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Cosmopolitan Solidarities of Difference in a broken World

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In my paper, I develop from Hannah Arendt's views an understanding of cosmopolitan solidarity characterized by plurality and difference and how it can offer possibilities of acting politically through multiple, interlocking layers of critical solidarity across differences. When polities divide their citizens through geographical borders and identity frames, the role of the political is to transcend these frontiers to open up new avenues for acting politically. Solidarity has a distinctive political character, which sets it apart from legal and moral norms. It allows people to disengage from any form of naturalistic ties based on a shared gender, society, nation, or race and thereby, rebuild the public sphere that the totalitarian mechanism threatens to dismantle. It is an exercise in "enlarged mentality" or the capacity for thinking one's way into the viewpoint, the position and the experience of other people. It is a shared responsibility to act on behalf of others in a coexistence and not merely an empty claim of support.

Introduction

The pivotal question of our times concerns a lack of belonging in a disintegrating, already broken world of differences. By "broken world," I mean a break from conventional forms of social cohesion due to a crisis within democracy. The specific context of my focus is the loss of links to a democratic public life under a narrow nationalist ideology globally. How do we make connections with those who are similar to us (sharing a common gender, religion, ethnicity, nation, culture, ideology, language, economic status, etc.) and the ones who are unlike us (strangers, refugees, rootless people, foreigners, other communities)? Can there be solidarity with others? How can solidarity help us bridge the lack of meaningful connections and maintain the dignity of human life? Is solidarity a willed relation (not same as friendship, sympathy or charity) or is it pre-given in our acquired identities at birth? Is it a moral concern? The basic presumption behind probing these aspects of solidarity is that people have some choice or agency in choosing with whom they want to express their solidarity. It also brings the question of politics back to the table, i.e., how much choice we have regarding, with whom we *can* see eye to eye? What are the political, social and moral consequences of the loss of a sense of belonging? The question of solidarity in the present context of global crisis of solidarity challenges

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the rigidity of thinking about homogeneous national identities and calls for a belonging towards more inclusionary ways of living in a cosmopolitan existence.

Cosmopolitanism refers to a shared humanity where rules, ethical, moral and political behavior are created by the inputs of all those who are governed by them. Cosmopolitanism is oriented towards figuring out how to live with the plurality of human beings. The "shared humanity" that characterizes cosmopolitanism connotes many related meanings under the umbrella of complex and ineffable qualities of human beings.[2] However, it is not merely a universal idea of shared humanity but cosmopolitanism appreciates diversity without placing social difference into a hierarchical relation and recognizes the uniqueness and equality of all human beings to conceive of new forms of acting democratically beyond the nation-state. While there are increasing concerns for right to home (*oikophilia*), there are also anxieties about the need to rise above rigid nationalistic boundaries to face global challenges concerning the environment, health related challenges and a just socio-political life on Earth in contemporary times. Instead of juxtaposing a binary between solidarity and cosmopolitanism, universalism and individualism, home and the world, the present focus of the paper is to work out a notion of cosmopolitan solidarity across differences that mediates through these binaries. Solidarity can be helpful in uniting and protecting others; whereby people take a stand for others in a shared political context in face of perceived injustices in a global set up. It helps to restructure and redefine the public sphere accordingly, in an already fragmented political world.

Key concerns of Arendt's Solidarity

Solidarity has been evoked by philosophers to address different questions concerning its relation with plurality, injustice[3], social change[4], identity[5], emotions[6], etc. Arendt deviates from the dominant trends within the philosophical tradition concerning the

2 Scholars have argued that one should possess "allegiance to humanity" wherein one does not only develop loyalties to family and countrymen but also to all persons (P. Kliengeld, Stanford Encyclopedia, *Cosmopolitanism*). Cosmopolitanism is not about choosing between universalism and individualism but it is "a matter of learning to navigate cultural difference and differences of basic values and orientations-and doing so with respect for people who navigate those differences less." (Calhoun, 189).

