

# Aesthetic Investigations

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## The Truth of the Story and its Variations

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**Abstract:** Husserl's phenomenology of appearances and the role of variations in the constitution of reality inspire Arendt's examinations of 'story' in *The Human Condition*. According to her, life is produced as a 'story'. Yet, a life story presents two significant difficulties: first, the unpredictability of events prevents individuals to be the author of their own stories, and second, due to the lack of sufficient distance to one's own story, only others can see and tell someone's story. Both claims give rise to difficulties in writing an autobiography. If narration is only possible when the narrators have sufficient distance to the narrated life, is it convincing that what they see and tell is the truth of the story? This article argues that if distance is a precondition of seeing and narrating, then variations of appearances and the reality that they constitute through different perspectives become a part of seeing and narrating.

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### INTRODUCTION

Edmund Husserl's investigations on appearances and how they constitute reality have a significant impact on contemporary aesthetics and political theories. Hannah Arendt, his former student, was not only influenced by Husserl's phenomenology and phenomenological analyses of his later period, but also contributed to the interpretation of appearances by adding the important notion of plurality. For her, to witness the appearances of this world in plurality constitutes the reality of the world as well as the reality of the

individuals. According to her, plurality is also a condition for political action and speech, which are the decisive capacities for disclosing and revealing oneself as a unique person among others.<sup>1</sup> Both action and speech are actualised in one's taking initiative, which Arendt describes as 'inserting oneself into human plurality'.<sup>2</sup> Hence, only the collection of initiatives produces a unique life story of an individual within the course of one's involvement in human plurality. Although the interaction with the others is based on initiative, this does not mean that one can determine the results of such initiative and become the 'author' of one's life story. Moreover, one cannot narrate one's life story, because as Arendt emphasizes, narration needs a sufficiently distant perspective.<sup>3</sup> This emphasis is in accordance to the phenomenological stance she shares with her predecessors: seeing is perspectival and it includes a multiplicity of unseen shades of perspectives as Husserl's term *Abschattungen* (adumbrations) suggests.<sup>4</sup> This claim has two implications: first, only others as spectators can gain sufficient distance to see one's life and narrate one's life story, and second, this view is inevitably perspectival.

These implications challenge the status of the autobiography and the biography, which both lie at the intersection between artistic production and reality. Yet, particularly because they share such an in-between state, an examination on autobiography and biography enables us to gather and compare the truth claim in reality and in fiction. We assume that both (i) autobiography and biography reflect a true story of their main character. This assumption is based on the presumption that (ii) there is a true story. The latter presumption suggests that, if the story is not true, something has been missed in the narration.

My aim in this paper is to challenge both of these assumptions. To this end, first I clarify the role of appearances in our constitution of reality and subsequently ask if this reality and the narrations that are involved in it can be strictly separated from phantasy and fiction. In order to investigate the role of fiction in the constitution of reality, and how this relation functions in narration, I first briefly explain the role of variation in perception and memory in Husserl. Second, I examine the meaning of the real and the fictional in a story. Third, I investigate the meaning of a story in plurality for Arendt. For this, I examine Arendt's essay on Brecht as an example of a biography. Finally, I investigate if it is possible to include a truth claim in a story. As I suggest, similar to the function of phantasy in perception, fiction is an inseparable component of all narratives of reality.

## I. APPEARANCES AND VARIATIONS

The Husserlian notion of variation opens up different venues to understand what reality is. The phenomenological investigation of seeing things and the complexity that is involved in seeing has been a central topic for Husserl from his earliest periods onwards, and he examines it in different texts. For Husserl, conscious acts belong to a temporal fringe and what has been perceived in the temporal fringe of the now is the core of all conscious operations such as memory and phantasy. Consciousness is taken as a ‘*nexus*’ and the *originary nexus* is time consciousness in which we have a ‘multiplicity of impressional contents’.<sup>5</sup> This multiplicity refers to the coexistence of different objects in each and every perception, i.e., when one looks at a particular object from a certain perspective, what is seen includes multiple objects. For example, if one looks at a tree, leaves, branches and colours are parts of the perception of the tree in the same act of seeing. Although one can say that it is the perception of a tree after all, these components accompany future perceptions and they will be used to ‘reconstruct’ other conscious operations such as association and disposition.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, reconstruction can influence our recollections; for instance, if I associate an oak tree with a certain type and color, it will not only influence my recollection of this oak tree, but it will determine my expectations whenever I see a new oak tree as well.<sup>7</sup> In recollection, the seen parts of a tree and the unseen parts,<sup>8</sup> such as the back of it, and numerous elements such as benches and leaves are united in phantasy, and one can say ‘I recall this tree in the garden’ as a unified whole, despite its missing parts. In the last section, I return to the meaning of this unified whole and the way in which one recollects things. As we shall see, this is a key component of my final analyses.

