

49. *Ibid.*, 257. "The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, 'natural' ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is ontologically rooted." I would argue that the grandiosity of this sentence, with its retreat to the ontological, evidences the thin ice on which Arendt's argument here rests. She has no better way of explaining novelty than Aristotle or Kant had to offer. She must assert novelty as a fact because she has no way to demonstrate it is so.

50. See "A Plea for Excuses," 175–77, for Austin's efforts to identify a full range of ways that one could give reasons for one's action.

51. Admittedly, the relation of action to character in Aristotle is problematic. Character (*hexis*) must be trained through the repetition of actions that lay a foundation of good habits. Once in place, character then (in most cases) will generate the right kinds of actions. William James adopts a similar approach in the famous chapter on habit in his *Psychology*. In Freud, however, character is a product of instinctual drives and early life experiences, not anything the self has done. Martin Ostwald captures the Aristotelean picture in his definition of the term *hexis* in the edition of *Nicomachean Ethics* I am using: "*hexis*: Characteristic, also Trained Ability, Characteristic Condition, Characteristic Attitude. A noun related to the verb *echein*, 'to have,' 'hold,' 'hold as a possession,' 'be in a certain condition,' designating a firmly fixed possession of the mind, established by repeated and habitual action. Once attained, it is ever present, at least in a potential form. The Latin interpreters of Greek philosophy rendered the term by *habitus*. . . . Hence, 'habit' has often been used as an English equivalent" (308–9). As we have seen, Bourdieu inflects the term "habitus" in a collective direction, whereas "habit" in James is fundamentally individualistic.

52. "A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not *command a clear view* of our use of words.—Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just this understanding which consists in 'seeing connexions.' Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases*. The concept of a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance to us." Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 49 (par. 122).

53. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 95. "For the historian and the poet do not differ according to whether they write in verse or without verse—the writings of Herodotus could be put into verse, but they would be no less a sort of history in verse than they are without verse. But the difference is that the former relates things that have happened, the latter things that may happen. For this reason, poetry is a more philosophical and serious thing than history; poetry tends to speak of universals, history of particulars." Quoted from Leitch et al., *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 95.

The One and the Many in the Philosophy of Action

Christopher Yeomans

Most philosophers of action generally assume that there is a single phenomenon under discussion and a single (proper) conceptualization of notions such as agency, responsibility, and free will. But a strong minority tradition deserves recognition, one that emphasizes the essential role of plurality in the phenomena of agency. This tradition collects together philosophers as diverse as G. W. F. Hegel, Bernard Williams, Gary Watson, Hannah Arendt, and Robert Kane. In fact, one could even include Aristotle on this list, since he distinguishes between virtues of character and virtues of thought on the basis of which parts of the soul are involved, and further between virtue and continence as forms of successful agency. After an inquiry into the qualitative significance of this quantitative difference in the work of Kane, Arendt, and Hegel, we will end up with an appreciation of the value of a generalized form of what Wilfrid Sellars called the stereoscopic vision.

1. Robert Kane and the Plurality of Self-Conceptions

I want to begin with Robert Kane, who argues that the existence of multiple and competing purposes is a necessary condition for the kind of free will that libertarians hold is in turn necessary to validate our understanding of ourselves as sole and individual authors of our lives. Let's move backward, beginning at the end with Kane's structural conception of the process of free will and then asking why the striking pluralism of that conception is required. For our purposes, a consideration of Kane's view can state the theme of the one and the many, given the clarity with which he has developed both the specific shape of the many and its connection to the one.

Kane believes that sprinkled in among all of the actions for which we are responsible are some essential ones from which our deep responsibility for the others flows. He calls these Self-Forming Actions (SFAs), or, more precisely, Self-Forming Willings (SFWs), which he characterizes as the effort by which agents create and sustain their own ends or purposes. But it is essential to Kane's view that these Self-Forming Willings are cases in which we *struggle* to set the end that we want to set, and specifically because we also

want to set some competing end, we *could* also set that competing end, and we have good *reasons* to do so. So as Kane sees it, these Self-Forming Willings are plural in three senses: they are plural voluntary, plural controlled, and plural rational. These track the three sense of willing itself, that is, that the will is desiderative, striving, and rational.¹

In Kane's central example, a businesswoman who walks by a mugging on her way to a crucial sales meeting confronts a conflict between two internal perspectives, one urging her to establish or sustain the purpose of advancing her career and one urging her to establish or sustain the purpose of helping the victim.² The self-forming aspect of her decision is grounded in the fact that she could set either end (though it would take an effort either way), she wants to set each end (i.e., she has strong motivations both to advance her career and to help the mugging victim), and she has good reasons to set each end (since both the career and the assistance to the victim are objectively valuable pursuits).

