

# Current Topics in Social Sciences

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ISBN 978-954-07-4135-2



ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI UNIVERSITY PRESS  
SOFIA • 2016

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St. Kliment Ohridski University Press

ISBN 978-954-07-4135-2

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Cover design: İsa CÜREBAL

# Chapter 16

## Radical Evil Problem in Hannah Arendt

Mustafa KAYA\*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is seen that evil problem, which was one of the ancient problems of philosophy history and was considered as an ethic problem until twentieth century, has become a matter of debate in political field now. This situation is affected by that the world has been comprehended as a place where evil dominates increasingly, that violence which becomes common and threads our lives and that people are pessimistic, sad and insensible to the events in their lives. Psychologists call the fear that evil has been increasing in the world, that trust environment decreases and that this world has begun to be a more threatening and hopeless place, and the effect formed by this fear as “bad world syndrome”. As for the most known negative result of this syndrome, it is the lack of empathy and aggression. As well as it is thought that evil is associated with many qualifications of human life such like intuition, variability, consciousness, freedom and self-control (Peck, 2003: 38), more importantly and probably more important problem is that relation between evil and concept of human nature. Moreover, it is closely associated with the question that whether we should consider evil problem with its relation to a certain nature design or with completely possible qualifications of the world we live.

In contemporary philosophy, the question “what is the source of bad or evil against big evils we experienced especially historically” has been important one more time in order to understand and explain reasons of evils. Thus evil is discussed with certain factors such like its resource, results, relation with human nature, effect of its ideology, relation of the evil with the power, society nature solutions, and it is begin to regard it as a problem which become evident at the point where it gives the place of ethic perspective to a political perspective (Duva, 2014: 12).

As it is known, evil problem has been discussed by means of identifying it with bad intention for a long time. In the period from the Middle Ages to Kant, action, actually in the directive principle of the action, the basic which exhibits the action is searched in the drive. Charles Werner (2000) states the assumption that the evil, which we see the first example in the Old Testament, is hidden in the inclination to bad before it appears in actions of the human, as the following:

Before depraving, exactly before it, there was a bad intention. If the power of human remained completely stable to love the good which could not be moved, then debaucher could not have a power on him/her. If there was no bad intention beforehand, bad intention (depraving) could not be realized (Werner, 2000: 7).

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The ethical perspective that evil is identified with inclination to bad has lost validity especially with *Auschwitz* experience in the twentieth century. Along with *Auschwitz* experience, evil has reached up to a level shaking all the current paradigms. The first question in our minds is that “How could such an evil be possible?” question, and nature of evil has become a research subject again in order to comprehend what happened here. Death camps have taken place as an example of evil, which is a new one in twentieth century and we cannot find a familiar one in the past, and it has led to think that evil is not only a moral problem when we have encountered it with the totalitarianism phenomenon as a reason which prompts us to examine the evil. This thought has still kept its importance in terms of contemporary problems (Duva, 2014: 13). As Baudrillard (2010), indicated in *The Transparency of Evil*, it has been understood that the place to where evil can go is limitless for human being and the *anamorphous of modern forms of Evil knows no bounds* (Baudrillard, 2010: 80).

Does it possible to define big and indefinable modern evils such like mass destruction policies appeared in 20<sup>th</sup> century? Moreover, does it possible to explain this kind of evils in known and ordinary statements? For Susan Neiman (2006), a limit should be drawn between evil and radical evil with *Auschwitz* experience which do not give place to explain the evil and it is a moment when an irreparable absolute cruelty materializes (Neimann, 2006: 14).

## 2. RADICAL EVIL

Radical evil is described as an absolute evil aspect consisting more than those which can be explained with ordinary and reasonable reasons in our lives. Then we can say that those which determines actually radical evil is something we cannot fit in any description or legalizing reason apart from “this should have not happened” statement and which we cannot give the meaning. Thus, Bernstein (2010) describes radical evil as the following:

Radical evil cannot be identified with natural tendencies and our extraordinary sensorial nature in any way. Needs and desires of the body and resource of the evil are not the same. Radical evil cannot be identified with any internal defect or disorder of human mind. This is associated with only will disorder (Bernstein, 2010: 40).

Radical evil concept and its relation to will in the sense mentioned by Bernstein is a concept which first Kant analysed in his work called *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. In his aforementioned work, Kant demonstrates the idea that “it is required to regard human as responsible for evil all the time” despite everything while he talks about existence of an inclination to evil which is with universal quality and “in fact rooted to the humanity”, which is subjected to natural moral that made an impression as far as being rooted into human in his book we mentioned. For Kant, radical evil results from an inclination existing in nature of human but this nature doesn’t mean a nature design that is stable and with determination; here, the thing is a situation nature of behaviour immanently, in other words, the nature of will. Therefore, radical evil directly associated with will is something which we personally cause; it is not an obstacle for us to judge actors of radical evil despite the fact that its results are incomprehensible (Duva, 2014: 15).

Afterwards, these thoughts of Kant have been criticized as they rationalized the radical evil concept, which is regarded as a phenomenon that collapse all standards we

know by Arendt and that leave us with its collapsing reality, and as they will cover the horror of radical evil. As argued by Arendt, “is it true that Kant rationalized the radical evil in a way to be explained with reasonable reasons?”

