deception and lies-telling has relevance for African societies also buried in the tomb of plain deceptions. In a recent issue of *Jeune Afrique*, Bechir Ben Yahmed makes the following observation:

D'une manière plus générale, sur le continent africain, nous entendons dire, depuis trois ans, des choses d'autant plus agréables pour nos oreilles et nos esprits qu'elles sont nouvelles et nous changent de ce que nous n'avions que trop entendu...Regardons ensemble ce qui se passe en ce moment sur les cinq continents de notre petite planète et nous constaterons, en effet que de tous les hommes sur terre, seuls les musulmans et les Africains-qu'ils soient musulmans, chrétiens, ou animistes-sont en train de se battre entre eux, de se faire la guerre, de s'entretuer et de subir l'occupation armée de certains de leur territoires.³¹⁴

This observation of Yahmed opens two trajectories of analysis: the first which concerns the external forces deceiving the African people about their real problems and situations; secondly, it pushes one to reflect on Africans themselves with their problems.

To start with, most African countries are led by pseudo-monarchs who always maintain that they are being democratic. In addition to the selfish cling to power, African leaders never cease to reiterate incessantly that they are going to change the continent, that they are organizing fair and democratic elections, which they are the choice of a people who do not really vote for them; that the country is moving ahead whereas everything is deteriorating. It does not take

³¹² A. MACINTYRE, *Ethics and Politics: Selected Essays*, p.140.

³¹³ P. GUIRAUD, *Semiology*, G. GROSS (trans.), Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1975, p.14.

³¹⁴ B. B. YAHMED, "Guerre et Paix" in *Jeune Afrique*, n. 2714, pp.3-4.

therefore a long time for someone to realize the discrepancies existing actually between the statements heard during political campaigns, and the realities of the African people which are not quite different from Aimé Césaire's description of the colonialists:

...there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses. No human contact, but relation of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production.³¹⁵

With the following realities still existing in Africa, one cannot deny that Africans humanly speaking will vote for such a long term president. But only through the violation of the rights of people and through deceptions can a leader obtain such regimes.

It is beyond doubt that Africans are all humans like others, noble as their leaders. Can they not enjoy the same trust and privilege given to their leaders? It is clearly observed that many African leaders benefit from the ignorance of their people to feed themselves rather than feeding their people. If one actually looks at the common good of Africans, there is not going to be violence in Africa, and democracy will have a better future in the continent.

To sum up what has been considered so far, Arendt holds that truth has always been involved in a stormy relationship with politics. In the course of treating this problem, she observes two aspects of the conflicts: philosophical and historical. But since she most certainly is not concerned with philosophy, she elaborated more on this conflict from a political point of view. Considering her views, then, we attempted to make an appreciation of Arendt's understanding by showing its relevance and pertinence but also some of the weaknesses of the grounds on which her political thought is founded.

8.2.1. Arendt's Relation to Factuality

Professor Peg Birmingham says that to fully understand Arendt's relation to facts one must remember her distinction between moral action and political action. For her, moral action is concerned with the dialogue between me and myself, and sets as its criterion for action, whether actors can live with themselves. Political action, on the other hand, is concerned with actors' relation to the world. Political action happens between humans while moral action is a concern primarily within the human. Though, as she describes it in *Truth and Politics*, sometimes moral

³¹⁵ A. CESAIRE, "Discourse on Colonialism," in *African Philosophy: An Anthology*, E. CHUKWUDI EZE (ed.), Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Massachusetts 1998, p.226.

action becomes political action. Her case for this is Socrates' refusal to escape from prison and therefore to die for the truth of his position. The act of Socrates can be described by the corrupt leaders of our time as cowardice. For Arendt, the factual truth about authority in the modern world is that it has disappeared. She acknowledges that conservative and liberal political scientists and functionalist social scientists not only deny this worldly fact; they have much data and research to support their conclusions.

Factual truth for Arendt is a phenomenon, in the phenomenological sense of that term. The reality of the disappearance of authority from the modern world is a phenomenon that moderns have to bear. This does not mean that authority has disappeared. That she speaks about it, that she articulates what it is in ways that are intelligible and meaningful, speaks to its phenomenological presence, in spite of its worldly disappearance.³¹⁶ To understand what Arendt means about factual truth, one has to understand phenomenological hermeneutics.³¹⁷ It is this phenomenological understanding which gives pertinence to Hannah Arendt's political considerations.

8.2.2. Life as an End in Itself

After viewing the active life in relation to the human condition, we discover from Arendt's consideration that all labour, work and action constitute means towards the preservation of man's life. Of all these activities, labour is the closest activity that deals with the life process itself aiming at ensuring its survival. From this, we come to the fact that life is at the centre of every human endeavour and so we will not hesitate in stating that life is the source, focus and aim of every human endeavour. This is evident in labour by means of which man struggles to provide for his basic needs that support his life and in work where man aims at making the world a comfortable place for life. B. Mondin asserts that:

Of all the forms of human action, the most elementary and fundamental and the one which at the same time emerges as the most complex and rich with content is life. For man's being, life is essential; it is an activity that cannot be interrupted without putting it in crisis, indeed without destroying his own being."³¹⁸

Given this value which man attaches to life the struggle to preserve it is inevitably natural in man. Arendt elucidates that work is a process of reification; that is, that man does not create out of nothing but in working, acts only on what is provided by nature and by so doing makes his own

³¹⁶ H. ARENDT, *Essay in Understanding (1930-1954): Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, J. KOHN (ed.), Schocken Books, New York 1994, p.xii.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ B. MONDIN, *Philosophical Anthropology*, p.25.

contribution to creation. John Paul II captures this vividly when he considers the following words of God to man: “be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subject it.”³¹⁹ By exercising this mandate he notes, man shares in the work of the creator. In a nutshell he posits that “man created in the image of God, through his work participates in the work of the creator.”³²⁰ It is by virtue of this dignity conferred on him by the creator that he participates in creation thus serving as co-creator.³²¹ Man as co-creator must operate within the confines of truth which the creator has set as a yardstick for moral action.

8.2.3. *The Social Character of Man*

Plurality, as H. Arendt contends, necessitates action through which men come to relate with one another thus developing into a community of social beings. This reveals the social nature of man and any mind open to reality will not doubt. Aristotle captures this truth explicitly when he affirms that “he who is unable to live in society or who has no need for society because he is sufficient for himself, must either be a beast or a god.”³²² D. Bigongiari shares fully in this view by asserting that “the fact that man operates not by instinct but by reason makes social organization indispensable”.³²³ To better clarify the point, he states that “as a spiritual being, the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations. The more authentically man lives these relations, the more his own personal identity matures. It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God.” John Cowburn maintains that “when man realizes that he is surrounded by other persons, each of whom is unique and a subject with his own thought and plans, then he becomes aware of a new situation, challenging and at the same time offering greater promise of fulfilment than any other.”³²⁴

Following the abuse of trust which citizens have meted on leaders, oftentimes they are deceived by white lies as a means of exploitation. As such, once this unappetizing aspect is identified, resistance becomes necessary. Arendt seems to have ended only at the level of criticizing the excessive use of force to achieve political ends without providing the remedies or

³¹⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, n.18.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, n.18.