But why is such plurality necessary? Here is Kane's answer with respect to two of the three kinds of plurality, namely plural rationality and plural voluntariness:

To say that *these* self-forming acts could not be such that the agent's predominant motives and will were set one way when they were performed is to say that SFAs must be more-than-one-way rational or motivated. Moreover, we know that SFAs must also be plural voluntary from the R[esponsibility] condition of UR [Ultimate Responsibility], which requires that "something the agent voluntarily did, and for which the agent could have voluntarily done otherwise" made a difference in the agent's current motives and dispositions.³

But why plural (rational) control? Usually, the most that even libertarians think we need in the way of alternate possibilities for free will is a kind of two-way power to do or not to do something, in this case to set or not to set one of the purposes. Furthermore, the issue is not just coming up with a justification for leaving Ockham's razor unused in this instance. Rather, there is a real cost deriving from this plural control and the indeterminism it entails: "Paradoxical as it may seem, in order to have *ultimate* control over their destinies, possessors of free will must relinquish another kind of control at pivotal points in their life histories, namely, an antecedent determining control that would guarantee how things will turn out in advance."⁴ So why pay this price?

As with the first two forms of plurality, that is, plural rationality and plural voluntariness, Kane's argument for the necessity of plural control is grounded in what he calls "Ultimate Responsibility." But then, of course, we need to ask why ultimate responsibility is worth wanting in the first place,

and Kane's answer is that it is necessary for us to be individuals in the most robust sense of the term:

In conclusion, then, why do we want free will? We want it because we want ultimate responsibility. And why do we want that? For the reason that children and adults take delight in their accomplishment from the earliest moments of their awakening as persons, whether these accomplishments are making a fist or walking upright or composing a symphony. This delight is no arbitrary feature of what we are. It is related to the fact that we first distinguish ourselves *as selves* distinct from the world by virtue of our ability to control some things by our wills, as the baby did her fist. Thereafter, we associate being a self in the full sense with imagining ourselves doing things—making, producing, creating, bringing about—as effecting changes in the world by our wills. . . . That is to say, creatures of higher consciousness such as we are have an unquenchable thirst for individuality and personhood (which I think are inextricably linked).⁵

Finally, Kane is almost unique in the contemporary literature on free will in drawing substantive moral and political conclusions from this view of free will: plural rationality requires a real value pluralism, and plural voluntariness requires that the political and social spheres make the plurality of values cognitively and affectively accessible to agents.

Well, so much for our forced march through Kane's very sophisticated and subtle theory, much of which has necessarily remained out of view; at this point I just want to get some different types of plurality on the table and use the justificatory structure provided by Kane to get a sense of their significance and connection. First, there is a plurality of aspects or axes of the will itself: the will is desiderative, rational, and striving. Second, there is plurality along each of these axes: SFWs are plural voluntary, plural rational, and plural (voluntary) controlled. Finally, there is a plurality of the objects of the will—of the ends that are desired, justified, and set and maintained through effort. And this last plurality is just as much objective as subjective on Kane's view, as one can see from his value pluralism. But the need for all of this plurality is grounded in a kind of singularity, that is, in the need to be somebody who matters as an individual as distinct from both other agents and the rest of the world. If we were not desiderative, rational, and striving creatures, we would not be identifiable sources of activity at all; and if we did not have the ability to set one particular end from among the many that we desire, that we find justified, and toward which we could strive, we would not be *ultimate* sources of activity. Finally, if there were not multiple objectively legitimate and incompatible ends and projects, the inner conflict that made such sourcehood possible would

only be a matter of confusion, the proper object of therapy rather than respect.

I have long been struck by the similarity of the conceptual moves made by critical theorists and philosophers of action, despite the philosophical and social disdain with which each group regards the other. In what is probably only a continuation of my history of failure to successfully explain each to the other, here is another attempt. The basic form of this attempt will be to focus our attention on the similarities between Kane's and Arendt's interests in individuality. Since we've got structure in front of us, let's begin with some rough structural parallels:

(1) for both, individuality is understood as a kind of sourcehood, and for both the grounding of the significance of that sourcehood in early childhood is more than a metaphor—rather a kind of metaphysics;

(2) for both, there is a kind of indeterminacy or unpredictability that is necessary for true or ultimate sourcehood rather than just proximate sourcehood as a link in a longer causal or teleological chain;

(3) for both, this conception of sourcehood is connected with the notion of public standing, of the need to “be somebody” irreplaceable in the shared world of appearance;

(4) for both, it is in the very nature of (free) actions that they can be only a small minority of human activities.