It is a chronologic mistake to expect that Kant predicted the horror experienced in twentieth century. Kant, however, is the philosopher who converted our thinking way about moral in the modern world. For this reason, it is quite appropriate to ask if thought of Kant about moral and radical evil will help us to direct our thoughts related to evil which we have witnessed in twentieth century.

If we want to understand what Kant implied with radical evil, the first thing we should do is to understand what he meant with evil. Thus, at first it is required to look the separation which Kant made between *will* (demanding) and *willkür* (arbitrary demanding). Kant emphasized that the place where evil materializes is actually principles of power while he argued that resource of the evil is in power. In other words, the thing that determines or directs good or bad actions against the evil is the principles of *will* rather than *willkür* desires. In this case, Kant tried to found the inclination that states an inclination to goodness and evil of human defined as an entity of opportunities into *willkür* concept, and to found the demand that has given its code to practical mind that is the basic of good action into *will* concept. Then, for Kant, while *will* is related to action and realizing the purposes, *willkür* is a desire capacity which is related to action not all that (Caygill, 2000: 415). In this case, *willkür* is the capacity to make choice among alternatives, *will* is a capacity to take an attribute arising thanks to laws of practical mind. In both cases, human makes selection voluntarily; however, *willkür* is the selection of desire and *will* is that of law. Then, the thing we say resource of evil is not a truth embedded into human and would not change; it should be looked in the power of human which can be used for the actions in this world. Kant didn't regard this as a capacity which is only human-specific. For him, animals have *willkür*. While *willkür* of animals are determined with the most powerful motives directly, it is not said that it is not determined completely by human even though it is affected by motives. It is true that actions of human are determined according to the most powerful motive all the time. However, only *willkür* can make the decision to determine the most powerful motive. Namely, the thing determines the action is *willkür*. Therefore, *willkür* of human is the competence to choose depending on free demand. Freedom of choice of *willkür* is the basic of moral actions; however, it is not *willkür* which determines the ethic character of an action and its law; yet, spontaneity might not create results for good all the time. *Willkür* is heteronymous, for this reason it cannot be seen as the guarantee of moral actions (Duva, 2014: 16).

Finally, *willkür* has a meaning that is contrary to the principal one; as *willkür* works as a resource of motive, which human has always in a powerful manner, instead of adopting principles by making decisions likewise *will*, it contains in itself the capacity to choose the bad at every phase. Then, both types of this demanding corresponds to demanding of human; *willkür* indicates spontaneity and *will* indicates the autonomy and putting law into practical mind. This conceptual analysis is actually for getting free from the situation where good or evil has become the determination law and for making a room for moral freedom. However, the thing important for us is that evil has found resource of the evil in the principle of action. In both cases, human should make demand that is the drive of bad actions and then we can easily pass to the responsibility issue of human to evils. Yet, the thing we should think about is not an

unconsciousness state; it is the difference between arbitrary will and will. In brief, to choose the evil is a result of a will which is arbitrary or puts law – including desire. In this case, man is responsible for all circumstances and situations he experiences, namely all circumstances and situations which he obeys the commands of practical mind or he chooses by arbitrary will. Then resource of evil cannot be external, and another person cannot be the responsible one for our bad actions. Relation of actions to will brings us to think about evil necessarily with what man, who is responsible for his bad actions, makes and acts.

After these important determinations with evil concept of Kant, we can eventually ask our basic questions to find answers. What kind of a relation has been seen between what Kant said in context of evil previously and radical evil concept formed by philosophical seeking in recent periods? Can we consider them as continuation and supplementary of each other, or should we evaluate them as quite different things? What does Kant mean in evil concept he argued? As Arendt argued, is it true that he suspected the existence of a special type of evil we cannot “comprehend” and that he tried to rationalize it? (Arendt, 1973: 459). Like Arendt, does he think that radical evil is a phenomenon “that collapse all standards we know and that leave us with the collapsing reality face to face?” (Ibid.: 459). Is it possible to agree, at least in certain points, with Arendt who tries to open the concept by associating it with a system which making human beings as human beings superfluous? What is radical evil, what should be understood when Kant is in question? In order to answer these questions, it is better to expand our research from the conceptual context drawn by Kant?

*Inclination* (Hang) concept that becomes prominent in evaluation of Kant for radical evil becomes important. Because Kant tries to explain our inclination to deviate from moral law and to adopt bad principles through radical evil analysis and inclination concept (*Hang*) mentioned in this analysis. Kant states that “by propensity (*propensio*) I understand the subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination (*habitual desire, concupiscentia*), insofar as this possibility is contingent for humanity in general” (Kant, 1998: 52). By concept, the inclination (*Hang*) that Kant determines as "subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination" refers people, entire human ancestry in general. Kant takes a step further in order to make inclination concept clearer and emphasizes the difference between inclination (*hang*) and predisposition (*Anlage*). For him, although an inclination is natural one, it is distinct from a predisposition as it should not be represented only in this way; because it can be regarded as acquired (if good) or as caused by human (if bad) (Ibid.: 53).