3 Habermas (2013) stresses on the "offensive" character of solidarity. For him, solidarity is detached from justice. In his earlier view, he believed that solidarity is understood as not only a particular kind of obligation toward another person but also as the root of the moral as such. There is no Kantian morality without solidarity. However, in his changed stance towards solidarity, Habermas draws from Arendt's notion of "action in concert" as a distinct manifestation of solidarity. He views solidarity as political and not moral. It is not concerned with justice. A problem associated with this view is, if solidarity is not connected to morality then how do we understand it? Is it an imperfect moral duty conflated with supererogatory acts of an optional excellence of character? How can we demand solidarity from others if there is no moral grounding to it?

4 Scholz (2008) defines solidarity as fundamentally oriented towards social change. It is a reaction to human suffering, injustice and oppression.

5 Amy Allen (1999) develops Arendt's view of solidarity to move beyond the false opposition between a repressive identity and fragmented non-identity within the feminist identity discourse. Also, see Seyla Benhabib (1996).

6 See Francesco Tava (2021) Justice, emotions, and solidarity, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy:*1-17; Reshaur, Ken. (1992). Concepts of Solidarity in the Political Theory of Hannah Arendt. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 25(4), 723-736

concept of solidarity. Cosmopolitan solidarity of difference implies a form of global collective action on behalf of others (shared agency). I draw from Arendt, Habermas and Sally Scholz's accounts of political solidarity to work out this concept. The focus of Arendt's notion of "community of interest" underlying solidarity, is action on behalf of others. It does not include actions for self-gain or profit-making.

Cosmopolitan solidarity is a political relation and can be characterized as political solidarity[7] in a global sense. What separates it from other forms of collective political action is that it does not require a shared membership as a condition of solidarity as in case of group-based solidarities. It is essential in a sense of urgency and it can be achieved among unequals or diverse and conflicting individuals and groups as long as they feel committed to the urgency of action in an unjust scenario. It is neither an affiliation (fraternity or brotherhood of any kind) nor does it draw itself from any moral terms. Sameness is not a requirement for cosmopolitan solidarity which is needed in case of fellowship, fraternity or brotherhood. The political content of cosmopolitan solidarity lies in its roots in intersubjectivity in the conventional political spaces. Unlike social and civil solidarity, political solidarity is oppositional as it seeks to abolish unjust practices or institutions. Scholz defines political solidarity as "a moral relation that unites individuals acting on the basis of some form of commitment to challenge injustice, oppression, social vulnerability, or to otherwise struggle for liberation." (Scholz, 2013, 82) Plurality and difference are at the heart of any democratic public space. Scholz's account of inclusive conception of political solidarity is not based on epistemic or empathetic requirements, shared identities, or even strong communal ties (though these are often present). She follows Gadamer's core hermeneutical virtues of openness to the other and recognition of difference for self and communal growth. Cosmopolitan solidarity acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual. In the context of solidarity, it means that in case of an unjust scenario one takes into account the fact that there can be different manifestations and interpretations of injustice in each individual's experience and each one of them is valuable. This account of political solidarity is characterized by an openness to the other and an expectation that the other has something valuable to contribute to one's self-understanding and to the group as a whole. Cosmopolitanism denies that a person's cultural identity is bounded by homogeneous cultural resources available in the world.

Historically speaking, the mainstream philosophy since Plato emphasizes oneness and unity in terms of a kind of teleological determinism. In such a worldview, unity and difference cannot coexist with each other. As we invoke the law of non-contradiction in logic, in case of human relationships, we stress that sameness is required to achieve social cohesion. But this understanding fails us in reality. Within the coterie of her works, Arendt points to the propensity that severe existential insecurity and the fear of living