But, of course, there are some essential differences on precisely these points:

(1') for Arendt, our natality means that sourcehood has to be distinguished from control—it is a kind of beginning without a goal to orient subsequent events; so whereas for Kane we are the source of *purposes*, for Arendt we are the sources of *new processes*;

(2') whereas Kane contrasts this indeterminacy with *antecedent* determining control, the contrast in Arendt is with *subsequent* determining control;

(3') whereas Kane thinks that one can “be somebody” in a number of different spheres and ways, Arendt thinks that such public standing can only be obtained in very specific circumstances; thus

(4') whereas Kane holds that true free action is a possibility available to most persons in modern society, Arendt despairs of its availability to any moderns, and precisely not in *society* as such.

Thus for each point there is a difference in conception that is related to a difference in justification. For the purposes of discussion we can group together the first two around the question of sourcehood and the second two around the question of the public shape of action. The first issue is thus predominantly conceptual and metaphysical, the second aesthetic and political. And

in each issue there is a Hegelian intervention to be made to help us see how the two perspectives offer compatible insights into the nature of agency.

2. Sourcehood and Control

The issue of control has a long history in the debates about free will that we will not consider in any detail here. But most generally it has been associated with the kind of authorship needed to connect free will to individuality via the notion of *self-determination*. Here is where Arendt is at her most radical, since precisely because she wants to connect action to individuality in the strongest possible terms she denies that we can ever be authors of our actions in the relevant sense. Indeed, she goes as far as to say that action is essentially anonymous, and she sees no direct interpersonal mitigation of this unsettling aspect of action. At best one's action can be picked up by a fabricator of stories that take their place within a community of remembrance, but that is quite unlike the way that promising mitigates the unpredictability of action and forgiveness mitigates its permanence, which are the other two essential and unsettling features of action identified by Arendt. But the agent and the author of the story about the agent are engaged in two fundamentally different kinds of activity. The latter is one in which there is, in fact, no reflection of the author in the finished product, and so authorship is the wrong model for agency:

The disclosure of the “who” through speech, and the setting of a new beginning through action, always fall into an already existing web where their immediate consequences can be felt. . . . It is because of this already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose; but it is also because of this medium, in which action alone is real, that it “produces” stories with or without intention as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things. . . . Although everybody started his life by inserting himself into the human world through action and speech, nobody is the author or producer of his own life story. In other words, the stories, the results of action and speech, reveal an agent, but this agent is not an author or producer. Somebody began it and is its subject in the twofold sense of the word, namely its actor and sufferer, but nobody is its author.⁶

Stories are naturally produced by action precisely because the medium in which action takes place is the plurality of other agents and their perspectives; the space in which they appear is thus an interpretive space. That plurality then serves as both the condition for the possibility of being the main character in one's life story and yet the condition for the impossibility

of having control over that story. Thus the significance of action cannot lie in purposes that are rarely, if ever achieved; instead, the significance of action lies precisely in its novelty, which is deeply connected to the kind of irreplaceable individuality Arendt sees as being embodied in true action. So, to take one recent political example, the U.S. ban on horse slaughter on the basis of animal welfare considerations has been found to result in poorer conditions for domestic horses, without a reduction in the overall number of horses slaughtered (who are simply shipped to Canada and Mexico for that purpose). One might then, from an Arendtian point of view, see the significance of the original slaughter ban in its reaction to the prior regime of domestic slaughterhouses, rather than in its subsequent effects.

But the radical nature of Arendt's view here should not blind us to the fact that Arendt and Kane have common cause against the notion of agency as self-mastery or absolute sovereignty—we already saw this in Kane's view that plural voluntary control was not just compatible with but in fact required the absence of antecedent determining control. The difference is in what they take to be the predominant form of disruption of that mastery and its temporal orientation. To begin with Arendt, the paradoxical thing about novelty is that it is essentially backward-looking; something is new with respect to what came before it rather than what comes after it.⁷ On Arendt's description, the agent turns their glance away from a future they do not control and back to a past with respect to which they can at least control their difference. This is also true in the specifically political dimension of action as well, where Arendt emphasizes the priority of the retrospective legitimation of action by reference to prior agreement (i.e., true politics) as opposed to prospective justification of action by reference to a goal (i.e., administration or bureaucracy).⁸ On Kane's description the agent looks forward to purposes that have to be set against the background of a plurality of psychic investments that undermines past control; on Arendt's description the agent looks back toward the past from which she differentiates herself against the foreground of a plurality of external perspectives that places the outcome of the processes she initiates outside her control.

