
Phenomenology of Art and Narrative in Hannah Arendt:

Redemption and Understanding for Law and Literature

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ABSTRACT

Hannah Arendt's aesthetic reflections have not been largely considered in Law and Literature (1), contrary to her contributions to political theory and philosophy. This article seeks to give an approach to the phenomenology of art developed by Arendt to apply it to Law and Literature. For this (2) I describe what this theory consists of, focusing the analysis on the notion of a work of art whose characteristics (permanence and uselessness) and functions (visibility and anticipation) are intertwined with two types of narrative: first, the narrative for redemption (3), based on which Arendt redeems the defeated in history and, second, narration for understanding (4), which seeks to morally

engage the reader in social phenomena. To highlight the use of both forms of narration, I pay attention to the use of Proust *In Search of Lost Time* in Arendt's work, regarding the redemption of the Jewish outcast, and to the analysis of a story by Günter Anders entitled *Die beweinte Zukunft* (1961), based on which I present the concept of understanding developed by Arendt, but led to concern for the current climate crisis.

I conclude (5) with some projections and criticisms that show that Arendt's phenomenology and her use of the narrative can be used in Law and Literature to reflect on the great problems of contemporary times.

KEYWORDS

Phenomenology of art - work of art - narrative for redemption - narrative for understanding

1. Hannah Arendt and Law and Literature: political theory and philosophy, yes; art, no.

The influential work of Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) has been analyzed from various points of view (Blume, Boll and Gross 2022). In the case of Law and Literature, she is frequently cited for her contributions to political theory or philosophy. A cursory review of these works reveals that they cover Arendt's

ideas on citizenship (Koegler, Reddig, and Stierstorfer 2022), power (Morín 2022), the space of appearance (Arancibia 2022a), the beginning (Arancibia 2022b), evil and violence (Abreu and Narváez 2022), the victims (Douglas 2014), totalitarianism (Weisberg 1991), the Holocaust (Beebe 2012), (Ruiz 2014), (Murav 2008) and her reading of Kafka (Ost 2006), (Fersini 2018), among many others. This situation contrasts with what happens with her theoretical reflections on art since they have not found a prominent place in Law and Literature. We can appreciate this in general works in our field of studies. If we open the 2017 book *New Directions in Law and Literature* we have to scroll our gaze to the bibliography to find that she is cited, yes, but as editor of the works of Walter Benjamin and then, in the general bibliography, *The Human Condition* is named, but without context (Anker and Meyler 2017, 382). The same occurs in *A Critical Introduction to Law and Literature* from 2007, where she is mentioned in passing in the introduction... regarding the importance of walls in classical Greece (Dolin 2007, 6). In the most recent book *Derecho y Literatura. Persiana Americana*, a single reference to forgiveness is made (Caballero and Jiménez 2022, 159) and in the case of the presentation of the *Revista Peruana de Derecho y Literatura*, it speaks, in passing, of the commemoration of the centenary of her birth (Torres 2006, 23). The only one who vindicates her figure and analogizes her interdisciplinary effort with what happens in Law and Literature is Ian Ward in his *Law and Literature. Possibilities and perspectives* of 1995, where he says: “Heidegger and Heideggerians such as Derrida, Arendt or Marcuse have advocated precisely the ‘cross-disciplinary’ study, or ‘Ciceronian unity’, which law and literature scholars such as James Boyd White have advocated” (Ward 1995, 149), but that’s all. As we can see, her ideas on aesthetics are not a fundamental part of the corpus to consider when writing in Law and Literature, as is the case with Richard Posner, Martha Nussbaum, and James Boyd White, among others.

If we now look at specialized articles, we will see that few works take into account her considerations on art and culture. Among them we can name those who refer to their impressions of culture (García Cívico 2018), aesthetic judgment (Arancibia 2023), (Binder 2008), and narration (Minow 1996). This last article is the only one we could find on the important theme of narrative in Arendt, applied to Law and Literature.