7 Sally Scholz defines three kinds of solidarity: Social solidarity (with family members and cultural groups), Civil solidarity (with fellow citizens through formal state structures) and political solidarity which is oppositional in nature and seeks to abolish unjust practices. The solidarity group is different from the oppressed group but they may also overlap. A disadvantage of Scholz's view is that the beneficiaries of injustice or former oppressors may also join in solidarity on an equal footing with the direct victims of oppression. (See Scholz, 2013)

under harshly repressive governments leads to xenophobia and strong ties within identity groups, intolerance and rejection of any outside groups. The dissolution of the public space is one of the conditions for the rise of totalitarianism. Such societies are characterized by the loneliness of its members, who are apparently united as one, which can be mistaken as solidarity: "it is as though their plurality had disappeared into One Man of gigantic dimensions"[8] (Arendt, 1973, 465–66). The fundamental component of solidarity, i.e., plurality is missing from such societies[9]. The citizens are forced to surrender their uniqueness and individuality to join a uniform ideological structure. An open and diverse public space is amiss in such societies. Habermas views that Nazi Germany is an example of traditional society that lacked the ability to distinguish between solidarity and fellowship— a morally dubious ethnocentric concept that turns solidarity into a mere means for the self-assertion of one collectivity against another. The polar opposite of such traditional societies are post-conventional societies. The individuals in post-conventional societies internalize the norms of a universalist morality to a degree that allows them to take a certain critical distance toward their own inherited, normatively structured forms of life. In his changed stance towards solidarity, Habermas draws from Arendt's notion of "action in concert" as a distinct manifestation of solidarity. He views solidarity as political and not a moral concept. It is not concerned with justice.

Hansen (2004)[10] is of the view that for Arendt, being in solidarity means "bearing with strangers," that is, entering a domain that is never entirely familiar and that has therefore to be filled with speech and action in order to allow its inhabitants to interact with each other and to learn how to actively share their public space. What characterises human beings from birth to death is not their similarity – the fact that they all belong to the same species – but their uniqueness (Arendt, 1998, 7-8)[11]. Each finite being adds an incommensurable element to the world, and plurality is nothing but the cognitive and rational interplay among these elements. This includes the uniqueness of interpreting unjust practices as well. Solidarity plays an important role as it embodies the political relation through which individuals can coexist as a plurality without losing their uniqueness and freedom. Solidarity is not rooted in any natural or quasi-natural features (any pre-modern/pre-political form of fellowship as in Nazi Germany) shared by members of a community but it refers to a mutual agreement to act in unison against injustice. It does not take the form of brotherhood united by the ideology of a charismatic leader rather the very act of establishing solidarity raises concerns about its connection with injustice. It is acting together on behalf of a shared goal. The shared goal is to resist injustice that emanates from a shared experience (either directly or indirectly) and a responsibility to act.[12]

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8 Arendt (1973). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Harcourt Brace & Co.: 465-66

9 "The political trouble which misery of the people holds in store is that manyness can in fact assume the guise of oneness, that suffering indeed breeds moods and emotions and attitudes that resemble solidarity to the point of confusion" (Arendt 2006, 84)

10 Hansen, P. Hannah Arendt and Bearing with Strangers. *Contemporary Political Theory* 3, 3–22 (2004). https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300124

11 Arendt, Hannah. (1998). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

12 Scholars like Sangiovanni claim that: "We owe others with whom we have acted because they have sacrificed both for us and for overcoming an adversity that we also face, or we have invested in overcoming."