As so often in philosophy, our guiding parable here ought to be the blind men and the elephant. There is every reason to believe that both sources of disruption and both temporal orientations are essential to agency. Here is where Hegel comes in, since he provides the conceptual structure to wed the two perspectives together, just as Kane and Arendt provide the phenomenology to articulate the significance of that structure. And to return to our opening question, the crucial point is that it is precisely the pluralism of each view that makes this possible.

One way of getting at this point is to pick up on Arendt's own self-understanding of the difference between her view and those in the free will debate as one between her own object-oriented perspective focused on public acts and their subject-oriented perspective focused on the will as an internal

capacity. The dominance of this latter orientation in modern philosophy is part of the explanation for why it cannot see the distinction between labor and work (which is obvious, Arendt thinks, if one looks at the differences between the physical and social conditions and products of the two activities rather than attending only to the subjective intentional stances involved). These two poles—the object-oriented and the subject-oriented—are the two poles of what Hegel calls “reflection,” which I have argued elsewhere is another name for the logical phenomenon of expression.⁹ And what Hegel gives us is a framework for seeing the two orientations as two processes that are locked in a kind of recursive and reciprocal interaction.

There is no space to go into the details of Hegel's conception here, but some terminology may be helpful: expression (“reflection”) involves two different sides: creation (“positing”) and interpretation (“reflection-into-self”). They exist in a kind of dynamic feedback loop: first, an inchoate idea or content is posited in an articulated form that is differentiated both from its own simple content and from other articulated forms to which it stands in relation; then it is reflected into itself when aspects of this differentiated form are built back into the original idea, making it a more determinate basis for further creation.¹⁰ But the crucial thing for Hegel is that any expression involves these two processes working in tandem, since he denies that one can make sense of expression as a simple disclosure or translation of an already given content. So whereas Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves wants to distinguish between expressive and communicative aspects of agency in Arendt's thought, the Hegelian idea would be that the notion of communication just brings out the aspect of interpretation that was already implicit in the notion of expression.¹¹ Arendt sometimes writes as if the political actor were completely lacking in self-awareness—a mere condition for the construction of meaning by storytellers in their audience. But given the tight connection between action and speech and the paradigmatic status of Pericles's funeral oration, that cannot be her considered view.

There are clearly real advantages to Arendt's rigorously object-oriented perspective here, and enough similarities with Hegel's treatments of stoicism and Kantian moral psychology to suggest a deep political and aesthetic affinity that we will take up in the next section. In my view, *The Human Condition* in particular is remarkably effective at bringing into relief the different constellations of relations between agents' talents and interests, the public world and our collective projects in it; and also very good at illuminating the way that those different elements change their significance when their relations change: for example, the way the meaning of the public world of fabricated objects changes when those objects are primarily related to our talent for and interest in consumption rather than permanence or self-disclosure. But I will not be the first reader of Arendt to point out distortions in plain view as well. Of particular relevance to our theme is that she apportions the two sides of expression to two different intersubjective positions or, even more

problematically, to two different kinds of people. There is the actor who creates and discloses, and the author or spectator who interprets. This gives us the strain in Arendt's thought that is sometimes characterized as elitist (Canovan) or heroic (Parekh), and her hyperbolic denials of the possibility of action in (mass) society as such in which all behavior has been regularized.

We have already seen in more detail the structural clarity enabled by Kane's rigorously subject-oriented perspective (i.e., his emphasis on free will rather than free action). The distortion thus introduced by Kane is the loss of the sense in which the projects or purposes set by the will are also relations to other persons or ways of life. Thus despite his cogent and (for a libertarian) unexpected attack on the conception of agency as self-mastery and his drawing of substantive moral and political conclusions, his conception remains atomistic, even if only by default. This comes out in his left-libertarian politics. But this seems to undermine his own acknowledgment of the need to be somebody in the public sphere, that is, the need for recognition or *Anerkennung* in the Hegelian sense. This distortion here is the cut between the plurality of motivational investments within the agent and the plurality of forms of activities and human relations present and possible in any given society. Thus the *qualitative* significance of the plurality of those investments tends to get lost in Kane's thought. Arendt's diagnosis of this general failing in modern philosophy of action traces it exactly back to the subjective perspective, arguing that it thus represents theorizing about action under conditions where it has effectively become impossible as a recognizable phenomenon in the public world.

