THE UNIVERSITY OF PARDUBICE

FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY

THE ETHICS OF PUBLIC SPACES

IN BETWEEN THE LIVED AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

DOCTORAL THESIS

2024 ANETA KOHOUTOVÁ

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ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled *The Ethics of Public Spaces: In Between the Lived and Built Environment,* introduces different philosophical approaches which elaborate upon the mutual conditionality between the lived and the built environment. In addition, it contrasts those attitudes not only with each other but also with examples of active citizenship, interventions, and art in public spaces. The aim of my work is to shed light on the different layers that public spaces consist of, and reveal what the word 'public' in a connection of spatiality means in praxis.
With Hannah Arendt as my main guide and other thinkers, including Judith Butler, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault and Richard Sennett, I pose the following questions: What is public about public spaces? What role do public spaces play in our lives? And how do they shape the way we perceive the world?
None of the authors mentioned above dedicated their work to public spaces solely. In their research, they only touch upon certain aspects, which I abstract and layer on top of each other to draw a bigger picture, which would stress the importance of public spaces in our lives since I claim we are slowly losing not only material places itself but also its meaning.

KEYWORDS: public spaces, plurality, power, resistance, built environment, public realm, space of appearance

ANOTACE

Dizertační práce s názvem Etika veřejných prostranství: mezi žitým a materiálním prostorem, představuje filozofické přístupy, které reflektují podmíněnost mezi prostředím žitým (nehmotným) a vybudovaným (materiálním). Práce nestaví do kontrastu pouze vybrané filozofické teze, ale i teorie s praxí. Na konkrétních příkladech rozkrývá jednotlivé vrstvy veřejného prostoru a objasňuje, co znamená slovo veřejný ve vztahu k prostorovým dispozicícm. Dizertace staví na myšlenkách Hannah Arendt, které dál rozvíjí teoriemi dalších myslitelů jakou jsou Judith Butler, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault a Richard Sennett. Hlavními výzkumné otázky jsou formulovány následovně: Jak veřejný je veřejný prostor? Jakou roli hrají veřejná prostranství v našich životech? A jak ovlivňují způsob našeho vnímání světa?
Ani jeden z autorů zmíněných výše se ve své práce nevěnuje výhradně veřejnému prostoru. Ve svém výzkumu se dotýkají pouze určitých aspektů, které tato pracuje abstrahuje, vrství a spojuje do ucelené teorie, jejíž cílem je zdůraznit důležitost veřejného prostoru v našem životě, protože přichází s tvrzením, že ztrácíme nejen prostor samotný, ale i jeho význam.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA: veřejný prostor, pluralita, moc, občanský aktivismus, veřejná sféra, prostor jednání

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **9**

1. The backstory 9
2. The delineation of public spaces and its problems 11
3. Chapter overview 14

CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC AS AN ACTIVE AGENCY **17**

1.1 Absent public spaces of Luhačovice 18
1.2 Arendt's notion of public in *The Human Condition* 19
1.3 The notion of public in the secondary literature 25
1.4 The rise of the social 27
1.5 Public freedom 29
1.6 The right to public spaces 32
1.7 Public is and is not about you 34
1.8 If not in my backyard, then where? 36
1.9 Who owns public spaces? 41

CHAPTER 2. PUBLIC AS A NEW BEGINNING **44**

2.1 Arendt and Spatiality 44
2.2 Natality 48
2.3 Action 50
2.3.1 The silent action - The role of speech and symbols *52*
2.4 Cease to exist: The public realm, space of appearance and invisibility 58
2.4.1 Invisibility *59*
2.4.2 Conditionality *65*
2.4.3 Plurality *67*
2.4.4 Recognition *69*
2.5 (Why) should the body count as a part of action? 72
2.5.1 Performative activism *79*
2.5.2 The Who-ness of others *83*

CHAPTER 3. PUBLIC THROUGH THE LENS OF POWER **86**

3.1 Genesis of Towns 86
3.2 Forms of power 91
3.3 Inner freedom 97
3.4 If this is art, they need to change the definition 100

CHAPTER 4. PUBLIC AS AN EVERYDAY BATTLE, WALKING TOWARDS FREEDOM **104**

4.1 Burden of power 105
4.2 Strategies and Tactics 106
4.3 Readers or writers 109
4.4 Resistance as a source of creativity 112
4.5 The story of one bench 116

CHAPTER 5. PUBLIC AND MONUMENTAL. TEARING DOWN THE STATUES, BUILDING UP THE VALUES **123**

5.1 Why do monuments matter? 126
5.2 Built environment as a part of dwelling 128
5.3 The change 134

5.4 The Case of the Buddha of Oakland 138
5.5 Plurality without consensus 140

CONCLUSION – WHAT IS PUBLIC ABOUT PUBLIC SPACES? 144

Bibliography 148

List of abbreviations

<u>Hannah Arendt</u>

HC *The Human Condition*

LoM *The Life of the Mind*

OR *On Revolution*

OT *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

PRPI *8. Public Rights and Private Interests: In Response to Charles Frankel*

WF *What is Freedom?*

<u>Michel de Certeau</u>

PEL *The Practise of Everyday Life*

<u>Michel Foucault</u>

STP *Security, Territory, Population*

SKP *Space, Knowledge, and Power*

SP *The Subject and Power*

INTRODUCTION

1. The backstory

The architect Setha Low, in her book *Why Public Space Matters?* (2023) describes her initial impression of public spaces as leftovers from a city construction site rather than as deliberately designed places (Low 2023, 19). When I read her story, I realised that I had never thought about public spaces in that manner. On the contrary, I have always perceived them as a vital part of the urban environment, and I have been fascinated by their boundaries and limits, which are set by their architecture as well as the presence of others. And it was precisely this connection that became a trigger point for my research. In hindsight, I find it surprising how my approach towards public spaces has changed since my initial proposal and how the thoughts of thinkers in my work have revealed new layers of public spaces for me.

I entered this territory not from the position of a philosopher but from the position of a practitioner, of someone who calls herself an active citizen. I have always enjoyed being an active participant in public spaces and engaging in happenings, protests, and demonstrations. And I approached my thesis in the same manner. The first visual clue that later resurfaced as one of the main ideas of my thesis was a triangle, which symbolised the categorisations of populations based on their access to and usage of power related to spatiality. The first was politicians, those who hold power; the second I labelled as active citizens, who struggle with politicians; and the last I called passive citizens, those who only consume what is pre-set. However, while writing this thesis, I learned that the same importance ascribed to being heard and recognised is the act of encouraging others to do the same. It was precisely the realisation of otherness and plurality which led me from the three strict categories introduced above towards the recognition of different layers of public spaces. This also influenced the selection of philosophers I engage with in my thesis, from Michel de Certeau, who strictly divides those in power and those who resist, to Michel Foucault, who is interested in how power is exercised, to Hannah Arendt and her notion of plurality and the common world.