For all the above, and because of what has been investigated, we can affirm that not enough attention has been paid to her theorizing about art

in Law and Literature studies. This is strange since there is a narrative twist in legal studies that could take advantage of Arendt's contributions on the matter (Brooks and Gewirtz 1996). Indeed, the philosopher of law, Cristina Sánchez Muñoz, names Arendt as part of a current of renewal in the social sciences that focuses its methodology on narrative and places it alongside references in Law and Literature such as Richard Posner and Martha Nussbaum (Sanchez 2007, 228). We are interested in exploring the place in which Sánchez situates her. To do this, we will use, first, two studies that address Arendt's phenomenology of art (Birulés and Fuster 2014) and (Bosch 2021). When describing this theory, we will highlight its elements and the functions associated with the narrative, which will give us the two ways in which it is used in her work.

2. Permanence and uselessness of the work of art: brief phenomenology

Hannah Arendt was never characterized as a dogmatic thinker, neither in terms of her ideas nor in terms of her methodology. To elaborate on her work, she used the most diverse disciplines: political theory, philosophy, sociology, and art, among others. As for the latter, literature appears in several of its texts. In this sense, she uses it to characterize the Jewish outcast based on the work of Marcel Proust or to describe colonialism based on the work of Joseph Conrad. The examples are multiple and show the value that she assigns to art for the development of her work. As Birulés and Fuster affirm, art adds depth and concreteness to their analysis (Birulés and Fuster 2014, 17). On the other hand, Arendt used the narrative as a form of her essay writing. Her way of narrating the origins of totalitarianism, without going any further, corresponds to what she calls her "old-fashioned story-telling" (Arendt 1962a, 10). Lastly, and more generally, the aesthetic dimension is central to her reflection. Her theory of action is based on the intersections between aesthetic and political phenomena. I will expand on the latter first and then on the narrative (3) and (4).

Even though our philosopher does not elaborate a systematic on art, she does deploy a phenomenological theory that relates art, *vita active*, and temporality. This theory is mainly exposed in *The Human Condition* (1958) and the essay "The crisis in culture: its political and social meaning" (1960).

For Arendt, as for other thinkers, the great question of the human being is related to mortality and the way to overcome it. How to achieve immortality as finite beings? One of the concepts on which she reflects is the category of world. This concept, which is not comparable to Earth or nature, is related to what is found *among* human beings. It is what we arrive at when we are born and what we leave behind when we die. This world that will survive us has a character of permanence and durability which means that what is deposited in it also has those characteristics. Starting from the world, for example, we can think of a civilization, that is, that set of customs, ideas, culture, and knowledge, to which human beings give shape and that will survive us once we have left the planet. To endow our experience on Earth with the world, then, human beings develop activities and found institutions that defy time. On the other hand, we manufacture objects based on which we satisfy our vital, work, cultural, and entertainment needs. Both the activities, the institutions, and the objects that we create have the intention of going beyond contingency, allowing the coexistence of mortal and diverse beings to be stabilized. Within these activities and permanent institutions, we find politics, history, philosophy, and art. Regarding the latter, Arendt pays special attention to the cultural object called a work of art (Bosch 2021, 30).

In the chapter entitled “The permanence of the world and the work of art” of *The Human Condition* and in the essay “The crisis in culture: its political and social meaning”, Arendt establishes two fundamental characteristics to call a work a work of art. The first is its permanence and the second is its uselessness (Arendt 1998, 167). Regarding their permanence, since they are objects made by humans, they become the most mundane of all, sharing space with other objects, such as furniture. In this sense, its durability is material, but more importantly, it is immaterial, since it is the quintessence of civilization, “the lasting testimony of the spirit which animated it” (Arendt 1961b, 201). About its uselessness, the work of art has this characteristic because it is not made for consumption, to satisfy biological needs, but instead embodies human thought, that individual self that is released in the work of art.