Neither distortion is a complete obscuring, though they sometimes come close. Arendt acknowledges that actions have purposes—they just appear to play no role in their deepest significance on her view—and Kane acknowledges that the recognition of multiple ends as legitimate by other agents is a necessary condition for the internal plurality of ends.

But here is the thing about Arendt's view: she has rather little to say about how action and speech generate or constitute the kind of plurality that serves as their own condition of possibility. That plurality instead appears in her work as a kind of brute historical given with respect to the individual agent, and this is part of what leads her to a paradoxical conception of action that is simultaneously narrowly political and yet completely divorced from the content of politics. In fact, it is quite difficult to see what the content of action is, on Arendt's view. That the Hegelian diagnosis here goes under the name of "external reflection" should not be surprising given Arendt's object-oriented approach. Hegel thinks that we rather easily forget that interpretation itself is an activity, or, more broadly, that activity partially constitutes its own conditions.¹² Arendt is sometimes so taken with the radical novelty of action that she doesn't see that any action is only novel in some particular respect, which respect actually constitutes the sense in which the old hangs together as one thing from which the new differentiates itself. So the realm

of nondifferentiation is taken to be objectively given (i.e., labor and work), rather than distinctively constituted by new action.

This will lead us on to the topic of the next section—the places and ways in which free action is possible—but before we go in that direction I want to point out a fundamental result: this distortion introduced by Arendt's view can be compensated by appeal to Kane's view. Once one can see the plurality of ends that serve as the basis of the effort of self-determination as itself a product of the agent's interpretations of the actions of other individuals in the public sphere, then one begins to see the way in which those other actions provide the content for the disclosure of the agent's individuality along Arendt's lines. Because Arendt doesn't have the structurally sophisticated metaphysics that Kane has, she has a kind of allergy to the notion that others' actions could provide that content, even when her own analysis of Greek political life shows otherwise. But Kane's view gives us the internal structure to show how these other projects and actions could serve as the input, as it were, for a robust process of self-determination. It would be a source of inner disruption, to be sure, but Kane has the rationale for precisely why such inner disruption is necessary for robust self-determination.

And the distortion introduced by Kane's view can then be compensated by Arendt's view, since the multiplicity of ends that make free will possible can itself be seen as a multiplicity of actual and potential relations to other agents. Thus the value experiments are less atomistic projects and more contributions to types or spheres of actions in which one can be somebody in the public world—but again this leads us to the topic of the following section, so we will leave off here. To conclude *this* section let us return to the question we posed at the outset of the essay, namely the qualitative significance of quantitative plurality.

More particularly the question is, What role is plurality playing here, and how it is playing it? The fundamental role that we have just seen is to displace the inner/outer distinction from its centrality in thinking about agency. Once we use the Hegelian logical scaffolding to join Kane's and Arendt's views together, we get a sense of the dynamic way in which the inner can take on the significance of the outer and vice versa. In terms of how plurality is playing this role, I believe that the kind of plurality that matters is a kind of mean. If we have no plurality—for example, if there is only one goal (on Kane's view) or only one way of behaving (on Arendt's)—we have no individuality at all and thus no true agency or action. And for the same reason: on that hypothesis, there is no beginning or even (on Kane's view) sustaining something begun against temptations or other motivations, therefore there is no sourcehood. But if we have too many goals or behaviors their differences run away into insignificance and thus we similarly lack the robust, contrastive identification with ends or courses of action that is required for sourcehood. This is something that post-Kantians such as Jacobi saw in Kant's moral psychology: action is either motivated by the moral law, or by

natural inclinations that are just physical events like any other; in either case, it is essentially anonymous. Or, to use Hegel's logical jargon, individuality cannot be grounded exclusively in either universality or particularity.