Variation is one of the terms that Husserl uses to express this multiplicity of perceptions in the constitution of an object.<sup>9</sup> In *Ideas I* Husserl explains that this multiplicity is due to our *being in* and *surrounded by* the world.<sup>10</sup> Yet, this does not mean that the world is simply present; it rather presumes a particular attention to what is obscurely intended in addition to what is now perceived and what is co-present: ‘what is now perceived and what is more or less clearly co-present and determinate, are penetrated and surrounded by an *obscurely intended to horizon of indeterminate actuality*.’<sup>11</sup> As the quote suggests, one’s relation to the world includes both determinate perceptions of what is *here and now* and, at the same time, the horizon of other possible perceptions that are not yet actualised. Hence, the multiplicity described by the term ‘variation’ does not only entail what is now perceived, and also not only what is co-present, but also includes the multitude of possible perceptions, that is, also what is not yet perceived, seen or experienced. This is the full scope of the indeterminate actuality of which Husserl speaks here and which is thus an integral and inseparable part of the constitution of the world and one’s being in the world.

The indeterminate actuality and the variation play a crucial role in Arendt's conception of the world and plurality, as will be discussed in the following sections. She particularly emphasizes the intersubjective dimension of this variation. In Arendt's phenomenological analyses of the political realm she eloquently describes how the appearance of things and people have a decisive role in constituting reality. In different passages of *The Human Condition*, she emphasizes that the reality of the world cannot be constituted without human plurality: 'For us, appearance — something that is being seen and heard by others as well by ourselves — constitutes reality.'<sup>12</sup> Hence, not only one's sense of reality of the world utterly depends on appearances, but also the reality of people depends on being among others (*inter homines esse*), i.e., the reality of people is affirmed in the 'bright light of the constant presence of others.'<sup>13</sup>

Our *different* perspectives of appearances thus constitute the reality of the world. She describes our different positions in and perspectives of the world as a group of people sitting around a table in which each one perceives a unique aspect of the thing perceived from his or her particular angle.<sup>14</sup> Arendt's emphasis on difference rather than on identity is particularly important for her work: she affirms Husserl's theory of perceiving and constituting the world, but she adds that a plurality of perspectives is decisive in that very act of constitution. Although Arendt hardly refers to Husserl, there are significant links between their interpretations of the world as a realm of indeterminate reality. Arendt's affirmation of the constantly changing horizon of the world and the human plural encounters of it turns Husserl's notion of *variation* into a more complex one, which resists every attempt to reduce it to a fixed entity.

Arendt's emphasis on the relation between appearances and human plurality is her most remarkable contribution to phenomenological theories. In fact, in Arendt's interpretation, the variation of an appearance is not only intrinsic to the existence of this appearance, but also and equally to the existence of other appearances. Thus, she interprets plurality as an existential precondition, not only for the reality of the world, but for one's self as well. Hence, her interpretation of appearances and their variations plays a crucial role for three reasons: first, as the previous analyses show, reality can only be constituted by a multiplicity of different perspectives; second, in the act of constitution, one can actualise one's unique stance in the world, as this perspective uniquely contributes to the constitution of the world; and third, as a result of this unique stance and perspective, one can constitute plurality. Let me explain these points in more detail, based on what she describes as story and the 'web of relationships'.<sup>15</sup>

## II. REAL AND FICTIVE STORIES

Story is an extensively investigated topic in the section of ‘Action’ in Arendt’s *The Human Condition*. For her, a story has two references: first, it refers to one’s life story as a collection of actions and speeches; and second, it is the story of all of us, namely, the story that reveals itself as human history. The text is devoted to explore the conditions of this story, which are labor, work, and action. According to her, those conditions are separable and characterised by different production types.<sup>16</sup> In her historically ordered investigation, she elaborates the necessity of making a distinction between these realms. Although the distinction does not exclude these realms to interact, she argues that mixing them up has fatal consequences: especially any attempt to reduce one to the other leads to the loss of the specific character of the production type of each of these realms.

