

Master's Thesis

**EXISTENTIAL ROOTS OF ANXIETY IN THE POLITICAL**

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## Introduction

One of the triggers for paradigmatic turns in political philosophy and theory is the increase of uncertainty in the contemporary world and, consequently - growing anxiety. Besides the ongoing war in Ukraine, there are multiple crises taking place including the western democratic world. The increasing uncertainty that defines the social and political realms intensifies the inability to predict the future. Such a situation requires new theoretical approaches that would emphasize the role of emotional, unconscious, and existential dimensions in political processes, decisions and the place of the individual within there. Acknowledging that reality is uncertain provides the realization that rationalists' explanations and predictions are not always plausible for political theory. One of the examples of such methodological turns in political theory is ontological security theory, which focuses on anxiety and insecurity in politics on both the individual and collective levels.<sup>1</sup> It relies on the premise that there are no stable and objective meanings for knowledge formation and that political reality is continuously altering. Ontological security theory is derived chiefly from the philosophy of existence and psychoanalysis. Thus, while my previous MA thesis in International Relations addressed ontological security theory and discourse analysis of Laclau and Mouffe, this thesis focuses on the existential perspective of *anxiety* by arguing for the importance of the work of Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and Hannah Arendt for the conceptualization of individual anxiety within the collective dimension of existence.<sup>2</sup>

In this thesis, *anxiety* is approached as a fundamental mode of being rooted in the ontological structure of individual existence. Furthermore, it implies that *uncertainty* is always a present and unavoidable condition of reality. As a response to uncertain reality, anxiety forces individuals to establish firm explanations for their existence. Thus, the problem is as Arendt stresses that anxiety and loneliness could make us catch up with any suggested certainty.

Initially, anxiety as a fundamental existential problem, was introduced by Kierkegaard and Heidegger. However, many existential and post-structuralist philosophers dedicate significant attention to anxiety as a central phenomenon that influences other aspects of our existence and

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<sup>1</sup> Some prominent scholars involved in this theory are A. Giddens, B. Rumelili, C. Kinnvall, J. Mitzen and B. Steele.

<sup>2</sup> Starkova, A-L.(2021). Russia's Sovereign Democracy through the Lens of Exceptionalism and Ontological Security Theories, MA thesis, University of Lund.

our relationships with the world and others. Hence, I interpret anxiety here as a force (psychic state or process) that uncovers an individual self, which means that anxiety is to be taken as a creative potential that leads to the self-realization of an individual. Relying on the existential perspective on anxiety, I attempt to explicate the nature of anxiety and its role for individuals who inevitably exist in political space.

Additionally, this thesis critically examines the foundations that Kierkegaard and Heidegger made for the Western philosophical tradition by introducing the concept of anxiety and addresses the question of how their conceptualization of anxiety can be appropriated into contemporary political theory through Hannah Arendt. Namely, I argue that she offers a way out of anxiety and loneliness through her ideas of *spontaneity* and *action* that actualize natality.

Thus, the thesis relies on several premises. First, anxiety is approached through the lens of existential philosophy (leaving aside clinical psychology assumptions and behaviourist approaches). Secondly, the domain of politics is defined through the individual experience of a subject within plural and multi-layered reality (instead of defining politics as a network of institutions). Thirdly, anxiety is considered in its distinction to fear. Fear, in this case, is defined in Hobbesian terms as an emotion that is a primary factor driving individuals towards social interaction<sup>3</sup> and action. The main distinguishing characteristic of fear is that the latter obtains a referent object towards which it is directed (for instance, fear of violent death), while anxiety does not have a definable object.

Hence referring back to Kierkegaard and Heidegger, we have the opportunity to incorporate their perspective into contemporary political theory, establishing the assumption that anxiety has a creative potential that discloses individual potentiality on the collective level. One way of recognizing anxiety is by considering an individual within the space of being with others (*Mitsein*).<sup>4</sup> While Heidegger precisely explicated the negative effect of *Das Man*, Arendt emphasises the possibility of a new beginning that unfolds in the realm of being with others.

Thus, anxiety is a psychic state or process which discloses itself in the social realm and has no definable referent object or a reason that causes it. Instead, anxiety is depicted as a primary factor that may influence decisions over the operations of reason. Relying on Kierkegaard and Heidegger, the third chapter suggests that anxiety should not be simply “managed” and

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<sup>3</sup> Hobbes, Th. (2008 [1651]). *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civil, Reprint Publishing.*

<sup>4</sup> Heidegger, M. (2008 [1927]). *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

eliminated as behaviourist approaches propose. Instead, anxiety can be understood as a creative power that uncovers individual authenticity and multiple potentialities of seeing ourselves and relating to the world and others. Thus, it opens a space for new beginnings through a spontaneous action, including spontaneous thought that reaches beyond the dominant paradigms of thinking.

The structure of the political space in this thesis is defined in the following way. First, the primary properties of the political space are the uncertainty of reality and the contingency of events. Second, referring to Heidegger, being is becoming, Dasein is Being in the world and Being free for its ownmost potentialities for being. Thus, an individual is a potentiality himself, conditioned by the totality of the ontological structural whole. Secondly, Arendt's understanding of the public space defines the political, where she distinguishes the social and the political.

As mentioned earlier, the existentialists dimension in the political theory can be traced already in Hobbes. Despite his realist stance and the social contract theory, nevertheless Hobbes introduces the existential dimension into modern political theory. Mainly, he went beyond the rationalist structures defended by classical liberalism because, he denies reason as the main factor for human action. For Hobbes, fear is the primary emotion that moves individuals to avoid violent death. Fear influences individuals to sacrifice their rights and freedoms and delegate them to the Leviathan. While Hobbes stresses the fear of violent death, Kierkegaard and Heidegger's existential writings focus on anxiety that does not presuppose any precise external object that causes anxiety. Instead, they place it into a space of uncertainty that intensifies anxiety. In the context of uncertainty, a subject usually experiences anxiety in front of the unknown, and the multiplicity of possibilities unfolding in front of him. Thus, following Heidegger, a subject is initially *thrown into the world*.<sup>5</sup> This world is the world of pre-given meanings and identities within which one is *falling*, but the subject should find its way to his authentic life within uncertainty. Thus, anxiety is exhibited here as a core element of the structure of being. Thus, throughout this thesis, I trace the contribution that existential philosophy made in approaching anxiety. Furthermore, the possibility of multidisciplinary study of the matter opens a perspective for further methodological frameworks that could benefit political theory.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The first chapter explores how Kierkegaard introduces the concept of anxiety as one of the central issues of existential philosophy that helps us to reveal the individual self and subjectivity that is vis-à-vis universal laws and objective truth.

The second chapter focuses on Heidegger's understanding of anxiety inherent in Kierkegaard's key assumptions on anxiety and the self. Anxiety in this chapter is revealed in its relationship to the ontological structure of Dasein and several elements of the latter – *fear, care* and the fundamental ontological characteristics unified by care: *falling, thrownness, existentiality* – that are disclosed through anxiety.

The third chapter emphasizes how Arendt addresses the problem of anxiety and the place of the individual within the structure of the political. Anxiety is defined in its connection to loneliness, and following Kierkegaard and Heidegger, the creative potential of anxiety is demonstrated. Based on that, there might be two possible ways out of anxiety. First, an individual finds his way in the social (in analogy to Das Man). The second way out of anxiety is in the public space, where an individual realizes himself through action and spontaneity, with the possibility to resist a violent order. Therefore, it argues in contrast to Heidegger, for public space as a necessary condition for actualizing the individual.

## Chapter I

### Uncertainty and the Individual Level of Anxiety: The Existential Roots Of Kierkegaard

This chapter defines *anxiety* as an existential phenomenon inherent to an individual as a necessary condition for actualizing one's subjectivity. In other words, anxiety gives us access to *the self*, where the self is a beholder of subjective truth and manifold of potentialities. Thus, anxiety is a fundamental mode of being rooted in the ontological structure of individual existence.

If anxiety is a way to *the self* through one's connection to God, then the experience of *anxiety* enables an individual to deal with the uncertainty in life by embracing the feeling of anxiety as a power that gives the opportunity to establish a connection between the self and the God. In this process, the leap of faith as a creative potentiality of anxiety opens a path for an authentic self to act by actualizing its own potentialities instead of securing oneself by the constructed idea of certainty. An objective truth or universal laws usually might underpin this idea of certainty. Therefore, by revealing the creative potential of anxiety Kierkegaard simultaneously addresses the problem of *uncertainty*.

#### 1.1 Paradox of Faith – Teleological Suspension of the Ethical

This section uncovers the relationships between *reason* and *faith*, in which *anxiety* plays a crucial role. Mainly, anxiety allows faith to become a guiding force for manifesting a subjective truth (that is reflected in a decision, judgement, or action) instead of the *reasoning* that tends towards an objective truth and universal generalizations. Second, these relationships imply that *subjectivity* and *finitude* belong to the *particularity* of individual experience. This particularity suspends the idea of eternal universal laws. Thus, Kierkegaard argues that *anxiety* (overlapped with faith) influences the authentic decision of a subject and allows access to *the self*. In this process, the leap of faith as a creative outcome of anxiety opens a path for an authentic self to act and to be in uncertainty.