Thus Kane's left-libertarianism seems an unsatisfying political response to his own theory of free will for reasons Arendt is well positioned to diagnose: that is, all of these different experiments in living have to be thought in relation to each other somehow, and so they are made commensurable by the one value of utility, which then has to be flattened out further into a mere concern for happiness that evacuates any remaining sense of contrastive significance of the experiments themselves. So, interestingly, both Kane and Arendt hold that truly free action is impossible under conditions of totalitarianism, but they differ in their political diagnosis of how widespread totalitarianism is in the contemporary world: Arendt thinks that it is the basic form of modern political life, whereas Kane sees it as an isolated phenomenon. And unless one has this tractable number of projects, ends, political factions, and ideals, the internal side of agency runs away into a blooming, buzzing confusion of mental states as on empiricist descriptions, and thus no meaningful map or translation can be offered between the inner options and outer differences that confront the agent.

And here is something important about the way in which Hegel's notion of reflection connects these two views: it is not so much a circuit as a continual development—a spiral, if you like, rather than a circle. Because expression never completes a circuit and comes back to exactly the point at which it started, it is always a matter of interpretation (in the technical sense above of "reflection-into-self") whether it has succeeded.

But once one has a plurality within this mean, one has a tractable number of contrasts, and the very significance of those contrasts works to break down the absoluteness of the individual subject as a unit of analysis. Kane's agent *works* to identify herself with one of the particular versions of the self that is pressing itself forward for consideration. Arendt's Greek politician *works* to display his own excellence in part by identifying with a particular faction.

3. The Public Shape of Action

In this section we want to pick up on the following similarities and differences from above:

(3) for both Arendt and Kane, their conception of sourcehood is connected with the notion of public standing, of the need to "be somebody" irreplaceable in the shared world of appearance; but whereas Kane thinks that one can "be somebody" in a number of different spheres and ways, Arendt thinks that such public standing can only be obtained in very specific circumstances; and

(4) for both, it is in the very nature of (free) actions that they can be only a small minority of human activities; but whereas Kane holds that true free action is a possibility available to most persons in modern society, Arendt despairs of its availability to any moderns, and precisely not in *society* as such.

Here I want to pick up on a few themes that go to the points about plurality just made: that is, at the object level it displaces the inner/outer contrast, and at the theoretical level it allows for a kind of compatibilism.

The first point requires us to return to perhaps the most basic pluralism in Kane's view, which is the idea that the will is rational, desiderative, and striving. Part of the pleasure of reading *The Significance of Free Will* lies in the counterpoint between these three senses and their different forms of plurality. As it turns out, Hegel is up to something similar in distinguishing between three constitutive projects of self-determination: self-appropriation, specification of content, and effectiveness. That is, in action we are trying to take possession of ourselves, to distinguish the signal from the noise of our lives, and to actually do what we want to do.¹³ There are rough structural parallels here with Kane—rationality is essential to self-appropriation, desires (in the broad sense) to the content of our wills, and striving is the effort to be effective—but what interests me most here is the tension between the three. What Hegel slowly comes to see is that these three projects are both mutually necessary and yet impossible to jointly carry out to their fullest extent. The very activities that allow for maximal specification of content, for example, tend to minimize our ability to appropriate that content or to play a fundamental role in realizing it in the external world. For example, the very wholehearted identification with one perspective can make it difficult to grasp other perspectives and thus to offer good reasons to others in defense of one's own perspective (self-appropriation) or to account for those other perspectives in carrying out plans defined by one's own (effectiveness).

The point I want to take away from this is that it leaves agency as a kind of problem that has multiple solutions, each of which has certain advantages and disadvantages compared to the others. This then generates an explicit connecting tissue between the inner and the outer, as a shared inner problem can be solved in at least three basic ways which are then embodied externally by different kinds of lives. For Hegel works in the audience, these basic ways are the three forms of accountability identified by Hegel in the Morality section of the *Philosophy of Right* as the rights of knowledge, intention, and insight into the good. And the embodiment goes under a name—"die Stände"—that is almost impossible to translate into English but is nowadays usually rendered as "the estates": farmers and soldiers, workers and managers, public servants and merchants.