The aim of my work was not only to unpack the ideas of selected thinkers but also to apply them to real examples. That makes the whole thesis not only more personal but also brings it closer to praxis. Since it was exactly the ancient public spaces that allowed philosophy as we know today to flourish, we should enable philosophy to enrich our knowledge and understanding of the role of public spaces today. Therefore, this thesis

expands from the discipline of philosophy into urbanism and architecture by asking questions concerning the conditioned relationship between the built and the lived environment. For some time, I struggled with a point of view, but in the end, I found an angle within the shift from the question "what" (what are public spaces) to "how" (how power/plurality/ manifests itself in public spaces, or generally how do we make sense of our experiences of them), which helped me to better articulate the connection between theoretical and practical frameworks. As Maria Robaszkiewicz and Michael Weinman describe in their book *Hannah Arendt and Politics* (2023):

> Crucial to this approach is the shift of emphasis from the "what" to the "how" of the thinking activity. Whereas in the case of metaphysical thinking the weight is on the intent of thought, that is, the knowledge of truth, dialectical thinking focuses on the method or phenomenological description of the experience of thinking (p.39).

The thesis is not a quest for an answer to what public spaces are, but it offers a story of their importance in our lives. The 'how' is also very strongly connected with my personal experience that I developed through my projects and numerous research stays that I did as a part of my Ph.D. program. Coming from the Czech Republic, a country in the middle of Europe, my academic stays at its most distant ends enriched my view toward different directions. While in Estonia, I felt spaces were very organised, marked by sharing borders and the past with Russia, my stay in Portugal expanded my awareness of space towards a more vivid and organic one. The most significant experience that twisted but also sharpened my perception of the word 'public' itself was my stay in New York, where due to the residents' density, housing crisis, and heavily protected private properties, public spaces are a scarce commodity. Here, the constant struggle for space is part of everyday life. What I realised was that people started to appropriate public spaces into their private ones, not only by turning them spatially that way but also by adjusting the set of activities that were performed there. Bus stops turned into shelters, subway benches into living rooms, and public restrooms became private bathrooms.

Additionally, the people using what was assumed to be public for their private activities were fearless in speaking their minds, if one dared to cross the line of what they thought was their private space. As a matter of consequence, the boundaries between private and public were either strictly set by signs and fences or loosened due to the occupation of public spaces by private activities. It was a feeling I rarely experienced within Europe. All those observations and projects I was, or have been part of, left their marks in my thesis. For

that, it is impossible to frame my research within geographical boundaries or precisely set time frames; neither was it the purpose of my writing. The crucial point for my argument is to evaluate academic theories related to public spaces on case examples to underline certain aspects of them.

On the other hand, the aim of this thesis is not to find whether there is any universal public space pattern that can be shared and practised by different communities. That I claim is a false dream to follow, just as there is no universal blueprint that would secure the best spatial disposition valid worldwide, as architect Hans Teerds highlights in his thesis, "There is no formula, no toolbox, that can be applied to assignments on public space, in order to enhance public spaces and turned it into a public sphere" (Teerds 2017, 240). However, quite the contrary, one of the branches of this thesis aims to uncover a vice-versa mechanism: how the public sphere gives rise and meaning to public spaces.

For that layering, I consider public spaces to be very fragile but also unique environments. As a result, I returned to the question of 'how' to trace not the space itself but its intricate layers.

2. The delineation of public spaces and its problems

All of the key thinkers presented in my thesis touch upon the question of (urban) spatiality; however, they do not define public spaces itself. Hannah Arendt often refers to the Greek polis as a place where philosophy was born out of public spaces. As she writes in *The Human Condition*: "In the experience of the polis, which not without justification has been called the most talkative of all bodies politic, and even more in the political philosophy which sprang from it, action and speech separated and became more and more independent activities" (HC 26). The polis is essential to her as a place where people can gather, share, speak, and acquire their political lives. "To be political, to live in a polis, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence" (HC 26). Although she does not deny its material essence when she describes it as a place "physically secured by the wall" with a "physical location", as she claims later, "its true space lies for her between people living together" (HC 198). Since Arendt's thoughts are mostly related to an intangible layer of public spaces, I see it as necessary to intertwine her theories with other thinkers whose ideas are centred around the materiality of public spaces. One of them is Michel Foucault, who introduces the built environment as a tool of disciplinary mechanisms in his book *Security, Territory, Population* (1978). His writing

provides a framework for the connection between power and architecture and their relation to society. While Foucault is interested in how power is exercised, other thinkers such as Micael de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, and David Harvey are interested in how we can resist it and how our everyday practices relate to the city as citizens and creators, not only as passive consumers. The problem for them is that the production of spaces (e.g., its material structure) is driven by those in power, who, through architecture, maintain their domination and status. In their writing, conditionality between how the space is constructed and its use comes to the fore. Overall, the framework of selected thinkers serves as a springboard for introducing public spaces as quite complex phenomena, as part of a bigger unit (cities but also society), highlighting its historical development and also unpacking several layers of what they consist of – namely, the presence of others, power relations, everyday practices, and actions.
For the purpose of this thesis, I narrowed the concept of public spaces to freely accessible places open to a wide society. This definition includes squares, parks, streets, etc. What is particularly interesting is the fact that those places, as opposed to, for example, libraries, theatres, or cafés, that are in a certain manner also considered public spaces, are not institutionalised in the sense of written rules, membership or entrance fees. For that, they are dependent more on its users and their actions.

Only a few books are dedicated solely to public spaces, most of which are presented as the intersection of architecture, urban studies, sociology, and political theories. One of them is *Public Space Design and Social Cohesion: An International Comparison* (2019), in which editors unpack a very accurate definition of public spaces in the introduction, contrasting the expectations and reality of public spaces. “Public space is the spatial component of the public sphere open to all….It is considered to be an inclusive, equitable and accessible space, in reality it is increasingly perceived, experienced and used differently” (Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha 2019, 3). A problem emerges from such a definition that outlines my thesis, and that is aptly summarised by Ceren Sezer. “There might be conflicts and tension between different groups claiming their rights to use and shape the same places“ (Sezer 2019, 225). In another collection of essays called *Public Space Between Reimagination and Occupation* (2018), editors Svetlana Hristova and Mariusz Czepczyński briefly touch upon the result of tensions stemming from claiming one’s right to a public space. “The urban is then a constantly renegotiated compromise between diverse groups of urban users with their different social interests and claims, thus nourishing the resilient diversity in the face of composed unity as a fundamental part of the sustainable life” (Hristova and Czepczyński 2018, 1).