One of the crucial tools for totalitarian domination is isolation of human beings through cultivation of hate politics and rewarding fear and suspicion. Arendt is a well known critic of both foundationalism and sovereignty. In her view, political power emerges as soon as people come together. It transcends any localized structures or citizenship norms. When divisive politics segregates humans through their geographical borders and identity frames, the role of the political is to transcend these frontiers to open new avenues. She regards human beings as non-sovereign, relational and singular (unique) beings. It is of particular interest to notice, what in Arendt's view triggers the formation of solidarity? Although, people are shaped by their particular historical experiences—but they are also moved, usually unconsciously, by needs and experiences and conditions shared by all human beings. In this sense, Arendt's conception of solidarity stems from human suffering. She does not refer to a generic notion of suffering but the peculiar pain that people feel whenever they endure oppression and exploitation. Her comments on solidarity and its formation are scarce, yet a brief and poignant passage from *On Revolution* is especially relevant to this topic. In this passage, she points out that when humans experience, either directly or indirectly such injustices, they tend to establish a "community of interest with the oppressed and the exploited" (Arendt, 2006, 79)[13]. In other words, when people are faced with an unjust situation, they can decide to act in solidarity in order to defend themselves or others suffering from injustice. Solidarity has a reactive and "offensive" character. Moreover, it allows us to disengage from any form of naturalistic solidarities, whereby what unites people are precise characteristics that they share (be they gender, society, nation, race, or other).

Arendt envisages that people are exclusively united by the negative but ethical emotions (anger, pain) of suffering, that arise when they experience something that they perceive as unethical. Yet in her vision, solidarity is not a feeling, nor is it merely conscience or based on any naturalistic bonds but it is a political relation based on ideas and the experience of suffering. Solidarity has a distinctive political character, which sets it apart from legal and moral normativity. Solidarity *per se* is not about pursuing justice unless one qualifies it. However, solidarity is not the same as alliances formed for harmful and unjust goals as we see in case of Nazi fellowships that aimed to perpetrate injustices instead of seeking any justice. Solidarity is not about picking the winners but it is about taking sides and acting on behalf of others that creates the political space for action. It is valuable to consider this view of solidarity towards thinking about the possibility of an international order that allows humanitarian intervention as a legitimate exception to the norm of non-intervention in the affairs of any state on grounds of severe human rights violation and for the sake of a global democracy.

Despite the role that emotions play in the arousal of solidarity, Arendt is very clear in pointing out that solidarity is not about emotions but about ideas: "This solidarity, though

(Sangiovanni, 2015, 349-50). He regards that "The horizontal obligations constitutive of solidaristic action are … obligations of reciprocity." (Sangovanni, 2015, 350). He refers to christian solidarity and points that it is equivalent to "acting on behalf of another rather than with another". (Sangiovanni, 2015, 350). But one can contend this claim if reciprocity is a necessary binding in case of solidaristic action.

13 Arendt, Hannah. (2006). *On Revolution*. Penguin: 79.

it may be aroused by suffering, is not guided by it … it remains committed to 'ideas' – to greatness, or honour, or dignity – rather than to any 'love' of men" (Arendt, 2006, 79). This is what distinguishes solidarity from pity, which for her is nothing but a sentiment driven by particular passions. Solidarity is neither a sentiment nor an emotion but a political relation: "It partakes of reason, and hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually, not only the multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually all mankind"[14] (Arendt, 2006, 79). To highlight this point, Arendt goes so far as to say that solidarity is something cold and dispassionate. In her understanding, solidarity represents the emotionless reaction to the highly emotional shock that injustice can cause. This reaction, however, is not an end in itself, but in turn leads to something else, which interests Arendt the most. Since solidarity "partakes of reason" and concerns ideas, it can "inspire and guide action"[15] (Arendt, 2006, 79). In the face of injustice, human behaviour is not restricted to emotions such as resentment and indignation. Unjust circumstances encourage people to establish a "community of interest" with the victims of such circumstances, irrespective of the fact that the sufferers of such circumstances are complete strangers to them. Arendt's account of solidarity seems to indicate a complex structure whereby the emergence of solidarity is caused by conditions of injustice through the interface of negative emotions, with the aim of intervening against injustice.