Kierkegaard's interpretation of the Biblical story of Abraham (Genesis 22:7-8) in *Fear and Trembling* allows us to grasp the nature of anxiety and how it affects an individual subject. In his argument for the *paradox of faith*, Kierkegaard addresses the idea of the teleological suspension of the ethical. Thus, the first paradox, or *Problema I*, uncovers the critical contradiction between reason and faith by demolishing the central claim that there is a universal principle to everything, and reason has access to the ultimate truth. By illustrating the paradox of faith, where faith oversteps the universal, Kierkegaard defines subjectivity and shows how anxiety manifests simultaneously with faith. In other words, the function of anxiety is revealed in the paradox of faith.

This is the way in which Kierkegaard explains how the universal eliminates particularity of individual existence:

“The ethical as such is the universal, it applies to everyone, and the same thing is expressed from another point of view by saying that it applies to every instant. It reposes immanently in itself, it has nothing outside itself, which is its telos, but is itself telos for everything outside it, and when this has been incorporated by the ethical, it can go no further. Conceived immediately as physical and psychical, the particular individual is the particular which has its telos in the universal, and its task to is to express itself constantly in it, to abolish its particularity in order to become the universal.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus, contrary to the ethical as the universal, the paradox of faith implies that faith does not presuppose the subordination of an individual to the universal. Instead, these relationships between oneself and God are uncovered in the moment of anxiety, which triggers the leap of faith. Therefore, faith constitutes a particular individual self in its absolute relation to the absolute, which is God. Such a connection allows us to reach the self. Kierkegaard brings an example by defining a sin. Conventionally, in order to avoid sin, *the ethical* requires an individual to be subordinated to *the universal*. However, such subordination drives an individual far from his own particular self (from his own potentialities), and this is indeed a *sin* according to Kierkegaard.

“Faith is precisely this paradox, that individual as the particular is higher than the universal, is justified over against it, is not subordinate but superior... after he has been subordinated as the particular to the universal, now through the universal becomes the individual who as the particular is superior to the universal, inasmuch as the individual as the particular stands in an absolute relation to the absolute.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kierkegaard, S. (1941 [1843]). *Fear and Trembling*, tr. Walter Lowrie, London: Penguin Classics, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Kierkegaard, S. (1973). *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, Tr. Robert Brethall. New York, The Modern Library, p.130.

Thus, his *paradox of faith* argument supports other claims of Kierkegaard expressed in *Fear and Trembling*. Namely, according to him, there is no closed philosophical system we should trust (as *the universal*); there is no ultimate objective truth, no linear movement, and no universal law. Instead, *subjective truth* is actualized only if there is a subject and his concrete experience. Moreover, the idea of *concreteness* (that opposes the transcendental) is essential. Hence, truth the subjective truth is revealed in the direct connection between the self and God in the concreteness of a situation when anxiety triggers faith.

Explicating the *faith* of Abraham that suspends *the universal*, Kierkegaard shows it in the distinction between the knight of faith and the tragic hero. While the tragic hero remains in the realm of *the universal*, Abraham, as the knight of faith, suspends it: “By his act, he overstepped the ethical entirely and possessed a higher telos outside of it, in relation to which he suspended the former.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, the knight of faith transgresses the universal, experiencing anxiety, which brings him into the state of his concrete singular being.

This relation of *the self* to *the absolute*, that is, the absolute connection between the self and God is accessible precisely through experiencing anxiety and the leap of faith that accompanies the former in a moment of very passion. On the contrary, if we fall deep into despair or in the eternal reasoning on the other side, that are caused by anxiety, we can no longer make any authentic choice. Therefore, “whereas a tragic hero is great by reason of his moral virtue, Abraham is great by reason of a personal virtue.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the one who commits such a decision relying in his particular being holds an absolute responsibility for himself and therefore, obtains freedom. Nevertheless, doubt remains as a necessary condition of faith, through which subjectivity is manifest.

Although Kierkegaard does not argue against truth as such, his argument on anxiety expresses in favour of subjective truth, distinct from objective truth. Anxiety allows us to access the ontological structure of existence, which constitutes the subjective truth in its particularity and concreteness. The interpretation of Abraham story demonstrates it by the reconciliation of *anxiety*, *subjective truth* and *faith* as mutually unfolding phenomena. As a result, such an approach uncovers the emotional and irrational domain of thinking. Therefore, access to

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<sup>8</sup> Kierkegaard, S. (1968 [1843]). *Fear and Trembling*, Penguin Classics, p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

knowledge is only possible through individual experience. Thus, Kierkegaard holds a strong position against any closed system of knowledge such as the one promoted by Hegel. “In the Hegelian philosophy das Äussere (die Entäusserung) is higher than das Innere,”<sup>10</sup> For Kierkegaard, *the paradox of faith* demonstrates that the particular is higher than the universal.

Hence, we can hardly protect ourselves from anxiety by establishing stable systems for explaining reality and interpretation of meanings. Any solid system of explanation of the world can collapse once an individual meets unpredictable misery. That is why, employing Kierkegaard’s assumptions, this thesis argues that as far as anxiety indicates the realization of multiple potentialities of one’s existence, it should not be suppressed by securing oneself with universalized laws or stable identities; instead, one should elaborate more flexible or spontaneous ways of dealing with reality.

Although Kierkegaard argues against a single universal guiding principle, philosophy for him does not presuppose an absolute absence of ground. Rather our thinking should be based on some assumptions that acknowledge the *uncertainty* of reality as its fundamental property. Then, the connection between the self and the God as a radical individual responsibility, or passion and either/or principle can guide, in order to not be lost in uncertainty and become stuck in undecidedness because of the multiplicity of possibilities. Such a way out happens through anxiety and the leap of faith. Therefore, anxiety emerges in this threshold between the ethical and religious, and one can overcome anxiety only if one embraces the absence of explanations. Kierkegaard demonstrates how Abraham was driven by *virtue of the absurd* into a leap of faith into uncertainty.

According to him, anxiety arrives with the despair from the realization of uncertainty of existence: “If there were no eternal consciousness in a man, if at the foundation of all there lay only a wildly seething power which writhing with obscure passions produced everything that is great and everything that is insignificant, if a bottomless void never satiated lay hidden beneath all what then would life be but despair?”<sup>11</sup> One can find himself in despair due to the lack of a clear picture of reality that would imply an unambiguous telos. Thus, the function of faith is revealed. Through faith as the absolute connection to God individual is capable of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> Kierkegaard, S. (1941 [1843]). *Fear and Trembling*, tr. Walter Lowrie, London: Penguin Classics, p. 5.

coming along with the world and attain to one's own self, purified from identities and meanings created in the external world. In this case, anxiety, in its simultaneous occurrence with faith, helps an individual realise himself in uncertainty.

Thus, *anxiety* is shown as *dread* in front of God, which comes when an individual withholds the absolute connection between himself and God. That enables us to distance ourselves from external explanations. Although, for Kierkegaard, God dictates the ethical principles, they still prevent an individual from a genuine connection with the god. The relationship with the absolute presupposes radical duty and responsibility in front of God. Radical responsibility does not presuppose compromises, on the contrary, it relies on the either/or, which is a personal decision made in the moment of anxiety: "the decision is the instant of madness."<sup>12</sup> The ability to open oneself to the absolute is the leap of faith that oversteps the idea of certainty and makes a decision, uncovering the creative potentiality of anxiety.

## 1.2 Either/Or

"How this anxiety enhances your beauty! Still anxiety in itself is not beautiful; it is so only, when one sees at the same time the energy, which overcomes it!"<sup>13</sup>

This section reveals the concept of *either/or* and the role it plays for a decision. Namely, in this very moment of *either/or*, faith and anxiety mutually drive an individual to manifest one's subjectivity through a decision. Based on that, *either/or* is an existential moment that allows the transition from the ethical mode of existence to the religious. Implementation of *either/or* entails that there is no place for consensus that we could achieve through the work of reason and an agreement.

Ambiguity and liminality of reality can lead us to infinite reasoning that searches for objective truth to make a judgement. Contrary to the processes of reasoning that would subordinate the particularity under the universality, Kierkegaard argues in favour of *either/or* as a basis for making a decision. "Caution, my beautiful unknown! Caution! To step out of a carriage is not so simple a matter; sometimes, it is a very decisive step."<sup>14</sup> Thus, the *either/or* principle drives a decision in front of the unknown, and anxiety activates such decisiveness. Kierkegaard

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<sup>12</sup> Derrida, J. (1992). *Gift of the Death*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Kierkegaard, S. (1973), *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, tr. Robert Bretall, New York: The Modern Library, p.34

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

depicts three modes of existence: *aesthetical* (driven by maximization of pleasures, utilitarian ethics), *ethical* (by universal ethics), and *religious* (driven by anxiety and faith). The either/or principle is embedded within religious mode of existence.

Kierkegaard claims “all men are bores and the boredom is the root of all evil.”<sup>15</sup> Hence, boredom drives an individual to ascribe meanings to one’s actions in order to eliminate boredom. By analogy, an individual has a wish to eliminate anxiety. Secondly, boredom for Kierkegaard is emptiness, which is all-penetrating; thus, it seems to be an open space for meaning creation. The notion of boredom is essential because, through this notion, we grasp Kierkegaard’s position on *meaning creation*, which is at the same time a remedy for anxiety. Therefore, instead of acting in accordance with *passion*, we avoid boredom and anxiety by adhering to pre-existed meanings in order to make a decision.