In *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political* (2017), the political theorist Chantal Mouffe introduces public spaces from the perspective of power as places of struggle since she sees them as “plural battlegrounds, where the different hegemonic projects are confronted without any possible final reconciliation” (Mouffe 2017, 227). Public spaces are thus filled with many contradictions, some of which are summarised by architect Adrian Blackwell in the conference collection *Public Space? Lost and Found* (2017), which he names as affinity versus antagonism, representation of power versus appropriation of space, public versus private, materiality versus immateriality, etc. (Blackwell 2017, 31–34).

This thesis also highlights certain paradoxes like public and private, tangible and intangible, but not to divide them but to follow Arendt’s methodology and to find common ground for them. The idea of having something in common is central for me in Arendt’s thoughts related to our perception of public spaces since I summarise her own definition of public space as simply - a world between us.

> The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak. What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, or at least not primarily, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them (HC 52-53).

Public spaces, for her, are therefore not only about discussion but also about action (e.g. the world between us is created not only by the material environment but also by intangible relations that take place within). As urban philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre might say, we build spaces but create places. However, we do not define them only from a perspective of legal ownership but also by activities that take place within them. Across five chapters, my thesis introduces public spaces not as a product but as a process, where things we can not imagine today may appear tomorrow. The process of creation of space seems to belong to no one, yet if there is a chance, everyone tries to claim their right to it.

3. Chapter overview

In the first chapter, “Public as an Active Agency”, I ask what it means to treat space as a public space. To dig deeper into the word ‘public’ itself, I draw from the thoughts of Hannah Arendt as presented in her book, *The Human Condition* (1998, originally published in 1958), in which she elaborates on the distinction between public and private. However, what I abstract and further develop is her notion of the public as an active agency based on one’s perception of the common world. To support my argument, I use the study case of my research stay in the well-known Czech spa town Luhačovice, for which I created an alternative guide based on interviews I carried with local residents. The problem of Luhačovice was not the lack of public spaces in its materiality but the absence of the public in its intangible sense that stems from them. This resulted not only in alienation from the place but also from each other. The first part leads to the conclusion that we need to explore what it means to have something in common in its intangible sense, which exceeds the material possession of things. By that, I state that the public implies a certain active agency. The second part of this chapter explores different motivations for attachment or alienation from the public through the Not In My Back Yard movement. I ask what motivation might spark our active presence in public spaces and connect it with a form of responsibility and public freedom.

The second chapter, “Public as a New Beginning”, stays with Hannah Arendt's ideas to dig deeper into her different notions of spatiality, namely the space of appearance and the public realm. Through these two categories, the conditioned relationship between the built (the public realm) and the lived (the space of appearance) environment starts to wave together. That connection is further developed in the subsequent chapters. For Arendt, appearance is crucial to her concept of natality, the capacity to begin and set things in motion. And just as the newborn appears to the world, we as citizens make public appearances to reveal who we are, which Arendt introduces as our second birth. However, this chapter balances between thinking with and against Arendt since, in the light of natality and new beginnings, it further introduces three concepts in order to push their boundaries and examine them with real cases in public spaces. Namely notions of action, invisibility and the body. In each subchapter dedicated to one of these particular topics, I stem from Arendt’s thoughts,

but together with the support of secondary literature, I progress towards current examples of public space activities.

To get a complete picture of the tension that appears within public spaces, the following two chapters discuss the concept of power using the ideas of Michel Foucault and his opponent, Michel de Certeau. In chapter three, “Public through the Lens of Power”, I use thoughts of Foucault to demonstrate how power turns inhabitants into subjects; however, aligned with Foucault, power is not introduced as a repressive but as an enabling source that allows all inhabitants to take part in the mutual web of power relations. The part of Foucault's work related to my research is how power is manifested and distributed through the built environment as a part of the disciplinary mechanisms. Hence, I trace his writing in the book *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978* (2009) to the genesis of towns as a tool to maintain society’s order. Not only does Foucault portray the relations between architecture and power, but in his later work, he also highlights individuals as a part of the society, not in the passive but in the active sense, which I emphasise in the proposed case of participatory practices in the the Norwegian project Crossroads.

The fourth chapter, “Public as an Everyday Battle“, is dedicated to Michel de Certeau's book *The Practise of Everyday Life* (1984), in which he, contrary to Foucault, portrays power as a repressive source. He aims to find a way for people to resist power oppression through the everyday practices tied to the built environment (such as walking) in order to understand the political level of our everyday lives. Although I argue against his narrow definition of power, I stress how he digs deeper into the conditionality between built and lived environments, which I consider crucial for my thesis. Essentially, his ideas are scaffolded around the role of space as a part of our lives. Namely, the perception of spatiality is how one's relation towards architecture is built and maintained. At the end of this chapter, I argue that a better understanding of spatial dispositions prevents the mere consumption of space and our alienation from it. As a study case, I use my observation of one bench in front of my house that was suddenly orphaned from social activities due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In the last chapter, “Public and monumental”, I shift the focus from everyday life towards more significant events such as the recent tearing down of statues worldwide. The main task is to argue that the built environment is a carrier of certain values, which, although it can enhance the sense of belonging, can also be read as a form of explicit exclusion from

participation in public life. Within this chapter, the ideas of key thinkers are intertwined to introduce the built environment as a crucial part of the human condition and as a part of dwelling. I highlight its influence on our perception of the world to answer the question of how we think about public spaces and their meaning. Through several examples of tearing down statues worldwide, I observe what importance we attribute to public spaces and, more importantly, how and why we are willing to actively step in and become part of them and participate in forming the common world.

All chapters play with the word 'public' to challenge its common perception and the fact that the thesis observes it from different angles. The key concept stemming from the chosen titles can be formulated as follows: What is public about public spaces? With that in mind, the thesis invites readers to challenge their notion of the public through the lens of philosophy and selected interdisciplinary thinkers and enlarge it with chosen study cases.

CHAPTER 1. PUBLIC AS AN ACTIVE AGENCY

One of the crucial terms that has to be clarified from the beginning is the word 'public' itself. What does it mean to claim space as public? And what is public about public spaces? In this chapter, I suggest looking at the notion of the public through the lens of Hannah Arendt, as presented in her book *The Human Condition* (HC). This book is crucial for my thesis since Arendt outlines here central concepts and distinctions, which can be traced throughout the rest of her work. What is particularly interesting for me about Arendt's perspective towards the public is that, for her, the public (as in the context of private) does not lie only in the matter of possession but, even more importantly, it exists in the realm of shared values and interests or, very generally speaking, in two different modes of man's[1] existence. "Throughout his life man moves constantly in two different orders of existence: he moves within what is his *own,* and he also moves in a sphere that is *common* to him and his fellowmen" (Arendt 1977, 104). The public mode of existence is, therefore, for Arendt, strongly connected with one's affiliation to the common world. The common world for her consists of everything that transcends us on a tangible and intangible level. "The common world is what we enter when we are born and what we leave behind when we die. It transcends our life-span into past and future alike; it was there before we came and will outlast our brief sojourn in it" (HC 55). The common world could be defined "as a web of human relationships" (Robaszkiewicz and Weinman 2023, 17), which goes "beyond my own projects" (Loidolt 2018, 96). Also common in that sense, differs from her notion of the public. The common is there; we become part of it once we are born. However, I read public as a practice, which is not granted, but once it appears, it becomes part of the common.