What do all mean? Before anything else, while Kant argues radical evil concept, he is not seeming that he doubts an existence of a special type of evil which we “cannot comprehend” as Arendt argues. It is true that he has tried to rationalize radical evil but he hasn’t meant something we cannot comprehend hereof. The thing he tries to rationalize is definitely not the thing Arendt indicates. Radical evil, which Arendt describes as “the phenomenon that collapses all the standards we know and that leave us with the collapsing reality face to face” is an inclination to adopt bad principles, namely inclination to ignore moral law for Kant. We can comprehend this inclination. As regards the question “What is the source of such an inclination”, Kant finds the answer he seeks in nature of human, namely in corruption of power (*Wilkür*).

Kant, in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, states that evil capacity of human consists of three levels:

First, it is the general weakness of the human heart in complying with the adopted maxims, or the frailty of human nature; second, the propensity to adulterate moral incentives with immoral ones (even when it is done with good intention, and under maxims of the good), i.e. impurity; third, the propensity to adopt evil maxims, i.e. the depravity of human nature, or of the human heart (Kant, 1998: 53).

Kant describes third inclination as human heart is being malignity, malignity. This kind of malignity means something corrupted in root, something degenerated, namely evil in radical manner. Nevertheless, even in this case, radical evil is something caused by human. As well as roots of evil inclination goes back to human nature, as human nature is not a completed ascribed nature, human makes the evil possible as being the actor of an evil story which he writes personally. In this case, there is no reason for human, under natural inclinations, to look for evil in another source.

Well, how can we struggle with this natural inclination in order to remove evil? For Kant, the only way is to realize freedom and then use it. For Kant, responsibility of our choices and decisions can be blamed on neither nature, body, mind nor the circumstances around us and control exercised by others over us. We are actually one who is responsible for evil we done. Our power (*wilkiir*) is totally free to choose or not choose radical evil. We cannot hinder freedom of our will in no way. Kant, in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, demonstrates that he thinks radical evil fed by evil inclination in universal manner can be overcome as it is fully related to free will. Therefore, for Kant, human can overcome radical evil only by freedom; each obstacle to use freedom is an opportunity for radical evils (Coşkun, 2013: 48; Duva, 2014: 18).

This emphasize made by Kant on personal responsibility presents the reality within a conceptual and analytical context that we cannot evade our personal responsibilities against violence and destruction policies and also bloodbaths consisting of all kind of extermination policies we observe as radical evil in today's world. He also shows that responsibility will be a baseline against the new face of evil within totalitarian experiences and moral uncertainty threatening all of us today. This uncertainty has a dimension which blurs the attitude against all these evils exactly, makes the political action impossible and covers the evils experienced. Zygmunt Bauman (2011) states the worry he felt about this moral uncertainty as the following:

Sin without sinners, murder without murderers, and crime without criminal!  
Responsibility of result, in other words, floats without finding natural harbour in any way. More precisely, crime spreads in such a thinned way, "the strongest and sincerest self-criticism or regret of any of partial actors will eventually change things too little. –if it can change- for many of us, very naturally, this vanity, futility of human efforts feed the faith of human and therefore it is seen as an adequate reason for attempting to a self-criticism and payoff (Bauman, 2011: 30).

Then, we are not having to refuse to turn the ethic one and evaluate the concept into the ethic one in a pessimistic and hopeless manner, on the contrary we can say that turning ethical attitude is an antidote against the actions which invalidate the principal one. Human who takes responsibility of his actions can become an actor, an actuator in this world only in this way. Even if it is difficult to argue that responsibility is exactly a guarantee, it is obvious that it is a concept we should insist on in order to test our belief in human-specific capacities in practice. Even if human who takes or forced to take responsibility of his actions doesn't succeed, he will acquire a vision related to ethics



and this vision is a more valuable acquisition than moral uncertainty (Duva, 2014: 18).

These thoughts of Kant are of course behaviour of an individual who shows courage to use his mind. However, much as radical evil has not been seen as an irrational situation, it is not read as an expression of right usage of mind. In other words, here, we mention an attitude which can be possible within the critical use of mind. Can an attitude require this kind of criticism be a solution for violence and domination world of this age and problems arising hereof? Hannah Arendt states obviously scepticism especially on this matter while he refers to evil concept of Kant. On one hand, with the ordinariness of evil, he agrees with the idea that radical evil is a choice, a selection occurred at the result of desire, on the other hand he thinks that radical evil appears as something which cannot be comprehended by mind in abnormal normality times. After these determinations of Kant regarding radical evil, in order to understand radical evil, it will be useful to see implications of radical evil which Arendt describes it as a phenomenon "that collapse all standards we know and that leave us with the collapsing reality face to face".

### 3. RADICAL EVIL IN ARENDT

Evil problem was continued to discuss over *Auschwitz* by many Jewish philosophers in 20<sup>th</sup> century too. After Lisbon earthquake, Voltaire wrote poem about the earthquake, but Adorno said that it would be barbarism to write poem after *Auschwitz* because for him contemporary evils are at a level which cannot be expressed. Of course, significant amount of evil experienced one after the other in twentieth century is enough to render the most cheerful philosopher a pessimist person; as optimists tend to write bad and pessimists tend to not write it, it is possible to understand silence of sections shaken by the mercilessness of this century (Keane, 1998: 17). Yet, traditional discussion factors of evil problem appeared again as an answer to *Auschwitz*. And these were demonstrated by many Jewish philosophers. One of these philosophers is Arendt.