Kierkegaard approaches pleasure as a subjective property, which drives a man towards the aesthetic way of existence dominated by the utilitarian nature of pleasure. At the same time, pleasure is still a manifestation of subjective truth: “the essence of pleasure does not lie in the thing enjoyed but in the accompanying consciousness.” He reveals here the realisation of meaninglessness experienced by an aesthetic man that experiences boredom and thus he needs to create new meanings in life. Thus, he arrives to the ethical mode in the search for meaning. If boredom moves us from the aesthetic mode of existence (where we maximize our pleasures), to the ethical; then *anxiety* can move us from the ethical, where we were subjected to the universal, to the religious – where we exercise faith and realize the connection of oneself to God. Therefore, one actualizes oneself in his potentialities through establishing the connection to God.

The existential *either/or* distinction allows one to make a decision that happens without explanations that are based on reasoning. There are no criteria for choosing between modes of life. "And although my life now has to a certain degree it is either/or behind it, I know well that it may still encounter many situations where the either/or will have its full significance. My sincere opinion and my friendly counsel are as follows: Do or don't do it – you will regret both."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.22.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

The aesthetic life is a rational life since man is consciously searching for pleasure, avoiding unpleasant things in a utilitarian manner. While aesthetic man is driven by reasonable rationalization, striving for the aim that is new pleasures, sensations, and new meanings, he tries to overcome anxiety and boredom by avoiding them. The ethical mode suggests its criteria for choice through the universal ethics. On the contrary, in the religious mode, where the *either/or* decision implies an absence of a secure footing: “What is to come?...That is how it is with me: always an *empty space* before me, what drives me on is a result that lies behind me.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, the one deals with this emptiness through the leap of faith and *either/or*, without an attempt to manage anxiety by any other means.

The role of *anxiety* in Kierkegaard's writings is revealed in its connection to *reason* and *faith*, and the *either/or* principle. Moreover, anxiety bears the potential to open a way out of a closed systems of thought (such as ideology, for example) that seemingly has the capacity to secure an individual from anxiety and give him a sense of certainty and answers on how to relate to this world.

These claims of Kierkegaard regarding subjective truth, *either/or*, anxiety and leap of faith influenced the ways of developing existential perspectives in the political theory of Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt. Moreover, Heidegger develops the idea about the strong connection between anxiety and individual potentiality and embeds it into the ontological level.

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<sup>17</sup> Kierkegaard, S. (1992 [1843]). *Either/Or*, tr. Hannag,A., Penguin Classics, p. 40.

## Chapter II

### Uncertainty and the Individual Level of Anxiety: The Existential Roots of Heidegger

Anxiety (*Angst*) for Heidegger is the basic fundamental mood (*Grundstimmung*). In other words, it is a way of attunement to the world that opens the possibility for an authentic experience by disclosure of *the self*. Since anxiety is rooted in the structure of Being as a basic state of mind, it acquires a fundamental ontological character. The way of approaching anxiety in Heidegger's philosophy is by revealing anxiety through consideration of the fundamental characteristics of Being and their relationships among each other and to the whole structure of Being – the totality of the structural whole. This chapter, through its focus on these relationships, exhibits how anxiety opens a path for Dasein to realize oneself as the *Potentiality-of-being*, which is in addition to *Being-in-the-world* and *being-with-others* the fundamental ontological characteristics. Thus, this chapter focuses on the aspect of how *anxiety* discloses *Existentiality* (Dasein as potentiality-for-being that projects and understands) of Dasein that is determined by *Thrownness* and *Fallenness*.

#### 2.1 Heidegger's *Being and Time*: The place of anxiety in the ontological structure of Being

Realizing one's own potentiality for being through anxiety allows one to uncover his ownmost potentiality and the way of interpreting the world and himself within the world, purified from pre-given conceptual and theoretical presuppositions and prejudices. In this section, I focus on two initial premises that Heidegger highlights in this regard. First, he distinguishes between fear and anxiety, although both are basic states-of-mind. Second, he analyses anxiety in relation to the structural elements of Being as a whole. Therefore, in this section, I focus on two aspects of anxiety: the distinction between fear and anxiety; and anxiety in its relations to the structural ontological whole of care as one of the existentials of Dasein (existentiality, facticity, fallenness).

## *Anxiety in relation to Fear*

The phenomenological interpretation of fear and anxiety mainly claims that anxiety, as well as fear, is a basic state-of-mind of Dasein, or ways of attunement (moods of Dasein). The primary function of both is that disclosure of the Self occurs through experiencing these moods of existence. Fear always has an object that triggers fear, while anxiety is connected to *nothing* and *nowhere*; at the same time, it is so close to oneself. Therefore, the feeling of home and homelessness are associated with the state of anxiety:

“When something threatening brings itself close, anxiety does not 'see' any definite 'here' or 'yonder' from which it comes. That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens is Nowhere. Anxiety 'does not know' what that in the face of which it is anxious is. 'Nowhere', however, does not signify nothing: this is where any region lies, and there too lies any disclosedness of the world for essentially spatial Being-in....it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one's breath, and yet it is nowhere.”<sup>18</sup>

Not only anxiety but fear also reveals Dasein as Being-there. However, the main difference is that fear does not turn us away from falling into the “they”, while anxiety does. Heidegger explains it by attributing the ontic connection of fear with ontic entities. Therefore, there are three fundamental differences between anxiety and fear that Heidegger suggests.

First, fear has its referent object, while anxiety does not have a precise referent object. Mainly, no obvious cause of anxiety can be detected in the external world of entities. The precise causes that we try to find in order to explain anxiety belong to the realm of the ontic entities. The ontological meaning of anxiety is in its connection to the nowhere or nothing. Second, our ‘turning-away from falling’ happens in a state of anxiety, and not in fear. Because the latter is provoked by ontic entities, while anxiety has an ontological character. Thus, Heidegger argues: “Our Interpretation of fear as a state-of-mind has shown that in each case that in the face of which we fear is a detrimental entity within-the-world which comes from some definite region but is close by and is bringing itself close, and yet might stay away.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, by opposing fear and anxiety, Heidegger prescribes the ontological significance to anxiety.

Therefore, the third difference is that anxiety is more primordial than fear. In support of this premise: „Thus the turning-away of falling is not a fleeing that is founded upon a fear of entities

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<sup>18</sup> Heidegger, M. (2008 [1927]). *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, p.231.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 230.

within-the-world. Fleeing that is so grounded is still less a character of this turning-away, when what this turning-away does is precisely to turn thither towards entities within-the-world by absorbing itself in them. *The turning-away of falling is grounded rather in anxiety, which in turn is what first makes fear possible.*<sup>20</sup> Thus, unlike fear, anxiety can bring oneself back to the state of Dasein as Being-as-such and Potentiality-for-Being. It is the world as a whole itself that makes individuals anxious.

### *Anxiety in Relation to Fallenness, Facticity, Existentiality*

As Karin Kustassoo demonstrates, the works of the young Heidegger cast light on the methodological and ontological problems in philosophy because he criticizes assumptions that rely on generalizing theorization. Instead, Heidegger argues for opening the access to things, as they are present at hand.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Heidegger asks how we experience asking the question of “is there something?”. In other words, how is this experience of questioning lived rather than how is it given. Heidegger uncovers the phenomenon of anxiety through his phenomenological method of ontological-existential Interpretation of Being. Besides its ontological role, he states that anxiety serves the main methodological function. “As a state-of-mind, which will satisfy these methodological requirements, the phenomenon of anxiety will be made basic for our analysis.”<sup>22</sup>

Thus, Heidegger employs anxiety as an ontological-existential category that helps to constitute Being in its very ontological sense. Anxiety is primarily stated as an ontological phenomenon and is, the crucial element of the ontological structure of Being. It is unlike psychological theories that present anxiety as an ontic entity triggered by the *world of ontic entities*. Nevertheless, for Heidegger, anxiety obtains hardly graspable nature. Therefore, according to him, anxiety does not have a clear relationship with ontic entities. It has been shown through its relationship to fear. However, anxiety makes one realize oneself as a Being that is subjected to the structures of meanings of the “they” (Das Man) because of the necessary conditions of our existence –*thrownness* and *fallenness*. Thus, anxiety opens a third ontological characteristic

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>21</sup> Kustassoo, K. (2018). „*Paths towards philosophy: Søren Kierkegaard's place in Martin Heidegger's first Freiburg period lecture courses (1919-1923)*”, PhD Thesis, Leiden University, The Netherlands, Ipkamp Printing, Enschede, 2018, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> Heidegger, M. (2008 [1927]). *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics., p. 227.

which is *existentiality* of Dasein (Dasein as a Being that has possibilities that distinguish oneself from any other beings).

*The totality of the structural whole*, which we should look at to find *anxiety* there, consists of multiple elements (modes, moods, fundamental ontological characteristics), relationships among them, which are unified by *care (Sorge)*. The role of anxiety here is that we can disclose all those elements of Dasein's Being: "As one of Dasein's possibilities of Being, anxiety – together with Dasein itself as disclosed in it – provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping Dasein's primordial totality of Being."<sup>23</sup>

Besides being *thrown-into-the-world* (thrownness, facticity of Dasein) at birth and remaining as such until death, Dasein is constantly *falling* (fallenness, inauthenticity and publicness of Dasein) into the space of others (das Man). These structures of meanings and interpretations in which Dasein falls penetrate our everydayness. The narratives of the "they" (publicness and inauthenticity modes of being) have the power to impose a certain logic on how to interpret the world and what is one's place in this world. Thus, the central role of *anxiety* is to allow an individual to sense this vulnerable condition of our existence in this world and the possible inauthenticity of our existence that prevents the disclosure of Dasein as *potentiality-for-Being*.