Perhaps the most interesting and unexpected thing is the way that Hegel's social theory of agency maps onto Arendt's philosophical anthropology and yet offers importantly different interpretations of modern social life. So, to

expand on the example above, Hegel associates the first form of accountability with success at specification of content, and thus with wholeheartedness, contentment, and enjoyment at the expense of long-term planning, principled justification, and efficacy over a wide range of conditions. This is the life of farmers and soldiers and, in his way of seeing things, women (due to their exclusive orientation to domestic life). There are, of course, many similarities between this description and what Arendt calls labor as opposed to work and action—similarities in the social location, orientation, and advantages and disadvantages of this way of life. But what Hegel's deeper pluralism about the structure of agency allows him to see is that there is real individual self-determination and thus action here, because there is at least minimal self-appropriation and effectiveness and great success at the other, third project of specification of content. Hegel is willing to meet Arendt halfway here in agreeing that those leading this way of life have difficulty recognizing their individuality—but precisely because of their tie to the particular features of geography and family that bound their lives, there is a uniqueness and specificity to their character that is appropriated largely in affective terms through enjoyment and trust. While we cannot address the point in detail here, there are similarly interesting connections between work and Hegel's second form of accountability, and action and the third.¹⁴

Instead, I want to focus on the shared problems of Arendt's and Hegel's view, or rather two different problems that stem from the same source, namely the apportioning of different forms of agency to different persons leading different ways of life in different spheres. For Arendt this apportioning is occasional, and it is problematic because of her steeply hierarchical account of the different activities. For Hegel the apportioning is fundamental, and it is problematic largely because the society to which they are apportioned bears so little resemblance to our own.

But we can radicalize Hegel's view of the three forms of agency even further by subjecting it to his own theory of reflection, and thereby at the same time maintain some of the phenomenological power of Arendt's description while rejecting her disdain for bourgeois life. As we have already seen, Hegel sees true self-determination in all three forms of agency, but agrees with Arendt that it is difficult to express the individuality of that self-determination both in what Arendt calls life and in bureaucratic administration. But I believe that the best analysis of the possibilities of agency in our own contemporary society requires combining the occasionalism, if I may, of Arendt's view with the more developed reflective or expressive structure of Kane's and Hegel's view. What I mean by the former is Arendt's recognition that all human lives involve labor, work, and action (even if any particular agent may be oriented *primarily* toward one of the three); what I mean by the latter is implicit in Kane and explicit in Hegel's notion that action partially constitutes its own conditions of possibility and significance (i.e., its presuppositions).

If we add to this conceptual idea a key component of Hegel's understanding of (civil) society—namely that it contains precisely the mixture of equality and distinctiveness that Arendt associates only with the political realm—I think we get something like the following picture: the three forms of activity are not fixed in terms of their ability to express individuality, but precisely by expressing individuality in a particular way each constitutes a background of conformity against which that individuality stands out. So, for example, one might express one's individuality through a deep investment in one's family, but at the cost of constituting one's career as “just a job” or even leaving the career to a spouse. Or one might dedicate oneself to public service, but at the expense of thinning out one's family relations to institutionally required performances or even not starting one's own nuclear family at all. We have, of course, common exemplars who represent the extremes of such choices—homemaking mothers would be an example of the first, celibate priests of the second—so there is always a complex and politically problematic relation between inner and outer here: between choices and roles, as it were. The temptations of strictly apportioning such roles to *kinds* or *types* of people, even on the basis of choice (as for men in Hegel), must be resisted. Nonetheless, the external visibility of the trade-offs entailed by precisely this radical power of action to constitute its own presuppositions is crucial in order to bring into relief the internal stakes of action, and thus to make individual self-determination possible.

4. Conclusions

Well, what do we get out of this big game of compare-and-contrast? The two fundamental theoretical benefits conferred by pluralism are that it displaces the inner/outer contrast at the object level and allows for a kind of compatibilism at the theoretical level. But it should be clear that these are just two sides of the same coin, or two different ways of seeing the same theoretical function. The very object-level plurality (whether of the aspects of the will in Kane and Hegel or the types of activity in Hegel and Arendt) provides multiple standpoints from which to formulate theories about action as a whole, each of which naturally emphasizes or clarifies some of its features while de-emphasizing or distorting others. There is, to generalize a term from Wilfrid Sellars, a kind of stereoscopic vision.¹⁵ And to push the metaphor a bit further, in human beings what stereoscopic vision gives us is a sense of distance and thus what Sellars calls our knowing our way around a landscape.