Arendt believed that each real thought is based on a personal experience, and major experience that shaped almost entire mentality is that he experienced Nazi period from beginning to end. Just in 1945, he said "evil problem will be the basic problem of intellectual life in Europe after the war". Until the end of his life, it was the problem he always got stuck in. Nevertheless, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt says: "*In the final stages of totalitarianism an absolute evil appears (absolute because it can no longer be deduced from humanly comprehensible motives), it is also true that without it we might never have known the truly radical nature of Evil*" (Arendt, 1973: 9).

Arendt, in a letter he wrote to Jaspers, "I don't know that radical evil is in real, but it seems to me that it has a relation with this phenomenon: *making human beings as human beings superfluous*" (Arendt & Jaspers, 1992: 166). Arendt indicated in the continuation of letter that this kind of superfluousness appears as soon as *spontaneity* of human, namely all unpredictability is ended. Besides, from the contradiction between the almighty doubt of a single person and the idea that people exist as plural, he takes our attention to a very important concept, *plurality* concept. These three concepts (superfluousness, spontaneity and plurality) are interrelated but distinguishable and they are important in terms of understanding thoughts of Arendt about radical evil.

### 3.1. SUPERFLUOUSNESS THREAT

Arendt considers *superfluosness* concept in several different ways. This concept that appears by disguising every time is used to separate and isolate those which are announced as superfluous. We encounter first determinations of Arendt regarding superfluosness in large section he allocated to imperialism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. As mentioned here, superfluosness phenomenon that developed as an element of imperialism period dominated Europe comes into existence in the entity of mob and contemporary refugees who had no homeland. Arendt talks about an economic crisis where capital is become over productive and so superfluous money appears because of over savings which couldn't turn into productive investment within the borders of country. This over money is required to be issued. Arendt considers it as a reason that provokes the imperialist expansionism. For him, the solution which European national states found to empty the production is expansion, namely extension. Extension act and superfluosness concept are almost one within each other. Before anything else, owners of over capital are superfluous. Extension has presented the most radical solution which keeps them to being superfluous parasites (Arendt, 1998: 55).

On the other hand, another residual product that capitalist economy should sell off immediately apart from over wealth is human wreck which became a real danger for society in ninetieth century. Masses, which became unemployed permanently in crisis period following the industrial development and isolated from social life after production period, are as superfluous as owners of over money at least. These two superfluous and over powers, namely over capital and over labor force, would be sent to abroad by annexing new lands eventually through expansionist policies (Ibid.: 56).

Arendt indicates that imperialism that is the product of over money and superfluous people and its limitless expansion ideal seem like to present a permanent solution to permanent evil. The reality that this mob can be used only by imperialist politicians and takes inspiration only from race disciplines caused an image that only imperialism can solve calamity social, economic domestic problems of modern times (Ibid.: 67). The direct proportion is crucial which was established between occurrence of a crowded mass which state and societies cannot look and a power policy is being possible to be applied far from the principles completely. Of course, superfluous masses fed by racism made great contribution in the period in which national states collapsed and the subsequent values were revaluated.

Consequently, two things which became useless and announced as superfluous for Europe – over money and over human source - met with wind of imperialism in the Dark Continent South Africa. Adventurers and miners takes part here together with mob that is “pulp of big cities” coming from everywhere and consisting of wastes of all class layers (Ibid.: 57).

The Dark Continent has turned into a huge stage for all people who “relegated from a standard world” and evaded from all kind of humanistic responsibility and reality of civilization to be imposed by that world. They believe nothing in an enemy world where they walk around such like materialized type of resentment; they are ready for everything from tossing up for nothing to wilful murder (Ibid.: 121-122). They immediately learned about or brought along the behaviour codes consistent with the type of murderer in the future. They also saw here that it is quite possible to turn their people into races and how somebody, only by engaging in violence, can bring their people into master race (Ibid.: 151).

Arendt talks about a fear which they felt against original inhabitants in Africa and couldn't get over it in any way. This is the fear which human is afraid of something that is similar to him but can be like him under no circumstance. For Arendt, this is the fear which establishes basis of slavery and a race society. It is such a frightening fear to accept that they might be human that it is easier for invaders to conclude that it is not possible to be included into the same human sort (Ibid.: 127).

Arendt indicates that mob turns the nations into races inescapably and then it is organized because there is no other connective relation except race for these individuals who lost all the relation with their fellows (1998: 68). A racist ideology and action is the only thing which Continent imperialism can present to wastes of all classes, namely mobs. This was enough for people who were nonplussed in the middle of these disentangled society relations and social atomization and who wanted to feel that they were belong to something, whatever it may cost. Furthermore, this inclination opened door for capitalist economies to open a more radical isolation than over human source together with over money (Ibid.: 184).