Therefore, once we experience anxiety, we may feel alienated and lonely, but we open a space for authentic meaning creation so that the disclosure of Dasein may occur. Anxiety drives one to such a realization by turning oneself back to his own self, where one can realize his being as becoming that unfolds in its ownmost potentialities, as the Being free for. In section 40 of *Being and Time* ("The Basic State-of-Mind of Anxiety as a Distinctive Way in which Dasein is Disclosed"), Heidegger addresses why anxiety acquires such a distinctive role as a state-of-mind and fundamental attunement (*Stimmung*, mood) what is being disclosed in anxiety. Mainly, the authentic Self is disclosed as *Dasein's Being-in-the-world* and as *Potentiality-for-Being* in the *totality of the structural whole*. This mode of an authentic Self that is actualized by one ownmost *Potentiality-for-Being* is rooted in the being-ahead-of-itself. Thus, the *existentiality* of Dasein is attained through *understanding* and *projection*.

Besides the *existentiality* of Dasein, there are such characteristics as the *facticity* of Dasein (while Being-in-the-world) which presupposes the thrownness of Dasein into the world and its attunement, which implies the need to be attuned to the already existing world (anxiety is one

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

of the attunements). The third fundamental ontological characteristic is the *fallenness* (while being-with-others, *Mitsein*) of Dasein. *Fallenness* signifies the condition of falling into the realm of the "they" and presupposes the inauthenticity and publicness of Dasein as its modes. All three characteristics are necessary conditions of Being of Dasein, and they are always there. However, anxiety allows to distant oneself from the falling, and instead it discloses *existentiality* of Dasein, that means one will be open to its ownmost possibilities.

### *Anxiety in relation to Care*

In addition to explicating the relationships between anxiety and fear, fallenness, and thrownness, Heidegger reveals the role of anxiety by situating it within the primordial totality of the structural whole, which is care (*Sorge*). Thus, we considered the unity of three fundamental ontological characteristics - existentiality, thrownness and fallenness, which are unified by care. He distinguishes care from concern, solicitude, willing, wishing, addiction, and urge. While all these moods are directed towards ontic entities (wishing for something, addiction to something), care acquires an ontological character that unites the whole ontological structure of Being, within which the authentic Self can be disclosed. In other words, care does not concern distinct objects or concepts of the external world. Rather, care serves as an existential basis for an individual that allows for the unique and the holistic relationships of an individual with the world. Care is defined as a primordial structural totality: being-ahead-of-itself-in-being-already-in-as-being-amidst. Thus, through existentiality, thrownness and fallenness we define care structure as of the existentials of Dasein (a structure inherent in any possible world).

Each of those three obtains its modes. Namely, the modes of existentiality are understanding and projecting; for facticity, it is thrownness and attunement; for fallenness, it is inauthenticity and publicness. Anxiety has the power to disclose these modes of our existence. Therefore, we become aware of our falling and the inauthenticity of our existence, as well as we become aware of our own existence in its ownmost possibilities.

Namely, one realizes himself as a potentiality-for-being that is free-for any unique and own possibilities (identities, meanings, decisions, ways of interpretation). However, the patterns of seeing the world given to us by the "they" or das Man also can serve as a remedy for anxiety since they establish the feeling of security and certainty. However, das Man closes down our own potential understanding of the world, which is subjective, by suggesting a certainty.

Falling - is a basic kind of Being which belongs to everydayness. Namely, the falling of Dasein signifies that Dasein is alongside the world. As was shown before, by the falling Dasein manifests its connection to the “they” that closes off the authentic potentialities of Dasein’s Being, and it is capable of preventing the disclosure of the authentic Self: “*In falling Dasein turns away from itself.*”<sup>24</sup> Anxiety, in contrary to falling, forces the disclosure, which means turning back to the authentic Self. The falling of Dasein entails that Dasein is absorbed into the world but also into the ‘they’.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, through experiencing anxiety, a subject obtains the opportunity to turn away from falling. Only then can we grasp the world and our experience in the world *as such*.

Therefore, Heidegger states that *care* is one of the basic existential phenomena that is strongly connected to anxiety because in anxiety Dasein’s Being reveals itself as care: “care as being-ahead-of itself Being-already-in Being-alongside”<sup>26</sup>, thus, “care is a unity of ontological structural totality.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, care embraces the unity of all three (falling, existentiality, facticity). Thus, anxiety opens it up to one’s authentic ownmost potentialities because it is not directed anywhere. If anxiety creates disengagement with the world of the “they” and ontic entities, then care establishes an individual’s involvement with this world. Therefore, *anxiety* and *care* are in an intimate relationship and constitutive of the authentic Self and Being-there. Consequently, by considering anxiety through these three kinds of relationships, we grasp the idea of Heidegger’s existential ontology that allows us to access the question of Being-in-the-world as such, where anxiety inevitably plays the role for its disclosure.

Kierkegaard was concerned with the similar problem, namely with accessing the particular existence of a singular individual. While Kierkegaard arrives at the Self through the reconciliation of faith and anxiety, Heidegger arrives at uncovering the Self through the reconciliation of anxiety and care as a core that brings one to the closest point with oneself and realizing oneself as an authentic potentiality of Being-free-for.

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<sup>24</sup>Heidegger, M. (2008 [1927]). *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, p. 230.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 235.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 236.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 236.

## 2.2 Tranquilization of Anxiety by Certainty of the “they”

In this section, I return to the question of *certainty* that was previously addressed by Kierkegaard, which is a common concern of the western philosophical tradition. Tranquillizing or calming oneself by establishing some artificial certainty is considered by Heidegger as a deceptive way of dealing with anxiety.

*Certainty* is established due to the fallenness of Dasein. Publicness and inauthenticity are modes of fallenness that provide meanings and ways of explaining the world. Thus, the ‘they’ gives a sense of security to the Self, by their discourse that establishes certainty. The elimination of uncertainty that is achieved by the tranquillizing effect of the discourse of the “they” closes down our authentic potentialities and unique ways of interpreting the world.

As Heidegger writes that in the mode of publicity and inauthenticity (“the they-self”) Dasein is fallen away from itself as an authentic *potentiality for Being its Self*.<sup>28</sup> However, the Self is for the most part inauthentic, because fallenness is always there. Since the space of “they” establishes certainty (be its discourse and the way of interpreting the world), one may easily lose oneself because the “they” provide answers to our existence. While anxiety serves an indicator of questioning the foundations of our existence, the “they” in the falling of Dasein suggest answers as a remedy. For Heidegger, it does so by idle talk rooted in discursive practices: “Idle talk and the way things have been publicly interpreted (which idle talk includes) constitute themselves in Being-with-one another.”<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, the “they” serve as a space, which can provide tranquillity through its discourse, freeing individual from anxiety by establishing *certainty*. As Heidegger argues: “Idle talk and ambiguity, having seen everything, having understood everything, develop the supposition that Daseins disclosedness, which is so available and prevalent, can guarantee to Dasein that all the possibilities of its Being will be secure, genuine and full.”<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the realm of the “they” prevents the disclosure of an authentic Self, mainly through suggesting an idea of *certainty* through discourse and language: “The supposition of the ‘they’

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.220.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 221.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 222.

that one is leading and sustaining a full and genuine 'life', brings Dasein a tranquillity, for which everything is 'in the best of order' and all doors are open."<sup>31</sup> In other words, as Heidegger suggests: "Falling Being-in-the-world, which tempts itself, is at the same time *tranquillizing* (*beruhigend*)."<sup>32</sup> On the contrary, instead of this way we can actualize our potentiality-for-Being through understanding and projection.

Besides the falling of Dasein, there are important relationships between the "they" and thrownness of Dasein. Being can never be entirely settled or finished. Thus, falling and thrownness as essential characteristics of Dasein, allow us to see the place of the individual within the ontological structure. As a result, the "they" and its way of interpreting the world prevent the disclosure of a singular and particular self. Thus, the main role of anxiety is that anxiety leads Dasein to flee from itself and its possibilities by being entangled in the "they", but at the same time, it returns Dasein back to himself. Namely, while experiencing anxiety, one realizes the manifold of potentialities. Therefore, one realizes his fallenness into the "they". Dasein's Potentiality-for-Being is disclosed in the unity of these three fundamental ontological characteristics because of anxiety. In other words, anxiety makes us realize that we are falling, we are thrown, and we are a potentiality-for-being. This definition signifies Dasein's everydayness, and each ontological characteristic of that structural whole is disclosed through anxiety, understanding and projection: "Being-in-the-world which is always falling, disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which it is ownmost Potentiality-for-Being is an issue, both in Being-alongside-the-world and Being-with-others."<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, this is the way of accessing the totality of the Being-in-the-world (Dasein), which requires employing the concept of anxiety as soon as one questions the possibility of exhibiting the ontological foundation of Dasein as a structure and its elements. Thus, besides its phenomenological importance, anxiety obtains methodological significance. Mainly, anxiety drives an individual to realize his ownmost being in its wholeness and in its relationships to the world as a manifold.

