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**Paulina Sosnowska: HANNAH ARENDT AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER.  
PHILOSOPHY, MODERNITY, AND EDUCATION.**

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UDC: 165.62Arendt H. Heidegger

The book *Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger*, authored by the Polish philosopher Paulina Sosnowska, assistant professor at the Faculty of Education of the University of Warsaw, is a meticulously researched and engagingly written discussion of the relationship between two of the most intriguing thinkers of the turbulent 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose works to this date endure as a substantial source of philosophical inspiration, despite—and, indeed, because of—the circumstance of evoking sometimes diametrically opposed, mutually irreconcilable responses. Although the personal pathways of Arendt and Heidegger bear witness to a lifelong intimate bond, which was able to withstand—after the end of the love affair—the hiatus of the holocaust, their intellectual relation continually (r)evolved under the sign of the initial nonreciprocity: whereas the writings of Arendt reveal the careful, if (not) rather concealed efforts of a—paradoxically articulated—(n)ever un-faithful student, Heidegger as one of the formative university teachers scarcely, if (not) only covertly took notice of her coming-to-prominence, of her accomplishments. Instead of attempting to elaborate—upon the re-presented, pre-supposed background of the teacher's

thought—the influence of Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology on the development of Arendt’s political theory, Sosnowska—in a certain “reversal” of the pedagogical rapport (subtly indicated in the title)—re-traces, giving preference to the perspective of the student, seeking, through(out) Arendt’s entire oeuvre, for underlying convergences and fundamental divergences, for in-commensurable in-congruences with Heidegger, but (thereby) avoiding also the potential pitfalls of a biographical “explanation” of the conceptual, the conditions (of possibility) for the philosophical dimension of the relationship between both authors, insofar as it, as already the subtitle of the study suggests, concerns the problematic of education within the modern—as well as the present-day (post-?modern?)—world.

330 Sosnowska, thus, takes the relation between Arendt and Heidegger—between their respective philosophical stances regarding the matters at hand—under consideration as a particular paradigm for a universally challenging re-questioning of the educational role of philosophy. However, should in (philosophical) thinking still exist, especially after and amid the ruins of the frightful caesura of 20<sup>th</sup>-century totalitarianisms, a glimmer of hope for a pedagogical promise, also its complex implications for the historical and contemporary context(s) of (political) action require special and specific attention.

The first part of the book is, therefore, dedicated to a deliberation upon the notion of education within the Western philosophical tradition. Sosnowska circumscribes the often in-explicitly intricate demarcation of a pedagogical component within philosophy through three comprehensive conceptualizations, which were not only of immense importance for Arendt’s thought, but have also had a profound cultural and social impact. The parallelization of Heidegger’s ontological and Arendt’s political reading of the Greek idea of *paideia*, as embodied in Plato’s illustrious allegory of the cave, opens up the gateway toward an account of the dispute on *Bildung* among the proponents of the neo-humanist ideals of liberalism, the predominant of whom was Wilhelm von Humboldt, that subsequently, at the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, lead to the foundation of the German university. Whereas various interpretations of *paideia* and *Bildung* directly address the issue of education, the analysis of (early) Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, as elucidated in

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*Being and Time*, touches upon it, emphasizing at once the ethical relevance of authentic existence and the lack of an adequate approach to (intra)human plurality, only in an inter-mediate(d) manner. However, from Arendt's—from the Arendtian—viewpoint, the philosophical promise(s) for education, the striving for freedom, individuality, and authenticity, remained unfulfilled—or had been betrayed—, not primarily because of flawed or failed (political) concretizations—Heidegger's (albeit temporary, yet perplexing) ideological entanglement with National Socialism is a famed, an infamous “example”—, but due to the catastrophic break denoting the eventuation of tradition.

