Bethania Assy*

Another Time for History: Singular Events, the *Entre-temps* of Hope, and the Politics of the Defeated

Abstract

Among most of Arendt scholars, it is well-known Arendt´s suspicious relation towards Jewish account on history. Her idea of new beginning has been mainly attributed to her readings either on Augustine or on the Roman foundation. Nevertheless, not only her conceptions of novelty of action and natality, but also, ideas such as the gap in history, her denying of conceiving politics in the modern logics of progress, her notion of public promise and reconciliation, to quote some examples, all pay a certain tribute to the Jewish messianic tradition, mainly to 1920´s central Europe. This paper focuses on two features in dealing with political philosophy and history, namely, the notions of singular event and testimonial narrative. Those notions rest beyond the gaze at the two major elements, mainly considered in Arendt´s notion of history and politics. First, it is the idea that singular events and rupture rather than universal progress and means-end process is the subject matter of history. Second, it is the claim that testimony and single historical narrative gather the self-revealing phenomenology of history. It is my claim that those aspects lead directly to the heart of Jewish messianic historiography.

Keywords: Jewish Messianic Tradition . Singular event . Narrative . Testimony . politics of the defeated and rupture in history

* Bethania Assy is Associate Professor in the Law School at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and at the Sate University of Rio de Janeiro.

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Resumo

Entre os estudiosos da obra de Hannah Arendt é notória a relação hesitante da autora com as considerações judaicas de história. A idéia de novo começo tem sido primordialmente atribuída às suas leituras sobre Augustinho ou acerca da fundação romana. No entanto, não apenas as noções de ação e natalidade, mas também, considerações tais como, ***gap*** *na história, a negação da concepção de política concebida como lógica moderna do progresso, as noções de promessa e perdão, para citar alguns exemplos, todos pagam certo tributo à tradição messiânica judaica, especialmente a certos intelectuais da Europa Central dos anos de 1920. Esse artigo foca sua pesquisa principalmente em dois aspectos no trato com a filosofia política e a história: as idéias de evento singular e de narrativa testemunhal. Estas duas noções estão na base de dois elementos essenciais, particularmente considerados nas idéias de política e de história em Hannah Arendt. Primeiro, a idéia de que eventos singulares e a noção de ruptura estão na base de suas considerações sobre história, invés da visão de história como progresso universal e processo de meios e fins. Segundo, a reivindicação de testemunho e narrativa histórica singular como suporte de uma concepção de história como fenomenologia auto-reveladora dos sujeitos. Neste artigo, defendo que tais considerações conduzem diretamente à historiografia messiânica judaica.*

Palavras Chaves: Tradição messiânica judaica . evento singular . narrativa . testemunho . política dos perdedores e ruptura histórica

Among most of Arendt scholars, it is well-known Arendt´s suspicious relation towards Jewish account on history.[1] Her idea of new beginning has been mainly attributed to her readings either on Augustine or on the Roman foundation. Nevertheless, not only her conceptions of novelty of action and natality,[2] but also, ideas such as the gap in history, her denying of conceiving politics in the modern logic of progress, her notion of promise, her notion of singularity, a new way of approaching subjectivity beyond the well-known

1 See Martine Leibovici, *Hannah Arendt et la tradition juive. Le judaïsme à l'épreuve de la secularisation*. Genève: Éditions Labor et Fides, 2003. See also Hannah Arendt, "Jewish History, Revised" in *The Jewish Writings*. Edited by Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, New York: Schocken Books, 2007, pp. 303-311.

2 For an outstanding discussion on Arendt´s Messianism on her notions of natality and action from *The Human Condition,* see: Susannah Young-ah Gottlieb, *Regions of Sorrow – Anxiety and Messianism in Hannah Arendt and W. H. Auden.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

binary debate between the community of identity (*Sittlichkeit*) versus neo-Kantian universalism, to quote some examples, all pay a certain tribute to the Jewish messianic tradition, mainly to 1920´s central Europe. The propose to read Arendt through the Jewish messianic tradition aims a new light on some Arendtian concepts crucial to political thinking nowadays, such as: testimony, narrative and reconciliation; Action as a new event rather than as violence; the rupture on history and the politics of the losers.[3]

By relating Arendt to a certain intellectual Jewish messianic tradition from the 1920´s, this paper focus on two features in dealing with political philosophy and history, namely, the notions of singular event and testimony narrative. Those notions rest beyond the gaze at the three major elements, mainly considered in Arendt´s notion of history and politics. First, the idea that singular events and rupture rather than universal progress and means-end process is the subject matter of history. Second, the claim that testimony and single historical narrative gather the self-revealing phenomenology of history. It is my assumption that those aspects lead directly to the heart of Jewish messianic historiography.

I. Singular events and rupture rather than universal progress and means-end process as the subject matter of history

In general terms, in the teleological history of the modern state, politics is mainly assumed as progressive integration. The purposeful approach on history defines the linear dimension modern philosophy treats politics. The refusal of this standard linear account on history, one of the fundamental aspects of Rosenzweig philosophy, relies on what Levinas has called in his preface to *Star of Redemption,* Rosenzweig's 'operative gesture,'[4] in which Hegelian dia-

3 This paper is part of a larger investigation project called: Theology and the Political: a new debate on community, politics, and law.

4 For an account on Rosenzweig´s 'operative gesture' see: Stéphane Mosès, *System and Revelation – The philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig.* Translated by Catherine Tihanyi, Forward by Emmanuel Lévinas. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992, p. 43 [*Système et revelation: La philosophie de Franz Rosenzweig*, 1982]. Mosès offers a very accurate analysis on Rosenzweig interpretation of Hegel´s philosophy of history and his ontology, in which Rosenzweig mainly deals with *Hegel and the State*. Hegel´s interpretation of necessity as the expression of morality in his *Philosophy of Right*, is at the core of Rosenzweig´s critique on Hegel´s universal history. As well pointed out by Mosès: "For Rosenzweig, the issue was not to prove that the Hegelian view of history is false, but on the contrary, to show that it is true, far beyond what Hegel himself could image. In other words, to demonstrate the intrinsic perversity of such a philosophy, it is enough to show its workings, to follow its verification in the reality of contemporary history, in short, to take it literally." Mosès, *The Angel of History* P. 38

lectic of universal history faced its own real accomplishment on the development of world history, namely, exacerbated nationalism of nations, violence of states, and wars. As Mosès calls attention to, "For Rosenzweig the war of 1914 caused the collapse of the central idea of the whole Western philosophical tradition, namely, that of a reasonable universe regulated by the logos, structured according to laws that are also those of our mind and that assigns man his harmonious place in the general order of things."[5]At a similar line of argumentation, Arendt analyzes the twentieth century catastrophes, touched off by the First World War, as a mark of the discontinuity with the ways of thought that have ruled the modern age, "rising with the natural sciences in the seventeenth century, reaching its political climax in the revolutions of the eighteenth, and unfolding its general implications after the Industrial Revolution on the nineteenth."[6]