Permanence and uselessness are opposed to the discourse of consumption in mass societies like ours, where entertainment is the value by which human works are measured. The work of art, a cultural product par excellence, exceeds consumption, becomes immortal, and in doing so eternalizes the human being. Says Arendt: “It is as though worldly stability had become

transparent in the permanence of art, so that a premonition of immortality... something immortal achieved by mortal hands, has become tangibly present, to shine and to be seen, to sound and to be heard, to speak and to be read” (Arendt 1998, 168). The human being brings to the materiality of the world a work that is born from him but becomes independent to be appreciated by others. The place where works of art materialize is in books, paintings, records, films, and all material objects that, since they are not intended for consumption, survive for current and future generations.

In Arendt’s thought, literature fulfills different functions, but two can be highlighted: making groups excluded from society visible and anticipating the development of social phenomena (Arendt 1961b, 199-200). Both functions are not developed by Arendt, but by two scholars of her work: Seyla Benhabib and Lisa Disch. They shape the two ways in which Arendt writes her work: narrative for redemption and narrative for understanding.

3. Narrative for Redemption: The Pearl Diver

We previously said that Arendt had described her way of writing history as storytelling. As is known, Arendt pointed out that after the crimes of the Nazis, the thread of tradition had been cut and it was not possible to continue narrating the past, the present, and the future based on the culture that had given rise to the most terrible events of the 20th century (Arendt 1961a, 14). Arendt got around this problem by resorting to storytelling. Based on this, she was able to do two things: on the one hand, she found a way to understand the past and, on the other, she was able to relieve those voices that history had silenced. To do this, she resorted to a metaphor from Walter Benjamin: that of the pearl diver.

Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), like Arendt, had to find new ways of coping with his understanding of lived reality. In his case, he resorted to the use of quotes and fragments since they maintained hope for the future from the past. They were bits of the past that we could bring up today, intact from the terrible context in which they were used. Arendt discusses these images of Benjamin in her essay on the author in the book *Men in Dark Times*. There she says that Benjamin occupies these thought fragments that have a double function: “interrupt the flow of presentation with transcendent force...and at the same time concentrate within themselves that which is presented”

(Arendt 1995, 194). This idea refers to Benjamin's collecting activity, based on which Arendt believes she sees a strong aesthetic foundation. The collector, says our theoretician, accumulates things that, as children know, are useless because they have value in themselves. The art of collecting things is useless because the use made of the things that are the object of the collection is useless. In this sense and going back to what we said about the work of art, it is revealed as permanent and useless, because at the bottom of it, we find no trace of its function. The work of art is self-sufficient and does not serve a specific purpose. The same happens with the collector's passion that neutralizes the functionality of things by grouping them around art, subtracting their ability to be consumed. This is its beauty in the Kantian sense: it is the disinterested delight that the Königsberg philosopher alluded to. The collector takes a transcendental step to be able to face reality: he obtains from the past a pearl, a jewel, a work of art that, separated from its context, he must clean to remove from it everything typical of it. Finding the thread of tradition already broken, it is only possible to dig into its ruins to find the shining pieces.

Benjamin undertook his work as a collector not only accumulating books but also gathering various quotes in his notebooks. There an 18th-century love poem and a clipping from the daily newspaper could coexist peacefully. Arendt points out that Benjamin achieved this that the fragments "illustrated one another and were able to prove their *raison d'être* in a free-floating state, as it were" (202). All the quotes and fragments float with each other in the sea of culture and the citizen's job is to find them, take them in their hands, compare them, and fish them out. Arendt titles the third part of her essay on Benjamin as "The pearl diver" and quotes an excerpt from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "Full fathom five thy father lies, / Of his bones are coral made, / Those are pearls that were his eyes. // Nothing of him that doth fade / But doth suffer a sea-change / Into something rich and strange" (193). We have seen how Benjamin's logic analyzed by Arendt operates: we can obtain from tradition what still shines like pearls. Those pearls can be fragments and quotes of works buried by the weight of history. What else can we get from those pearls? As if this paper were a meta-fishing, Seyhla Benhabib takes Arendt's ideas (which, in turn, takes them from Benjamin) to configure what she calls: a redemptive narrative.