Within *The Human Condition,* Arendt raises two major concerns that are inscribed in the discussion about public spaces. The first one is our alienation from what she describes as the common world[2] and the second concern is with the experience of wordlessness. The whole book aims to explore what it means to be human, not based on knowledge, but on experience. The main research task for this chapter is, therefore, to discover the nature of the

[1] I use the term 'men' with respect to Arendt's vocabulary, in which she uses this term to refer to humankind in general.
[2] Quite contrary to Marx, to which Arendt refers, whose concern is self-alienation, she emphasises world-alienation.

public as proposed by Arendt and apply it to the notion of public spaces to outline an answer to the following questions: What does it mean to treat public spaces as public? And what does Arendt mean by a potential threat to humanity in the context of alienation from the common world?

1.1 Absent public spaces of Luhačovice

During the summer of 2021, I conducted fourteen days of extensive research in one of the most famous Czech spa towns, Luhačovice. I aimed to explore how local inhabitants perceive the notion of public in the context of town, which is mainly controlled by the spa industry and meant solely for business purposes. Is it possible within this environment to feel part of the common world? During those fourteen days, I conducted dozens of interviews with local inhabitants to encourage them to think about the town as something they all have in common and can co-create. As something to which, using the words of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, they have a right for.[3] Usually, I started my interviews with simple questions, like: What is your favourite place in Luhačovice and why? Do you have any special memories or experiences that would bind you to this spot? Most people were sincerely shocked by those questions because, as they said, they never considered the built environment to be something that plays a significant role in their lives. Most of them see the built environment only as a tool that helps them to get from one place (from their flat) to another (to work or to escape from the town). Their memories and experiences ran away from the city, primarily due to the beautiful nature surrounding this whole region. Unsurprisingly, most inhabitants felt like strangers to their "own" place. Although they have access to all public spaces, a great part of their lives would instead take place in the private realm since the public spaces are primarily built for tourists and spa guests. I aimed to know whether it is because they feel they do not belong, which is what most of them confirmed. After my insistence to reveal at least some of their favourite places, a couple of them came up with marvellous answers, like the couple of elderly ladies sitting on a bench in front of their house every day I spent in Luhačovice. "If you really would like to know my favourite place, then I have to tell you that it is this bench," one of them said with a serious face. Others shared their urban-related memories from childhood, always accompanied by a sigh that everything was different before.

[3] Lefebvre, H. *Le Droit à la ville, 1968, English translation as The Right to the City 1996.* Harvey, D. "The Right To The City". Online. *New Left Review* Sept/Oct 2008, no. 53 (2008): 23-40.

Since Luhačovice is well-known for being a spa town, everything -- public spaces and institutions-- are meant as tools to profit from the spa guests. As a result, the city is divided into two parts. In the first one, there is beautiful scenery in which the life of tourists takes place. In the second, there is the city where the locals live, work in a factory, and go to their favourite bar in the parking spot between the housing estate and the factory. Although there is no strict border between those parts, the inhabitants of Luhačovice identically point to the train station. From that place, locals go right and tourists take the opposite direction.

Luhačovice is not, of course, the only example where private interests prevail over the sense of the common. Still, my fresh experience of being part of this world for a while serves as a solid starting point for a discussion about the common world as something essential that the "public" consists of. While I was encouraging the people of Luhačovice to share their experiences and memories of public spaces, the majority of them referred to the local pub (a very specific one) and the restaurant (a non-stop pub serving frozen pizza) as their favourite public spaces within the town. No one mentioned a park, a street, a square, a playground, or something widely understood as public space. As long as I stayed with the inhabitants of Luhačovice, it became increasingly evident that they do not claim themselves as part of those public spaces as named above, and thereore, they diminished their role in their lives. Public spaces for them shrink to places where it is only possible to consume. Their sense of the common world was reduced at the expense of the business interest, which commodified their perception of the public. While writing my thesis, I was playing with the dystopian vision of what not having public spaces in its material sense would feel like. However, although inhabitants of Luhačovice do have access to all of the public facilities, I realised that the important part of public spaces does not lie solely in their material essence but also in their intangible value and, more importantly, in the way those two elements condition each other.

1.2 Arendt's notion of public in *The Human Condition*

When referring to Arendt's ideas about the public, it's impossible to avoid her notion of private, which she introduced as an intertwined phenomenon within the second chapter of *HC*. This book draws a complex picture of how the human condition has changed in Western societies from ancient Greece to the present. Arendt's aim is to introduce the three modalities of being in the world, the three conditions of 'vita activa' - the active life. All those categories that create the fabric of human life are latently present within all of Arendt's

concepts. Therefore, I consider it necessary to introduce them briefly. As she writes: “They are fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man” (HC 7).

The first is labor, in which biological and self-preservation needs and necessities are maintained. As Arendt states, "the human condition of labor is life itself” (HC 7). The second is work, the realm of durable objects and artificial objects made for consumption, as well as the world of institutions or artworks. “Work provides an "artificial" world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings” (HC 7). The third and last is action, the highest activity connected with our disclosure and appearance to others. The succession follows the order in which Arendt introduces those three conditions. Namely, first, the cyclical life necessities have to be secured, allowing one to move towards producing durable objects with a defined beginning and end that move in a more or less linear timeline. Only on that basis can action, such as the appearance to others, be performed. Action, contrary to work and labor, refers to immortality. According to Arendt, the highest value of the third condition – action, also lies in the fact that no one else can provide that for us. It is, therefore, strictly connected to one’s existence. “Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world” (HC 7).

Arendt highlights that during ancient Greece, the private sphere was connected with providing biological necessities, while the public was associated with freedom and action. As she states:

> The rise of the city-state meant that man received, besides his private life a sort of second life, his bios politikos. Now every citizen belongs to two orders of existence; and there is a sharp distinction in his life between what is his own (idion) and what is communal (koijon) (HC 24).