To reject history as a progressive rational order derives from an experience of European history where man was surrendered to arbitrariness and violence. "In Rosenzweig's eyes the war experience is decisive not because it refutes Hegel´s philosophy of history but, on the contrary, because it confirms its tragic truth. A history molded by the rivalries of states and the nationalistic passions of peoples can only be a catastrophic one. Yet Hegel had shown that modern European civilization represents the final stage – in other words, the supreme accomplishment – of the process of universal history."[7] Rosenzweig makes quite clear his criticism on the idea that the civilization of Modern Europe has constituted for Hegel the fulfillment of universal history. As a

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5 Mosès, *System and Revelation*, p. 24-5. In 1920, in the "Concluding Remark" to his *Hegel and the State,* Rosenzweig summarizes: "Today, when the book is published, in the 150th year after Hegel´s birth, in the 100th since the appearance of the *Philosophy of Right,* that dream seems to dissolve irretrievably in the foam of the waves which overflow all life. When the edifice of a world collapses, then both the thoughts that imagined it and the dreams that were woven through it are buried under the debris." In: Franz Rosenzweig, *Philosophical and Theological Writings.* Translated and Edited, with Notes and Commentary, by Paul W. Franks and Michael L. Morgan, Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000, p. 82.

6 Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future - Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Penguin Books, 1977, p. 27. It is a matter of fact that Arendt testifies the even more outrageous events at the Second World War, when the breaking with the Occidental history of civilization, besides accomplishing a fact, reached a new form of government and domination: totalitarianism. "What is frightening in the rise of totalitarianism is not that it is something new, *but that it has brought to light the ruin of our categories of thought*." (emphasis added) Hannah Arendt, "Understanding and Politics." In *Essays in Understanding*, Edited by Jerome Kohn, New York, San Diego, London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994, p. 318.

7 Mosès, *System and Revelation,* p. 24. Franz Rosenzweig, *Philosophical and Theological Writings.* Translated and Edited with Notes and Commentary, by Paul W. Franks and Michel L. Morgan. Indianopolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000.

matter of fact, the last idealization of universal history accomplished through European modern philosophy rests upon war and violence. In an analogous critique to Hegel, Arendt comments the *time-concept* of modern history in which "…the immortalizing process has become independent of cities, states, and nations; it encompasses the whole of mankind, whose history Hegel was consequently able to see as one uninterrupted development of the Spirit."[8]

What matters in Hegelian criticisms here is to highlight the pedagogical ambitions of eighteenth century ideology of progress able to match a purely formal dialectics to a historical dialectics, in such a way to equalize the universal judgment and the universal history, the rational and the real. Putted in Rosenzweig own words, "It is only because universal history is universal judgment pronouncing its irrevocable sentences in the name of the law of Reason that the real is rational"[9]

Arendt, by distinguishing modern concept of history from that of antiquity, offers a similar criticism on a universal account of history, in which the modern accomplishment of reason and history coincide: "What the concept of progress implies is that the concrete and the general, the single thing or event and the universal meaning, have parted company. The process, which alone makes meaningful whatever it happens to carry along, has thus acquired a monopoly of universality and significance."[10]

To the temporality of the modern states and nations, Rosenzweig opposes the messianic temporality of Judaism. Refuting the particular modern concept of the infinity progress of history, it stands the messianic analytics of Rosenzweig: the instant, the actual possibility of the arrival. The peculiar temporality of history is marked by an essential incompleteness, in an endless movement toward an impossible goal. This so-called redemptive time rises up the unpredictability of the brand-new.[11]

It is precisely the contrary of the utopian temporality, a permanent waiting for the arrival of an ideal end, a kind of enduring hope which has to be postponed day by day until its final triumphal accomplishment.[12] The perma-

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8 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p.75. For Arendt, the further step after Modern Hegel´s infinity process is the idea of an ultimate end as the end-product of a manufacturing process of politics.

9 (Rosenzweig, *Hegel and the State*, p. 368) Quoted by Mosès, *The Angel of History,* p.42.

10 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p.64.

11 Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*. Part One, Book Two, Reality of the World, p.57.

12 See Mosès discussion on Utopia and redemption in Mosès, *The Angel of History*, p. 50.

nent redemptive hope rather opens up the possibility for the radically new, the "qualitative leap into an absolutely other reality". Rosenzweig emphasizes the paradox of history between unpredictability and the essential human experience of the future. The future the messianic hope calls for - beyond a mere "guiding idea" - implies the belief that its realization can arrive at any moment. It means precisely the spontaneous conviction that a new event, a miracle, can appear here and now. A radical and new world can appear at any instant. So, this messianic impatient that an upheaval can occur at ant moment is the very essence of hoping. It distinguishes itself either from hope´s endless waiting or from historical reason's accomplishment.[13]

If we turn to Arendt´s historical time schema, by mentioning Greek historical narrative, as Leibovici calls attention to, Arendt aims to emphasize single events and its unpredictability as the subject matter of history. In *Between Past and Future*, she claims that "What is difficult for us to realize is that great deeds and works of which mortals are capable, and which the topic of historical narrative, are not seen as parts of either an encompassing whole or a process; on the contrary, the stress is always on single instances and single gestures. These single instances, deeds or events, interrupt the circular movement of daily life in the same sense that the rectilinear – of the mortals interrupts the circular movement of biological life. The subject matter of history is these interruptions – the extraordinary, in other words."[14]