Arendt’s main concern in distinguishing the production types of the different realms is to protect the production of the realm of action, which itself is nothing but the story and history of human plurality. The story of a person is a disclosure of how one appears; thus, it should be a result of one’s initiative,<sup>17</sup> which is actualising one’s actions and speeches among others. One’s appearance is to become visible by one’s words and deeds not only for the others, but also for oneself. In this very description of human action in terms of initiative, action is no longer limited to being the main category of politics alone, but it is the capacity to exercise one’s existence, since it is an ‘exposition’ of an ‘event’ far beyond being a ‘signifying process or a translation’.<sup>18</sup> In other words, action turns into the capacity of actualising the story of a person among others. Hence, the political realm and action have a privileged place among other realms of production, because of their very capacity to produce both one’s life story and history in general.<sup>19</sup>

Despite this central role that is given to action, speech and initiative, a person cannot determine her life story. Arendt’s other major claim in her theory of action concerns the frailty of action and speech.<sup>20</sup> Frailty refers to two characteristics of human action: first, since action is disclosed in deeds and words, they are events that belong to a moment; they are ephemeral. Second, although one may have particular intentions motivating an initiative to achieve something by saying or doing something, these words and deeds cannot determine their results, since they are thrown into the realm of human plurality, in which they are confronted and transposed by other’s intentions. As a consequence, the results of deeds and words are unforeseeable and indeterminate. This indeterminate realm gives the same characteristic to all actions as well as to the stories they produce, as I further explore in the coming section. Moreover, the spontaneity of the event of speech and action not only make them ephemeral in the moment, but also marks the significant differences of the production of action to that of work.

To begin with, the characteristic of the production process of work is different from that of action: productions of work do not belong to the spon-

taneity of the present; rather, all artificial things are produced according to a model. From a Husserlian perspective, the temporal difference between two activities distinguishes them. In work, the temporal fringe extends from past to present: the model that has been formed in the past is transposed into a product in the present; by contrast, all action and speech temporally take place from present to future. The teleological process involved in work can be recognized in Arendt's references to the Ancient Greek distinction between *praxis* and *poiēsis*.<sup>21</sup> This distinction leads Arendt to a further claim that, because of the way in which work and action produce, only action can produce *real* stories, which are fundamentally different from *fictive* stories.<sup>22</sup> This distinction is based on the following three reasons. (i) All artificial things can be foreseen and planned according to a model, which is prior to the product itself, whether it is a fictive story or any other production that is transposed into a solid material. By contrast, action can neither be foreseen nor planned; it can only appear and disappear in the moment of the now. Thus, the spontaneity of an event resists to planning as well as to the foreseeability of its results. (ii) Moreover, a model (*eidōs*) always allows for the repetition of the same product, whereas an action is unique and cannot be repeated. Because of the earlier model or plan is shaped by the one who decides on it, the product of work carries the 'blueprint of its maker' from beginning to end, whereas action only discloses itself as a beginning and it never turns into an 'end' product. (iii) Action can only take place in the appearance to others, and the presence of others not only make the agent real, but also the story. By contrast, the production of work never needs the appearance of others and it is never bound to be seen in order to exist, unlike a person. Hence real stories can only be found among people, whereas fictive stories can be produced in absence of others.

The sheer contrast between productions of work and action, and particularly between fictive and real stories confronts us with sets of questions that require further investigation. I systematise these questions in two steps; first, I analyse what Arendt calls a real story in human plurality, and second, I explore her assertion that one cannot be the author of one's own story.

### III. THE STORY AND THE WEB

Approximately four decades before we started associating the web with Internet, Arendt used the notion of web to describe human relations. The 'web', for her, is an exemplary description for the constellation of human plurality. The web not only depicts the complexity of human relations, but also presents the spatial constellation in which each person stands. A unique perspective of seeing things follows from this unique stance. Hence, the web indicates both the distinction that is gained by different perspectives and the inseparability of these relations in human plurality. In the web, one's action and speech influence others and is influenced by others; as a result, one changes one's

course inevitably. Therefore, there is neither one aspect of a person or an event, nor any single person that stands isolated in the web. In this manifold existence, by their contact, the intentions of the actors clash, touch and form each other, affecting both the individual persons they are and the events in which they are involved.