Superfluousness status of masses who lost their jobs and seen as a surplus by the rest of society turns disguises this time and then turns into the superfluousness of those who lost their positions in the world. Arendt indicates that each political event happened after World War I created new categories which became homeless and stateless, lived out of the laws and seen as they were easy to isolate because of these properties in the twentieth century. While evaluating the years after World War I which collapsed European commonwealth in an irreparable manner, Arendt emphasizes on the hate phenomenon that can be directed to everybody and everything without observing a certain target and that exhibits a blurred but common image at the same time. It is not clear where this hate started and ended which infiltrated into the spirit of this period; it goes everywhere in an unpredictable way. This is a hate felt randomly for everything under the sun. In 1920s when a claptrap peace experienced under the threat of this hate wave affecting a larger area increasingly and of economic problems, the major work of the civil wars splashed everywhere appears as immigrant groups who weren't accepted anywhere and couldn't be assimilated anywhere. They are seen as the pulp of earth. They are homeless when they leave their homes; they are stateless when they leave their states; and they have no rights when they are divested of human rights (Ibid.: 256-257).

The disaster, that people without rights are in, is not because they are devoid of the right to live, be free and seek the happiness or to be equal before the law and they are devoid of the rights of freedom of thought- they all formulas designed in order to solve the problems within definite ascribed societies-, it is results from that they are not a member of any society no matter what kind it is. The reason of being in a bad situation is not because they are not equal before the law but there is no law for them; is not because they are suffered, as nobody wants to suffer them. Their right to live is under danger solely at the final stage of a quite long period; if their lives continue to be exactly "superfluous" and if nobody "protects" them, then they might be under danger (Ibid.: 302-303).

For Arendt, even Nazis started to destroy Jewish at first by means of purifying them from all legal rights and kept them in ghettos and concentration camps and disconnecting them with the world; they took action after they were sure that nobody would protect these people (Ibid.: 303).

In a world millions of people are exposed to superfluousness threat because of

global political situation, Arendt argues that the basic right is the right to have rights. And it should be understood as the person lives in an environment where he is judged according to his actions and thoughts. Besides, it is obvious that it is related with the right of individual to be a member of an organized community. Consequently, he should be a member of a community where he will protect his rights and use his rights by protecting honour of humanity (Ibid.: 304).

Arendt discusses, in the final section of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, how superfluousness evolved with imperialism has a more shocking meaning in totalitarian regimes and how it became a part of mass domination. He displays, without hiding anything, how political exclusion causes a social exclusion and then a physical exclusion for human. This time, the situation is more threatening because manipulators of this totalitarian system believe that they are as inessential as their victims at least. Totalitarian murderers are the most dangerous ones as they don't care about being dead or alive, lived or unborn for themselves. "Even when they get anything, they are in a mania that they have nothing to lose" (Arendt, 1973: 459; Adorno, 2009: 109).

As the form referred by Arendt in questioning radical evil, *superfluousness* reaches may be the most tangible expression in the concentration camps where it defines its experiment to organize a public for ultimate aims without paying attention its individuality as a kind of laboratory made with reality or rather against the reality. These camps, which produce corps continuously in order to make room for new generations, in fact materialize the superfluousness with its meaning that feeds radical evil. For Arendt, concentration camps are the most important institution of totalitarian management because camps are the places where experiments are conducted which can prove that everything is possible under mass domination including rendering people inessential as human. Regarding power of totalitarian regime, it establishes "concentration camps as special laboratories where the experiment will be conducted under mass domination" in order to serve for inclination to demolish the fabric of reality and to turn it into a fiction (Arendt, 1973: 392).

For Arendt, the purpose of totalitarian ideologies is to neither change the external world nor revolutionize the society. Here the actual aim is to change nature of human on purpose. The most radical experiments for changing nature of human – but when people are rendered inessential as human- are conducted in concentration camps serving as a laboratory. At the end of all these experiments, "minimizing the human to a bunch of reaction" disconnects the world of living deaths with living world. The most important feature of such a minimizing is that it separates human from anything he has radically as much as a mental disease, in other words from his personality, his character. These experiments, which try to prove that an absolute domination can be practiced over human, eventually become successful to create series of human going to death such like puppets. For Arendt, the common sense hitting reality of concentration camps and the thing which "normal people" refuse to believe should be sought in that everything is so possible, just here (Ibid.: 441).

Arendt explains the domination, which produces superfluous ones at first and then removes them completely, in a subsequent three analytical phases. The first phase in mass domination way is to destroy legal-political personality. This started long time before Nazis established death camps. Here, Arendt indicates legal constraints which take legal rights of Jewish, disease carriers, representative of dead classes and other isolated groups. As understood, in this phase, the purpose is to divest people of their

capacity to take action. For Arendt, "the aim of an arbitrary system is to destroy the civil rights of the whole population, who ultimately become just as outlawed in their own country as the stateless and homeless. The destruction of man's rights, the killing of the juridical person in him, is a prerequisite for dominating him entirely"(Ibid.: 451).

The second phase is the following. Another important step to prepare living corps is to kill the moral personality inside human. Having a moral personality requires a frame where moral actions have a meaning. Concentration camps are places where it is impossible to find a make choice for moral action in the meaning we know, namely a choice between good or bad. Opportunities to all kind of humanistic solidarity were removed at the result of strong efforts of SS which inspected the camps. Depending on this attack made against moral person; decisions of moral compass became doubtful, having moral compass became unimportant increasingly, it had not importance to make a distinct between good and bad, difference between guilt and innocence was deleted for those who lived in concentration camps. Arendt says "totalitarian terror won the most terrifying victory when it succeeded to disconnect moral person with individuality escape and when it made decisions of moral compass questionable absolutely and open to question" and then he continues:

When a man is faced with the alternative of betraying and thus murdering his friends or of sending his wife and children, for whom he is in every sense responsible, to their death; when suicide would mean the immediate murder of this own family how is he to decide? The alternative is no longer between good and evil, but between murder and murder. Who could solve the moral dilemma of the Greek mother, who was allowed by the Nazis to choose which of her three children should be killed? (Arendt, 1973: 452).