In this messianic diagram, birth itself holds the radicality of redemption, even by taking into account that by natality as a singular event Arendt meant a worldly event rather than a transcendental redemptive event. By approaching the reality of the world, Rosenzweig converges to Arendt´s conception of natality. Coincidently or not, Rosenzweig uses the expression "full miracle" referring to the phenomenological genesis of birth as the absolutely new. The reality of the world is its perpetual renewal; each birth is a negation of nothingness: "But the birth breaks forth in its individual result, as a full miracle, with the shattering force of the unforeseen, of the unforeseeable. There has always been coupling, and yet each birth is something absolutely new."[15]

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13 See Mosès *The Angel of History*, p. 50

14 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 42-3. I am focusing precisely on the relation among the notions of history, politics, and freedom towards the notion of progress. I am aware of the debate on Marx, Benjamin and Arendt towards the progress, ideology, imperialism critique, See: Martine Leibovici, "En la grieta del presente: ¿mesianismo o natalidad? – Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamín y la historia," In *Hannah Arendt – Pensadora en tiempos de oscuridad. Al Margen*, Mar & Jun 2001, N. 21 -22, Colombia, pp. 194-221.

15 Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*. Part One, Book Two, Reality of the World, p. 57

II. The singular event and a detour in the linear historical time: *Entre-temps* and the Gap in history

Among the general time scheme in the messianic tradition of central European intellectuals from the 1920´s stands the recurrent thought of a plait in history. "For Rosenzweig, history is marked by an essential incompleteness, not only because of the incessant alternation of moments of life and moments of death but especially because each instant is made of a tension between those antagonistic tendencies."[16] The plait of historical time holds an essential unpredictability regarding the arrival time of the event.

The three plans of time, in Rosenzweig´s economy temporality, are not a homogenous succession of historical time. They rather exist simultaneously. "Past time is not annulled time. What has passed can, to be sure, not be at it were present, but must as something past coexist with the present. … What is future is not a present existence but it is has to coexist with the present, as something future. And it is equally absurd to consider being past as well as being future as complete nonbeing."[17] Rosenzweig nominates two connected experiences of time. The first one concerns the future, an extraordinary *acceleration of time*. For Judaism, stopping time has the purpose to dissolve the distance that divides the present from the extreme future, that is, from the ideal end of the historical process. "Only an absolutely synchronic time can allow the actualization of the most distant future in the flash of the present instant, in other words, in Redemption."[18] As called by Rosenzweig, such qualitative infinity, constant in the antagonist tendencies, presents a time out of time, as a constant possibility of radical otherness. [19]

By the same token, this very acceleration of time promotes the experience of *contraction of time*, namely, "the possibility of seeing messianic promises realized today stems from a millennial spiritual technique, an ancestral familiarity with the internal experience of condensation in a single point of the three dimensions of time"[20] Mosès calls attention to the fact that in the *Star of*

16 Mosès, *The Angel of History,* p. 50.

17 Franz Rosenzweig, *Briefe,* Ausgenwählt und herausgegeben Von Edith Rosenzweig und Ernst Simon (Berlin, 1935), p.346. Quoted by Mosés, *System and Revelation*, p. 43.

18 Mosès, *The Angel of History*, p. 58. See: Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, 382.

19 See: Mosès, *The Angel of History*, p. 52

20 Mosès, Ibid., p. 59.

Redemption such contraction on a single moment emphasizes a particular approach on tradition, a discontinuous chronology, apart from the linear generational narrative of the ancestors. A discontinuous account of the events aims to overcome forgetfulness, to be precise, to transmit the flaws and breaks of history, away from rational causality. "A numerical chronology (the count of years) is converted here into subjective values, into a sum of personal experience, in short, into a memory."[21]

Rosenzweig´s time account resembles Arendt´s treatment, not only on her Kafkanian report on time, but also, on her analysis on the discontinuous nature of the tradition. In the introduction to *Between Past and Future,* Arendt refers to Kafka's parable about time in order to illustrate the experience of suspending the linear and continuous temporality of daily life. "He has two antagonists; the first presses him from behind, from his origin. The second blocks the road in front of him. He gives battle to both. Actually, the first supports him in his fight with the second, for he wants to push him forward, and in the same way the second supports him in his fight with the first, since he drives him back. But it is only theoretically so. For it is not only the two antagonists who are there, but he himself as well, and who really knows his intentions? His dream, thought, is that some time in an unguarded moment – and this, it must be admitted, would require a night darker than any night has ever been yet – he jump out of the fighting line and be promoted, on account of his experience in fighting, to the position of umpire over his antagonists in their fight with each other."[22]

As emphasized by Arendt in *The Life of the Mind,* the present is a rupture, "a gap between past and future," "*un présent qui dure*," as Bergson says, or even the medieval *nunc stans*.[23] In his mental activities, the *He* of Kafka's parable is

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21 Mosès, Ibid., p. 60. See: Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 322.

22 Kafka's parable is presented in a collection of aphorisms called 'HE': "[Kafka, *Gesammelte Schriften*, New York, 1946, vol. V, p. 287. English translation by Willa and Edwin Muir, *The Great Wall of China*, New York, 1946, p. 276-277] Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 07.

23 Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking, Willing*. New York-London: Ed.Harvest/HJBBook, 1978. p. 12. "Since time and space in ordinary experience cannot even be thought of without a continuum that stretches from the nearby into the distant, from the now into past or future, from here to any point in the compass, left and right, forward and backward, above and below, I could with some justification say that not only distances but also time and space themselves are abolished in the thinking process. As far as space is concerned, I know of no philosophical or metaphysical concept that could plausibly be related to this experience; but I am rather certain that the nunc stans, the 'standing now,' became the symbol of eternity – the '*nunc aeternitatis*' (Duns Scotus) – for medieval philosophy because it was a plausible description of experiences that took place in mediation as well as in contemplation, the two modes of thought known to Christianity." Arendt, *The Life of the Mind - Thinking*, p 86.