As Heidegger argues: "That in the face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite... Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious."<sup>34</sup> Thus, the involvement between the subject and the external world is shattered, and there is no object of anxiety that it is anxious about: "This threatening does not have the character of a definite detrimentality which reaches what is threatened, and

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

which reaches it with definite regard to a special factual potentiality-for-Being. That in the face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite.”<sup>35</sup> Hence Heidegger defines that anxiety directed to a "nowhere" as an absence of a definite object that provokes anxiety, and the involvement with the world of things is lacking.

“In anxiety one does not encounter this thing or that thing which, as something threatening, must have an involvement. Accordingly, when something threatening brings itself close, anxiety does not “see” any definite “here” or “yonder” from which it comes. That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens is nowhere... Nowhere, however, does not signify nothing: this is where any region lies, and there too lies any disclosedness of the world for essentially spatial Being-in...it is already “there”, and yet nowhere; it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one’s breath, and yet it is nowhere.”<sup>36</sup>

Like Kierkegaard, the idea of *certainty* blocks potentialities of the self, in this case - Dasein's potentialities. Thus, anxiety is anxious in the face of nowhere and nothing. However, the external world is not absent, but it rather means that an individual experiences anxiety in front of the world as such, where the entities within-the-world acquire so little significance. While this something that Heidegger calls “nothing” is indeed grounded in the most primordial “something” – in the world as it is (that belongs to Dasein as Being-in-the-world) – on the deepest and primordial level – in the ontological realm. Therefore, we are anxious in the face of our own authentic Self.

That means through anxiety, we gain access to Being in its ontological sense. Therefore, we can exercise our existence authentically and genuinely, relying on our own realization of unique potentialities that let us create an alternative way of being, instead of subjecting ourselves to the presupposed and prescribed ways of being that have been established by models of social relationships or imposed on individuals. In this way, Heidegger revealed the creative power of anxiety and its constitutive character for our own concrete and singular existence. Our feeling related to Dasein is an uncanny feeling in which anxiety is triggered: as being at home but at the same time not at home. Nihilism and loneliness are always a possibility. However, Hannah Arendt, relying on similar assumptions to Kierkegaard and Heidegger, creates practical ways out of anxiety through her idea of *action* and *spontaneity* that are political per se. That is why she is arguing for public space as the basic concept that she developed from Heidegger’s *Mitsein* (being-with-others).

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



## Chapter III

### Arendt's Concept of the Political: Action and Spontaneity

“If it were true that there are eternal laws ruling supreme over all things human and demanding of each human being only total conformity, then freedom would be only a mockery. Then homelessness would be only a fantasy, an imagined thing, which could be cured by the decision to conform to some recognizable universal law. And then-last not least-not the concert of human minds, but only one man would be needed to understand these laws and to build humanity in such a way as to conform to them under all changing circumstances.”<sup>37</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to reveal how anxiety affects an individual to realize one's potentiality while remaining singular within the space of being with others. In other words, to trace the creative potential of anxiety and loneliness for an individual existing in the political space. Secondly, the chapter emphasizes what Arendt inherited from Kierkegaard and Heidegger, and her main disagreements on the matter of the individual self and anxiety. Thus, this chapter focuses on anxiety understood by Arendt in its intimate link to loneliness, and how she appropriates the problem in the political domain.

The creative potential of anxiety was already marked by Kierkegaard and Heidegger. However, they prefer to distance an individual self from the space of the “they” to retain one's subjectivity of being. Arendt, on the contrary, suggests understanding an individual within a political space that would not eliminate one's authenticity; instead, the public space is the necessary condition for the manifestation of individual singularity, authenticity, and realization of creative potential. Thus, the main argument of this chapter is that relying on Kierkegaard and Heidegger's assumptions on anxiety, Arendt introduces action and spontaneity as human capacities for *being with others* without sacrificing one's own self, which are both political phenomena by nature. This chapter presents two possible ways that individuals may choose to deal with anxiety: either, to exist in *the social*, or in *the political* (as a creative way out of anxiety). There are always other ways too, such as complete isolation, but that limits our self-realization because of the absence of others.

Arendt's definition of anxiety can be found in her interpretation of Heidegger. She reflects on his language on anxiety and alienation: “the basic mode of being-in-the-world is alienation,

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<sup>37</sup> Arendt H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding* (1930-1954), New York: Schocken Books, New York, p.257.

which is felt both as homelessness and anxiety. Anxiety, which is a fundamental fear of death, is reflected in the not-being-at-home in the world. Being-in (In-Sein) enters into the existentiell mode of not-being-at-home. This is alienation.”<sup>38</sup>. Although, Arendt does not dedicate the greatest attention to anxiety per se, she emphasizes it whenever she speaks about the *loneliness* and *alienation* of individual within the social realm – a phenomenon that she is deeply concerned with. Thus, she defines anxiety as an integral part of alienation, which is a major concept in her writings.

### *Disagreements with Kierkegaard and Heidegger*

Regardless of their shared conceptions of anxiety, the main difference that distinguishes Arendt from Kierkegaard and Heidegger is that if Kierkegaard sees the solution in connection of the self to God, Heidegger understands it in the connection of oneself to death (as the ownmost possibility). Arendt, however, sees the way out of alienation in the connection between the self and the world. Neither for Kierkegaard nor for Heidegger is *being with others* that Arendt suggests in her concept of *the political* understood as a possible solution for authentic existence. Nevertheless, for Arendt, *the political* is precisely the way out of anxiety which allows for individual singularity and particularity. Namely, the shared space implies *plurality* (one of the human conditions) that consists of particulars that communicate amongst one another and mutually constitute each other's subjectivity. Secondly, Arendt states that an individual is more than the self, mainly because she disagrees with the radical separation of the Self from its fellows that Heidegger argues for. Instead of being pre-occupied with authenticity as the major problem, she emphasizes the necessity of being-with-others in order to realize one's own plurality and agency, and to open a space for new beginning. This fact requires that the public realm is also a constitutive part of an individual, and not a subjugating force only.

Thus, there are two ways out of existential anxiety can be drawn relying on Arendt. The first is to adhere to the meanings and identities of *the social* (for example, to ideology that bears the danger of a totalitarian structure behind it). The second way lies in the fact that anxiety helps one realize the threat of the social realm to one's own freedom. Therefore, anxiety in this case opens a space for resistance. The creative potentiality of anxiety is explained by Kierkegaard and Heidegger previously as its very nature. However, resistance, for Arendt, means not only

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<sup>38</sup> Arendt H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding (1930-1954)*, New York: Schocken Books, p. 179.

revealing oneself as an authentic being, but resistance presupposes action and thinking in the public space shared with others.

There are two ways: either to fall into more loneliness through adhering to narratives of *the social* in order to feel secure; or to choose the alternative way – action in the public space through meaning creation and communication, which implies new beginnings. Thus, the first section explores the danger of a totalitarian system that consists of totalizing narratives, where the individual self is dissolved in *the social*. This situation resembles Heidegger's concept of *falling* into the space of the "they". However, he does not suggest the necessity of communicating the truth in the area of "they". On the contrary, both Kierkegaard and Heidegger are more inclined to the radical separation from the world remaining in the private realm and contemplation, in relation to God and death, respectively. In contrast, the second section will focus on Arendt's alternative way out of anxiety and loneliness through action and spontaneity in the shared space with others because this way actualizes the individual as a unique being.

#### *Kierkegaard's influence on Arendt*

The influence of Kierkegaard can be traced to Arendt's understanding of subjective truth and *individual*. Mainly, she receives Kierkegaard's philosophy as "existential thinking - i.e., antiphilosophical philosophizing - which overcomes metaphysical uncertainty by decisively appropriating that which must be simply because I am, leaping beyond the antinomies of Kant's pure reason, viz., the subjectivity of the existing individual's truth"<sup>39</sup> Kierkegaard achieved defining truth beyond "philosophical truth" derived by the procedures of reason relying on causality. Instead, truth for Kierkegaard, is attained through an individual's subjective experience. This premise lies in Arendt's distinction between philosophical truths and factual truths, which are located in the political – a realm of opinions and interpretations - the realm of individual realization.<sup>40</sup>

The essential point that fundamentally unites Arendt with Kierkegaard and Heidegger is the profound attempt to retain: the subject's particularity and the singularity of one's experience that should not be categorized by universals. Thus, in Arendt's essay on Kierkegaard, she appropriates his standpoint on Hegel and the universalism in philosophy. "Philosophy is so

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<sup>39</sup> Sjørnsen, Harold P. (2003). *Hannah Arendt on Kierkegaard*, Søtoft, Pia.

<sup>40</sup> Arendt, H. (2006 [1961]) *Truth and Politics, Between Past and Future*, Penguin.

caught up in its own systematics that it forgets and loses sight of the actual self of the philosophizing subject: it never touches the 'individual' in his concrete 'existence.'<sup>41</sup> In other words, Hegel trivializes this very *individual*, that Kierkegaard is concerned with. This trivialization occurs because Hegel's dialectic and synthesis do not address the individual in his specific existence but, rather, treat individuality and its specificity as abstractions.<sup>42</sup> While for Hegel, a paradox can always be eliminated by the reconciliation of thesis and anti-thesis into the higher synthesis, Arendt emphasizes how Kierkegaard, instead, defends the *paradox* as the fundamental structure of individual existence that should not be resolved. Neglecting a paradox (that we always meet in a state of anxiety) by resolving it, we deny the concreteness of our existence, contingency, and therefore, the individual himself. Paradox for Kierkegaard reveals the *Self*.<sup>43</sup> In other words, exactly through encountering the paradox, anxiety occurs. The situation cannot be eliminated merely by a universal resolution or by adhering to identities of *the social*. It would mean that an individual renounces himself as his own possibilities. Arendt shares this position with Kierkegaard.