Another interesting aspect of Arendt's solidarity concerns the distinction between private and public. She makes a sharp distinction between the public and private sphere. Public space is an artificial construct created by human beings for appearance and memory, a space for talking with others and recognition. It is a crucial site for production and transformation of politically significant identities and solidarities. Arendt highlights two main aspects of the conventional public space: One, it is a space of visibility and publicity. Everything appearing in public can be seen and heard by everyone. Two, public signifies "world" itself as a common space and it is separate from the private sphere (Arendt, 1998, 50, 52)[16]. The question here is how is the cosmopolitan (transnational or global) public sphere effective? While the emotions that suffering causes are necessarily internal, subjective, and therefore belong to one's private life, by turning them into a solidaristic community of interest to counter injustice, we reopen and reconstitute the public domain. In this sense, solidarity can be viewed as an intersubjective relation that

14 Arendt, Hannah. (2006). *On Revolution*. 79.

15 "It is out of solidarity that they [people] establish deliberately and, as it were, dispassionately a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited. The common interest would then be "the grandeur of man" or "the honour of the human race" or the dignity of man. For solidarity, because it partakes of reason, and hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually, not only the multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually all mankind. But this solidarity, though it may be aroused by suffering, is not guided by it, and it comprehends the strong and the rich no less than the weak and the poor; compared with the sentiment of pity, it may appear cold and abstract, for it remains committed to 'ideas'—to greatness, or honour, or dignity—rather than to any 'love' of men.… Terminologically speaking, solidarity is a principle that can inspire and guide action." (Arendt, 2006, 79)

16 Arendt writes: "The term 'public' signifies two closely interrelated but not altogether identical phenomena: It means, first, that everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity…Second, the term 'public' signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it." (50, 52)

allows human beings to rebuild the sphere of plurality and commonality that the totalitarian mechanism threatens to dismantle.

Although Arendt's analysis of solidarity shows how negative emotions can justify its emergence, it must be noted that this is not always the case. All negative emotions do not trigger a solidaristic response, and, even when they do so, all of these responses do not target resistance to the injustice that originated them. Emotional responses to injustice can also be disproportionate and generate further injustice, rather than resolve the original one. In this sense, the interpretation that we gather from Arendt's analysis of the role of negative emotions in generating solidarity describes only one possibility for generating solidarity, rather than clarifying any norms of its formation.

Commonality within Difference

Arendt provides us a vision of solidarity that offers a way-out of the challenge imposed by certain synthesizing projects around homogenous political identities. It has implications for oppositional political movements. A troubling aspect of Arendt's *oeuvre* is her sharp distinction between the public sphere of political action and the private sphere of necessity. Her sharp disdain for eclipse of the political and the rise of the social makes it easier to conclude that she tacitly rejected any connection between the public and private. However, she suggests a connection between the two when she mentions the role of political emotions that belong to the private by turning them into solidarity relationships in the public sphere. Arendt's understanding of solidarity grows out of a tension and interplay between identity (exclusionary and repressive) and non-identity (fragmented), between equality and distinction that is at the heart of her political philosophy[17]. She neither subscribes to any view of an exclusionary, repressive identity or a non-identitarian politics rather she operated with a dialectical understanding of collectivities. Plurality for Arendt means, "[W]e are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live" (Arendt, 1998, 8). She reformulates solidarity as a concerted action rather than a pre-given, fixed repressive identity. A national identity by itself does not have any value in itself but it plays an instrumental role in ensuring trust and sacrifice (trigger strong reasons, even obligations to share the fates of fellow nationals/citizens). It just makes it easier to rally together once we have some other reason to overcome injustice or oppression. Arendt rejects the view that solidarity rests on a shared identity or on an inherent sameness, be it a shared essence, a shared experience of oppression, or any other commonality. For her, sameness cannot be the basis for any political action because the "unitedness of many into one is basically antipolitical; it is the very opposite of the togetherness prevailing in political … communities … from the viewpoint of the world and the public realm, life and death and everything attesting to sameness are non-worldly, antipolitical, truly transcendent experiences" (Arendt, 1998: 214–15). All communication and action would

17 This dialectical side of Arendt has been recognized by Seyla Benhabib, who writes, "Arendt repeatedly focused on the dialectic of equality and difference. In this sense, her political thought anticipates some of the major preoccupations of today's identity politics" (Benhabib 1996: xxxiii). See also Bohman (May and Kohn, 1996).