The distinction between public and private is not only a matter of spatial discrepancies but is also based on the activities performed there. In the private sphere, one does not act “as a truly human being but only as a specimen of the animal species mankind” (HC 46). On the contrary, the public sphere is a space above the biological necessities related to her notion of action. Arendt was not only concerned about such distinction within the ancient world, but she also related the loss of the public to totalitarianism and the Second World War; as Jeffrey Goldfarb puts it:

> The household and the public sphere are distinct locations in the Athenian world: the former, the realm of necessity, the latter, the realm of freedom. But something changes in the totalitarian context. The "origins of totalitarianism" is a story of the destruction of public space to the point that the totalitarian order is without any public space (Goldfarb 2007, 14).

The private and public spheres are related to different tasks, but it does not mean they are in opposition. Arendt does not dispute that there exists a life that is mine – such as the life of individuals, which takes place in their homes or in nature far away from society. However, the public she values the highest is one connected to citizenship, in which one is born for a second time and appears to others as a citizen, as a member of society. "Every individual in the privacy of his household is subject to life's necessities and has the right to be protected in the pursuit of his private interests; but by virtue of his citizenship he receives a kind of second life in addition to his private life" (PRPI 103).

For Arendt, the notion of the public itself bears "two closely interrelated but not altogether identical phenomena" (HC 50). The first is "that everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity" (HC 50). Hence, as she writes, "our feeling for reality depends utterly upon appearance and therefore upon the existence of a public realm into which things can appear out of the darkness of sheltered existence" (HC 51). According to Arendt, we need a public realm to get a complete picture of what the world consists of. "Neither education nor ingenuity nor talent can replace the constituent elements of the public realm, which make it the proper place for human excellence" (HC 49). Living only in a private sphere (the sheltered existence) does not provide the complete picture of reality as a whole. "The idiot is one who lives only in his own household and is concerned only with his own life and its necessities" (PRPI 107). The first notion of "public" then involves the plurality of which the public consists, the presence of others, but also the visibility and ability to act. The second notion of the public is connected to her understanding but also the creation of the world. As Arendt writes: "Second, the term 'public' signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it" (HC 52). The public, in that sense, is for her related "to the human artifact, the fabrication of human hands, as well as to affairs which go on among those who inhabit the man-made world together" (HC 52). Within that claim, she distinguishes between man-made environments, which are not equivalent to nature or earth.

What Arendt points to is the material essence of a space but also the realm of metaphysics, which refers to the world of affairs or an intangible notion of the public bound to values and transcendentality. Arendt refers to the ancient perception of the polis as a place

where people could live and act together. She claims that “the realm of polis is the realm of freedom” (HC 30). For her, the notion of freedom (and its practice) is strongly bound to the public realm and the common world. To follow Arendt’s argument means not only to reveal a mutual conditionality of those two notions of public and anchor them in our understanding of public spaces but also to highlight the importance of the public itself, which is the possibility to express oneself and, as Robaszkiewicz and Weinman suggest, ‘step out’ to appear to others.

> For her part, Arendt considers the lack of public spaces in which equality could manifest itself, spaces in which citizens could express their opinions and hence lead a public debate, as one of the main challenges of large democracies. As soon as these spaces exist, it is up to the citizens themselves to muster the courage to step out into the light of the public realm and act politically (Robaszkiewicz and Weinman 2023, 148).

Therefore, the existence of public spaces is not a guarantee of appearance, which is a central motif of the second chapter; however, what needs to be discussed beforehand is the necessity and threat of public spaces disappearing. Namely, public spaces are in retreat in favour of private ones.

The rise of homo faber and the glorification of work results in a situation where we live in the world of objects rather than in the world of relations. Arendt is concerned that the modern world is a place where objects prevail over action and where people gather together, but only for consumption, not for action itself. She highlights the necessity of public spaces for exercising common values, which one could never achieve within private life. “Every activity performed in public can attain an excellence never matched in privacy; (...) and no activity can become excellent if the world does not provide a proper space for its exercise” (HC 49). On top of that, Arendt claims that “the public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak“ (HC 52). According to her, the most difficult part is to preserve the fact that “the world between us has (...) the power to gather us together” (HC 53). In the sense of a material layer (the notion of public 2) from which foundation, the intangible sphere of values is being constantly built (the notion of public 1). Although Arendt heavily refers to an ancient understanding of the public sphere, the point in which she highlights the necessity of material space differs from the polis.
In her essay “What is Freedom“ she describes the polis as a performative stage. “The Greek polis once was precisely that ‘form of government’ which provided men with a space of appearances where they could act, with a kind of theatre where freedom could appear“ (Arendt 1961, 154). The polis is important for her as a place “where freedom can be seen and

remembered" and also become fully public (WF 154).

The potential conditionality between the two notions of public, as mentioned above, is expressed by Arendt with a powerful metaphor picturing the public realm as a table with people sitting around it. The table could have arbitrary shape and colour and could be made from whatever material one can think of. Still, the crucial point lies in the question: Do we perceive the table as something which binds the people sitting around it together, or rather as something that creates distance and divides them? In that example, she highlights the mutual conditionality between the tangible (the table) and intangible (the relations centred around it).

> The weirdness of this situation resembles a spiritualistic seance where a number of people gathered around a table might suddenly, through some magic trick, see the table vanish from their midst, so that two persons sitting opposite each other were no longer separated but also would be entirely unrelated to each other by anything tangible (HC 53).

The second layer, or rather a subquery, which stems directly from Arendt's quotation, is whether we let the table disappear while the relations between its participants remain. If the tangible dissolves, can the intangible be sustained? This thought-provoking metaphor can be easily projected into a deliberation about public spaces. In everyday life, do we share the impression that a park or square is a place that creates certain kinds of relations between its users, or does it work more as an element that divides them? Or, to use Arendt's words – does the park have the power to gather people together? The answer is, of course, not a matter of a simple decision between these two possibilities. However, it must be evaluated as a more complex phenomenon connected with our perception and experience. By experience, Arendt means our understanding of the world and perception of the community. Therefore, I aim to promote public spaces as spaces we all have in common, similar to the fact that we were all born into this world. In this sense, I consider the table in the previous example to be something everyone could use and take care of since the seating is not given, and no one would like to have their meal at an untidy place where someone else was eating. On the other hand, when only one person remains responsible for the table, while others only leave the dishes and leave, it does not sustain the notion of a common world as well. In that way, the sense of commonness is something we have to not only advocate for but also rehearse to maintain the table in good order. To relate the table to the example of Luhačovice, one has to imagine that the same table has been bought, and therefore, some people take care of it for us. However, access to the table is now limited since entrance has to be paid for or conditioned by consumption. Not only is access exclusive, but also the activities that can be performed by

the table no longer depend on the other participants but on the new owner. In that metaphor, the sense of communion not only stems from the table but also exceeds it. There is a need to replace what has been hitherto only the material image of the table. The table in Arendt's example means not only the physical place but also bears certain values rooted in the public perception of it.