### **3.1. First way out of Anxiety: Fall of the Self into the Social (danger of ideology and totalitarianism)**

“Terror freezes men in order to clear the way for the movement of Nature or History. It eliminates individuals for the sake of the species; it sacrifices men for the sake of mankind-not only those who eventually become the victims of terror, but in fact all men insofar as this movement, with its own beginning and its own end, can only be hindered by the new beginning and the individual end which the life of each man actually is.”<sup>44</sup>

Arendt distinguishes *the social* and *the political*, which is *the public space*. While the first presupposes falling into the realm of pre-created meanings of the “they”, the second suggests an opportunity to resist. To resist means *to begin* through action and the creation of new meanings that are possible due to one’s spontaneity. The *public space* is based on plurality instead of the homogeneity that *the social* implies.

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<sup>41</sup>Arendt H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding (1930-1954)*, New York: Schocken Books, p. 45

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 46

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 342.

Thus, relying on Arendt's understanding of the individual's situation, anxiety simultaneously opens two tendencies in front of an individual. Either anxiety drives the individual to join extreme political or totalitarian movements (as a social movement), accept the totalizing power structures and adhere to pre-existed political identities to feel secure from anxiety and loneliness, eliminating the particularity of our experience; or anxiety becomes a creative force that opens opportunities for resistance and new beginnings, and the latter happens in the public space. In addition, a third option implies that one remains in loneliness when escapism and radical separation from the world is seen as a way out of anxiety and alienation. Thus, unlike Kierkegaard and Heidegger, Arendt argues in favour of the second way, which claims that anxiety may open opportunities for resistance.

The danger of *the social* (ideology, expansion of the private sphere, totalitarian movements) is shown throughout most of her works and in her analysis of totalitarianism as the quintessence of such danger, which is the opposite of the political. It originates in the social realm and threatens an individual's singularity and the particularity of one's experience. The vulnerable situation when the social becomes a threat occurs in a state of loneliness and anxiety. Once an individual experiences the feeling of *not being at home* in the world, or what she refers to as *worldlessness*, he is exposed to the social realm, where he would search for answers to fill the emptiness. Arendt brilliantly explained how effective totalitarianism is for filling in this gap. When we speak about totalitarianism in this context, it includes ideology and the mechanisms underpinning the latter: propaganda, terror, consistency of the narrative and logicity, the universality of laws of Nature and History, etc. All these aspects create appealing and solid meanings to which an anxious individual can adhere in order to feel grounded in times of uncertainty.

Therefore, totalitarianism as the quintessence of such a movement eliminates the ability *to think*. As a Nazi bureaucrat, Eichmann is a representation of this thoughtlessness<sup>45</sup>. Thus, thoughtlessness – is a submission of an individual to the social that eliminates particulars. A *movement* is based on a consistent story claimed to be universal, and its aim is motion itself. That is why its narrative appeals to anxiety and suggests stable structures of reality and unambiguous meanings. The narrative of totalitarianism becomes attractive due to its simplicity, logicity and consistency, and provide therefore offers a sense security. Similar to Nietzsche, Arendt warns about the cynicism of narratives that can justify any version of truth.

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<sup>45</sup> Arendt, H. (2006 [1963]). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. Penguin Classics.

She oversees a great danger in cynicism, that is “a result of consistent and total substitution of lies for factual truth.”<sup>46</sup> In this case ideology served as a remedy for an isolated.

While totalitarian movements provide a sense of security, it is the highest expression of a danger to subjectivity, and, therefore, to individual freedom.<sup>47</sup> Thus, if anxiety, referring to Kierkegaard and Heidegger, has triggered the disclosure of the self to its ownmost potentialities and provoked the feeling of insecurity, totalitarianism as a movement closes down the uncertainty and contingency of reality, and becomes a threat to the singularity of unique being.

Agreeing with Heidegger’s interpretation of the fundamental character of anxiety, Arendt argues that one may fall into the space of the “they” because this realm reassures us of *certainty* which can eliminate or reduce anxiety. However, by accepting reality as certain, we prevent ourselves from disclosing the potentialities of the self. Agreeing with Heidegger at this point, Arendt shows the danger of totalitarianism that creates the idea of certainty and prevents us from *thinking* that would rely on spontaneity. Mainly because totalitarianism, by its nature, resembles a closed system of thought that was criticized by Kierkegaard (the main properties of which are: consistency, universal law that underpins the motion in history, logicity, elimination of subjective truth, universality over particularity). Disclosure of the self towards its authentic potentiality has no place here because everything is already explained and pre-defined, while the unknown, uncertain, and contingent are annihilated.

Therefore, while for Heidegger, the tranquillization of oneself by the “they” as a response to anxiety is the danger to Dasein’s disclosure, Arendt sees such a danger in ideology, which has little to do with the political. The logicity that underlines ideology makes it appealing to an isolated and anxious individual because it gives him a sense of certainty. However, the illusion of certainty prevents the plurality of the individual. “The universal law, which is based on the most abstract rules of reasoning”<sup>48</sup> generalizes, deduces and reduces. As Arendt writes with respect to loneliness and terror:

“It has been frequently said, and it is perfectly true, that the most horrible aspect of terror is that it has the power to bind together completely isolated individuals and that by so doing it isolates these individuals even further. Only isolated individuals can be dominated totally”.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Arendt, H. (2006 [1961]). *Truth and Politics, Between Past and Future*, Penguin Classics. p. 15.

<sup>47</sup> Arendt, H. (1976 [1951]). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Florida: A Harvest Book.

<sup>48</sup> Arendt H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding (1930-1954)*, New York: Schocken Books.p. 356.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.356.

Thus, the loneliness and alienation of individuals, accompanied by anxiety, within a totalitarian structure creates an atomized individual. It denies communication that is needed for being with others as a creative way out of anxiety. Such *atomization* presupposes the separation of individuals from one another and implies the lack of any meaningful connection between them. Therefore, there is a lack of mutual recognition. Secondly, by revealing such atomization inherent to totalitarian systems, Arendt illustrates why it is necessary for an individual to be engaged in the space of being-with-others, as well as to communicate with them. “By the terms “atomized society” and “isolated individuals” we mean a state of affairs where people live together without having anything in common, without sharing some visible tangible realm of the world. The loneliness happens because of the collapse of our common home”<sup>50</sup>.

“Loneliness in such a world is no longer a psychological matter... Loneliness, as the concomitant of *homelessness* and uprootedness, is, humanly speaking, the very disease of our time.”<sup>51</sup> Such loneliness is experienced alongside anxiety as a sense of homelessness, and the realization of the absence of common ground.

Consequently, one becomes more receptive to totalitarian ideology while questioning the meaning of existence. Arendt argues that any ideology, despite its political values, suggests a consistent picture of reality – a movement of life in accordance with the laws of Nature and History. Such an explanation is appealing, especially for one who experiences anxiety as homelessness and a lack of ground. *Consistency* makes the narratives even more attractive for an individual to avoid anxiety as a feeling of homelessness and fill the empty space. Thus, one of the main problems for her is ideology as a closed system of thought which affects the human capacity to *think*. Namely, it destroys spontaneity and pretends that reality is certain and consistent: “The ideological consistency reducing everything to one all-dominating factor is always in conflict with the inconsistency of the world, on the one hand, and the unpredictability of human actions, on the other.”<sup>52</sup>

Recalling Montesquieu and his classification of traditional forms and principles of government, Arendt demonstrates that although tyranny is not identical to the peculiar new phenomenon of totalitarianism, both reinforce loneliness. However, totalitarianism presupposes complete the absence of relations between individuals. “Fear, the inspiring principle of action in tyranny, is fundamentally connected to that anxiety which we experience in situations of complete

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 258.

<sup>51</sup> Arendt H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding (1930-1954)*, New York: Schocken Books, p. 258.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 350.

loneliness. This anxiety reveals the other side of equality and corresponds to the joy of sharing the world with our equals.”<sup>53</sup>

While in the political realm individuals, remain singular beings inhabiting the shared space of plurality, totalitarian movements wipe away any boundaries, and therefore, relationships between singular individuals. In a state of despair, we can realize this situation.