In her article "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative" (1990), Benhabib establishes that the storytelling practiced by Arendt al-

lows her to discover, under layers of sediment, those pearls that have been silenced under the rubble of history (Benhabib 1990, 171). The narrative for Arendt, says Benhabib, is a fundamental human activity and the form she uses is that of the pearl diver. In the specific case of the work under analysis, Benhabib focuses on the disappearance of the individual under the Nazi machinery, studied by Arendt in her *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. In Arendt's monumental work of 1951, we find the breaking point regarding the death of the juridical subject, the moral subject, and individuality. Benhabib says that the death of the juridical subject is analyzed by Arendt in the section "Imperialism", where she deals with the paradox contained in the conception of the nation-state and the universal rights of the human being when confronted with the structure of totalitarianism. Arendt traces its roots to the case of the Boers in the South African colonization, pointing out that mere humanity was not a sufficient guarantee for the juridical status that enabled one to be a subject of rights. The death of the juridical subject is signed with the minority treaties after the First World War that create millions of homeless, nationless, and displaced people. The juridical subject becomes a "superfluous" human being. The murder of the moral person, for its part, accompanies the above-mentioned death. Anti-Semitic prejudice plays a special role in this process, for the Jews are blamed for the death of the Son of God. This produces in the Jewish population the idea that they carry a vice, an essence, which is undeniable. Finally, looking at the concentration camps, we find the disappearance of individuality. It is the mass that replaces the individual thus considered, leaving the person in a condition of solitude. As there are no references to hold on to, no words to grasp, no identities to anchor oneself to, there is a disappearance of the person in the mass. How does Arendt rehabilitate the disappeared person? Using literature.

In her study, Arendt observes that although the past is fragmented and we cannot turn to tradition, we still need to make sense of what has happened, that is, the past. To do so, she resorts to the narrative. Actions only live in the narratives of those who perform them and in the narratives of those who understand, interpret, and remember them, says Arendt. Therefore, storytelling is a fundamental human activity. And what guides the storyteller? The search for the pearls of history. How do we make the disappeared subject appear under the layers of sediment? One avenue to explore is literature. To illuminate the death of the moral subject, she turns to the work of Marcel

Proust. In chapter 3, “The Jew and Society”, Arendt dwells on the consideration that society had of the Jew as the bearer of a vice (Jewishness) which, contrary to what might be thought, generated attraction in the Parisian salons of the early twentieth century. It produced this because the figure of the monster, of the exotic, made it possible for the bourgeoisie to entertain themselves and take a break from their usual tedium. The problem is that Jews had to lead a double life where an attribute such as that of the Jew, which is a national one, had to seek recognition only as a private attribute, subject to the fallacious admiration of the bourgeois class. The individual had to hide. To illustrate this, our thinker turns to Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, because there she finds the categories of pariah and assimilated Jew, central images for her work. There we can see how the Jew is accepted as a human being who moves between vice and crime, what ways he must follow to conform to high society, and the outcome of such actions. To exemplify the point, Arendt resorts to the character of monsieur de Charlus from *Sodom and Gomorrah*. He, a homosexual, who had formerly been tolerated, “notwithstanding his vice,” for his personal charm and old name, now rose to social heights. “He, says Arendt, no longer needed to lead a double life and hide his dubious acquaintances, but was encouraged to bring them into the fashionable houses”. Topics of conversation that he formerly would have avoided—love, beauty, jealousy—that would lead somebody to suspect his anomaly, were now welcomed avidly given the experience, strange, secret, refined, and monstrous upon which he founded his views (Arendt 1962b, 81). Something very similar happened to the Jews. Individual exceptions, says Arendt, ennobled Jews, had been tolerated and even welcomed in the society of the Second Empire, but now Jews as such were becoming increasingly popular. In both cases, society was far from being prompted by a revision of prejudices. They did not doubt that gay people were “criminals” or that Jews were “traitors”; they only revised their attitude toward crime and treason. That is the thing that Proust narrates in a magnificent way.