³²¹ F. FUKUYAMA, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Free Press, New York 1992, p.17.

³²² J. OMOREGBE, *A Simplified History of Western Philosophy* Vol. 1, Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, Lagos 1991, p.65.

³²³ D. BIGONGIARI (ed.), *The Political Ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Hafner Publishing Company, New York 1953, p.180.

³²⁴ J. COWBURN, *Love and the Person*, Geoffrey Chapman Limited, London 1967, p.41.

the alternatives that could be used instead of violent methods. According to K. Peschke, if people should see that the government is so unjust, active resistance is necessary. For him, active resistance is “an organized defence of citizens against the abuse of state authority.”³²⁵ This defence may be carried out with or without the use of force. Non-violent active resistance may take the form of mobilizing the public opinion in word and writing, of appealing to a higher judicial tribunal like the U.N.O., of mass- demonstrations, or of a general strike.³²⁶ For him, apart from special circumstances, non-violent resistance is the only, traditional Christian, permissible active resistance to defend citizens’ rights against unjust, despotic state authority.³²⁷

Arendt later on asserts that in private as well as public life there are situations in which the very swiftness of a violent act may be the only appropriate remedy. Her point is that under certain circumstances violence—acting without argument or speech and without counting the consequences – is the only way to set the scales of justice right again.³²⁸ Our point contrary to that of Arendt is that the end does not justify the means. Man has no right to take away the life of another person. Looking at the consequences of violence which Arendt failed to acknowledge, F. Winters decides to affirm Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violence because even with the slightest violence (no matter the circumstances) we are never too sure of the final result. Looking at the well-known Anglophone Crisis that has entered into the history of Cameroon, seeking violent means has led the country to an almost state of nature in the English speaking regions, a state of perpetual of life-threatening conflict.

It was as a result of such unwanted eventualities that M. Kings admonishes us that we should always avoid violence. For him, if one succumbs to the temptation of using violence in one’s struggle, unborn generations will be recipients of long and desolate nights of bitterness, and one’s legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos.³²⁹ In relation to this, B. Taylor states that violence is unlawful. For him, political violence oversteps the limits placed upon the lawful pursuit of political purposes.³³⁰ This probably also is the reason why C. Tumi had to state categorically that every citizen should “erase the word violence from their vocabulary.” This

³²⁵ K. PESCHKE, *Christian Ethics*, p.612.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 613.

³²⁸ H. ARENDT, *On Violence*, pp.63-64.

³²⁹ M. LUTHER, “The most Durable Power” in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther Kings Jr.*, Harper and Collins, San Francisco 1991, p.10.

³³⁰ W. TAYLOR, “Violence,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Vol. 2, p.946.

for him is not an issue that should be treated lightly, while sitting comfortably at one's desk, sipping a cup of coffee and eating a slice of bread.³³¹ As earlier stated, we must not forget both the immediate and long term consequences of violence. It leads to loss of lives, both of those who are directly concerned and even the innocent. It can also lead to desertification and less production and hence famine especially when it is accompanied by the use of bombs. Violence also violates basic human rights of a person both social, economic, moral, and political.³³²

8.3. THE PHILOSOPHY OF NON-VIOLENCE

Arendt's philosophy on violence is current to our contemporary era where violence is spotted from every corner of the world. One is left with the following questions: what kind of society do we want to see emerging from the confusion of our time? How can we have a type of society that promotes justice and peace worth the name? And like P. Rowntree one will ask: on what principles would our common life be ordered?³³³ Here, we see the necessity of non-violence.

Yet, for philosophers like Leo Tolstoy, Henry Thoreau and most importantly M. Gandhi, non-violent means should be employed to preserve moral values in politics. Gandhi maintains:

I do not believe in short-violent-cut to success. However much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is therefore really no meeting-ground between the school of violence and myself.³³⁴

The basic principle therefore is to 'do good and avoid evil.' An understanding of conscience as an inner voice in man which inclines us towards seeking the good confirms this principle.

Non-violence (in Hindu *Ahimsa*) is: "the policy of using peaceful methods, not force, to bring about political or social change."³³⁵ Literally speaking, *Ahimsa* means non-killing.³³⁶ Thus one may not offend anybody, or harbour an uncharitable thought against others.³³⁷ Non-violence is the law of our species just as violence is the law of the brutes. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law; to the strength of the spirit.³³⁸

³³¹ C. W. TUMI, *The Political Regimes of Ahmadou Ahidjo and Paul Biya, and Christian Tumi, Priest*, p.16.

³³² R. AUDI, "Dimensions of Violence," in *Social Ethics Morality and Social Policy*, p.276.

³³³ P. C. ROWNTREE, *Politics and the Christian Vision*, SCM Press Limited, London 1984, p.3.

³³⁴ M. GANDHI, *All Men are Brothers*, Orient Longmans Private Ltd, Switzerland 1958, p.83.

³³⁵ S. WEHMEIER et alii. (ed.), *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, London 2000, p.795.

³³⁶ N. JUDE, *Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy of Non-Violence as an Ideal means of Preserving Moral Values in Politics*, 2009, p.8.

³³⁷ M. GANDHI, *PARKIN Frank*, G. A. Natesan and Co, Mandras, p.382.

³³⁸ M. GANDHI, *All Men are Brothers*, p.85.

Satyagraha in Hindu means Truth. It is indispensable in the practice of non-violence. He who seeks God should be truthful in all his actions, words and thoughts. A truthful action for Gandhi is governed by the readiness to get hurt and not to hurt and to respect the truth in the person.³³⁹ *Aparigraha* means non-possession. Poverty and detachment from material things play an irreplaceable role in the practice of non-violence. True humility ensures peace and justice in society, self-sacrifice and a sacrifice of time, pride and one's whole being for the propagation of truth and for the preservation of justice and peace in the society. There must be control of anger. This is because violence (*Himsa*) is the first-born son of emotions (anger) while *Ahimsa* is that of reason. The basic principle of non-violence is love and this cannot be placed at par with anger.

8.3.1. Arendt and The Notion of Civic Friendship

Arendt's philosophical insight brings to consciousness the notion of civic friendship. Maritain notes that if the world is to move from its present state to a world society, the cultivation of civic friendship will have to be done in a broader manner. However, he points out that civic friendship will always remain infinitely different from charity just as the world political society will remain infinitely different from the kingdom of God.³⁴⁰ The notion of civic friendship enhances living together.

8.3.2. Living Together

Maritain opines that for the world political society we must live together clarifying what he means by living together, Maritain notes that living together does not mean occupy the same space of geographical location, nor does it mean being subjecting everyone to the same pressure, same pattern of life and the same external condition, speaking the language or the same cultural practices but rather it means suffering together, it means sharing together as men not as beasts.³⁴¹ People come together to suffer together not because of love be it in a political society but they bear all the burden and inconvenience that that may bring in order to achieve a common task and that task is the common good Maritain opines.³⁴²

³³⁹ E. ERICKSON, *Gandhi's Truth*, Faber and Faber Limited, London 1970, p.412.