“The dependence and interdependence which we need in order to realize our power (the amount of strength which is strictly our own) becomes a source of despair whenever, in complete loneliness, we realize that one man alone has no power at all but is always overwhelmed and defeated by superior power.”<sup>54</sup>

Hence, in Arendt’s analysis of the danger of the social she remains in indirect agreement with both Kierkegaard and Heidegger. However, the difference is seen in her concept of the political. Addressing the question of the self, Arendt does not entirely agree with Heidegger. Seemingly, he does not tend to give any solution to the problem of the possible co-existence between the self and the “they” – the conflict that has been disclosed in anxiety. She interprets that the only ground for the self in Heidegger is “nothingness”: a negative definition of the self through defining what the self is not; the self as absolute selfness, which implies the radical separation of oneself from his fellows. And only in death can Dasein entirely attain his self because there are no relations with others anymore. That means whenever the self is involved in the everydayness of the “they”, it is no longer oneself. Thus, if she accepts the idea that the “who” of Dasein as the self and the meaning of Being is to bring Dasein back to itself, and this is only possible if one can pull back from the being-in-the-world to the self, she still emphasizes that “the very nature of human being will not permit it to do”<sup>55</sup> because the “falling” is always there. Likewise, Heidegger also states that falling is permanent. However, relying on that, she concludes that the individual is more than the self: “being-a-Self” has taken the place of being human.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, despite the significant influence of Heidegger on Arendt, she moves forward to the practical solution for an individual being within the collective realm, that neither Kierkegaard nor Heidegger suggested. She looks at it through the complex human condition, which presupposes natality, plurality and worldliness. Moreover, as shown in this thesis, she

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>55</sup> Arendt H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding (1930-1954)*, New York: Schocken Books, p.181.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

does not deny the contradiction between the self and the collective realm, which anxiety reveals.

### 3.2 Second way out of Anxiety: The Political, Plurality, Action and Spontaneity

“Traditional political philosophy tends to derive the political side of human life from the necessity which compels the human animal live together, rather from the human capacity to act.”<sup>57</sup>

Unlike the previous section that reveals the danger of *the social* in which one finds a sense of being at home and gets rid of anxiety and loneliness, *the political* instead preserves one’s individuality without the reduction of personality to a biological body. In other words, in *the political*, we sustain the uniqueness of an individual and *plurality* within the collective realm. It is this possibility that arrives together with anxiety and alienation to resist and realize the subjectivity and singularity of us, thus opening the space for genuine meaning creation through *action* and *spontaneity*.

To define *the political*, Arendt draws a distinction between the social and the political, defending the idea that they should not be equated. Referring to Thomas Aquinas's translation of Aristotle into Latin: “man is by nature political, that is, social”, she comments: “More than any elaborate theory, this unconscious substitution of the social for the political betrays the extent to which the original Greek understanding of politics had been lost.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, Arendt derives her understanding of *the political* from her critique of the modern for her situation, which merges the social and the political as identical. Initially, the Greek polis did not presuppose the social; on the contrary, the *polis* separated the public (the political) and private and guaranteed the latter's privacy. “According to Greek thought, the human capacity for political organization is not only different from but stands in direct opposition to that natural association whose center is the home (*oikia*) and the family. The rise of the city-state meant that man received ‘besides his private life a sort of second life, his *bios politikos*.’”<sup>59</sup> Thus, following the Greeks, there are two distinct fields – the private and the political, while the social dangerously intervenes in private life and cancels any kind of boundaries.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 429.

<sup>58</sup> Arendt, H. (1998 [1958]). *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London. p.22.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.24.

The concept of the political corresponds to her disagreement with Heidegger. First, she disagrees with his idea of the impossibility of reaching an absolute selfness while being with others. Although, Heidegger claims that the “falling” of Dasein into the “they” is unavoidable and always there as a fundamental condition of Dasein. Second, according to Heidegger, public space has a tendency to conceal the possibility of experiencing anxiety. Therefore, public space conceals the possibility of Dasein being disclosed and being open to its authentic potentiality. That means that it eliminates the possibility of Dasein becoming the self entirely. Third, Heidegger does not emphasize action in such a way that Arendt does. He remains in the ontological sphere. Instead, Arendt insists on action (which is political by its nature) as a fundamental human capacity to realize the unique particularity of the individual and his possibility to begin anew. Therefore, if one's acts, he initiates. Thus, in contrast to Heidegger's emphasis on the importance of death, Arendt focuses on natality that is actualized through a spontaneous act in the context of plurality. Natality is possible only in public space, and action is political by nature: "Action alone is the exclusive prerogative of man; neither a beast nor a god is capable of it, and only action is entirely dependent upon the constant presence of others."<sup>60</sup>

Hence, the public space is a realm for resistance through the initiation of the new. Once we acknowledge ourselves within the public space and its plurality, then we can resist. It becomes possible to break chains of causalities imposed on us from the outside structures and thus let a new beginning appear. This is the meaning of natality. In this respect, Arendt claims that traditional political philosophy needs to have a theory about the conditions that would best suit these human conditions - *natality* and *plurality*. Thus, as she writes:

“Politics – is a domain in which genuine philosophic questions arise, and not merely a sphere of life which ought to be ruled by precepts that owe their origin to altogether different experiences....Nobody, as a matter of fact, any longer sincerely believes that all we need is ‘wise men’ and that all they can learn from political events is the ‘foolishness of the world.’”<sup>61</sup>

Thus, politics is not a realm to be seen through normative lenses or institutional analysis. Instead, while looking at politics, we reveal the systems of falsehoods that are obstacles to thinking and grasp how it is connected to an individual being in the existential sense. Secondly, the political is not a homogenous society, but plurality which allows the freedom of the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>61</sup> Arendt, H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding (1930-1954)*, New York: Schocken Books, p.430.

individual to be realized. “Our problem is that our concept of freedom, at least in its political aspects, is inconceivable outside of plurality.”<sup>62</sup>

As an example of resistance to totalitarian narratives (falsehoods), she argues that speech that can be actualized only if we recognize plurality and the possibility of new beginnings. For her, silence was not possible after the concentration camps.<sup>63</sup> This position differs from Heidegger's perspective, who maintained silence about the political context of totalitarianism. As well as for Kierkegaard silence is necessary in order to actualize the absolute connection to God. On the contrary, for Arendt human beings can experience meaningful existence only because they can talk to each other and, therefore, experience themselves and others through speech. The necessary condition for speech is the public space. Therefore, the political allows rescuing individual particularity since plurality presupposes the uniqueness of each individual that is not subjected to a universal law. Instead, human relations between each other and the world are contingent and unpredictable. This stance contributes to the arguments of Kierkegaard and Heidegger on anxiety, regardless of the idea of public space, which both of them avoid.

Arguing in favour of individuals' engagement with others as a way out of anxiety and loneliness, Arendt states that the self cannot be realized without communicative relationships with others - it is a space where meaning emerges, and the common ground appears. However, the common ground she refers to is different from the concept of *common sense*. *Communication* is not identical to compromising or a mediated truth. Instead, communication is itself the connectedness between individuals where the beginning happens through speech and a common ground where plurality remains.

Therefore, in Arendt's writings, we see the moment of *anxiety* that arrives with the realization of one's loneliness as a discrepancy with others or alienation. That is similar to Kierkegaard and Heidegger, because it drives an individual back to himself. However, we find in Arendt that an individual obtains mainly two paths: either *loneliness* (as *isolation* or as a dissolving into *the social*) or being with others in a public space that enables resistance and the creation of the new as meaning, action and judgement.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 437.

<sup>63</sup> Kattago, S. (2019). *Encountering the Past within the Present. Modern Experience of Time*, Routledge, p. 12.

In addition to the shared assumptions about individual existence and individual freedom, Kierkegaard's influence on Arendt is shown in her definition of action as a creative way out. In the essay "Concern with Politics in Recent European Philosophical Thought," she highlights the fascination with politics inherent to French existentialists (Camus, Malraux, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty). In her interpretation of them, she stresses how action presents a way out of the realization of absurd existence and complimented nausea that already presupposes the Kierkegaardian concept of *anxiety* as dizziness from freedom:

"The way out of this situation opens when man becomes aware that he is 'condemned to be free' (in Sartre's phrase) and 'jumps' into action—just as Kierkegaard jumped into belief out of universal doubt... the springboard being the certitude of individual existence in the midst of an uncertain, incoherent, and incomprehensible universe, which only belief, as in Kierkegaard, can illuminate, or only action can endow with humanly comprehensible meaning. The disgust with an absurd existence disappears when man discovers that he himself is not given to himself, but through commitment (engagement) can become whoever he chooses to be. Human freedom means that man creates himself in an ocean of chaotic possibilities".<sup>64</sup>

The role of action and active creation of meaning is revealed through her interpretation of existentialism: "As philosophers, the French existentialists can lead to the point where only revolutionary action, the conscious change of a meaningless world, can dissolve the meaninglessness inherent in the absurd relationships between man and world."<sup>65</sup>

Thus, Arendt's interpretation of French existentialists and their way of political engagement supports her understanding of politics as a space for new beginnings. "In this activist humanism, politics appears as the sphere where, through the concerted efforts of many, a world may be built that constantly defies and gives the lie to the human condition; this, in turn, will permit human nature, conceived as that of the animal rationale, to develop to the point where it builds a reality, creates conditions of its own".<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Arendt H. (1994). *Essays in Understanding (1930-1954)*, New York: Schocken Books/, p.438.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.440.

### *Spontaneity actualizes Natality*

If, for Heidegger, public space as *Das Man* does not leave room for natality, for Arendt, public space can also be a space for new beginnings. Therefore, the subject is not isolated anymore. Arendt expands the Heideggerian idea that our existence is conditioned fundamentally by death that marks our ownmost potentiality. Instead, she introduces the concept of natality<sup>67</sup> through which an individual realizes oneself. Natality is a fundamental human condition that denotes the possibility of a new beginning. Spontaneity is a capacity of our thought and action and the necessary condition that actualizes natality. We can exercise spontaneity only when we recognize our plurality. Thus, spontaneity is possible only when communication creates a field for action: “man achieves reality only to the extent that he acts out of his own freedom rooted in spontaneity and connects through communication with the freedom of others.”<sup>68</sup> Therefore, spontaneity does not let us fall into the fallacy of narratives. Instead, we create our own narratives through *speech* that is possible only through being with others.