Third and final phase of the mass domination, which turns people whose rights are dispossessed and whose moral personality is destroyed into living dead, is aimed to this unique individuality and spontaneity which people possess directly. After the murder of the moral person and the annihilation of the juridical person, the destruction of the individuality is almost always successful. For to destroy individuality is to destroy spontaneity, man's power to begin something new out of his own resources, something that cannot be explained on the basis of reactions to environment and events (Ibid.: 455).

### **3.2. SPONTANEITY AND PLURALITY**

For Arendt, the effort to understand radical evil arising in total domination logic of totalitarian management is a motivation for theming the basic characteristic of human life –spontaneity, birth rate, action, freedom and plurality. The reason why Arendt discusses the mentioned concepts one by one and tries to exhibit the relation between them is that he wants to demonstrate, in all respects, the totalitarian effort which tries to turn people into something different from human (lower) by means of removing them (Bernstein, 2010: 265).

By means of removing the individuality that is the final phase of total domination, we find out the importance of removing individuality and spontaneity which is second thinking chain of Arendt at the same time. Arendt states that removing individuality is equal to removing spontaneity and this means removing power of human to start a new work with his own resources.

Arendt talks about *labor*, *work* and *action* as three major activities (*vita activa*) of

human in *The Human Condition*. Each of these three major humanistic activities corresponds to the way of giving the world to the human. For Arendt, labour is the epitome of life. The humanity case corresponds to labour is life. Here, life means biological needs (Arendt, 2000: 35). Labour is the sum of activities which human conducts in order to survive and continue his type. As “labour” is determined with physical needs, it works with obligation principle. In this concept, it is an activity which renders human common with animals; it is repeated during the lifetime of human and doesn’t create any permanent product. Therefore, it is the most invaluable one among the human activities and it is the most restricting one for human’s freedom. Labour is not an action that involves violence naturally, it is an activity which human being wants to get rid of it because it requires a physical effort and power and it is a routine action. That is why people wanted to use other people in order to meet physical needs during the history and they applied violence in this purpose (Arendt, 1998: 31). Arendt discusses the slavery system in Ancient Greece within this frame. It reverses the approach of Aristotle that he considers normal to use those who are lack of mental capacity in physical activities. For Arendt, the reason cause to enslave people and end human capacity is to being involved in labour all the time. Another point coming to forefront in this argument is that this activity belongs to special area. Physical needs and meeting these needs must be confidential, personal needs and confidential relations are subjects which are not shared with others and should be hidden from others.

The second activity defined as “work” (*poiesis*), is the sum of production (manufacturing, construction, etc.) actions which human attempts in order to change the world, environment and physical conditions. Work activity works with cause final principle; final product is permanent objects and structures. When it is compared with labour, it allows work freedom because mental design is required for doing the work. A carpenter imagines the image of a chair before he makes this chair, architecture who designs s structure if he wants to build it. However, work contrary to labour consists of violence by its processing. It is required to convert the wood to make a chair, to change the nature in order to build a structure, to apply force on it. Work gets one step ahead of labour as it involves intellectual design has a closer relation with political field as well. Work creates a world where permanent products and people are together and so it is the precondition of political fields, it is prioritized (Altunok, 2007: 47).

Work is the way to make the world their own property for people. By means of work, people make the world permanent, namely materialize it. They make the world beautiful while making him permanent. In this regard, “World is a place with a permanence created by the work, not the labour, which is consumed immediately, and this consumption is repeated continuously” (Berktay, 2012: 48).

Action is the most important and at the top activity of active life among these three activities. Action is the only activity which passes directly from one person to another without mediation of things or material. As being different from labour and work, it is an activity conducted without mediator and tool, and it doesn’t serve any purpose. It neither meets a need nor creates a physical product; it is the main condition of human solidarity. It makes recall and history possible. Action corresponds to plurality status of human, namely the reality that human doesn’t live in the world, people live here in solidarity and that they are from this world. Even though each three activities can be associated with political in any way, plurality is the single valid activity in political sense as it is a main condition to establish political field. With the statement of Arendt,

“plurality is not only essential *-conditio sine qua non-* for politics, it is the one that makes it possible *-conditio per quam-* as well (Arendt, 2000: 36).

It is obvious that action is more important than other activities for human life because people experience that they are free thanks to the action. Action is the ability of human to initialize a new thing, an unpredictable thing also. It is a capacity that comes into existence in each new life. Arendt associates this capacity with spontaneity. Arendt emphasizes that initializing, leading and dominating are the qualifications which free people have, and that *archein* word in Greece states an experience in which ability to be free and start a new thing conflict. Moreover, if we attempt to express this today, he says that we will say: “*Freedom was experienced in spontaneity*” (Arendt, 1961: 166).