³⁴⁰ J. MARITAIN, *Man and the State*, p.207.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² *Ibid.*

8.3.3. *Sense of the Common Good*

According to Maritain, one body politic is one organised people. He notes that the unity of the world body politic would be quite different from that found in kingdoms or nations. It will not even be a federal unity but rather, a pluralist unity he holds. Therefore, he advises that the unity in the various individual bodies politic should be superseded by this unity.

He continues, that saying the world should form one body politic means that the world should form and become one people.³⁴³ This automatically calls for the development of a sense of common good which should supersede the sense of the common good found in the individual bodies politic.³⁴⁴ He does not lose sight of a fact, which fact is that to insist on a worldwide sense of civic friendship as pre-requisite to the formation of the world political society is placing the cart before the horse.³⁴⁵

This chapter elaborated on the philosophical pertinence of Arendt's thought in the post-truth era. In it, we discovered that while much of Hannah Arendt's essay, *Truth and Politics* is devoted to an examination of the disintegration of political life that sounds all too familiar to a contemporary reader, she concludes by defending what she calls the actual content of political life. Associating with others in public with the goal of making something new together for Arendt, can give rise to feelings of joy and gratitude. This said, final chapter shall give a radical turn in response to this very pernicious enterprise contemporary politics has adopted; "Alternative Facts." The Degeneration of African politics can be encapsulated in the notion of "Alternative Facts" which is deliberate falsehood.

³⁴³ J. MARITAIN, *Man and the State*, p.209.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p.207.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

CHAPTER NINE

A PHILOSOPHICAL RESPONSE TO THE NOTION OF “ALTERNATIVE FACTS” AS A RETURN FROM THE POST-TRUTH ERA TO THE ERA OF ETHICAL BODY POLITIC

The Degeneration of African politics can be encapsulated in the notion of “Alternative Facts” which is deliberate falsehood. In a political milieu where truth does not matter, where lies telling and deceit have become political virtues in gaining and maintaining power, what solution do we propose to ameliorate politics in Africa relatively on the question of power? The need for virtue politics becomes urgent and indispensable. Consequently, this chapter focuses on a call for virtue in African politics as a relentless effort to respond to the very pernicious degeneration of truth within the African political enterprise. It is a call for a virtuous political agenda as a response to the very dangerous “Alternative Facts”. How should we respond to this sad, nasty state of the degenerating politics then?

9.1. VIGILANCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN POST-TRUTH POLITICS

Some commentators argue that we have now entered the epoch of post-truth politics.³⁴⁶ Matthew d’Ancona further suggests that democratic orthodoxies and institutions are now fundamentally shaken by “a wave of ugly populism”, whilst rationality is threatened by emotion.³⁴⁷ This is indeed a stern warning regarding the “post-truth” era. Although truth does matter, we must not take it for granted. It is at this very point of time, when politics has been degenerated into wasteful competition for self-interest and power, and when people are losing their faith in truth, that we must stay vigilant and conscious towards truth. Once we all lose our persistence of truth in politics, it could potentially lead to a very pernicious situation, at which the authorities make use of lies and manipulated facts to assert its control over society, guide us the way it wants us to develop, and thus undermine the individual liberty we cherish.

In *Animal Farm*, almost all animals were either simple minded, intellectually inferior or indifferent to world.³⁴⁸ Most of them, instead of trying to improve their intellectual calibre at the early stage, fatalistically accepted that the pigs were more intellectually mature and capable than

³⁴⁶ W. Davies. *The Age of Post-Truth Politics*, The New York Times, 24 Aug. 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/opinion/campaign-stops/the-age-of-post-truth-politics.html. Accessed 5 May 2017.

³⁴⁷ M. D’ANCONA, *Post Truth: The New War on Truth and How We Fight Back*, Ebury Press, 2017, pp.7-8.

³⁴⁸ G. ORWELL, *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*, Penguin Classics, 2000. “politics, n.” OED Online. Oxford UP, June 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/237575. Accessed 19 Jul. 2017, pp.23-24.

others, and decided to follow the pigs' decisions without any doubt.³⁴⁹ Soon Napoleon, leader of the pigs, and Squealer, the propaganda officer, realised that they might exploit this blind spot in the community to further the dictatorship of the pigs in the *Animal Farm*. Among the many ways Napoleon used to maintain the legitimacy of his regime, the repeated amendments to the Seven Commandments and their "new interpretations" saw how the pigs, whose ancestors had established these laws for the *Animal Farm*, deliberately violated and gradually ignored them while keeping other animals in the dark. For instance, when three hens and a sheep were executed for their crimes committed in the farm, the Sixth Commandment was amended to "*No animal shall kill another animal without cause*",³⁵⁰ so as to justify the killings by the regime. Eventually, the Seven Commandments was, once and for all, replaced by a single Commandment: "*All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others*", but all the animals "did not seem strange".³⁵¹

At the end of the story, when Animal Farm was named Manor Farm again, it was apparent that the pigs, led by Napoleon, was no different from human in the exploitation and oppression of other animals.³⁵² One message Orwell was trying to convey in this "fairy story" was that we should be sceptical of, rather than blindly follow, a political authority, no matter how "utopic" or "ideal" its political system or ideology is, because such "pursuit of ideal society" could be an excuse for ruler to oppress the people. It would be too late if the people fail to realise and stop what is false and ridiculous, even the slightest, at the very beginning.

John Stuart Mill, a Victorian British philosopher, suggested that "*the free development of individuality is one of the leading essentials of wellbeing*".³⁵³ Mill advocates the liberty of "*framing the plan of our life to suit our own character*"³⁵⁴ as the utmost basis of the flourishing of individuality. In another work, *Utilitarianism*, Mill claimed that "*it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied*". The said liberty to develop one's individuality allows one to exercise and further such human faculties as perception, judgment, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and moral preference, which all

³⁴⁹ G. ORWELL, *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*, Penguin Classics, 2000. "politics, n." OED Online. Oxford UP, June 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/237575. Accessed 19 Jul. 2017, pp.25-26.

³⁵⁰ G. ORWELL, *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*, pp.62-63.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.101-102.

³⁵³ J. S. MILL., *On Liberty*, 1859. Batoche Books, 2001. Economic e-Translations Into and From European Languages, Pixel-International Education and Training Institution, eet.pixel-online.org/files/etranslation/original/Mill,%20On%20Liberty.pdf., Accessed 20 Jan. 2018, III, p.2.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.12.

constitute the “higher pleasure” for human satisfaction and well-being.³⁵⁵ It is also these moral and mental faculties that make human distinctive from other animals, that enable human to determine what is true and what is false with proper analysis and rational reasoning.