The role of spontaneity in the given context reminds one of Kierkegaardian faith. Namely, faith leaps over entire procedures of reason and reinforces a decision in a moment of anxiety and despair. Thus, similarly to Kierkegaard, Arendt suggests that an individual should possess a capacity that overcomes the structures of falsehood as chains of causality. She defines existence as the form of human freedom, in which man, as potential *spontaneity*, rejects the conception of himself as a mere result. Thus, the spontaneity of action is an expression of freedom, which breaks the imposed systems of the “they”. An act committed in the public space disrupts a dominant narrative. That is how a new beginning emerges, and subjectivity is manifested. Therefore, natality presupposes our ability to break the vicious circle of reasoning and thus begin in accordance with the concreteness of a particular situation and experience.

In conclusion, despite their shared assumptions about anxiety and its relations to subjectivity, self, and the necessity of manifesting particularity over universality, Arendt is different in her conclusions from Kierkegaard and Heidegger. First, she is different in her understanding of the self and it is the main and only part of the human being. Secondly, she argues for a creative way out of anxiety that lies in co-existence with others instead of isolation from others. Thus, while Kierkegaard explains a creative potential of anxiety that is realized through the

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<sup>67</sup> Arendt, H. (1998 [1958]). *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183

connection between the self and God, Heidegger, in the connection of oneself to death (as an ownmost potentiality of the self), both find the way in remaining alienated from the space of others to avoid any subjection to the “they”. Instead, Arendt brings the individual back to the world with meaningful relationships. She does so while explaining the danger of *the social* when conformism from one side and a totalitarian movement from another are fundamental threats to individual freedom that intervene in one's ability to think and to begin.

## Conclusion

Arendt was influenced by the philosophical thought of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, and as has been argued in this thesis, she disagrees with them on some points. Nevertheless, in accordance with Heidegger and Kierkegaard, her argument supports that there is no closed system of reality and thought. Instead, there is always a space for a new beginning through spontaneous acts. This thesis found some disagreements regarding the ways out of anxiety, mainly through reconciliation between singular individuals and the collective space of others. Despite that, all three argue for the creative potentiality of anxiety that is fundamental for the constitution of the self and the disclosure of individual potentiality.

While the closed systems that Kierkegaard argues against, suggest *certainty* and universal meanings, they block genuine subjective truth. Therefore, his stance is very applicable not only for understanding how to deal with uncertainty and anxiety but also for incorporating it into contemporary political theory. It is relevant today with the rise of convincing propaganda, ideologies that are underpinned by consistent logic, which could be the basis for totalitarianism, and the politicization of history that serves particular political regimes. Arendt explains such tendency in the political field while inheriting significantly from Kierkegaard and Heidegger their understanding of *certainty*.

Kierkegaard created the ground for the further conceptualization of a subject. Mainly by turning away from classical metaphysics and by negating the priority of objective truth achievable by reasoning. In analogy to his approach, Arendt focuses on factual or subjective truth that is not logical, philosophical mathematical, or rational. Thus, for Arendt, the experience of such factual truth depends on our understanding of a shared reality. Both Kierkegaard and Arendt define truth and falsehood in their own terms. Namely, falsehood can be defined as such only regarding the whole narrative. Thus, Kierkegaard allows the shift in the understanding of truth, which played a crucial role in Arendt's philosophy. Thus, she distinguishes philosophical truth and factual truth, showing the importance of the latter, which is necessary, and it can be grasped in the political space that is distinct from the domain of natural science.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Arendt, H. (1998 [1958]). *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press.

Both Kierkegaard and Heidegger acknowledge that there is no a universal foundation for meanings. Namely, things can always be interpreted otherwise in many possibilities. When one realizes it, anxiety can grip him, although the latter has no precise objective cause. Instead, anxiety occurs in front of the unknown as a whole. For both philosophers. Western metaphysics attempted to develop certainty - foundations for knowledge and meaning-creation to secure us from the unknown, since the abstract ideas of Plato: “we have to imitate Socrates and produce a permanent daylight against the dark desires.”<sup>70</sup> Based on such attitude towards traditional attempt to create certainty, Kierkegaard and Heidegger highly emphasize anxiety as a creative force that allows an individual to make an authentic judgment in uncertainty.

If we acknowledge uncertainty as an unavoidable condition of reality, the disclosure of the self happens through experiencing anxiety. According to Kierkegaard, leads to the resignation from individual, instead submitting to the universal that seemingly provides certainty. Therefore, it becomes an obstacle to encountering the uncertain reality and authentic self. While according to Heidegger, falling into the space of *Mitsein* becomes such an obstacle. Therefore, what is necessary to take from those thinkers is the premise that there is no certainty that can become a remedy for anxiety. For Heidegger, there is only one certainty that exists – death.

In contrast to Heidegger, Arendt suggested the concept of public space that is necessary for the constitution of the individual to realize his particularity, subjectivity, and agency because the public space is essentially conditioned by plurality and permanent possibility for new beginnings. Thus, besides death as the fundamental ontological condition, Arendt insisted on natality as an essential ontological and the main political category.

Arendt’s argument on the self distinguishes her from Kierkegaard and Heidegger. For her individual is more than the self. It presupposes that individual cannot be constituted without ongoing communication with others, without being included in the space of the “they”. Although both Heidegger and Arendt acknowledge the constitutive role of the “they” for the individual Self, Arendt disagrees with him about the greatness of the threat of the “they” towards the authenticity of the Self. It cannot manifest without being actively engaged in the shared space with others through action.

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<sup>70</sup> Nietzsche, F. (1889 [1997]). *Twilight of the Idols: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., p. 16.

Therefore, if Kierkegaard explains the way out (and function) of anxiety in the connection of oneself to God, Heidegger – in the connection between oneself and death as the ownmost potentiality, for Arendt is the connection between the self and the world. Based on the inheritance of Kierkegaard and Heidegger and her own perspective, Arendt reintroduces the realm of the political within which an individual must realize himself, making the focus on plurality and natality as the basic ontological conditions. Thus, the political for her is not a number of institutions that constitute social reality and individual; instead, the political is a place for individual subjective experience and communication between singular selves that realize themselves within it. Falsity for her is the narratives reproduced by the social that is not political. For example, ideology belongs to such narratives, and propaganda is a tool that consistently justifies a story. Therefore, when political institutions become entirely ideological, they lose a sense of truth. Thus, there is no place for spontaneity or imagination, while a spontaneous action as a new beginning can break the consistency and logicity of narratives.

Furthermore, such attention to the existential understanding of anxiety and Arendt's appropriation of this existential matter into the space of the political contributes to political theory. The role of emotions in contemporary political theory has been undeveloped. In other words, many theorists prefer to rely on positivist assumptions in their research. Namely, the problem is that the positivists' perspective tends to consider only tangible factors, depending on solid hypotheses and predictions, and behaviourist approaches instead of acknowledging the uncertainty of reality and focusing on tacit factors such as emotions. Thus, focusing on anxiety, I argued for considering emotions and subjective experiences of the self as a fundamental matter of the uncertain reality. Therefore, we can have access to more tacit phenomena of political reality, focusing on individual subjectivity. Although, in modern political theory, emotions have already been considered the primary factor that drives social and political life since Thomas Hobbes.

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## **Abstract**

The thesis focuses on the existential perspective of anxiety suggested by Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger and its creative potentiality that allows access to the self and the ontological structure of existence. Furthermore, it argues in favour of Hannah Arendt's concept of the political where such potentiality can be actualized. The thesis reveals the influence of both philosophers on Arendt regarding individual existence and the question of truth; at the same time, her disagreement with them concerning the collective space as a place for the realization of the uniqueness of the individual in its potentialities. Influenced by Arendt, the thesis argues for two possible ways out of anxiety. First, through the social where individual anxiety is realized in mass society. Second, through the public space of the political, where an individual realizes himself through action and spontaneity, with the possibility to resist a violent order. Therefore, according to Arendt, public space is a necessary condition for actualizing the individual.

## **Abstrakt**

Magistritöö keskendub Søren Kierkegaardi ja Martin Heideggeri pakutud eksistentsiaalse ängi perspektiivile ja selle loovale potentsiaalile, mis võimaldab juurdepääsu iseendale ja eksistentsi ontoloogilisele struktuurile. Järgnevalt tuuakse välja Hannah Arendti poliitilisuse mõiste, mis võimaldab sellise potentsiaalsuse aktualiseerumist. Magistritöö toob esile mõlema filosoofi mõju Arendtile seoses individuaalse eksistentsi ja tõeküsimusega; ühtlasi aga näitab tema erimeelsust seoses kollektiivse ruumiga kui ainulaadse isikupära teostamise kohaga kõigis selle võimalikkustes. Arendti mõjul arutleb lõputöö kahe võimaliku väljapääsu poole ärevusest. Esiteks läbi sotsiaalse, kus individuaalne ärevus realiseerub massiühiskonnas. Teiseks läbi poliitika avaliku ruumi, kus indiviid realiseerib end tegevuse ja spontaansuse kaudu, võimalusega seista vastu vägivaldsele korrale. Seetõttu on avalik ruum Arendti sõnul indiviidi aktualiseerimise vajalik tingimus.

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