Why does Arendt turn to Proust to explain this issue? She sees in the French writer someone who has poured himself into the literary work. Someone who has seen and lived reality in a way that, later, when translating it into a novel, can enrich our vision of events. With this, it contributes so that Arendt, as a pearl diver, can redeem “the memory of the dead, the defeated and vanquished by making present to us once more their failed hopes, their untrodden paths, and unfulfilled dreams” (Benhabib 1990, 196).

4. Narrative for understanding: without the sea, there are no pearls

We said that Arendt's ideas can be used in Law and Literature in two ways: as a redemptive narrative and as a narrative for understanding. Let us look at the latter.

What in the last century moved Arendt to try to delimit the elements that gave shape to totalitarianism, were the concentration camps, that is, the total disappearance, not only of the juridical and moral subject, but of human individuality that becomes superfluous. What event marks today our becoming as a species? Among others, it seems that the one that stands above all others is climate change. It has been said by specialists that this is the greatest threat to our life and that we are the first generation to experience the possibility of extinction of our species. The rivers are drying up, the rain is not falling, and the sun is raising the temperature day by day. The curious thing about this phenomenon is that there is no sense of emergency. "The lack of a sense of emergency, Heidegger explained, "is greatest where self-certainty has become unsurpassable, where everything is held to be calculable, and especially where it has been decided, with no previous questioning, who we are and what we are supposed to do." (Heidegger 2012, 99) What to do? Try to understand the phenomenon. Understanding, for Arendt, was the source of her philosophical work, synthesized in the phrase: "What is important for me is to understand" (Arendt 2013, 9). What was understanding for Arendt? She referred to it on several occasions, but there is one that is useful for what we are proposing. In the preface to the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, she points out that understanding means: "... to examine and consciously bear the burden that our century has placed upon us - and not to deny its existence or meekly submit to its weight. Understanding, in short, means an attentive and unpremeditated confrontation with reality, a resistance to it, whatever it may be." (Arendt 1962b, viii). It is about assuming the challenge of looking at the problems of our era profoundly, without seeking artificial or superfluous solutions. Responsibility to the world, that is, to that permanent and stable place of which works of art are a part, was for Arendt her driving force of life. If previously we said that she had adopted a philological method to analyze events, now we can say that she gave rise to a comprehensive method, that is, one that uses different approaches to achieve its goal. In her book *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Philosophy*

published in 1994, Lisa Disch delved into the analysis of this narrative form, this method, in the chapter titled “More Truth Than Fact”.

In this text, Disch says that in a society where the social abstractions of social theory and social science sometimes mask real conflicts, “a good narrative can reveal the assumptions hidden in seemingly neutral arguments and challenge them.” (Disch 1996, 106). The time we live in, a predominantly virtual one, between *fake news*, openly biased YouTube channels, malicious tweets, and where each person is an Instagram account, forces us to redouble our efforts to understand the magnitude of the real (not virtual) crisis we are experiencing. Arendt could not reflect on climate change, but she did write down some ideas about culture and the consumer society that can help us develop the idea.

In the first part of this writing, we said that every work of art had two characteristics: its permanence and uselessness. Arendt detects that there is a philistinism in contemporary times that leads to consider the work of art merely as entertainment. This causes the work to be consumed, therefore, destroyed. She says: “The point is that a consumers’ society cannot possibly know how to take care of a world and the things which belong exclusively to the space of worldly appearances, because its central attitude toward all objects, the attitude of consumption, spells ruin to everything it touches” (Arendt 1961b, 211). Everything that falls under the hands of the consumer society is treated in the same way: as an object that must be used for something, as a means to an end. According to Arendt, the consumer society cannot reach a high degree of culture only with the passage of time and education. In this sense, there is a pessimism of Arendt that leads her to disbelieve in a change of course in the world. But at the same time, she says that today the “Only ones who still believe in the world are the artists—the duration of the work of art reflects the enduring character of the world. They can’t afford alienation from the world” (Arendt 1997, 142). If this is the case, then a narrative for understanding may be a good way to explore the crisis we are going through. Lisa Disch said that the term storytelling is not defined by Arendt, but upon reading her work, she observes that there is a way of narrating that seeks to understand events when there are no already stable categories (Disch 1996, 108). In the absence of these stable categories, the sources that our thinker uses are varied and literature can be a good way to anticipate certain events. To highlight how narrative can be shaped for understanding, we will analyze a short story by Günther Anders called

Die beweinte Zukunft (1961) (“The Mourned Future”) that deals with the construction of Noah’s ark.