Therefore, we human beings, unlike the animals in *Animal Farm*, possess the ability to avoid the continued manipulation of false or partial information. We should be pleased that different stakeholders have realised the acute effects of “fake news” and “content farms”, which facilitated the coming of the post-truth era, and are taking measures to combat falsehood on the Internet on a global level. For instance, Facebook is working with ABC News, Associated Press and other independent agencies for fact-checking purpose, and launched a new system to warn users of potential fake news stories circulated in the social networking site.³⁵⁶ However, there is no reason for individuals to slacken. Mill corroborates that the aforementioned human faculties were like muscular powers and could only be improved by use.³⁵⁷ If one “lets the world,..., choose his plan of life for him”, it is at best “ape-like imitation” or “machinery by automatons in human form”.³⁵⁸

9.1.1. The “Ought Vision” of African Politics

Although we do possess the ability to distinguish falsehood from truth, if we personally do not do so in an active and determined manner, it means nothing. We shall overcome our simple-mindedness and laziness if we are to be immune from false information and irrational sentiments, and we shall be immune from false information and irrational sentiments if we are to realise that universal well-being, rather than self-interest of individuals in the establishment, is the genuine and ultimate goal of politics. With such determination in responding to the degenerating political ideal, we must be objective to point out “Alternative Facts” as a post-political era.

Africa and African politicians ought to have a vision that is underpinned by patriotism. A patriotism that pushes one to uphold the truth and to see lies telling and deceit as injustices and means of exploitation of the African people. Just like John Pombe Magufuli, many African leaders and thinkers have been moving in this direction. We hear the president of Ghana, Nana Addo

³⁵⁵ ³⁵⁵ J. S. MILL., *On Liberty*, 1859. Batoche Books, 2001. Economic e-Translations Into and From European Languages, Pixel-International Education and Training Institution, eet.pixel-online.org/files/etranslation/original/Mill,%20On%20Liberty.pdf, Accessed 20 Jan. 2018, III, pp.3-4.

³⁵⁶ , Matthew D’Ancona, *Post Truth: The New War on Truth and How We Fight Back*, Ebury Press, 2017, p.118.

³⁵⁷ , J. S. MILL, *On Liberty*, III. P.3.

³⁵⁸ , *Ibid*, III, p.5.

Dankwa Akufo-Addo saying, we must think of Africa beyond aid. We must imagine an Africa where we deploy our resources in a manner that is going to underpin and undergird our development. He urges African countries to take charge of their destiny and not to allow national budgets to be over-dependent on aid. he explores how Africa can optimise the use of its resources, creativity and innovation to finance the continent's development agenda and ambition effectively. Akufo-Addo explains that "*Africa beyond aid is about mutual benefit, and we must change our perspective to collectively stand on our own feet and forge stronger partnerships that serve Africa's interests*"³⁵⁹ Africans ought to be conscious of a transcendent being; the supreme judge.

9.1.2. Consciousness of a Transcendent and Judging Being

A lot of Africa's problems related to aspect regarding bad governance is caused by their oblivious of the existence of a transcendent being to whom they will render account. It is imperative to state it clearly here, that God is the unaccountable being but to whom all other beings are accountable. Man has developed a tremendous sense of independence such that he is no more afraid of the creator, maybe because he cannot be seen directly, rather, he is more afraid of his fellow men than God. God being omniscient (all-knowing), man prefers to hide things from fellow men, tell lies to the people, deceive them, whereas, God knows and sees everything. Human being have to be conscious of the immanent reality that our lives come from God and which we owe to Him. Hence, humans must always act in the way that pleases the Divine will or that is in accord with it. According to Aquinas every agent of necessity acts for an end which is the good.³⁶⁰ Explicitly, Aristotle avers that the end is that for the sake of which a thing is done and the good as that which all things aim.³⁶¹ This presupposes that every end is a good and every good is an end. Commenting on the teleological dimension of the cosmos, P. Kreeft specifically holds that *teleology* is a fact. Justifying this claim, he asserts that visible things in nature act for an end and according to their essence or distinctive nature. If they were not end-directed, things would act randomly. We observe that things do not act randomly. He concludes therefore that there is an end to every created thing.³⁶² Moreover, L. Bogliolo states: "Since in him is contained the totality of the created world, then everything, with man, in man, and from man, is in movement towards

³⁵⁹ Nana Akufo-Addo, *Africa Beyond Aid*, 74th UN General Assembly, New York, November 9, 2019, <https://pan.africanist.thought.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/akufo-addo-africa-beyond-aid.pdf>.

³⁶⁰ T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Gilby (trans.), Blackfriars, London, 1964. 1a-11ae, q.1, a.2.

³⁶¹ ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Penguin Books, London, 1964, 1094, a.3.

³⁶² P. KREEFT, *Summa Philosophica*, St. Augustine Press, India 2012, p.87.

God.”³⁶³ In other words, all the values and riches of the human person are rediscovered in a Supreme and Divine Being who is the cause of his existence and wills the existence of other beings.

Living without this consciousness of the Divine creator presupposes man’s misunderstanding that they are determined. Determinism is in contradistinction to human freewill. Yet voluntariness also presupposes that we have freewill. That is why Aquinas gives a hypothetical response that if man were not free, then counsel, exhortation, command, prohibition, reward and punishment will be useless. This gives room for P. Kreeft to note that, “we believe in freewill because we directly experience it. Sometimes, a thing is in our power or control, sometimes not.”³⁶⁴

9.1.3. Truth Telling as a Categorical Imperative

Truth has a healing character. It has the propensity to restore or reinstate lost values; love, justice and peace in the body politic. Its importance cannot be overemphasized. As a result, telling the truth in a period where truth has been undermine and trampled underfoot of a disdained political pursuit becomes an imperative. Not just any kind of imperative, but a categorical imperative. By a categorical imperative, we mean an unconditional moral obligation. The Kantian categorical imperative has been celebrated for years and remains perennial in providing a moral guide toward upholding an ethical society. Immanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative reads: “Act in accordance with that maxim which can, at the same time, make itself into universal law.”³⁶⁵ Shedding light on this, H. Jonas makes an elaborate explanation of the ‘can’ used by Immanuel Kant. He asserts:

The ‘Can’ here invoked is that of reason and its consistency with itself: given the existence of a community of human agents acting rational beings, the action must be such that it can without self-contradiction be imagined as a general practice of that community... An imperative responding to the new type of human action and addressed to the new type of agency that operates it might run thus: ‘act so that the effects of your actions are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life or expressed negatively, ‘act so that the effects of your action are not destructive of the future possibility of such life.”³⁶⁶

At the pivot of Kant’s account is an appeal to morality’s overriding demands in the shape of a supreme moral law. The supreme moral law is associated with Kant’s distinctions between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. They indicate what such a goal is aimed at, and they are associated with specific desires which Kant would classify as “sensuous.” Desire, not reason, sets

³⁶³ L. BOGLIOLO, *Rational Theology*, Theological Publication in India, Bangalore 1985, p.58.

³⁶⁴ P. KREEFT, *The Philosophy of Tolkein*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2005, p.62.

³⁶⁵ I. KANT, *Practical Philosophy, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, M. GREGOR (trans) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, 4, p.434.