Arendt differs from other thinkers who reflect on the notion of the public (in the spatial context) because her distinction between public and private is not solely connected with an act of possession, ownership, or the surveillance of power relations. What I see as an additional layer that Arendt brings into that ongoing discussion is the realm of values framed by a sense of commonality, which must be discussed to unfold the ethics of public spaces.

Although Arendt's main argument is not explicitly centred around values, they are latently present in her writing since they are connected with public appearances, especially tied to the public. “Value is the quality a thing can never possess in privacy but acquires automatically the moment it appears in public” (HC 164). Values for Arendt exist only “in relation to other things” (Parekh 2009, 63). To unpack it with the table example as stated above, its public value appears when people sit together and use it as a common place. Arendt uses Marx’s ideas to support her argument about values being present within social relationships (HC 165). They are made by humans, but they are not some higher universal moral principles. “Values, in other words, in distinction from things or deeds or ideas, are never the products of a specific human activity, but come into being whenever any such products are drawn into the ever-changing relativity of exchange between the members of society” (HC 164).

For this thesis, the term values will be used in the sense of principle, guidance or rules of conduct, which are not a result of a divine order but stem from our own decisions and actions (Arendt 2003, 51–52). As later described, the importance is not in its definition but in the way one forms and practices them in relation to the built environment and presence of others. The term ‘value’ will play a crucial role later in the thesis, especially in the last chapter related to the statutes. However, it has to be introduced in the context of public and private, especially in the context of the public as an active agency and Arendt's concern about the shrinking of public spaces, which she connects with a loss of shared values (togetherness, plurality), those which can appear only within the public.

1.3 The notion of public in the secondary literature

The sociologist and Arendtian thinker Richard Sennett, in his book, *The Fall of Public Man* (1977), describes a shift in thinking regarding the distinction between public and private after World War II and portrays it as a transformation from a psychological to an economic role of these terms. As he writes:

> After the war, younger members like Jurgen Habermas and Helmut Plessner took up this work in terms of a shift in the meaning of "public" and "private." Habermas conducted studies of opinion surveys to deduce what people thought about the public dimension of social life; Plessner tied the changing weights between public and private to shifts in the character of the city. This younger generation moved away from some of the psychological depth of Adorno and Max Horkheimer to a more "economic" emphasis—if economics be understood in the broad sense of production of the means of life (Sennett 1977, 40).

The question of production, the position of power and surveillance instead of the Arendtian common world, was further developed by key thinkers in the field of urbanism and human sciences, such as Henri Lefebvre, who, in his book *The Production of Space* (1991, originally published in 1974), critiques the capitalistic production of space, in which space is produced and maintained only by a specific class that tends to claim the control over it. "The space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action; in addition to being a means of production, it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (Lefebvre 1991, 26). Or, David Harvey who, in *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (2001), highlights the geographical evolution of society under capitalism, sees culture (including urbanism) as commodified, the same as Lefebvre by a certain class, that seeks to maintain and control power. Additionally, David Harvey, in the book *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (2019), conveys the Lefebvre term 'right to the city' in the context of public and private as a "collective right as opposed to the individual we put into fore" (p. 3).

Both Lefebvre and Harvey influenced several urban scholars, most prominently the work of Sharon Zukin, the urban sociologist whose specialisation is modern urban life. Zukin, in her article "Conflict and Control in the City's Public Spaces" (2018), traces a historical narrative of the privatisation of public spaces in the United States to the 1970s and labels it as a "new form of social control" (p.18). The main task of this form of control is, according to her, to keep "public spaces clean and safe" (p.19) and turn them into "havens of consumption by eliminating all potentially unpleasant encounters" (p. 19). For this policy,

Zukin uses the term "pacification by cappuccino" (p. 19), in which the imaginary space for all is created; however, not everyone can afford to be part of that. Not only do we speak about institutional surveillance, but in the private sphere, we also speak about different business groups and agents that tend to conquer public spaces. As Zukin draws her vision of shared spatiality, "public space is not a passive location, it is an active agent in producing civil society" (p. 24). Harvey sees "city as an exercise of collective power over the process of urbanization" (Harvey 2019, 4) and Lefebvre connects the creation of public space with the act of humanity. What Arendt, Harvey, Lefebvre, Zukin, and others have in common is a warning related to the transformation of the concept of the public itself, as well as the fact that they see the public in light of an active agency.

Pro-active verbs like exercise, rehearse, or practice have been used to define the core of the word 'public'. This is in contrast to terms like consumption and alienation, which are used to describe the privatisation and passivisation of public spaces. Indeed, Hristova maintains that: "While the political space is extended beyond national borders, human spaces diminished in the cities to the secure seclusion of home: public spaces are drained of public meaning and increasingly reduced to locales of consumption and entertainment" (Hristova 2018, 33). The concern stems from a clash between public and private and is then centred around the sustainability of the public in the era of capitalism, individualism, and alienation from the common space. "Under the veil of pursuing what seems to be good for all, public spaces become, on the contrary, more exclusive and less accessible for the wider society" (Aelbrecht, Stevens and Nisha 2019, 3).

What Arendt sees as a possible threat is that the consciousness of communion is something we are slowly losing in favour of individualism and the private realm. Mass society does not favour culture but entertainment, the world of things instead of the world of action. "They lost the faculty which is originally peculiar to all cultural things, the faculty of arresting our attention and moving us" (Arendt 1960, 281). Despite that, she argues, we have to find a new solid ground and plant the seed of the common in it. Otherwise, public spaces will become fields of economic individual profit instead of gardens where society will flourish. To maintain a perception of the common world, the table in Arendt's metaphor can not be perceived as a compound of tiny private places, with clearly marked spaces for each participant, but quite the contrary, as a common solid place.

As Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves writes:

> For Arendt modernity is characterized by the loss of the world, which means elimination of the public sphere in favour of private. Modernity is the age of bureaucratic administration and anonymous labor, rather than politics and action, of elite domination and the manipulation of public opinion. Modernity is an age where individuals, having lost their traditional standards and values, must search for new grounds of human community as such (d'Entreves 1994, 3).

She even goes further to connect the notion of being part of the public with the condition of being a complete human being. "A man who lived only a private life, who like the slave was not permitted to enter the public realm, or like the barbarian had chosen not to establish such a realm, was not fully human" (HC 38).

1.4 The rise of the social

Arendt introduces the notion of "modern individualism, also referred to as modern privacy" (HC 38), in which she draws from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas about intimacy and rebellion against society. This term of intimacy and modern privacy, she claims, is something that is not opposed to the public, but she perceives it as the opposite of the social. The public is then not equal to the social, although it is connected to the earth's citizens. Social for Arendt stands for mass society, conformism, and unified normalisation.