metaphorically launched out of any *topos noētos*, any mental *space*, displacing the past-future of the spatial language of time. Past and future are described as divided strengths "at the point where 'he' stands; and 'his' standpoint is not the present as we usually understand it but rather a gap in time which 'his' constant fighting, 'his' making a stand against past and future, keeps in existence."[24] The present is a "*lasting todayness*," absorbing the spatiality of time, in which the position of each new individual *drives* and *places* his past and future.[25] Arendt points out: "The time continuum, everlasting change, is broken up into the tenses past, present, future, whereby past and future are antagonistic to each other as the no-longer and the not-yet only because of the presence of man, who himself has an 'origin,' his birth, and an end, his death, and therefore stands at any given moment between them; this in-between is called the present. It is the insertion of man with his limited life span that transforms the continuously flowing stream of change … into time as we know it."[26]

The past survives at the bottom of present and future lives as a promise, as a sort of impatient waiting.[27] The three dimensions of time do not lead to a synchronic gathering, in a sense of a coherent sequential fusion of historical horizons. As formulated by Walter Benjamin, history suffers a constant and abrupt actualization, turning the present into a present of awareness. [28]The waiting qualifies the present. Such qualified present does not fulfill itself by its mere substantial and immanent totalization. This means that the present

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24 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 11. By despatializing the topos of mental life, Arendt emphasizes the human being's capacity to take a position, driving and placing the 'past' through remembrance and the future through expectation. Time becomes the *topos* where the mind's activities occur. By positing memories and prospects, the mind is able to drive temporality.

25 Arendt alludes to Bergson, who criticizes the terminology of space applied to temporality, highlighting that time's terminology has been "'borrowed from spatial language. If we want to reflect on time, it is space that responds.' Thus, 'duration is always expressed as extension,' and the past in understood as something lying behind us, the future as lying somewhere ahead of us" (Arendt, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking*, p. 13). "This seeming spatially of a temporal phenomenon is an error, caused by the metaphors we traditionally use in terminology dealing with the phenomenon of Time." Arendt, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking*, p. 13.

26 Arendt, Hannah, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking*, p. 203. See: L. Bazzicalupo, "Il present come tempo della politica in Hannah Arendt," in *La Politica tra Natalità e Mortalita – Hannah Arendt*. Edited by Eugenia Parise. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1993, pp. 139-68.

27 The experience of waiting in Redemption by no means implies a passive, no-acting waiting. It is rather calls for creativity and new beginning, towards decision and action.

28 See: Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project. Edited by Rolf Tiedemann, and translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2002.

is not a punctual fusion of three linear dimensions of time. Present is the hypertemporalization of time itself. Melted in the present instant of action, past, present and future are launched in the following instant. The messianic present means precisely this always new instant, upholding a meantime (*entre-temps*).[29]

As much as Arendt´s gap in history, the messianic *entre-temps* brings to the fore two protagonists in dealing with politics and history, namely, the singular event and the testimony narrative. For Benjamin the concept of interruption is crucial to politics. The revolution works as the Messiahs: he does not arrive at the end, when the process is already over, but rather, suddenly, at any moment, it interrupts history.[30] Timely understood as a gap between past and future, the *entre-temps* embraces a sort of detour, a discontinuity in the linear historical time, which determines the deviation in the logical temporality of historical time. It implies the deviation in the law, a deviation in the normativity imposed by the rational authority of history.

The well-known, often quoted by Arendt, René Char´s aphorism gives the trace Arendt leads in her approach on tradition: "*Notre héritage n'est précédé d'aucum testament*."[31] In her essay on Walter Benjamin, Arendt highlights that by experiencing the two world wars, Benjamin was very aware of the fact that the break in tradition and the loss of authority were irreparable. Arendt came to the conclusion that Benjamin found out an original way of dealing with the traditional history. Benjamin's form of "thought fragments" aims "interrupting the flow of the presentation with transcendent force (*Schriften* I, 142-43) and at the same time of concentrating with themselves that which is presented."[32]

Still in her essay on Benjamin, Arendt adds, "history itself – that is, the break in tradition which tool place at the beginning of this century – had already relieved him of this task of destruction and he only needed to bend down, as it were, to select his precious fragments from the pile of debris. In other word, the things themselves offered, particularly to a man who firmly faced the present, an aspect which had previously been discoverable only

29 See: Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations*. Translated by Harry Zorn, with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt. London: Pimlico, 1999, pp. 245-255, [On the Concept of History/*Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, 1939].

30 Mate, *Memoria de Occidente*, p. 206.

31 ("Our inheritance comes to us by no will-and-testament") (René Char, Feuillets d'Hyonos, Paris, 1946, no.62.) Hannah Arendt, *The Life of Mind - Thinking*, p. 12.

32 Hannah Arendt, "Walter Benjamin", in *Men in Dark Times*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1983, p. 194.

from the collector´s whimsical."[33] According to Arendt, the history collector implies that "there is no more effective way to break the spell of tradition than to cut out the 'rich and strange,' coral and pearl, from what had been handed down in one solid piece."[34] Pearl diving is a fragmentary and discontinuous style of writing history, which turns historical material into a collection of singular historical events, frag-ments, quotes or images, which are brought into new constellations with other fragments from the past.[35]

By recalling Arendt´s account on Benjamin, the key point is precisely to accentuate the new place particular narratives take in political philosophy, taking into account the break with tradition and its opening up for a discontinuous way of dealing with the rational authority of history. The issue at stake here is not to investigate the deep theoretical embroiled account on Arendt and Benjamim conceptions of history, tradition and truth. It is neither to defend nor to deny Benjamin's negative emphasis on ultimately helpless for Messianic redemption against Arendt´s positive account on the past as a full network of possibilities. The question is rather to underline a powerful historiography of testimonial narrative with highly political implications, which I think can be attributed to Arendt accounting on narrative and judgment with clear Benjamin´s credits on it. As Gottlieb highly gives emphasis to, Arendt "closes her account of action not with an announcement to the effect that time is coming to a close, but by way of misquotation: 'A child has been born unto us.' Here, too, she adopts the redemptive procedure of 'pearl diving' that, as she herself indicates, gives Benjamin Messianism its extraordinary vitality."[36]

III. Testimony and individual historical narrative: the self-revealing phenomenology of history

Let me begin this section by quoting a very intriguing epigraph attributed to Cato, Arendt starts the unfinished third volume of her *Life of the Mind*, named "Judging,": *Victrix causa deis placit, sed victa Catoni"* ("The victorious cause

33 Arendt, Ibid., p. 200.

34 Arendt, Ibid., p. 196.

35 Concerning a full account on the many interfaces on the conception of history and tradition in Hannah Arendt and Walter Benjamin see: Eva De Valk, "The Pearl Divers: Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, and The Demands of History", In *Krisis: Journal For Contemporary Philosophy*, 2010, Issue 1, p. 40.