be unnecessary, even superfluous, if we were all the same. Everyone would immediately intuit the needs, hopes, wants, and dreams of others because they would be the same as one's own needs, hopes, wants, and dreams. Thus, the very fact that communication and concerted action are necessary in political life indicates the truth of the claim that sameness and solidarity that is predicated on an appeal to an inherent sameness is anti-political. However, the reverse of this is the claim that communication and action together would be impossible if we were all drastically different or if we had no commonalities at all. Communication and action in concert depend on some sort of commonality between individuals; without that commonality, it would be impossible to formulate political goals and/or to strive to achieve them.[18] Thus, while Arendt rejects the idea that political action can be based on an appeal to sameness, she nonetheless insists that political action cannot be understood at all if one abandons any and all notions of commonality among actors (e.g., a common language). Thereby, Arendt highlights the dialectical relationship between equality and distinction, commonality within difference. All action involves this dialectical relationship. It is an unchangeable human condition.

Action in the public sphere always involves the courage to appear before equal others and the disclosure of our unique selves. Acting in the public sphere both individuates us and binds us in a web of relationships. For this reason, it seems clear that Arendt would refuse to accept the terms of the identity based social cohesion debate, opting instead for an account that stresses the dialectical relationship between identity/non-identity, commonality/difference, and equality/distinction. Instead of focusing on the universal conditions under which life is given to humans on the Earth, that is, the level of universal humanity, solidarity arises within the intermediate grey zone of collective identity. This zone is intermediate between the universal level of the human condition and the particular level of the unique individual.[19]

In the European context of post-national societies, Craig Calhoun quotes Habermas' view of "the communicative network of a European-wide political public space embedded in a shared culture" (Calhoun, 2002, 164). This network includes civil society composed of interest groups, non-government organizations and citizen's initiative and movements where political parties can duly address the decisions of European institutions and go beyond mere tactical alliances to form a European party system.

In the Indian context, a cosmopolitan solidarity was at work in the specific case of Farmers' resistance movement in 2020, where not just a nation-wide support but also a global support for farmers led to the success of the farmers' rights initiative. Another example is the contemporary global workers' movement that raises the changed work

18 "Human plurality, the basic condition of both action and speech, has the twofold character of equality and distinction. 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 … they would need neither speech nor action to make themselves understood. Signs and sounds to communicate immediate, identical needs and wants would be enough." (Arendt, 1998: 175–6)

19 In words of Nancy Fraser: "When we focus on this zone, we highlight people as members of collectivities or social groups with specific cultures, histories, social practices, values, habits, forms of life, vocabularies of self-interpretation and narrative traditions" (Fraser, 1986, 428)

issues after the pandemic by uniting different perspectives of workers worldwide. The creation of such cosmopolitan public spaces integrates global spaces within a democratic republic and acts as a safeguard against a problematically nationalist one. The distorted publicity of advertising, fake news, political campaigns also reflect on the way in which public life has lost its link to both democracy and a rational-critical understanding under a narrow nationalist ideology of the right. Plurality and difference lie at the heart of a democratic public sphere. If it cannot encompass differences of identities and opinions, it can hardly be the basis of democracy. It addresses concerns about how people should coexist and what a state should do to make that possible.