If we follow the way of conceiving the Christian apocalypse, we find a sense of inevitability. The end that it announces cannot fail to happen, because it is supposed to be brought about by an imperious necessity, followed by salvation. But today, in secular societies, we know the theme of the end, outside any religious horizon of salvation as a desperate catastrophe of the mundane, the domestic, the valued, the signifier, and the operable. In short: it is inevitable and there is no salvation. But the message can be sent in another way and we can commit ourselves as human beings to a change in the course of the world. We can think of the biblical story of Noah. There he is described as the only righteous man left on Earth. That is why God decides to spare him from the flood with which he will sweep away human wickedness. And to save himself and his children, he warns him one hundred and twenty years in advance. Genesis makes no mention of the interval between God’s threat and the construction of the ark. Günther Anders imagines Noah’s angst during that time. In *Die beweinte Zukunft* Noah is the protagonist and he tries to open the eyes of his contemporaries. The first interesting aspect of the story is that it brings us into the subjectivity of the character, who here is no longer the silent builder of the ark of the biblical story, but a tormented and tragic figure. He pursues his contemporaries to tell them what is to come, but they mock and humiliate him (Anders 1981, 15). Noah is not content with this and puts on a performance to persuade his peers: he then appears in the street pretending to be in mourning: prostrate, dressed in rags, and with his head covered in ashes. He wants to teach them a lesson: “Und durch Schrecken zur Einsicht bringen. Und durch Einsicht zum Handeln” (16). He seeks to involve them in becoming aware of the future that awaits them so that they can act. It is necessary, then, to understand a phenomenon to be able to act accordingly. The anticipation to which Arendt referred when we talked about the functions of literature, takes on a pronounced turn in this story by Anders, since the story itself deals with how to foresee the catastrophe, the extinction. In this sense, Disch points out that the narrative for understanding, as Arendt uses it, can “morally commit us” (Disch 1996, 109). The story understood in this way, can “represent a dilemma as contingent and unprecedented”, stimulating the reader’s “critical thinking” (110). Anders’ story places us in front of the most relevant existential dilemma and yet the characters in the story ignore Noah. They approach him and ask

him all kinds of superfluous questions. They ask him about his mortuary attire and think that someone close to him has died. Noah continually tells them no, until at one point he tells them that he is mourning the many who have died. They ask him when that happened, and he answers: "It happened tomorrow" (20). To the bewilderment of the public, he explains that the flood will come and end everything we know. He asks them if they even know what that means. As they remain silent, he tells them: "There will be no difference...between those who cry and those who are cried..." (22) He says to them that they have to wake up, because "the day after tomorrow will be too late" (2. 3). In the face of concern from his neighbors and once his mission has been accomplished, he says: "The show is over." (24). In the days that followed the performance, Noah was visited by his neighbors who helped him build the ark.

This story of Anders shows us what it would be like the day after tomorrow when there's nothing and no one left. The temporal space that Noah opens is extensive and recalls the possibility of thinking of those who will come after us, when we are no longer on Earth, that is, after the flood, after the end of the world. And, seen from that time frame, everything that exists today will be as if it never existed. No more world, no more objects of art, no more mankind. In that sense, knowing that no one will weep for you, that no one will say the prayer over your grave, that no one will remember you because there will be no one to pray and remember: this thought has the power to terrify the lazy, since not having someone to remember you and mourn you is equivalent to never having been there, to never having appeared on this world.

Understanding this issue, and confronting it, is a way of taking a stand and committing to changing the course of the world.