Arendt describes action, as the insertion of one's self into this web in order to express this involvement. As she explains, insertion is not only etymologically related to *initium*, but as the Latin origin of the word indicates, it also means to begin and to lead.<sup>23</sup> By an insertion into the web, one can change all existent constellations of the web and change them irreversibly. The very structure of the web implies that an actor in turn can be influenced and changed irreversibly. In its constantly changing structure, neither a singular event, nor an individual can stay identical. In the web, life stories are not simply intertwined with each other; rather, intertwined stories have become the only possible way of existence of a singular event or a story. At this point, Arendt's remarks come to the notable conclusion that one cannot be the author of one's own story: 'the unique life story of the newcomer, affecting uniquely the life stories of all those with whom he comes into contact. (...) nobody is the author or producer of his life story.'<sup>24</sup> This conclusion is based on following two reasons: First, an individual is always in the web and influenced by the intentions of others. Therefore, one cannot become the author of one's life story as if it is a script, that is, a life story is never a result or a product of the sum of the actor's intentions, since the story changes its direction when the others affect it. Second, since the actor is always in the midst of the events of her life, an actor never has the distance that is necessary to have the perspective that enables her to tell her story. As Arendt concludes, an author is a spectator or a witness, who has sufficient distance to see the story and to be capable of narrating it. Thus, she says that those who are witnesses are the only ones that can see somebody like the Greek *daimōn* who looks back from over one's shoulder.<sup>25</sup>

As the plural perspectives of appearances constitute the reality of the world, Arendt will claim that witnessing events and people together constitutes the reality of the web and the people. Reality, then, is an indeterminate multiplicity that one can only access from one perspective and from one unique stance in the web. However, if there is a double interaction in the web, namely, to influence and to be influenced by each insertion, and if this is the core of one's life story and history, then who will be capable of telling the *real* story? If a spectator has only her unique, yet, singular perspective of reality, the reality of one event must lay in the multiplicity of narrations.

The role of the spectator presupposes a distance both in spatial and temporal terms. The spatial distance promises an angle that suffices to *see*, whereas temporal distance means a sufficient distance to *unite* the complex multitude of successive events in a perceptible unity. The narration of the succession of events, which temporally necessitates occurring from present to

past, also requires a distance from the coming events. For example, if someone writes a biography of a living person, the constant changing constellation of the web obviously can change the biography itself. Biography is not a tool to predict or to determine the future self of the same person or the events in which the person would be involved. Hence a biography has to be limited to past events. Now the question one may pose is on which ground a narrator could claim there is only one real past in this multiplicity of perspectives. This question brings us to the next section; I examine what a biography really exposes. I take as point of departure one of Arendt's biographical essays, namely the one on Brecht in her collection *Men in Dark Times*.

#### IV. ENACTED STORIES

The contrast between the products of work and action can also be traced in Arendt's relatively brief investigations on the work of art. Arendt says that the work of art is the 'most intensely worldly of all tangible things', and hence, they are the objects of remembrance which represent the durability of the world.<sup>26</sup> Despite her clear distinction between work and action, they come closer to each other in artistic production, since without the reification of speech and action, there would be no story or history at all. Durability and remembrance are only possible by transposing a living moment into solidified letters,<sup>27</sup> that is, in the reified narration that we find in a text. In any literary form, and in particular in biography, the interaction between *praxis* and *poiēsis* can be traced in different ways concerning their relation to reality and fiction. Accordingly, one can ask, if it is possible to add any truth claim to this relation between reality and fiction; as Lamarque confirms, 'it can be argued that a certain kind of reality pertains to fictional objects and a certain kind of truth to fictional description.'<sup>28</sup> A similar argumentation can be followed in light of a phenomenological account of the real in its relation to the indeterminate horizon of appearances. To this end, let me examine the truth claim in the following form: when one tells a story, either of another person or one's own, is it a fictional or a real story?