A linked concern with solidarity is the role of common sense and understanding in making sense of the world in which one is both a stranger and a unique being. Common sense and understanding situate people in a world together with others with whom they can verify their unique experiences and in so doing achieve an understanding of the world. For Arendt, understanding "is the specifically human way of being alive; for every single person needs to be reconciled to a world into which he was born a stranger and in which, to the extent of his distinct uniqueness, he always remains a stranger. Understanding begins with birth and ends with deatto understand totalitarianism is not to condone anything, but to reconcile ourselves to a world in which such things are possible at all." (Arendt, 1994, 308)

It is important to stress at this juncture that Arendt did not evaluate all forms of solidarity equally. For her, some modes of togetherness can be politically deleterious. This is to say that social cohesion based on homogenizing factors suppress individuality rather than promoting it. The danger Arendt envisioned in these kinds of solidarity issues from a concern for the world. Certain homogenizing forms of togetherness because they are based on similarities, either innate (as in identity politics) or circumstantial (between pariahs), tend to be formed as a consequence of the exclusion from the human world. For Arendt this is the case for the pariah, for those people who share a sense of "fraternity" precisely because society has rejected them (persecuted people, enslaved groups, precarious and vulnerable individuals). But solidarity in the sense of fraternity comes at a cost: "it is often accompanied by so radical a loss of the world" followed by an atrophy of common sense, any sense of beauty or taste as a consequence of worldlessness, "a form of barbarism" (Arendt, 1968, 13). That often occurs, historically in "dark times" when the public realm is so obscure that people ask no more of politics than to show respect for individual, private interest and personal liberty, people tend to "despise the world and the public realm, to ignore them as far as possible" (Arendt, 1968, 11). Such brotherly attachment arises from "hatred of the world in which men are treated "inhumanly …" (Arendt, 1968, 13). Under these conditions, where individuals "arrive at mutual understandings with their fellow men without regard for the world that lies between them…a special kind of humanity develops" (Arendt, 1968, 12). This is exemplified in the eighteenth century ideal of fraternity, that was created not simply due to indifference to the world but out of a rejection (and hatred) of it. Through compassion, the revolutionary-minded humanitarian intends to achieve solidarity with the "unfortunate

and the miserable" but another downside of this solidarity is that it is a privilege of the pariah and is not transmissible and cannot be acquired by the those who are non-pariahs, thereby excluding them from this close-knit solidarity. Further, the warmth and brotherhood of such closely packed human beings is based on compassion that intends to compensate for their "weird irreality" (a state of worldlessness is substituted psychologically by human nature)[20] and makes action impossible. This is the reason why Arendt rejected fraternity and advocated respect as a possible solution. This is primarily because respect is selective and not egalitarian as fraternity, something similar to the Aristotelian ideal of friendship.

The dialectic of commonality and difference present in Arendt's account of the human condition is further reflected in her discussions of Jewish identity. In Arendt's address on accepting the Lessing Prize, she illuminates some of the implications of her account of plurality and action for her conception of collective identity. Arendt claims that

> … the basically simple principle in question here is one that is particularly hard to understand in times of defamation and persecution: the principle that one can resist only in terms of the identity that is under attack. Those who reject such identifications on the part of a hostile world may feel wonderfully superior to the world, but their superiority is then truly no longer of this world; it is the superiority of a more or less well-equipped cloud-cuckoo-land. (Arendt, 1968, 18)

The reason why Arendt rejected any identity-based solidarity is that it is profoundly anti-political as it renders any resistance to domination impossible under the umbrella of a homogenizing identity. Ben Lazare also rejects any attempts towards a homogenous Jewish identity. Lazare defines nationalism in agreement with socialist ideas. For him, nationalism is "the expression of collective freedom and the condition of individual freedom" (Lazare, 1898). A nation is the milieu in which the individual can develop and flourish most perfectly. A nation is a collectivity that exists due to certain affinities between certain individuals, whatever maybe the reasons and causes that created these affinities, due to which the group also acquires a personality.