³⁶⁶ H. JONAS, *The Imperative of Responsibility, in Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, p.11.

the goals, and reason's role is only to indicate how best to achieve the satisfaction implicit in those desired goals.³⁶⁷

Categorical imperatives, by contrast, are not of this kind. They do not advise but command. They do not rest on sensuous desires or impulses; and they do not require *a posteriori* knowledge of techniques or skill. Levinas' metaphysics of the face, we could say, is another categorical imperative, a situation where the *I* has to respond to the needs of the *Other*. The claim is that there are *a priori* requirements of morality which rest on pure practical reason. Categorical imperatives mark an agent's autonomy, that is, freedom from sensuous impulses, an ability to choose among alternatives guided by reason, and an appeal to an overriding morality.³⁶⁸ To survive the plague of "Alternative Facts", we must recommit to the Kantian Categorical Imperative as well as Levinas' metaphysics of the face where we learn to think out of ourselves, out of our comfort zones that make us deviate from political ideals and ethical principles and the virtuous life.

9.2. MORAL EDUCATION

"Moral education is a matter of developing understanding of the moral domain."³⁶⁹ It has to do with influencing behavior and this presupposes a certain amount of knowledge to be acquired by the pupil.³⁷⁰ Children are not born moral. That is, they do not have the capacity to distinguish wrong from right and to act in the right way. Hence, it is plain that a child will not be able to choose to do the right thing unless he knows what it is. He will not be able to attach any sense to truth telling except he knows what that entails. Therefore, he must be taught these things.

First, *the principles that define morality*: it is certainly true that what is taken as moral claims often differ from place to place, from time to time, and from person to person. This relativistic nature of morality is not to say that morality has not got certain defining characteristics which are recognized and acknowledged across cultural and historical periods.³⁷¹ These characteristics represent the fundamental moral principles which a society, worthy of the name, is called to practice and which Barrow looks forward to serve as a guide for future generations. These include: fairness, respect for persons, freedom, truth and well-being.

³⁶⁷ I. KANT, *Practical Philosophy, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, pp.434 - 435.

³⁶⁸ G. BIRD, *Companion to Kant*, Black Well Publishing, Australia 2006, p.256.

³⁶⁹ A. LACEY, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, London 1976, p.221.

³⁷⁰ M. REFFREYS, *The Unity of Education*, The Religious Education Press Ltd, Wallington 1966, p.111.

³⁷¹ A. LACEY, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, p.221.

Second, *Fairness*: For Barrow, fairness means giving the same consideration to all in the sense of treating them similarly, except where there are good reasons for doing otherwise.³⁷² This means that people should be treated the same except where there are relevant reasons for treating them differently. In this regard fairness implies equal treatment. The example he brings more vividly is that in distributing food to a group of men, women and children, equal treatment should mean giving them all the same ratios or giving them what is appropriate to their different appetites and needs.

Third, *respect for persons*: here, Barrow, like Kant, maintains that all persons be recognized as autonomous beings who cannot be treated as if they were material objects or as a means to other people's ends.³⁷³ To elucidate this point he says:

Prior to discovering that somebody has offended us in some way we assume his equal right to be treated as an end in himself, and when we do recognize somebody as deserving of some kind of penalty or punishment, we nonetheless acknowledge that he is not a mere means to our ends, a chattel for use.³⁷⁴

It follows that whatever crime a person commits, he should not be subjected to inhuman punishment such as retributive punishment, but that his dignity as a person should still be respected.

Fourth, *freedom*: for Barrow, part of what it means to act morally is to act freely, to act because you see it as your duty and not simply for hope of some rewards or to avoid some pain. He goes on to say that what gives morality supremacy over other things is that moral behavior is freely chosen, because the agent sees it as his or her duty.³⁷⁵ This leads Barrow to describe a moral world as that in which freedom is valued but that does not necessarily mean freedom to do anything or freedom from everything. Morality, therefore, is not to be defined in terms of any particular freedom, but in freedom to do what is right.³⁷⁶

Fifth, *truth*: truth is universally acknowledged by Philosophers of different schools of thought to be a moral good. Therefore, thought intimately has to be given to the question of when it is morally legitimate to lie, suppress the truth, and so forth, and to valuing truth-telling.³⁷⁷ We

³⁷² R. BARROW, *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy And Moral Education*, p.75.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.76.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.77.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.78.

can only get things right and approving if people tell the truth to one another. Owing to the above sentence, Barrow says truth is knowledge of value.³⁷⁸

Sixth, *Well-being*: it is not easy to find the most suitable name for this principle. This is because of the multiplicity of names that it has such as: happiness, benevolence, felicity, goodwill, non-malevolence, non-suffering. To make things more complicated these different labels may pick out subtly different concepts. For example, a Principle of “benevolence” and a Principle of “goodwill” may just be two names for the same thing.³⁷⁹ However, what is pivotal here is to establish that a society that has a code of conduct that makes no reference to people’s well-being, that is, condition of the good life and what the good life achieves, even implicitly, would not have anything

9.2.1. The Ultimate Goal of Moral Education

The ultimate goal of moral education, according to Barrow, is to improve on the moral standard of our society, to create a community where the moral principles are highly valued. He poses this in form of questions:

How are we to improve the moral tone of society? What can we do to ensure that the next generation is a generation of people of moral integrity, which means people with certain principles and attitudes, particularly of tolerance and respect, rather people who slavishly adopt and insist on absolute obedience to more and more social rules, or, at the other extreme, uncritically accept that there is no such thing as moral truth.³⁸⁰

Given the above, it is clear that the next generation should be made up of people who are able to reason out and to make clear distinctions between moral and immoral acts.

9.2.2. The Morally Educated Person

According to Barrow, a morally educated person is not quite the same as a moral person. This is because it is possible to be moral without having experienced any type of education and to be morally well educated but fail to live a moral life. He insists that a morally educated person understands the nature of morality and is committed to the standards and norms implicit in moral inquiry.³⁸¹ This means that he must be transformed by his moral knowledge. By way of conclusion, moral development does not take place through the mere maturing of individuals. Individuals also

³⁷⁸ R. BARROW, *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*, p.78.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.162.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.166.

assimilate the outside environmental experience. But in the course of assimilating, they put their own stamp upon it because of their own innate capacities.

9.2.3. Respect for the Dignity of the Human Person

The human person, by virtue of possessing a self-subsistent soul, is naturally endowed with an intrinsic value and dignity. Barrow, in fact gives explicit attention to this human intrinsic value in his theory of moral education and for this reason he deserves due praise. In the Principle of respect for person, he maintains that people be recognized as autonomous beings who cannot be treated as if they were material objects or as a means to other people's ends.³⁸² He asserts, that prior to discovering that someone has offended us in some way, we must acknowledge the fact that he is not a chattel for our use. Barrow says that if a man is a serial rapist, we should still treat him in accord with fairness and with respect for persons.³⁸³ Ultimately, it boils down to what he says that retributive punishment should play a lesser part in moral education³⁸⁴ while deterrence and reformative punishment form the basis of all punishment. In affirmation, Kant maintains, that the human person has an intrinsic worth, that is, dignity, which makes him above all other creatures.³⁸⁵ It is fascinating to think that of all innumerable creatures of the observable world, the human person alone attains the image of God (*imago Dei*). Since man was created by God and since all creation is dependent upon the exemplars in the mind of God, the likeness of man to God must be deliberately intended by God Himself.³⁸⁶ Thus, while not being an absolute being, man, nevertheless, has an absolute value, because he proceeds from He who is Absolute (God) and who has wished that a contingent being (man) participates in this absolute value.