Or, to use a related metaphor, the pluralism at issue is a bit like the topological notion of an atlas of maps. When a three-dimensional space such as a sphere (e.g., roughly, the earth) is projected onto two-dimensional maps, a non-Euclidean space is represented by a Euclidean space. This allows better comprehension of the topological characteristics of the space but at the

cost of some distortion. What topologists call the maximal atlas is the collection of all such map projections and the additional transition map that allows points on one map to be transformed into points on the other map, and this atlas defines a non-Euclidean manifold in Euclidean terms. The forms of plurality we have considered are like the different map projections of the atlas: moderately distorted yet truth-revealing. But two natural tendencies must be resisted: on the one hand, the tendency to think that there is some further, single perspective from which every point immediately appears in undistorted relation to every other point; and, on the other hand, the tendency to think the ineliminability of distortion entails that we can have no firm grasp of truth and must therefore lapse into skeptical antirealism or a Heideggerian mysticism of unconcealment. To pick up particularly on the difference between Arendt and Kane, there is no third pure or absolute form of expression or reflection that would be both object-oriented and subject-oriented at the exact same time, but there are Hegelian conceptual ways of understanding how the distortions introduced by one orientation are compensated by accuracies introduced by the other orientation, and vice versa. Pluralism is what makes these reciprocal compensations possible.

Notes

1. Strictly speaking, this isn't quite right, since (a) voluntariness involves not merely desiring but desiring more than any other alternatives (and thus the plurality of voluntariness involves not merely desiring different things but the possibility that different things could be most desired); and (b) voluntariness also requires lack of coercion. See Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 30. But for our purposes in stating the theme, we will accept this minor distortion as the price to be paid for the structural clarity at which we aim.

2. Kane sees this as a conflict between moral and prudential reasons, but that interpretation isn't essential to the example, even on Kane's own view, since such moral choices are only the sharpest example of the incommensurability between purposes that necessitates the effort to set the will.

3. Kane, *The Significance of Free Will*, 114.

4. *Ibid.*, 144.

5. *Ibid.*, 100–101.

6. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 184.

7. The notion of a beginning—also important for Arendt—just combines that novelty with the subsequent causal or teleological chain, and so shares this predominantly retrospective character.

8. See, e.g., Arendt, *Crises of the Republic: Lying in Politics; Civil Disobedience; On Violence; Thoughts on Politics and Revolution* (New York: Mariner Books, 1972), 151.

9. Christopher Yeomans, *Freedom and Reflection: Hegel and the Logic of Agency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

10. In schematic form this is actually quite close to Sellars's understanding of the "dialectical interplay" between the manifest image (which limits itself to correlations between perceptible events) and the scientific image (which posits imperceptible objects to explain those correlations). See "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," in Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception, and Reality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 1–40, at 19–20.

11. Maurizio Passerin d'Entrèves, *The Political Philosophy of Hannah Arendt* (London: Routledge, 1993), ch. 2. For a characterization of Arendt on expression quite close to the one of Hegel offered here, see John McGowan, *Hannah Arendt: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 64.

12. There is every reason to think that Arendt should have seen this, given her views about how historical events do the same thing (and thus cannot be said to be caused in the strict sense), but again her object-oriented approach continually blurs this feature of individual human agency—it is there, but out of focus and therefore prone to being forgotten or minimized. This is a nice example of Sellars's point that in the stereoscopic vision each perspective is present in the image of the other perspective, but distorted ("Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," 8). See Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 319, and the discussion in McGowan, *Hannah Arendt*, 55–56.

13. See Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), §§25–26. A fuller argument for the interpretation briefly summarized here can be found in my *Expansion of Autonomy: Hegel's Pluralistic Philosophy of Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

14. Briefly, in each case Hegel roughly agrees with Arendt on the division of phenomenal features between the forms of agency—and roughly their social location as well—but his more detailed pluralism allows him to see agency where Arendt denies it and to problematize it where she sees it. Work is the province of the estate of producers and managers and turns primarily on the power of self-appropriation via the products, skills, and teamwork involved. For action, however, there is a more fundamental contrast. Hegel sees politics (outside of the monarch) as largely the province of civil servants and others who put their shoulders to the wheel for the common good and thus tend to become anonymous. Whereas Arendt's typology of activity is intended to build up to the one pure form of action that delivers individuality, Hegel's is intended to reveal the success, failures, and pathologies of individuation that attend to each form of activity.

15. And perhaps it is not much of a generalization, since it is easy to see Kane as emphasizing the scientific image of human beings and Arendt as trying to trace the manifest image back to the original image of which it is the "sophistication and refinement" ("Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," 18). Furthermore, the suggestion of a mediating tissue of types or social groups is crucial to Sellars's own suggestion for the way to make the stereoscopic vision come into focus and is, at least at one point in the essay, associated with Hegel's distinctive contribution to the problem (*ibid.*, 16, 39–40).