36 Gottlieb, *Regions of Sorrow,* p.140.

pleased the gods, but the defeated one pleases Cato"). Such an assumption gives the general tone to relate the messianic tradition towards Arendt´s particular away to deal with the concepts of history and politics throughout her notion of judgment.

In an apparently opposite direction, it is quite well-known Arendt´s recurring affirmation that ancient historiography is done by the Greek concept of immortality, "the doer of great deeds and the speaker of great words."[37]Here Arendt valuates ancient sense of history rooted in the Greek-Roman tradition mainly based on the conceptions of narrative, history and Greek immortality. History as a category of human existence begins by Ulysses listening "to the story of his own deeds and sufferings, to the story of his life, now a thing outside himself, an 'object' for all to see and to hear."[38] At first sight, one can ahead identify an opposition between Arendt´s heroic historiography and her final account on the defeated ones, precisely by dealing with the faculty of judgment in the *Life of the Mind*. It is quite unlikely to reconcile an idea of history as the narrative of the heroic figures with history mainly understood as the narrative testimony of the defeated ones. It is well-known Arendt´s suspicious relation towards Jewish account on history, [39] precisely by the highlighted role the defeated one plays on it. After all, who would be interested in the history of the defeated ones? This latter resembles, instead, Jewish historiography.

Arendt, herself, gives the first sign towards such suspicious epigraph. It is very meaningful that in the first sentence of her 1947 essay, "The concept of History," Arendt mentions Herodotus -- who, according to Cicero, was called the father of Western history -- to make a case for considering history, to use Herodotus´ terminology, the "eyewitness" (ἱστορία).[40] That is precisely the point Collin highlights by mentioning a common feature between Arendt and the Jewish tradition: "the sense of Arendt's story is rooted in the origins

37 Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 47 "Great things are self-evident, shine by themselves; that the poet (or later the historiographer) has only to preserve their glory, which is essentially futile, and the He would destroy, instead of preserving, if he were to forgot the glory that was Hector´s." Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 52.

38 Arendt, Ibid., p. 45. According to Arendt, the place the concept of immortality occupied in Greek History was replaced by the concept of progress in Modern History. Arendt, Ibid, p. 62

39 See Leibovici, *Hannah Arendt et la tradition juive. Le judaïsme à l'épreuve de la secularisation*. Genève : Éditions Labor et Fides, 2003.

40 Cf Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (Arendt quotes Max Pohlenz, *Herodot, der erste Geschichtsschreiber des Abendlandes,* Leipzig and Berlin, 1937).

of Greek thought, but may also come from Jewish culture, whose truth is a Book that is not just a 'great story' but a multitude of small stories in which characters proliferate."[41] The first step then is that Arendt´s historical scale relies on eminently personal experiences. Historical Judgment is made by testimony narrative, in both Arendt´s figures, either as in the playing actor or in the judging spectator.[42]

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41 *Filosofía y biografía o pensar/contar según Hannah Arendt*, in idem, Praxis de la diferencia. Liberación y libertad, Barcelona, Icaria, 2006, pp. 202-203). See: Lebovici, 'En la grieta del presente: ¿mesianismo o natalidad? Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin y la historia'. In: *Al Margen. Hannah Arendt, pensadora en tiempos de oscuridad.* Mar & Jun 2007, N. 21-22, pp. 194-221, Colombia.

42 As it is well known, the first puzzle in dealing with the faculty of judgment is that Arendt left this world leaving behind only two epigraphs of what would have been the beginning of the third volume of *The Life of the Mind*, "Judging." This paper does not aim to deal with the whole of Arendt's theory of judgment. To properly grasp it, one must take into account the connection she establishes between judgment, action and politics – the *vita activa* – on the one hand and the faculties of the mind – the *vita contemplativa* – on the other. This proves to be even more intricate once one confronts Arendt's account of judgment in "The Crisis of Culture," based on the Greek notion of *phronesis* – practical knowledge coming through action – with her account of aesthetic judgment and the non-participation of the spectator. One could be compelled to yield to temptation to attempt a sort of theoretical "reconciliation" between judgment as Aristotelian intellectual virtue and judgment as Kantian enlarged thought. Arendt's account of judgment can be illustrated by the image of Penelope's embroidery, a back-and-forth movement between actor and spectator, action and reflection, future and past orientation, dealing with her new moral foundation, the art of storytelling, in either Aristotelian or Kantian terms. These apparently contradictory threads are underlined by Arendt scholars. In describing Arendt's ambiguous account of judgment, commentators like Benhabib and Bernstein have convincingly pointed out Arendt's unreconciled standpoints on judgment. In terms of theoretical reconciliation, we are unlikely to find an entirely satisfactory account of judgment that encompasses the whole of Arendt's writings on the topic. On the one side stands "Freedom and Politics," "The Crisis in Culture," "Truth and Politics"; on the other, *The Life of the Mind, Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, and the unpublished lectures on morality. For a whole account on it see Bethania Assy, *Hannah Arendt - An Ethics of Personal Responsibility*. Peter Lang - Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Wien, 2008. For distinct perspectives see for instance: Seyla Benhabib, "Judgment and The Moral Foundations of Politics in Arendt's Thought." In *Political Theory* 16/1 (February 1988), p. 39; Beiner, *Hannah Arendt on Judging* - Interpretive Essay on Hannah Arendt's Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy. Chicago: Ed. Ronald Beiner, The University of Chicago, 1982; Seyla Benhabib, "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative". In *Social Research*, Vol. 57, No.1 (Spring 1990), p.85; Dana Villa, "Thinking and Judgment," in *The Judge and the Spectator – Hannah Arendt's Political Philosophy.* Edited by Joke J. Hermesen & Dana R. Villa. Louvain: Peeters, 1999, p. 24; André Duarte, "The Political Dimension of Kant's Philosophy according to Hannah Arendt." In *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Arendt, Hannah, Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará, 1993; Bernard Flynn, "Arendt's Appropriation of Kant's Theory of Judgment." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology,* v. 19, n. 2, May 1988; Patrick Riley, "Hannah Arendt on Kant, Truth and Politics," *Political Studies,* 35: 379-392, 1987. Notwithstanding, her lectures on Kant's political philosophy lay the groundwork for describing the faculty of judging as a mental activity. One of the most perplexing features of Arendt's investigation of judgment is her addressing of aesthetic judgment, i.e., the distinction between beautiful and ugly, in order to analyze judgments of right and wrong, i.e., political and ethical judgment. See: Richard Bernstein, "Judging - the Actor and the Spectator." In *Philosophical Profiles - Essays in a Pragmatic Mode*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