If one's life has been touched and formed by so many people and events in the web, then the question arises: how many lives can one have, and which one of them tells the true life story of this person? In this very question, *praxis* once again comes closer to *poiēsis* in storytelling, despite the simple measure of a real story Arendt suggests, that is, a story that has really happened. Arendt's collected biographical essays in *Men in Dark Times* is a remarkable example of how one can see the other's life stories. In the preface she writes: 'the collection of essays and articles are primarily concerned with persons — how they lived their lives, how they moved the world, and how they were affected by historical time.'<sup>29</sup> As she explains, the title of the book was borrowed from Brecht's poem 'To Posterity' and the name of the book, *dark times*<sup>30</sup> does not indicate a monstrous period – which is no rarity as she

says – but it refers to our *expectation* of light. She says that ‘even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination’ and the light comes from the ‘weak lights that of some men and women, in their lives and their works’,<sup>31</sup> rather than from theories. As she suggests, the work and life of people are real, in contrast to fictive theories, which serve far less to ‘our right to expect some illumination’<sup>32</sup> from the future.

In her essay on Brecht, Arendt portrays him from his early periods to his involvement in the Communist Party. The essay exposes how the voice of a poet is drawn into an ideological agenda and how poetic passion is replaced by an ideological compassion. Arendt asserts that the attachment to the party has silenced Brecht’s poetic voice, and in order to explain this assertion, she takes an example from Brecht’s theatre in early thirties, namely from the *Measure Taken*. In the play he tells, ‘how and for what reasons the innocent, the good, the humane are outraged at injustice and running to help are being killed.’<sup>33</sup> Despite the reaction it causes in communist Russia, Arendt says the reason why he dares to write it is obvious: ‘He had done what poets will always do if they are left alone: he had announced the truth to the extent that this truth had then become visible.’<sup>34</sup> And she adds that the simple truth of the matter was that innocent people were killed, and eventually the communists had begun to kill their friends.<sup>35</sup>

In this description, what has happened in the reality of the world and the truth of what has happened overlap. The measure of the ‘simple truth’ that Arendt mentions is the reality of those dead people and those who witnessed them.<sup>36</sup> Despite this truth, the disappearance by death already becomes more enigmatic when it is seen in light of her quotation from the *Three Penny Opera*: ‘for some are in darkness, and others stand in light. And you see those in light, those in darkness are not seen.’<sup>37</sup> What is the truth of the dead people when they are described as the ones that are left in darkness? What happened to the dead people is real, but what are the truths of their stories? If we understand ‘darkness’ as the limit of one’s capacity of seeing which includes the unseen — as it refers here to the inaccessible parts of what happened to the dead — the conclusion is that one is only capable of telling the stories of the ones in the light of the living present. As Brecht describes, what one collects from reality is the visible side of the appearances that have revealed themselves to us: they are partial; they are real; yet they are still in the dark.

If the unseen part of appearances is the correlate of the seen, and if one can remember and transpose them into the literary forms only from the witnessed aspect, then, in the process of writing a biography the question is: who comes in light and who remains in darkness? Is it the writer or the character? For example, in Arendt’s essay, who is in light indeed? Brecht as the character who inspires the story or Arendt as the storyteller? Can we access who Brecht is more than who Arendt is, because Arendt told us the story of Brecht? Maybe here, one should follow Arendt’s claim that the work carries

the blueprint of its maker and that it is not Brecht, but Arendt who is revealed in the text.

The arguments go in a similar direction if one asks how one constitutes the reality of the world and the truth of a story: the truth of a story upholds the measure of plurality of different perspectives in appearances. Thus, it also affirms that a singular perspective of what appears or what is seen, is the truth of this story for the one who tells it. In those stories, one can find what is revealed from a particular perspective and this confirms that there is a story between other stories, without the claim of an identity between any of those perspectives. The case of the truth of the world is an intriguing example: we all say that there is a world and that it is true that we are in this world. The common appearance of the world to us, and our confirmation of it as true, can only be secured by plurality despite the differences. However, when the number of perspectives is reduced, for instance, in one's life story, what the story reveals as well as its reality are reduced to the same extent. Because of the difficulty that one's story cannot be told from all its perspectives, it never becomes a true story: it always includes the unseen aspects of one's life, which has a limited appearance in the perspectives of others. In light of these analyses, it is neither possible to access the true story of others, nor of one's own self. One cannot access the story of the others, because of its unseen parts, and one cannot access one's own story because one does not have sufficient distance to see, that is, enough distance to create a perspective to see the multiplicity of appearances involved. These two claims on accessing truth make storytelling fragile when it comes to the distinction between truth and fiction. Moreover, it explains the crucial aid of fiction to storytelling not only to unite the multiplicity of reality and possible narrations, but also to gather the parts in dark and in light.