Before venturing (toward) the question of a beginning, the second part of Sosnowska's book, with constantly more consummate aspects encompassing the conflicting “conversation” between Arendt and Heidegger, deals with the crossroads, whereat philosophy and education—in their inter-relation, in their inter-relatedness with politics—have found—or lost?—themselves with regard to—the author cites Arendt—“the broken thread of tradition” (81 ff.), the confrontation with which triggered a thorough re-thinking of thinking itself. Whilst, on the one hand, Heidegger's thinking of being after the so-called “turn,” through the estrangement from the previous existential categories and therewith from philosophy as such, wholly withdraws from the political—or, at least, endeavors to do so—, Arendt's thinking of action, on the other hand, prompted by the unprecedented experience of the emergence of totalitarian movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century demanding description beyond traditional patterns, without reservation faces the challenges posed by the plurality of the public sphere. The discussed authors' contrasting, but complementary readings of Aristotle, of *phronesis* and *sophia*, to a great degree additionally illuminate both Arendt's indebtedness to the motivation and the movement that, through the (polemically) received incentive by the teacher, guided her to work, to write “with Heidegger and against him” (126). Although Arendt's political philosophy rests upon the construction of dichotomies, such as the ones between life and world, between the private and the public, the searching for freedom, of central significance also for her comprehension of modernity, for her conception of alienation prevalent within it, above all renders homage to the multispectrality of human existence: “In Heidegger the collective subject (the they) veils the conditions of realization of human freedom; in Arendt the

plurality of the people is an ontological condition of actualization of human freedom: the faculty of beginning, potentially given to us with the new beginning of our birth.” (147)

332 In the final part of the book, Sosnowska, upon the basis of preceding reflections, explores the consequences the situation, where classical tradition cannot deliver any solutions, may convey for what totalitarian cataclysms had bequeathed to posterity as the pedagogical task of philosophy. Thus, as if (almost) by necessity of the debated problematic itself, the author is compelled to quest, with—and beyond—Arendt, for (ostensibly un-likely) allies among her predecessors and her successors alike, who—in one way or another—surpass (through) the confinement of the “Heideggerian” con-text(s): on the one hand, Johann Gottfried Herder’s remarks on finiteness and historicity, on linguality and intersubjectivity, as well as, on the other hand, genealogies of (bio)political power by Michel Foucault and of state of exception by Giorgio Agamben (continue to) offer fundamental contributions to the function of philosophical critique for the preservation of essential plurality determining the human condition. However, as Arendt’s renowned elucidation of the “case” of Adolf Eichmann demonstrates, the perpetually threatening connection between non-thinking and the banality of evil, against (late) Heidegger’s recourse into contemplation, calls for a thinking as “a phenomenon of everydayness” (194) that does not—and will not—shy away from the affairs of the human(e) world.

The treatise of Paulina Sosnowska not only convincingly discloses different facets and layers of the philosophical relationship between Arendt and Heidegger, but by re-posit(ion)ing the question of education at the heart of confounding inter-communication between philosophy and politics also—in the concluding chapters—relevantly discusses the precarious circumstances, in which contemporary universities (and other academic institutions), under the immense pressure of the marketization of entire society, struggle to maintain the (former?) ideals of (scientific) autonomy. The extraordinary achievement of the book *Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger* that deserves attentive readers both among the scholars of the two authors as well as among pedagogues interested in the philosophical dimension of educational efforts exhorts, by re-awakening the promise of thinking, of its potentiality, of its potency, to

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the “vigilance”—but by no means to a “vigilantism”—of thoughtfulness in a thoughtless, dark time.

Since the destiny of a review lies in submitting a mere—more or (rather) less suitable—sketch of the book’s thematic abundance, maybe the re-sounding words of a poet, of Robert Frost’s poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” nonetheless can, with regard to Sosnowska’s work, propose—how many times heard? how many times hearkened to?—a fitting end, a beginning: “The woods are lovely, dark and deep, / But I have promises to keep, / And miles to go before I sleep, / And miles to go before I sleep.”

*Andrej Božič*