Purposefully denied by Arendt, Rosenzweig and Benjamin, it is the idea that universal history holds universal judgment pronouncing its irreversible sentences in the name of the law of reason. One of its main consequences in political philosophy, as Rosenzweig particularly contests, is the belief in a *logos* able to establish progressive rational meanings to unfold political events. Such is the linear form classic traditional philosophy treats politics. Rosenzweig aims rather a complete breaking up with this "schema that had been classic since the Enlightenment, of a quantitative and cumulative temporality whose moments add up according to the law of a constant perfection."[43]

Benjamin by the same token suggests transposing the experience of the lived time from the personal sphere to the historical level, "replacing the idea of objective liner time with the subjectivity experience of a qualitative time, each instant of which is lived in its incomparable uniqueness."[44] However, an exceptional idea of present has to be taken into account in order to be able to reach those qualitative experiences, a present of now, able to constantly challenge the meanings attributed to the past. This perception of time is political *par excellence*, since what is in evidence for Benjamin is not to "decipher" any past, but precisely to be able of "reading in our present the trace of a forgotten or repressed past. The political vision of the present highlights the kinship of the situation we are living with the struggles and suffering of preceding generation."[45]

IV. A New *logos* to narrate politics: Witnesses of the future

Highly emphasized by Benjamin, history demeans judgment. This latter depends on a choice, a political choice so to speak. A universal history requires a universal judgment. The universal judgment, the raw material of universal normativity, fixes its contents and meanings at the cost of erasing the qualitative personal narrative. For Benjamin the universal history coincides with the history of the victors, with the conquest of the winners. What Benjamin requires is precisely a new *logos* able to narrate the memory of the nameless ones. "The very essence of this history, whose sentences constantly sanction the triumph of the strongest and the disappearance of the weakest, represents

43 Mosès, *The Angel of History*, p.11.

44 Mosès, Ibid., p.105

45 Mosès, *The Angel of History,* p.106

the history of the winners. On the contrary, Judgment, in the sense that Benjamin understood it, indicates the ever-renewed fight of the living – including the historian – to try to save the heritage of the losers."[46] The defeated personal narrative proceeds by no means from a submissive will towards the law of reason, as if, it was just a matter of one more claiming among the many others in a general equivalent system of rights and duties.

The deviation is no chaos, which must be fulfilled (rationalized, domesticated), apprehended by a normative totality. That is the most constant temptation of the politics of history.[47] As well formulated by Bensussam, the detour, rather, creates the condition of possibility to the quest of justice be raised above the teleological vision of history.[48] The fracture overcomes the persistent veiled totality presented in the idea of progress as the logic of politics. Narrative of the defeated one only plays a political role by its capability of bringing into the light the memory of the losers' ones. The political role of language depends on its anamnesis' capability.[49] Memory and recollection, for Benjamin, mean "re-mebering (Zekher), which does not denote the preservation in memory of events of the past but their reactualization in the present experience."[50] For Moses, "The task of recollection, wrote Benjamin, is to 'save what has failed', just as Redemption for him does not mean a tangential relationship to the future but the ever-present possibility of 'achieving what we were refused." [51] Each moment gathers the potentiality of the revolutionary vitality of the novelty.

Arendt´s account on narrative, on the other hand, relays on her notion of judgment, and brings new light on the political potentiality of anamnesis' capability. In her vocabulary, through the abilities of judging, narrative reaches a dimension far beyond language reduced to cognition, the mental apparatus of *homo faber*'s fabrication. Narrative achieves a level beyond the over-valoriza-

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46 Moses Ibid., p. 109. See: Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on the Philosophy of History".

47 Gérard Bensussan, *Le temps messianique. Temps historique et temps vécu.* Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 2001, p. 158.

48 Bensussan, Ibid., p. 159.

49 See the outstanding work of Reyes Mate in José Zamora, *Memoria – Politica – Justicia. En diálogo con Reyes Mate*. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2010.

50 Mosès, *The Angel of History,* p. 109.

51 Mosès, Idem.

tion of a mental and material sense of reality mainly based on mechanization, as *adequatio rei et intellectus*. Narrative, unlike the power of logical reasoning, of cognition, does not mechanize the real. Through its instruments and tools, logical reasoning is only able to build a self-explanatory picture of reality.

Cognition, which is based on an account of usefulness, embeds a kind of knowledge that, like *homo faber*'s activity, can be approached as "in order to," in terms of utility. Cognition, like fabrication with its instruments and tools, is a process that leads to a proposition. It has a beginning and an end and its utility can be demonstrated. Scientific results produced through cognition are added to human artifacts, like material things. This is a result not only of the instrumentalization of the world, but mostly important here, of the instrumentalization of judging processes. The pure process of rationalization apprehends language in terms of cognitive logic process, operating under the edge of a reproductive imagination. The manufactured nature of language relies in fact on a reproductive, normative imagination.

Approaching man as toolmaker and fabricator, as the embodied authority of the science of fabrication, as mastering *epistēmē poiētikē*, turns the processes of the realm of fabrication into the guarantor of reality. The result is to neglect unexpected experiences, those which fall outside the frame of means-ends relationships, making us unable to judging and to act in unpredictable situations, as much as in unbearable experiences.[52]

For Arendt, it is through narrative, and not through cognitive logic process of language in and by itself, that a non-time and unpredictable reconciliation with the unbearable is possible. Narrative, utterly distinct from cognitive logic process, is essentially a linguistic device that reconstructs that which has happened in history through a plot that privileges individual human agents more than impersonal processes. Narrative no longer derives its meaning of the particular from the universal.