The final paragraph of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* shows the centrality of this idea:

But there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning; this beginning is the promise, the only "message" which the end can ever produce. Beginning, before it becomes a historical event, is the supreme capacity of man; politically, it is identical with man's freedom. *Initium ut esset homo creatus est*-“that a beginning be made man was created” said Augustine. This beginning is guaranteed by each new birth; it is indeed every man (Arendt, 1973: 478-479).

The relation between ability of human to initialize and his freedom is considered similarly in his work called *Between Past and Future*. Arendt says from the philosophic statement of Augustinus that:

...freedom is conceived there not as an inner human disposition but as a character of human existence in the world. Man does not possess freedom so much as he, or better his coming into the world, is equated with the appearance of freedom in the universe; man is free because he is a beginning and was so created after the universe had already come into existence: [*Initium*] *ut esset, creatus est homo, ante quern nemo fuit*. In the birth of each man this initial beginning is reaffirmed, because in each instance something new comes into an already existing world which will continue to exist after each individual's death. Because he is a beginning, man can begin; to be human and to be free are one and the same (Arendt, 1961: 167).

Then it can be said that action as beginning corresponds to the reality to rise for Arendt. For Arendt, if there was no birth phenomenon, we couldn't know what innovation is; all “action” would be either behaviours or protection (Arendt, 1997: 91). Man is able to make and the unexpected thing can be expected from him and this means it can be expected that he is able to perform one of the eternal possibilities. At this point, we understand the value of inimitability, uniqueness of human being. Each of us owes our capacity to choose one of the eternal possibilities and to make this choice freely to our own uniqueness, namely spontaneity (Coşkun, 2013: 170).

Thoughts of Arendt regarding totalitarian effort to remove birth rate, spontaneity and individuality are also associated with thoughts about plurality. For Arendt, action that is the unique activity performing directly among people corresponds to plurality situation of human, the reality that people live in this world, not human, and that they are from this world. Plurality demonstrates that people are both the same and different. A world and humanity where plurality has been removed is almost impossible because people become peer similar of a type in such a world, just like animals. On the other

hand, people demonstrate their uniqueness and experience their freedom thanks to this uniqueness only under politic circumstances where plurality potential is moved from force to action (Günel, 2015: 98).

The main purpose of totalitarian mentality is to reduce all people to one person in huge sizes; totalitarian regimes cannot achieve its purpose until spontaneity that is the freedom capacity of people is removed completely. It is not a coincidence that totalitarian, monistic mind tries to remove plurality. However, as people who act in plurality have the capacity to initialize and result arising from the human act can never be determined beforehand, totalitarian mentality attempts blood baths to remove plurality by its internal consistency (Ibid.: 99).

As it is understood what we have transmitted so far, *plurality* is an important concept which direct political thoughts of Arendt. Plurality is the thing that enables human action and therefore human freedom to be demonstrated, in other words it allows human to demonstrate his own uniqueness and who is he actually. Thanks to this plurality situation, human can act and show who he is in real. Human can understand who he is depending on the same plurality, in other words, being heard and seen by other people. We can understand who we are only when we are seen and heard by others.

For human, offering new opportunities by means of the capacity to develop new perspectives and attempt to new activities is associated with plurality that is the one of the most significant qualifications of people. Ant it means that another world is always possible. People, unless the mentioned political capacity is removed, cannot be fitted into a perfect and predictable model and cannot be condemned in a single constant and unchangeable world (Canovan, 2009: 15).

We are safe from to being condemned in subjectivity of singular experiences as we can comprehend and comment the common world we live in from different perspectives because of plurality. Only in this way, in plurality, we can have experience of meaningfulness. As Arendt says, “human in plurality, namely to the extend they live and act in this world people experience meaningfulness as they can talk only with each other and they can make it meaningful to each other and themselves” (Arendt, 2009: 31).

The thing that enables us to see people as a political entity is that people can talk with each other because word makes human a political entity. As for political life, it appears, and should appear, as a stage for struggle among people who have different perspectives and therefore rival views and who generate the majority (Arendt, 2009: 30; Bernstein, 2010: 264).

Another determination of Arendt which we can associate with individuality and spontaneity concepts about plurality is in that: “Plurality is the condition to humanistic action because all of us same; in other words, we are human in a way that we will never be same to anybody else who live now and will live in the future” (Arendt, 2009: 37). This means that we are same just because of being human in a way different from anybody else. Therefore, it is highlighted that singularity of each individual is a singularity which resists to being reduced in a common core. Thus, it makes us think that plurality cannot be reduced to anything else.

For Arendt, who regards world as home for people varying by his uniqueness –not for human- and who comments external world over the plurality concept, ignoring plurality of human in theory means to force individuals for something in practice.



Reality that people live in this earth, not human, namely determination of plurality for humanity appears frequently in Arendt. Canovan (2009), makes this evaluation regarding the plurality concept of Arendt through a quite proper observation:

Lecturing in 1955 on the history of political thought, she remarked that each of the key political thinkers of the past 'has thrown one word into our world, has augmented it by this one word, because he responded rightly and thoughtfully to certain decisively new experiences of his time'. After following her thought trains, we must, I think, concede that in the course of her own response to the experiences of her time, Arendt also 'augmented' the world by one word: the word 'plurality' (Canovan, 1992: 280-281).