Furthermore, Aquinas in his analysis of the dignity of the human person maintains that man has an intrinsic dignity because of God's image which he bears which is maintained in his intellect.³⁸⁷ John Paul II shares this view and for him, the dignity of the human person lies in the

³⁸² R. BARROW, *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*, p.76.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.162.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.155.

³⁸⁵ I. KANT, *The Idea of "Human Dignity"* in J. RACHELS, *The Element of Moral Philosophy*, McGraw-Hall Companies, Inc. New York 199, p.132.

³⁸⁶ R. JOLY, *The Human Person in the Philosophy of Education*, Mouton and Co, London 1965, p.55.

³⁸⁷ T. AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, I, I, q.93, a.6, ad.I,

fact that “God created man in his own image.” (Gen 1:2).³⁸⁸ D. Anton crowns it all when he asserts that every human being has an absolute value, worthy of the utmost respect and consideration.”³⁸⁹

9.3. THE GENUINE INTELLECTUAL

According to J. Plamenatz, every thinker, even an abstract one, is deeply influenced by the circumstances of his day either in a political, cultural, economical, moral, or intellectual way.³⁹⁰ Fonlon is one of such thinkers who integrate the zeniths of cultural, economical, moral and the intellectual spheres in his speculation. One of such is his contention as regards the Genuine Intellectual. According to Fonlon, the Genuine Intellectual or scientific philosopher is one who is capable or who has the aptitude or the capacity to take into himself all the abilities of the present, all the contributions of the past, and all the hopes of the future. Hence, Fonlon maintains that this man must be a university of knowledge.³⁹¹ He further elucidates that the Real Intellectual must be a man whose mind is constructed on the foundation of philosophical and scientific knowledge.³⁹²

9.3.1. Qualities of the Genuine Intellectual

Fonlon outlines some indispensable qualities that one must possess or embrace by right before one can earn for oneself the name Genuine Intellectual or scientific philosopher (the true philosopher), which we shall proceed to examine. Taking this into account, he holds firmly that the True Intellectual must be a faithful and steadfast person who goes out to wage warfare against falsehood, evil and vice.³⁹³ Since truth is an indispensable principle or quality in the life of the Unadulterated Intellectual, Fonlon uses the analogy of “goodness” and “beauty” to show how the Legitimate Intellectual must strive for the truth. He holds that as “goodness” and “beauty” are embedded in the truth, so too a Genuine Intellectual must be a permanent seeker of what is good and right and at the same time avoiding what is evil and wrong.

9.3.2. Respect for Moral Principle

According to Barrow, the proximate goal of moral education is to improve on the moral standards of our society, that is, to create a community where the moral principles are highly

³⁸⁸ J. PAUL II, Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (15 August 1988), n. 2.

³⁸⁹ D. ANTON, *Self-Realization and Intersubjectivity in Gabriel Marcel*, Urbaniana University Press, Rome 1988, 2. Jewish Martin Buber is perhaps one of the greatest of these dialogical personalists.

³⁹⁰ J. PLAMENATZ, *Man and Society*, Longman Group Limited, London 1963, p.9.

³⁹¹ B. FONLON, *The Genuine Intellectual*, p.113.

³⁹² *Ibid.*

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

valued. He posits it in form of a question, how are we to improve the moral tone of our society?³⁹⁴ This proximate goal consists essentially in a pattern of living in accords with the dictates of right human reason. It involves the use of the various human powers in a properly regulated manner. Moral education can accomplish this goal only by actually improving the person in his or her entirety. In fact, if the worth of life is to be measured by its moral value, then the true essence of moral education is seen to consist in the proper development of all the virtues.³⁹⁵ The society, therefore, accomplishes this goal if it is capable of forming people with certain principles and attitudes, particularly of tolerance and respect. In this regard, the young will be introduced into a world in which goodness is respected and ultimately rewarded, and badness is barren.³⁹⁶

9.3.3. The Prime Role of Parents in Moral Education

It is generally held that the family is the first school in all aspects of life. The home is the most powerful factor in the moral development of the child and in the home the parents especially mother has the most powerful influence to this regard.³⁹⁷ It is for this reason that Barrow urges parents to both exemplify and encourage moral behavior in the early years of the child.³⁹⁸ By the natural law parents have the primary right to educate their children for education belongs to the primary end of marriage.³⁹⁹ Shedding more light on this Pope John Paul II declares:

The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life, it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.⁴⁰⁰

Our interest in this final chapter was to make a radical turn in response to this very wicked enterprise contemporary politics has adopted; “Alternative Facts.” The Degeneration of African politics found firmly established in the notion of “Alternative Facts” which is deliberate falsehood. In a political milieu where truth does not matter, where lies telling and deceit have become political virtues in gaining and maintaining power, the need for virtue politics becomes urgent and indispensable.

³⁹⁴ , R. BARROW, *An Introduction To Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*, p.162.

³⁹⁵ , R. JOLY, *The Human Person in the Philosophy of Education*, p.102.

³⁹⁶ , R. BARROW, *An Introduction To Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*, p.189.

³⁹⁷ E. SCHMIEDELER, *Your Child's World*, The Paulist Press, New York, p.108.

³⁹⁸ R. BARROW, *An Introduction To Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*, p.188.

³⁹⁹ A. FAGOTHEY, *Right and Reason, Ethics in Theory and Practice*, Rockford, London 1976, p.442.

⁴⁰⁰ J. PAUL II, *Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio*, (22 November 1981), n.36.



GENERAL CONCLUSION

Using a phenomenological hermeneutic approach, our whole project was anchored on three parts in order to bring Arendt's thought to a logically conclusion. We were able to bear in mind that more than ever, humanity remains in a constant longing for truth, especially in a world of confusion and whose substance is relativity. This search for knowledge is also found in man's need to live with others. It is only then that one can fully come to know who one really is. However, these seem only to be shadows of politics since the phenomenological stature of things have become so complex that one can only wonder if politics can truly serve as the means for man's pursuit of happiness.

The approaches vary as far as the problem of truth and politics is concerned. The most common approach is to evaluate politics on philosophical grounds, in order to determine the moral validity of political actions. Different from that approach however is Arendt's analysis as she clearly says that she looks at politics "from outside." If one were to interrogate a number of people on their impression of what politics is all about, nowadays, the replies most certainly would not be drawn from Plato or Aristotle or Arendt. Rather, the story would be about one's experience with politics, either personal, through literature, the information on television, news from radios or newspapers and so on. In other words, one would talk only about remote or recent happenings in politics such al-Qaida, Islamists in Mali, Hitler's policies, Western imperialism, the death of Gaddafi, the pseudo-monarchs in Africa, the death of John Pombe Magufuli, the violence in South Sudan, the Anglophone Crisis and so on. In this respect, the strong tendency is to think that in politics or in the present age, everything is relative: there is no standard for anything. In order to convince people of such an age, therefore, is to go into an interpretation of their experiences to seek out the very fact that there are things which beyond doubt still underlie communal life. This is in fact the approach Arendt has taken and which we have applauded on many grounds.