### CONCLUSION: BINDING THE GAP BETWEEN THE VARIATIONS

As I aimed to examine in my previous remarks, in writing Brecht's biography, Arendt also reveals herself as a person while telling what she sees in Brecht's life. She reveals her thoughts about his work, her judgments about his political engagements, and her expectations for an *illumination*. This expectation is the motivation for her writing and explains what she finds worthwhile in narrating the story. As I explored in the previous sections, this story is one of the possible stories that can be formed out of the many facets of reality. In contrast to the living presence of action and speech, a written story of someone is a reified product; it has its unity and it has its aim. In an Arendtian sense, a biography is a medium between action and work in which one transposes the living moments of a person into a reified product. In this very structure, both biography and autobiography are privileged forms of display-

ing the intersections and the limits of fiction and reality, and one needs to understand the truth claim in them accordingly.

In order to clarify these intersections and limits, in this last section, I examine the temporal gap between action and narration in a text. Compared to action and work, narration presents a more complex temporal fringe. Unlike action and work, a narration in a text operates in-between two temporal fringes: it operates both from present to past, since it necessitates recollected past experiences, and from present to future, since it has a reified form of narration and exposes certain expectations of the author. Thus, past experiences and expectations are the key elements of the intersections and limits of reality and fiction, mainly because of the similarity between how we constitute reality and how we narrate it. In both the constitution of reality and a narration of it, one needs a unified whole, even if they remain provisional and partial. Fiction in writing and phantasy in perceiving reality play a similar and crucial role in forming a unified whole in this specific sense. One can form a whole filling the gaps between the variations of a momentary perception: by transposing them into something that is perceived and in something that is written.

One may pose the question of whether the act of filling the gaps of reality has a certain aim or directedness or whether they are provisional. As Husserl claims, any act of constitution – including filling the gaps – cannot be completely detached from past experiences and future expectations, as well as our perception of an event or a person, or of reality in general. If one recalls the example of the oak tree, the green color of a tree standing in front of someone, not only confirms the experiences of the past winters, but at the same time, it determines one's expectation of the coming winter. The life of a person in human plurality shows an incomparable complex order to gather these experiences and expectations: Two people can narrate not only completely different stories about a person, but also contradicting ones. What makes these differences in narrations possible are the multiplicity of impressions, experiences and expectations of the moment perceived or recollected, as beautifully expressed by Schlegel: 'for every individual, there are an infinite number of real definitions'.<sup>38</sup> Phantasy has an essential role in uniting what one perceives in a present moment. Fiction plays a similar role in each narration and transposes narration into a reified whole.<sup>39</sup> At this point, one may assert that there is a necessary distinction between autobiography and biography because an autobiography includes a direct witnessing of one's own life.

In this regard, Arendt's warning about the difficulty of distancing oneself from oneself retains its reasons: in the now, one lacks the capacity to form a unity by which one can narrate oneself, as I explained earlier. One can attempt to overcome this difficulty by inserting a temporal distance between the living moment of the now and the past by writing diaries and notes. Nevertheless, this direct witnessing and experiences of oneself will inevitably

suffer from being only one aspect of the witnessed life among other possible aspects. One may surprisingly see in the future that the reality of what was written in a diary can appear entirely different than it was depicted or thought. Therefore, it can also be claimed that diaries cause another gap between the writing and the reading selves. The reason of this new gap is the sediments of different experiences that are located in between this temporal fridge. However, the gap between writing and reading can still be bridged; not on the ground of past experiences, but of expectations that remain the same. This is because a narration forms one unified collection amongst other possible narrations and it aims to transpose this narration to the future. This transposition gathers together both the existent and missing parts of the past reality in order to form a future reality. Fiction is the only possible way in which one unites the past as a whole and narrates it as a story. Thus, there would be no unity in past recollections without the aid of fiction in narration forming it as a story for the future. For an author, the truth of the story is the event or the person that she gathers in unity and transposes into a text in order to expose an expectation.