The intriguing, paradoxical condition of the faculties of the mind allows "the mind to withdraw from the world without ever being able to leave it or transcend it".[53] It justifies in the first place the use of metaphorical language and imagination, to employ the terms Arendt uses to articulate the imbrica-

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52 See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 300. In terms of political philosophy, it coincides with the creation of the modern political vocabulary, in which, for instance, one speaks of the "fabrication" of "tools" and "instruments" for the creation of the "artificial man" called the State: Hobbes' Leviathan.

53 Arendt, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking*, p. 45. Taminiaux calls attention to this symmetry: "Not only do most of the words in ordinary language refer to the outlooks and aspects of entities ap-

tions among thinking, judging, narrative, and the visible world. Whether in silent critical thought or in concrete judgment, what is at stake are the outlooks and events of the appearing world transposed into ordinary language.[54] Narrative derives from human beings' lived experience and therefore must remain tied to it.

Judging for Arendt has a very particular meaning, it is not equated with the classical attributes of rationality as a cognitive faculty whose criterion is truth and which apprehends concepts through passive perceptions leading to objectively verifiable knowledge. At the same token, imagination is not described in the classical sense, in which it merely (re)-presents images, schemas through which intellect and cognition operate. In those classical conceptions of imagination, logic arbitrates meaning; principle precedes prudence and general rules command particular circumstances.

In Arendt's understanding, by removing the object, imagination is not merely endowing judgment with the reproductive image to supply the concept, as in the case in determinant logic judgment.[55] By *de-sensing*, imagina

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pearing in the world, but even our most abstract way of speaking is full of metaphors which transpose to the activity of the mind words which are originally rooted in appearances. Originally, an idea is an outlook, a concept is a capture, a metaphor is a displacement, a reason is a ground, and so on." Jacques Taminiaux, "Time and the Inner Conflicts of the Mind," In Hermsen, Joke, & Villa, Dana, (Eds.) *The Judge and the Spectator- Hannah Arendt's Political Philosophy*. Leuven: Peeters, 1999, p. 46. It is worth calling attention to the fact that Arendt is not making rigorous conceptual distinctions between any of those terms. See also: Taminiaux, Jacques, "Événement, Monde et Jugement," in *Esprit – Changer la culture et la politique, "Hannah Arendt*," N. 42, 2 édition, Juin, 1985, pp. 135-47.

54 Arendt would agree with Wittgenstein's argument against a private language: "In all such reflecting activities men move outside the world of appearances and use a language filled with abstract words which of course, had long been part and parcel of everyday speech before they became the special currency of philosophy." Arendt, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking*, p. 78.

55 Discussed by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in determinant judgment the particular is subsumed under a universally given law, rule or principle. In that case, the play between intellect and imagination is a matter of the pre-given categories of determinant judgment, deontological argumentation, or procedural rationality, where the role of imagination is merely to facilitate understanding – a re-presenting imagination that is basically imitative and reproductive. Abstract and universal schemas are the main outcome of imagination in determinant judgment, an operation of our universal cognitive rationality. On the other hand, reflective judgment rather encompasses a free play of imagination and understanding. In reflexive judgment, rather than intellect providing the rule, imagination provides an exemplary instance. This active perception is able to re-move objects and promote the enlargement of mind. This ethical imagination is the foundation for a subsequent operation, namely reflection, "the actual activity of judging something," which gathers deep political implications. Arendt, Hannah, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Edited with an interpretative essay by Ronald Beiner. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 68.

tion prepares the objects of thought for judgment.[56] Indeed, metaphor calls for the primacy of the appearing world, but at the same time it attributes narrative an ability to apprehend the visible world apart from the chronological events of everyday life.[57] Narrative interrupts space and time inasmuch as it can make present to the mind a past event through remembrance and anticipate the future by foreseeing an event, in a non-chronological or logical rational way. Such path paved by imagination traces a small track of non-time in which imagination beats within the time-space of mortal men and into which the trains of thought, of remembrances and anticipation run through.[58]

Such account on narrative and judgment play a crucial role in her account on testimony. Let me bring back once more the epigraph Arendt starts the *Life of the Mind´s* judging volume: "The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the defeated one pleases Cato." My claim here is that judgment plays the role of a political faculty able to bring to the fore the testimony of the defeated ones. The faculty of judging is deeply linked with the anamnesis' capability, in which testimony plays a crucial role. Narrative in the shape of personal testimony gathers the possibility to reach narrative beyond the universal construction of discourse. At the same token, narrative is the experience of the impossible *ad equation*. Individuals do not come from the merely free-will submitted to law of reason. We are not merely one among the others in a system of general equivalence of rights and duties.

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56 On Arendt's account on reflective judgment see: Dostal, Robert, "Judging Human Action: Arendt's Appropriation of Kant," In *The Review of Metaphysics*, n. 134, 1984; Forti, Simona, "Sul 'Giudizio Riflettente' Kantiano: Arendt e Lyotard a Confronto." In *La Politica tra Natalità e Mortalita à Hannah Arendt*. Edited by Eugenia Parise. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1993; Clarke, James p., "A Kantian Theory of Political Judgment – Arendt and Lyotard." In *Philosophy Today*, Vol. 38, N. 1/4, (Summer 1994), 135-48; Ferrara, Alessandro, "Judgment, identity and authenticity: a reconstruction of Hannah Arendt's interpretation of Kant." In *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 1998, v.24-2/3, p.110.

57 In a longer passage Arendt highlights: "If the language of thinking is essentially metaphorical, it follows that the world of appearances inserts itself into thought quite apart from the needs of our body and the claims of our fellow-men, which will draw us back into it in any case. No matter how close we are while thinking to what is far way and how absent we are from what is close at hand, the thinking ego obviously never leaves the world of appearances altogether. The two-world theory, as I have said, is a metaphysical delusion although by no means an arbitrary or accidental one; it is the most plausible delusion with which the experience of thought is plagued. Language, by lending itself to metaphorical usage, enable us to think, that is, to have traffic with non-sensory matters, because it permits a carrying-over, metapherein, of our sense experiences. There are not two worlds because metaphor unites them." Arendt, *The Life of the Mind – Thinking*, p. 110.