Whatever the current attitudes and policies of governments, the reality that there is a popular immanent relationship between truth and politics, including the greater right to economic justice and political freedom is beyond debate. A deepening and widening concern for the promotion and protection of truth on all fronts is now unmistakably woven into every fabric of contemporary world affairs. In fact, no other period in human history has been so linked to the quest for truth as the 21st Century. This century stands out as the century of truth but also, the century of the most abject denial of truth as the disregard for truth in politics in this century has skyrocketed and falsehoods and deceit have become political virtues. Yet, it must be stated categorically clear that, truth is the noblest objective of all political endeavours and philosophies.

In principle, the primary aim of states is to promote and protect the truth in all forms of political endeavours because it fortifies good governance. However, some state leaders have trampled truth underfoot. This explains why sages throughout the history of philosophy like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Kant, have taken the pain to philosophize on the ideal relationship between the truth and politics from varied viewpoints as well as politics and morality. Nevertheless, this subject is not an antiquated piece in the museum of philosophical ideas. The recent decades saw the rise and fall in the popularity of different political philosophies on this subject ranging from the wholeheartedly totalitarian views to the totally liberal and anarchic ones.

However, it should be noted that the phenomenological approach should not be closed upon itself as Arendt does. The question of morality in politics, of which Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill have greatly contributed, help to give a strong foundation to one's understanding of politics. Though this approach has not been made, it is of great importance to acknowledge the fact that the many kinds of dirty hands involved into politics nowadays, cannot be solved without reference to an 'essential understanding of politics;' Or to use the contrary terms of Arendt, 'looking at politics from inside.' This implies the 'ought' of political actions which guarantees the happiness of the entire human family. It can only be on such a ground that one comes to fully understand why one is living in a society and the sense of direction one has to take in order to respect each and every individual's dignity in politics.

The ideal way for states to minimize the degeneration of truth in the political enterprise is by setting a framework in which the universal well-being and the common good are the ultimate goal of the state. Hence, political philosophy is chiefly concerned with the pursuit of the ultimate goal of politics. Examples of Contemporary Philosophers who have philosophized on the goal of politics are: Hannah Arendt, Fagothey, P. Huntigton, Foucault, Fonlon, P.L.O. Lumumba, and just to name a few. Arendt's perspective forms the crux of our enterprise. Hannah Arendt does not leave the burden of guessing about the relationship between truth and politics to our sagacity. She philosophizes on this subject and makes an acute analysis of the concepts of "Lying in Politics" which has taken a new jargon: "Alternative Facts."

As a result, any analysis of "Alternative Facts" would be incomplete without a reading of Hannah Arendt's magnificent essay, "Truth and Politics" from 1967. Arendt, in this essay, examines carefully the relationship between truth and politics and makes a few observations that

remind us of why the issue of “Alternative Facts” is neither new nor uniquely digital. It is but an aspect of that greater challenge of how we reconcile truth and politics. Arendt anchors the entire discussion solidly not only in a broader context, but she reminds us that this is a tension that has been with civilization since Socrates. “Alternative Facts” is nothing else than yet another challenge that meets us in the gap between dialectic and rhetoric, and Socrates would even be surprised and dismayed to find us thinking we have discovered a new phenomenon.

The issue of truth in politics is one that has always been at the heart of our civilization and our political tradition. In thinking about the relationship between truth and politics, Arendt makes a decisive and radical turn towards the direction of political idealism. The almost brutal tone of her whole enterprise, in this direction, is sounded in the very opening lines of her Essay which expresses her conviction that truth and politics are essentially inseparable with each other. Arendt resuscitates the idea of political idealism, of truth in politics by upholding ‘virtue politics’ which has long been slaughtered and sacrificed on the altar of political realism by the Machiavellian and Hobbesian political traditions and even by present day politicians; where the value of truth has been shipwrecked in the whole project of politics and morality ruled out as an essential political virtue and placed secondary to serve the interest of despotic political authorities. It is interesting to think about how Arendt is read here. Today, as political ideal is under attack and one suffers from an increase of rhetoric and the decline of dialogue, one almost immediately becomes defensive. It is worth noting that politics should not be disparaged and that it deserves respect. For this reason, one should be careful and ensure that one does not further increase people’s loss of faith in the political trajectory.

Arendt recognizes in our political systems, a philosophical analysis that has remained constant over time. She quotes Hobbes saying that if power depended on the sum of the angles in a triangle not being equal to the sum of two angles in a rectangle, then books of geometry would be burnt by some in the streets. This is what politics is; power. That is why the education of politicians is so important and urgent, and their character, key. Socrates’ insight of this importance and urgency when he tries to educate Alcibiades is fundamental.

In her seminal 1961 Essay on “Truth and Politics”, Hannah Arendt distinguishes ‘factual’ from ‘rational’ truths, arguing that the former are “much more vulnerable” and susceptible to distortion in politics. She notes; “*Dominion (to speak Hobbes’ language) when it attacks rational truth, oversteps, as it were, its domain while it gives battle on its own ground when it falsifies or*

lies away facts.” It is this distortion of factual truth in politics that has today resulted in the concept of “Alternative Facts” which is excruciatingly perpetuated by the ‘sophists’ of the 21st Century who prefer rhetoric and image making to truth in politics. Facts are fair game in politics and have always been.

But Arendt also offers a solution and hope and it is evident even in this rather grim quote. She speaks of a politically immature public, and as she closes the essay, she takes great pains to say that these lies, these falsehoods, in no way detract from the value of political action. She says, our respect, as citizens, for truth is what preserves the integrity of the political realm. As in the platonic dialogues, as in Hobbes, as everywhere in history, truth is a matter of character.

In order, to have a better grasped of a philosopher’s thought, one needs a clear appreciation of the problems and issues with which he was concerned, and the context in which they presented themselves to him. Most of the books in philosophy have been written by men who were either worried or excited. Plato was worried by the profound social changes of his time and excited by mathematics; Kant was worried and excited by Newtonian physics and the French Revolution; Hobbes was triggered by the perpetual life-threatening conflict that existed in the state of nature; Leibniz was excited by the discovery of the microscope and worried by the mechanistic implications of Cartesian philosophy. These thinkers were perplexed by problems arising from new discoveries and social change just as many modern thinkers are perplexed by the implications of Marx, Freud and Einstein or appalled by the social problems created by rapid industrialization. Every thinker, even the most abstract, is deeply influenced by the circumstances of his day” and so for us “to understand a theory we must understand the conditions in which it was produced. This certainly is an important requirement for understanding Arendt’s consideration of truth in politics. Her philosophical viewpoint was occasioned and shaped by the events of his days. Let’s begin by examining some information about Arendt.