5. Conclusions

In this last part, I will first present the conclusions and projections of the research and, then, the criticisms that can be made to the aesthetic approaches of the analyzed work of Arendt.

Regarding the conclusions and projections, I think that just as in Law there is a critique of legal positivism, in the social sciences Hannah Arendt was an enemy of positivist methods of dealing with research (Sánchez 2003, 23).

Her philological and comprehensive method prevented her from being tied to barriers that would allow her to access knowledge. For this reason, all her essays and works are full of references that come from art. But as we argue throughout this text, this was not only a way of exemplifying phenomena, but it became something deeper: she found a way to narrate and to narrate to herself the past, the present, and the future. I think that her contributions in terms of aesthetics have the same value as her findings in political theory or general philosophy and can be used in Law and Literature.

For this, it was necessary to describe her phenomenology of art, since it contains powerful signals about what the world we have created means, the civilization in which we live, the value of things *per se*, and how, within it, the work of art it situates itself and produces its effects. These disquisitions often escape the Law because it seeks knowledge's usefulness, ignoring reflections that exceed it. In this sense, I have exemplified the two forms of Arendt's narrative based on the crisis of the individual today. On the one hand, I am referring to the criticisms that exist around the universal subject of Law, and, on the other hand, I am referring to the existential threat in which we find ourselves because of climate change. Both put the notion of the legal subject of the Enlightenment to the test and put us in tension. As former Dean of Harvard Law School and cited author of storytelling and Arendt, Martha Minow, puts it: "Like Arendt, I find myself struggling with the limits of Enlightenment universalism, or what some call political liberalism, given the historical events of the twentieth century. In the name of universalism, particular groups have been oppressed; in the name of Enlightenment rationality, particular groups have been exterminated. At the same time, as more recent history suggests, the war of all against all is a likely result of a revival of particularisms" (Minow 1996, 34). The author describes in a good way the tension that we currently live on between particularisms and the universal subject. We must add the danger of death that humanity is experiencing today. The law cannot be absent from both discussions, and I wanted to demonstrate how, in the first case, we can approach the story of the victims, those subjects that have been excluded from the universal subject, through the portrait that is made of the Jew in the work of Proust. The reflections that Arendt makes on the novel can be updated today to what has been known for some time as "identity politics". Thinking about the projections of the narrative for redemption, we can cross this issue with the experiences of LGBTQIA+ groups, feminism, or native peoples.

If we see it from the narrative for understanding, the issue of climate change places us on the edges of what we know as the reason for the West. The crisis is so deep that it removes the beliefs and ideas we have accumulated for centuries and makes us need all the intellectual tools to understand what is happening. Anders' story reflects this concern and highlights the permanence of the world and the anticipation of literature that Arendt outlined in her writing on culture.

As for the criticisms, merely as an example, I think that one of them may be that Arendt's vision of the consumer society is pessimistic and conservative. Her argument that this society spells ruin on everything that it touches, can be refuted if we consider that there is literature that indicates that consumption is an emancipatory experience that produces equality in people, erasing their status signs (Peña 2020, 96). The question to ask would be whether it is possible to separate the sphere of art from the consumer experience.

In the same sense, her vision of high and low culture (or entertainment) has been called into question in postmodernity (Huyssen 1986). The ideas of beauty and uselessness that support Arendt's theorization about art and works of art can be defended from the postmodern attack if it is considered that there is some criterion to establish what can be understood as a cultural object and what No. Arendt fixes it on the permanence of the object through the centuries.

Lastly, and without intending to exhaust the possible set of criticisms, Facundo Vega finds out that there is an inconsistency in the way of thinking about the work of art as a product of *homo faber* since this is treated in Arendt's work as one that acts based on to means and ends, a procedure with which the work of art would not be related (Vega 2018, 370). Vega himself points out that the answer to this criticism may be given by Arendt's consideration of the action as exempt from the said procedure and by its unpredictable nature. Arendt's aesthetic work offers intriguing insights into the intersections of law, art, and politics, which are relevant to the study of Law and Literature. However, it is important to address any objections that may arise, including those raised here.

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