For Arendt, network of concepts that is the characteristic of human action - spontaneity, individuality, plurality- are the features which make human life humanistic. Here, meaning of radical evil which Arendt describes as "rendering people inessential as human" means exactly an effort to turn people into a situation that they are not humanistic anymore. It is the exact thing which totalitarian management tries to destroy in extermination camps. All terrifying applications are for destroying the features which make human life humanistic. For Arendt, concentration and extermination camps of totalitarian regimes serve as laboratories where totalitarianism proves the main belief that everything is possible (Arendt, 1973: 437). These camps are the most physical indicator of the effort to turn people into something –where they are not human any more. All experiments, which render people inessential as human and therefore try to change characters of people were conducted in those laboratories.

The camps are meant not only to exterminate people and degrade human beings, but also to serve the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself as an expression of human behaviour and transforming the human personality into a mere thing, into something that even animals are not: for Pavlov's dog, which as we know, was trained to eat not when it was hungry but when a bell rang, was a perverted animal. (...) Under normal circumstances this can never be accomplished, because spontaneity can never be entirely eliminated insofar as it is connected not only with human freedom but with life itself, in the sense of simply keeping alive. It is only in the concentration camps that such an experiment is at all possible, (Arendt, 1973: 438).

While people whose spontaneity were destroyed in concentration camps were turning into something in that they were not human anymore, in that even animals were not turned into, radical evil was performed which Arendt described as "*making human beings as human beings superfluous*"

On the other hand, Arendt states that totalitarianism that tries to destroy plurality and spontaneity tries to produce something which does not actually exist:

Total domination, which strives to organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual, is possible only if each and every person can be reduced to a never changing identity of reactions, so that each of these bundles of reactions can be exchanged at random for any other. The problem is to fabricate something that does not exist, namely, a kind of human species resembling other animal species (Arendt, 1973: 438).

In *Auschwitz*, Nazi leaders thought that "everything is possible" with the trust they felt on their almighty. From this idea, they believed that they could remove plurality of their victims and –in a way that making human beings as human beings superfluous -

they could produce a human sort similar to other animal types, in other words something that didn't exist actually.

Thomas Dürr (2009) evidences of totalitarian logic that everything is possible and people can be dominated completely can be removed firstly by plurality phenomenon, namely the situation that a large number of people live on the earth (Dürr, 2009: 165).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Totalitarian experiment has included radical evil into humanistic matters which arises as rendering people inessential as human by removing spontaneity and plurality. Arendt thinks that doesn't and even cannot know results of totalitarian experiment exactly. However, radical evil is a problem that can apply to every moment and everybody where suitable circumstances appear. Predicting tomorrow from today is as difficult as describing the most extreme type of evil which holds on totalitarianism through strong roots.

Our concerns will continue regarding that radical evil can be repeated in different events and phenomenon and that quite normal people around us can be believed in totalitarian solutions by some means or other, because radical evil is now a phenomenon placed into our civilization. The danger indicated by this phenomenon is not removed, and it doesn't seem that it will be removed. Arendt gives justification, to the existence of an annoying but undeniable possibility that similar offenses might be committed in the future, in the final sentence he wrote for *Banality of Evil*. For him, it doesn't mean that the most radical type of evil wasn't experienced and it grew and developed in totalitarianism land only by the effort of Nazis, and that danger passed and wouldn't repeat again. Once the unique one appears, then it may be example for the future (Arendt, 2012: 278).

Well, what will serve us as a guarantee against evil when the mass domination happens? For Arendt, we should trust on competences to initialize the life again in such situations. Initialization idea is not only a hope for the future, but also an opportunity hidden in the capacity of human to "being born", born and produce the new one, as well. Human, who goes towards action in his entity, is the one that will draw us out of dark periods of history. With the talking action, human has a dimension that keeps people safe from regarding each other as only physical objects and so regularizes the humanistic life by this aspect. Therefore, we can be reengaged in this world by means of we can talk, namely we can act. Here, Arendt describes this engagement as a second birth. Ability to initialize something new makes people remember that they come in this world in order to initialize something new and demonstrate something new, not to die. There is a close relation between ability of human to initialize and his freedom and human can overcome big evils kept in history thanks to this relation.

There is eternal series of possibilities for human who has a natural ability in terms of ability to initialize the new one; in this case, the only thing that can overcome evil is to use power to initialize the new one. If people didn't have any power to change and modify, humanity would turn into a ruin against evil. Being born phenomenon, ability of human to initialize something new, something unpredictable does not always result in good, of course. Totalitarianism is a result of this unpredictability; however, ability of man to initialize something new, and touching the new one, includes a plurality into itself all the time. As we can comprehend and comment again the world we live in from different perspectives due to plurality, and moreover as we can talk to people, we can

comprehend that plurality is the law of earth. Nobody wants to be caged in a single, same and closed world when we encounter something new; what really matter for people is the plurality phenomenon which will make the world much more meaningful. For this reason, the only way to overcome evil is that people would perform experiences which wouldn't cause to forget this plurality, in short that people realize that *people live in this world, not human*.

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