Politics today, apart from being opinion oriented, flawed by personal interests, it could be considered as contemporary sophistry. One may tremble out of fear or disgust when one hears of alternative facts and “post-truth” era. One may be afraid that one’s mutual confidence is crumbling and that lying has become very common. One may also hate liars earning unmerited favour and society becoming morally corrupt. Despite the unpleasant nature of “Alternative Facts,” what is at stake in defining the incessant role for philosophy within the post-truth era is not only the future of the discipline, faced with the double challenge of anti-intellectualism and increased

authoritarianism, but also the way we understand and foster democratic values and civic participation. A philosophical science aimed at strengthening the foundations of open and tolerant societies, based on ideals of social justice and embracing diversity is essential for the development of societies that are resilient to nationalism, populism and discriminatory practices. This effort needs to be reflected in the quality of work done by philosophers as well as its wider dissemination, including through making it more accessible for a general public. In this context, the development and growth of open access sources of credible, high-quality philosophical information plays a special part. Given the particular challenges associated with living and working in an age of ‘post-truth politics, special attention needs to be geared towards addressing pressing societal issues such as current uses of social media, inequality and social justice, migration and multiculturalism, terrorism, democracy and democratic values, protest and civic participation, climate change and environmental concerns, political behaviour and the philosophy of human rights, among others.

In the end, the ‘post-truth era’ of today might very well be a momentary, negative development soon overcome and even forgotten. This is a rather optimistic view given the fact that its consequences are already being felt by various communities around the world: refugees unable to find shelter from war, protesters detained for expressing their dissatisfaction, people being displaced or losing their livelihood due to climate change, those who feel powerless in the face of growing inequality or afraid they might be killed or evacuated due to imminent conflicts. These are all part of the tragic realities of today even more so than decades ago given the increasing scorn for and dismissal of evidence coupled with embracing more or less unfounded views just because they suit one’s interests and reflect one’s emotions. A thorough philosophical analysis of these phenomena is timely and necessary, as is the creation of practical tools to counter ‘post-truth’ mentalities.

The knowledge of philosophy and the development of a philosophical spirit remain key to curtail the perennial promulgation of “Alternative Facts” in the post-truth era. No doubt Plato said, *“unless all philosophers become kings or kings become philosophers, mankind will have no peace.”* This was very foundational and underscores the role of philosophy in upholding core democratic principles. This fits squarely to depict the underpinning role of philosophy in politics and good governance.

As regards the notions of truth and freedom, it is worth noting that the question of freedom is a key concept to the understanding of Hannah Arendt’s contentions. She holds that truth in all

its forms (rational and factual) opposes political freedom. This happens, she holds, especially when truth by its very nature is stagnant and does not lead to action which is the very essence of political life. Consequently, freedom appears to a large extent as the absolutely highest good, to which all other goods are subordinate. Values which compete with freedom, or which might necessitate its restriction, seem to be fetters, that is, relics of archaic prohibitions and fears. Political policy must show that it contributes to the advancement of freedom in order to be accepted.

Philosophy as pointed previously does not abide to a glamorous claim of freedom. Freedom has its limits and these limits are set by a proper knowledge of how things *are*: that is the truth. Hence, truth and freedom can never be opposed to each other.

Even though Arendt fails in a way to solve the problems of politics purely in the light of politics itself, she is to be praised greatly for having attempted to tackle the problem of deception in clarity. Basing herself on the serious harm done onto factual texture, Arendt's main interrogation was: how will human beings or democracy be in a world totally deprived of facts. It is in this relation that one has to understand why Arendt is so much concerned with facts.

The brave crew navigating the ship of the Realm of Truth is under threat from multiple agents in the Ocean of Untruth, most of which have little or no interest in reality. From lies to half-truths to outright bullshit, the weapons are fearsome and the potential risks to Truth's survival, serious. Some agents do have a toehold in fact and reality, but are all the more dangerous for their duplicity. Thus, *we should pursue these approaches*:

- i. Openness, transparency, honesty, authenticity, substance; economy, clarity and simplicity.
- ii. Understanding and engagement with underlying values, motives and causes for specific questions; empathy.
- iii. Recognition of individual and tribal identities; communication that does not challenge worldview or identity.
- iv. Provide liked and trusted messengers; promote authenticity, openness and humility.
- v. Novel and agile methods of communicating in a fast-changing environment.
- vi. Co-opt the power of stories, anecdotes, pictures, graphics and emotional appeal; develop narratives; dramatise.

The African man prior to colonialism, was very committed to the supreme being which pushed John Mbiti to affirm that "the African man is notoriously religious." The African was keen

in observing rules and working in line with established principles. Of course, it cannot be denied that some of these principles were mundane like the human sacrifices or the killing of twins. But the African was law-abiding, committed and faithful to the supreme through their religion. Through the influence of colonialism, the African man has lost his African potentials, Africa lost core African values. It is against this backdrop that Aimée Césaire writes and promulgates the philosophy of 'Negritude and the Return'. He urges his fellow Africans to come back to core African values and uphold an African spirit. This return is not only physical but also ideological. We need to recommit to the African way of thinking, the African way of living together, accepting one another. With the continuous presence of Colonial influence in the form of neo-colonialism, Kwasi Wiredu is keen to observe this iniquitous influence and to call on the Africans for Conceptual Decolonization. Although the Colonial Powers have liberated us physically, their influence is getting stronger and stronger making the African people to be at loggerhead with themselves. A rational mind is imperative in such a situation to the point that Bernard Fonlon's notion of the Genuine Intellectual finds its relevance within this framework.

In one of his speeches, Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba, within the logic of truth in African politics, advocates for Hygiene in African Politics. This implies bringing a sense of cleanliness to the stinky and dirty politics as practiced by our African leaders. Getting rid of the ill practices in African politics like corruption, tribal discrimination, embezzlement, deceit just to name a few. The truth must remain at the centre of the political trajectory. Truth often suffers due to the human error in terms of possessing the truth. What is dangerous in this world as Yuval Harari says, is that too often we think we own the truth. This was what happened during the totalitarian 20th century and we have moved from that to a situation where we do not think there is any truth. That is why in a way, fake news and "Alternative Facts" replace propaganda. In propaganda, one believes one is going to impose one's truth. As such, they create the impression that truth is not worth pursuing. If there is only one religion of a non-religious person, it should revolve around the thought that the pursuit of truth is what ought to and should define us. But the idea, the illusion that at some point we find it, that is where they begin to go wrong, that is the danger.

Humanity is currently experiencing a technological advancement whose practical consequences deviates man from his maker; God, undermines His power as the Supreme creator and puts man at the centre of creation. Transhumanism, as advocated by many transhumanist philosophers, is built on the idea that man is emerging with technology. Transhumanism is

technology in its extension. It should be remarked that before we learn to be post-humans or trans-humans, we have to learn to be human. The transhumanist enterprise is a doctrine that one has to be very suspicious of because it is conceived and acted by humans. And somebody has to make the judgements: we would never transcend that kind of finitude. The human being is a being that aspires to perfection. This perfection is a transcendent reality. Transhumanism is another human project to mislead us not to look on our creator but to turn to the scientific man as the modern god. Hannah Arendt must be held very strongly and esteemed for ever. Thud, truth will resurface and be upheld as an indispensable political value. Truth will be considered an inherent value in human relationship and governance within the body politic.

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