Arendt's remarks in the Lessing Address are directed against those who favor assimilation over a celebration of the unique identity of oppressed and marginalized groups (Jews or pariahs, to put it in Arendt's jargon). She writes: "for many years, I considered the only adequate reply to the question, who are you? to be: a Jew. That answer alone took into account the reality of persecution. As for the statement with which Nathan the Wise … countered the command: "Step closer, Jew" – the statement: I am a man – I would have considered as nothing but a grotesque and dangerous evasion of reality" (Arendt, 1968, 17). In other words, to appeal to the universal ideal of humanism and respond "I am a man (and not just a Jew)" to the command of a persecutor is indeed

20 "The rationalism and sentimentalism of the eighteenth century are only two aspects of the same thing; both could lead equally to that enthusiastic excess in which individuals feel ties of brotherhood to all men. In any case, this rationality and sentimentality were only psychological substitutes, localized in the realm of invisibility, for the loss of the common, visible world." (Arendt, 1968, 16)

to distort political realities and it is dangerous because it seriously undermines political freedom. Arendt's statement "I am a Jew" should not be taken to indicate a naive or essentialist view of Jewish identity as it is not predicated on a shared essence or a shared experience of oppression:

> … when I use the word 'Jew' I do not mean to suggest any special kind of human being … … [nor do I] refer to a reality burdened or marked out for distinction by history. Rather, I was only acknowledging a political fact through which my being a member of this group outweighed all other questions of personal identity or rather had decided them in favor of anonymity, of namelessness. (Arendt, 1968, 18)

Thus, Arendt insists that one can affirm that one is a Jew without implying that it involves some fixed essence shared by all Jews. Affirming membership in a Jewish community is recognition of a fact. Factually, it is undeniable, and to attempt to deny it is dangerous and counts one deluded. But to adopt it politically is resistible and changeable. Sometimes political realities compel us to acknowledge the political fact of certain identities that are under attack, and the political significance of resisting in terms of them. Her work provides an excellent starting point for rethinking the concept of solidarity beyond homogenous collectives. In the same light, Benhabib argues "engaging in politics [for Arendt] does not mean abandoning economic or social issues; it means fighting for them in the name of principles, interests, values that have a generalizable basis, and that concern us as members of a collectivity" (Benhabib, 1996, 145). Within Arendt's vision of solidarity, it is possible to resist in terms of an identity that is under attack without being a member of that group whose identity is under attack. Solidarity rests not on a shared identity, but it lies in the shared commitment of particular individuals to come together for the attainment of a common goal. We might glean from Arendt's work that solidarity is based not on a community of feelings, but on a community of action. This is the same as saying that solidarity is an expression or a modality of power. It becomes pertinent mainly when solidarity is most frequently invoked as a means to the end of strengthening oppositional political action that seeks to resist and transform relations of dominance and subordination in a democratic manner.

Conflict and Difference

Conflict is not always a divisive force but it can also be understood as a creative potential that can ignite a process of change. In other words, difference does not necessarily preclude solidarity. One can say that, conflicts and tension do not undermine the struggle to construct a collective identity nor the possibility of uniting people for common goals. Rather, questioning the primacy of collective identities and attachments to the nation state is the first stage in exploring "the ways that transnational actors can design the means to facilitate the creation of a variety of international collective identities." (Crow, 2001, 27.) The struggle to forge solidarity also entails a responsibility to respond to the different problems and priorities of people and be sensitive to the

contexts in which they operate. Thus, one might recast conflict as a creative force in political activism, rather than considering it as an indicator of an increasing propensity towards fragmentation and separatism. If identity is understood to be fluid, rather than fixed and constructed through the dynamic interaction of groups, rather than a static precondition for political mobilisation, then strategies to build alliances and support networks for groups struggling against injustices in specific contexts might be effectively worked out that enhance the possibilities for achieving an inclusive solidarity. Cosmopolitan solidarity bears an ongoing political character which keeps changing and might not endure over a long period of time. Nevertheless, it is preferable to an exclusionary and divisive solidarity that is built upon hegemonic discourses and practices that silence particular voices in the interests of maintaining ideological status-quo. Conflict should not then be juxtaposed against cooperation. In so far as conflict facilitates reflection and dialogue, it is essential in the process of establishing the common ground which makes cooperation possible. Cosmopolitan solidarity as an enabling condition of political agency makes the welcome contribution of dissolving the strong linkage between collective agency in world politics and the sovereignty principle.

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