As I argued throughout this paper, neither of these unities are fixed; they can always be altered into a new one.<sup>40</sup> The unity arrived at through distancing or recollecting has its variations: every spatial and temporal point provides one with a new stance to see a past event. For this reason, past experiences change and form another story of the same event or the same person, based on the perspective of these new stances. This brings biography and autobiography closer together mainly because witnessing the other is another form of witnessing oneself in plurality. In the web, there is always a constant and mutual impact between oneself and another, which changes one's experience of oneself as well as one's experiences in general. Arendt's emphasis on 'to see myself and to be seen by the others' becomes even more accurate here and confirms how one constitutes reality. However, as I noted above, witnessing is always partial, circumstantial and leaves gaps in this reality. Without fiction, neither accessing these possible aspects, nor narrating them in one unified form can be achieved. By the inclusion of fiction, narration is located in the in-between of multiple aspects of reality and their unity. One's perspectives entail to ever new appearances in the web and their indeterminate actuality in their variations. Fiction not only prepares us for the variation of another truth, but also makes them possible. Yet, the manifold aspects of the same event are always reified in the words of the storyteller's singular perspective and in the horizon of her expectations. The truth of the story reveals these expectations of the authors and their intentions to bring something to light, which serves, as Arendt elegantly describes, their 'expectations for illuminations'.

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NOTES

1. Arendt 1958, 176.
2. Arendt 1958, 177.
3. Arendt 1958, 184.
4. Husserl 1966, 281; Husserl 1990, 291.
5. Husserl 1980, 291; Husserl 2005, 351.
6. Husserl 1980, 293; Husserl 2005, 353.
7. Husserl 1966, 52; Husserl 1990, 54.
8. As Husserl states clearly: ‘The appearing side is nothing without the non-appearing side’. (Husserl 1966, 55; Husserl 1990, 57).
9. The term variation is mostly used as modification or in its relation to modifications in *Ideas*: ‘modifications under consideration belong to *any* mental process as ideally inherent possible variations’. Husserl 1950, 149; Husserl 1982, 179.
10. Husserl 1950, 49; Husserl 1982, 51.
11. Husserl 1950, 49; Husserl 1982, 51.
12. Arendt 1958, 50.
13. Arendt 1958, 50.
14. Arendt 1958, 52.
15. Arendt 1958, 181.
16. Arendt does not use production in its narrow sense of, i.e., product of a making, but rather in terms of what something is able to create. Arendt 1958, 173.
17. Arendt 1958, 176.
18. Nancy 2006, 166.
19. Arendt 1958, 8.
20. Arendt 1958, 188.
21. Arendt 1958, 195.
22. Arendt 1958, 185.
23. Arendt 1958, 177.
24. Arendt 1958, 184.
25. Arendt’s remarks become particularly interesting in her interpretations of the relation between *eudaimonia* and *daimon*, and its relation with appearances in light of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* in footnote 18: ‘For which, which man (can) bear more *eudaimonia* than he grasps from appearance and deflects in its appearance?’ Arendt 1958, 193.
26. Arendt 1958, 167.
27. Arendt 1958, 169.
28. Lamarque 2009, 176.
29. Arendt 1955, vii.
30. Arendt 1955, viii.
31. Arendt 1955, ix.
32. Arendt 1955, ix.
33. Arendt 1955, 240–241.
34. Arendt 1955, 241.
35. Arendt refers to the Moscow Trials.
36. Although she uses the term truth here, one should keep in mind that the very meaning of narration for Arendt is not to seek for a truth, but to understand, as she famously wrote: ‘What is important to me is to understand.’ Arendt 1994, 3.
37. Arendt 1955, 237.
38. Schlegel, Athenaeum fragment 82, quoted in Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1988, 44.
39. Lamarque and Olsen 1994, 223.
40. Cf. ‘What is given as unity and as we presuppose here, given adequately as individual and consequently temporal being, is not really and immanently given in the final and absolute sense.’ Husserl 1966, 283; Husserl 1990, 294.

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