> It is decisive that society, on all its levels, excludes the possibility of action, which formerly was excluded from the household. Instead, society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behaviour, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement (HC 40).

It is thus the social, for Arendt, that stands contrary to the public, which is connected with plurality and action. Arendt sees potential threats within the rise of the social in the context of public spaces in its uniformisation, homogeneity, and so-called normalisation. Getting along well with others is more than homogeneity; it is about learning how to deal with their differences. Like Arendt, Richard Sennett, in his book *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (2018), points to the danger of monoculture, which he compares to the world of nature, in which the cultivation of monoculture may lead to disaster (Sennett 2018, 42). His standpoint stems from the material approach towards the town, aptly complementing Arendt's thoughts, which are rooted mainly in the intangible notion of the social. On that matter, Sennett points to standardised centres of towns, which are meant to be places of meetings; however, within the process of socialisation of public spaces, they have become universalised spots for tourists, which he refers to "as black holes for residents" (Sennett 2018, 45). Similar

to the example of the spa town in Luhačovice, Sennett points out that “in the globalization of cities, the boundary is replacing the border, cities are even less internally porous“ (Sennett 2017, 264). The impossibility of porosity illustrates the fact that local inhabitants could draw a line between the touristic part of the city and their lived environment. The boundary that prevented the public from emerging was clearly set. The wall as a form of protection from our differences is a topic that Sennett extensively researches in his book *Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (1990), where he defends plurality as enriching rather than threatening, as aligned with Arendt's diction between public and social.

> What is characteristic of our city building is to wall off the differences between people, assuming that these differences are more likely to be mutually threatening than mutually stimulating. What we make in the urban realm are therefore bland, neutralizing spaces which remove the threat of social contact: street walls faced in sheets of plate glass, highways that cut off poor neighbourhoods from the rest of the city, dormitory housing developments (Sennett 1990, 12).

Like Sennett, Arendt sees plurality as a condition of all political life (HC 7). Plurality, according to her, corresponds with the fact that “we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live” (HC 8). For that, plurality also has to be discussed as one of the main conditions of the public.

Based on Arendt and subsequent thinkers, I argue for two potential ways that diminish the role of public spaces. The first is the socialisation of public spaces, where the sense of plurality is replaced by homogeneity when only one idea is pursued. The threat to plurality is deeply rooted in her experience of totalitarianism. The link to the second threat, which is the invasiveness of private interests towards public spaces, may be spotted within the phenomena of mass tourism from which only a few people profit and which do not leave others with alternatives other than to consume.

In the case of Luhačovice, public spaces are witnessing what Arendt warned of: the privatisation or materialisation with respect to homo faber of the public and, as other urban thinkers would say, the commodification of the public. The sense of commonality (i.e. the public plurality and the web of relationships) was replaced by the sense of profit. The city was commodified and precisely divided between entrepreneurs, whose primary interest was to maintain people in the mood of consumption. As a result, it leads towards the feeling of alienation from the place of their whereabouts. That was embodied in the question by which most citizens replied to my concerns about their lack of interest in public spaces. It always started with: Why should I...? These three dots, symbolising the doubting process, could be

replaced by different activities, such as, why should I pick up this litter in the street? Why should I make an effort to take care of this park garden when it is not mine? I assume the overarching task for all these doubts may be formed this way: Why should I care about space that is not mine? I perceive those concerns as a springboard for implementing Arendt's thoughts on the notion of the public. Anchored in that, I believe that her answer to that essential question would be that one has to look at the space not only from the perspective of ownership but from the standpoint of shared values, which are mine as well. Freedom or plurality could not be owned but could be gained, shared, and practised. We live in the "world which we have in common without owning it" (PRPI 104). I believe that involving Arendt's distinctions of public and private in this discussion is fruitful because it reshapes our perspective from ownership in an economic, material, and legal sense to a standpoint of shared values.

When one applies the idea that we live in a common world to a previously raised question, the answer acquires concrete shapes. Why should I? Because you are part of this space as well. It is your responsibility –the same for you as for others. However, the privatisation of public spaces is, according to Arendt, dangerous in the way of losing the possibility of gaining a sense of commonality as something one acquires by using public spaces. By diminishing the role of the public in our lives, one loses the sense of the common world, which the private sphere could not sustain. The sense of the common is, for Arendt, the core of public spaces from which public freedom grows. Behind the walls of our homes, we are free to do what we please; however, our interaction with the human world limits our possibilities. Arendt sees the limitations as a distinction between the inner freedom we get and the public freedom which is given to us by others.

1.5 Public freedom

For Arendt, freedom is connected with our ability to act and start something new. "The distinction between private and public coincides with the opposition of necessity and freedom" (HC 73). Freedom is not a private and/or contemplative act; on the contrary, it's connecting with an action and public—freedom for her lies in the power to begin. The way to understand freedom is to connect to the world and, by words and deeds, become part of the public in the sense of becoming visible to others. In the book *On Revolution* (1990, originally published in 1963), Arendt demonstrates public freedom in the context of the French and American revolutions. She sees it as a principle without "which no revolution would ever

have come to pass” (Arendt 1990, 232). It is public in the sense that it should not be assigned to a privileged group of people but to all (OR 269).

Philosopher James Mensch connects the Arendtian notion of freedom with public spaces when he states that “such appearance, however, requires public space“ (Mensch 2007, 31–32). Freedom does not depend on us but on each other within public spaces. Encounters with others limit me in the same way as I limit them. “This freedom, she notes, is distinct from ‘the free will or free thought’ that philosophers have traditionally discussed. As the revolutionary thinkers of the 18th century understood it, such freedom “could exist only in public” (Mensch 2007, 31). As Robaszkiewicz and Weinman aptly summarise, for Arendt, “freedom is a practise, she politicizes freedom and turns it into a worldly phenomenon” (Robaszkiewicz and Weinman 2023, 20). The politicising of freedom lies in the fact that freedom always requires others in the sense that freedom is strongly connected with a public realm to manifest itself. According to Arendt, the freedom I receive from others goes beyond my comprehension; it is thus my yet unknown freedom. It is something that could not be planned, only assumed. When one enters the public realm, one can never be sure which range of freedom will be given. The limits of public freedom could be tested and enlarged by one's actions. “Public freedom, in other words, is both the result and the cause of individual freedom” (Mensch 2007, 35).

One may consider public spaces as spaces where the edges of one's definition of freedom are abraded and confronted with others and their perceptions because each participant brings novelty into the shared world. In public spaces, we learn how to deal with others and what our rights and responsibilities are. As in Arendt’s metaphor of the table, there is not only an advantage in using it to have a place where to set a plate, but also to share the responsibility of leaving the table clean.