58 Arendt, Hannah, *Between Past and Future*, p. 13. See: Jean-Claude Eslin, "L'Événement de Penser," in *Esprit – Changer la culture et la politique, "Hannah Arendt*," N. 42, 2 édition, Juin, 1985, pp. 7-18.

Justice is not staring either on the positivity of a law or on the ontological status of autonomy. The unjust cannot always be known from universal normative judgment. Personal testimony cares within itself, in each level of the exercise of justice, the potentiality of justice for the individual who properly exceeds the law. Particularly Rosenzweig and Benjamin, by insisting that the defeated ones are rather the protagonists of history, capture precisely the role aesthetical judgment plays in Arendt epigraphy on Cato. For those authors, "Thinking over the so called "truth of the fact" means does not reduce reality to facticity, which means, one has to recognize that the unnamed ones, the non-subjects, the defeated and victims of history, they all take part of reality. Thinking over politics taking into account barbarity means to question the progress as the logic of politics."[59]

V. Testimony, narrative, and politics: The word and its plait on time
The Judgment of the defeated

The testimony announcement reaches a level beyond the pure exteriority of the law, transcending law's own logical interiority. Testimony is within itself the narration of the interruption, an interruptive moment of language. Testimony arrives as a form of mediation, not mediation as the capability to determine a point of metrical equilibrium between excess and absence, as a provisional rational calculability. It is precisely under the condition of breaking events that the inward tension of law raises up. Bensussan clarifies that reparation, saw through Rosenzweig´s lenses, asserts for no merely "ponderative" rationality aiming to abolish or to equal the failures and splinters of universal law (*din*), as mainly considered by equitable fair-middle adjust.[60] Law and reparation necessarily imply a link with another dimension of justice linked to ethics. A messianic paradigm of politics calls for a petition of justice, before any reflection regarding the rationality of the ends and the organization of communicational normative exchanges. Since it is impossible to calculate the reality of a suffering or the truth of an affliction, justice needs a calling, an invocation of the absented one *(hessed)*, a qualified invocation

59 ["*Re-pensar a verdad significa no reducir a realidad a facticidad, es decir, reconocer que forman parte de la realidad los si-nombre, los no-sujetos, las víctimas y los vencidos de la historia. Re-pensar la política teniendo en cuenta la barbarie significa cuestionar el progreso como lógica de la política.*"] See: Mate, *La Herencia del Olvido.* Madrid: Errata Naturae, 2008, p. 170.

60 Bensussan, *Le temps messianique*, p, 159.

that testimonial narrative gives voice to.[61] As evocatively putted by Zamora, "as Benjamin calls attention to, referring to another mythical phenomenon, namely, the law, under the correlation between culpability and retribution is not possible to grasp the experience of time, which is not a figure of law, but rather a figure of justice and forgiveness. This means that this latter has to do with the possibility of something truly new, able to escape the imposition of repetition." [62] Testimony confirms the intellective value of that which it testifies, beyond all normative representation, whose main account of justice is metrical distribution. The necessity of this impossible *ad equation* call for the commitment with a politics of the extraordinary.

That is the meaning of testimony, the temporal unforeseen event of the word towards its open creative potentiality. Even though it cannot normatively equalize thinking and announcement, it is precisely by such lack of equalization that narrative keeps the present in a continuous commitment of endless renewed expectation. Thus, testimonies endorse a sort of ethical political dimension on narrative, mainly interrelated to the other. In the Jewish epistemology, to testify is precisely to promote a disjunction in the linear historical time, a deviation on time which leads to the impatience of the new: the hoping waiting, namely, the promise.[63] The act of testimonial discuss cannot be verified and limited to the motionless now. In Arendt´s *Human Condition* terminology, the promise implies precisely such plait on time. The act of promising is constituted by a word that keeps entirely open the possibility to the narrative of the defeated one. In Arendt, the promise is the word opened to the future. To speak, to announce, is at once to promise.[64] Promising is the meta-ethical commitment of politics.

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61 According to Bensussan, the effect of a historical gap raises up *nomos*' internal tension (between the extraordinarity of political action and the stability of the Constitution), in which it can be particularly considered Rosenzweig's structure of the Hebraic law: juridical (din); the *compassionel (rahmanout)*; the justiciel, and the gift (*hessed*). See: Bensussan, *Le temps messianique*, p.159.

62 [como Benjamin advierte en relación con otro fenómeno mítico, el derecho, bajo la relación de culpa y venganza no puede haber experiencia del tiempo, que no es una figura del derecho, sino de la justicia y el perdón, es decir, que tiene que ver con la posibilidad de algo verdaderamente nuevo que escape a la coacción de la repetición.] «Dialéctica mesiánica: tiempo e interrupción en Walter Benjamin», en: G. Amengual, M. Cabot y J.L. Vermal (eds.): Ruptura de la tradición. Estudios sobre Walter Benjamin y Martin Heidegger. Madrid: Trotta 2008, p. 83-138.

63 In the Jewish epistemology, testimony (*Edout*) gathers a double dimension: knowledge (*daât*) and an impatient patience (*ad*). Raphaël Draï, *La pensee juive et l'interrogation divine: Exegese et epistemologie*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France; 1 edition, 1996, p.66. Quoted in: Bensussan, *Le temps messianique*, p. 156.

64 Here it is noteworthy the similarity of Arendt with Derrida. See: Jacques Derrida, Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question, Translated by Geoffrey Bennington, and Rachel Bowlby, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991 p. 93.

In Rosenzweig´s idea of subtraction, the space left by the testimonial narrative is the very possibility to remediate "the wound of the unfinished." Testimony repairs within itself the impossibility of fulfillment of any account of rational history.[65] As Benssusan calls action to, the testimonial narrative of victims´ sufferings, as putted by Benjamin, turns possible to think about an unfinished narrative on history. That is the very condition of possibility that keeps open an enduring aperture to accomplish justice.[66] Thoughtfully formulated by Mosès, "it is the memory of the defeated alone that reveals the truth of history, since it is doomed to forget nothing, neither the rule of the powerful that victimizes them nor the tradition of victims that it must perpetuate".[67]

65 Bensussan, *Le temps messianique*, p. 157.

66 Bensussan, Ibid, p.156.

67 Mosès, *The Angel of History*, p. 110.