One of the concrete examples of what public freedom means in our individual lives is discussed by Eric Klinenberg, author of the book *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (2018). Klinenberg's research digs deeper into the role of libraries and institutionalised public spaces. He points out that libraries are not only storages of books but are also places where most people get their first library card and become responsible for themselves in the context of others by meeting certain deadlines and requirements for handling books, etc. This experience shapes how we perceive the world and our sense of public freedom. Although Klinenberg writes mostly about libraries, he acknowledges that they are only a piece of a social infrastructure that shapes the way people interact -- public spaces, where parks,

playgrounds and other shared facilities also belong (Klinenberg 2018, 5). Klinenberg's argument could, therefore, be applied to any public realm in which one is exposed to others. The advantage hidden in the observation of non-institutionalized public spaces such as parks, squares, and streets is that no regulations are usually displayed next to the main entrance. On the contrary, those places typically do not have one main entrance from which they could be reached. This makes the whole situation entirely dependent on its participants rather than written regulations. In other words, public spaces are part of a social infrastructure in which we gain our sense of public freedom and the common world that is not based on written rules but rather on mutual interactions. Therefore, in Arendt's thought, they are not only material places but also spaces that exceed one's existence and provide one with values that can never be achieved within the private realm.

> Their (The men who in France prepared the minds and formulated the principles of the coming revolution) public freedom was not an inner realm into which men might escape at will from the pressures of the world, nor was it the liberum arbitrium which makes the will choose between alternatives. Freedom for them could exist only in public; it was a tangible, worldly reality, something created by men to be enjoyed by men rather than a gift or a capacity, it was the man-made public space or market-place which antiquity had known as the area where freedom appears and becomes visible to all (OR 124).

What is essential for Arendt, then, is to realise oneself in the context of the public. The public is something that transcends oneself in the sense of action as something which will remain.

Arendt demonstrates that durability not only within the intangible but also with the example of a built material space made to outlast its builders. "The ideals of homo faber, the fabricator of the world, which are permanence, stability, and durability" (HC 126). Homo faber is, according to Arendt, "the builder of the world" (HC 135), who works with his hands as opposed to animal labourers, who work with their bodies. "As opposed to that animal laborans are wordless" since their activity, quite contrary to homo faber, does not stay (Parekh 2009, 59).

According to Arendt, public spaces, built with hands, tools and machines, should be planned with long-term vision as material places on which the common world is strictly dependent. However, by its durability, the products of homo faber gain their independence from man, its creator (HC 137).

> If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the lifespan of mortal men. Without this transcendence into a potential earthly immortality, no politics, strictly speaking, no common world and no public realm, is possible (HC 55).

The public is something that goes beyond one in two ways. As a tangible material condition of architecture and urban design, which will be discussed in more depth within Chapters 3, 4 and 5, but also on an intangible level (values and interest carried by public actions and conserved by storytelling, etc.) As Arendt writes: “In this sense, the public defines the private. What is worthy of bright public light is relevant; it is what can be tolerated, so the irrelevant automatically becomes a private matter” (HC 51). I see there a strong relation to the common world; in the sense that what appears in public becomes a part of the common world. Therefore, those two notions become intertwined in the sense of appearances. Introducing the word ‘public’ in connection to an active agency enables me to move towards the concern that permeates most of Arendt's writing. Are public spaces capable of sustaining this role, or do they become only an empty phrase so far from its significance on which Arendt leans?

1.6 The right to public spaces

As stated earlier, the public must be, according to Arendt and others, perceived as an active agency or capacity, not only when it stands alone but especially when framed within the spatial context. Complementing Hannah Arendt, David Harvey reflects the mutual relations between individuals, society and the city. The task for him does not lie in the mere statement that I, as an individual, have access to these places but more in whether everyone has the same possibility to use and participate. “The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city“ (Harvey 2008, 23). He aptly points out that the right to the city is not measured by the mere fact that I am capable of passing a street or using town facilities; however, Harvey is aware that individuals can imprint their traces into the structure of the city in a different manner, which is to create social and cultural life within towns, which although not a visible and tangible act, may nonetheless leave a remarkable trace.

When someone asks me to describe a city where I live, my answer will not be a list of streets in their alphabetical order, its geographical area, or the number of football pitches and rivers flowing through the town. I assume that I would say something like, the town where I live has quite a conservative spirit, a lot of elderly people and families with small kids live there and, for that reason, we lack a proper music club, because there is no demand for this

kind of activity. On the other hand, the town where I live is flat, so it is suitable for biking and running, and therefore, the city council supports sports activities such as new outdoor gyms and workout places for runners. I aim to state that our understanding of towns happens on an intangible level of experiences, observations, and memories. Thus, participation in public spaces can mean more than repairing a bench or building a new chess table in the park. It could also lie in the fact that we can create its spirit and possibly participate in its change. The public here stands for, to rephrase Lefebvre's claim, the right to be a city. This claim echoes Arendt when she writes, "Wherever you will go, you will be a polis" (HC 198). When I opened this question with the inhabitants of Luhačovice, most answered that the city does not have any public significance to them. Instead, they described it as a tourist spot, in which they had lost their right to be part of the city at the expense of tourism. With that statement, again, the question about intangible and tangible perceptions of the essence of public spaces arises as something very central but also missing in our deliberation about cities.

In this light, cities balance the built and lived environment, so we need a philosophy to clarify and evaluate how such fundamental notions are solidified and offer a deep understanding of their mutual relations. What needs to be added to deliberation about public spaces is a reformulation of the initial question. Rather than asking what kind of building (white, wooden, art-deco) we need, get an idea of who we are, and why we need to build things. In that case, I claim that intangibles should be discussed before the tangible to fulfil the notion of public in public spaces. No universal schema or blueprint exists for a place one will always describe as good or ideal. However, one could more easily formulate what values one demands from a place, such as safety, freedom, equality, etc. In this manner, Arendt's political philosophy of the human condition is, for me, connected with the question of what values places should promote and how one should think about them, more than with a concrete shape or the structure of the place. The aim is to intrude on this intangible part of public spaces and highlight its necessity and role in forming our sense of public freedom. As Jürgen Habermas claims: "It is hardly surprising that we generally fail to live up to these standards; but that in no way devalues the standards themselves" (Habermas 2021, 114).

What I see as problematic about those standards is the prevalence of individual influence and admission to the values of public space since "the quality of urban life has been a commodity for those with money" (Harvey 2019,14). Meanwhile, spatiality is part of a process in which different agents enter and exit. It includes architects, urbanists, inhabitants, politicians, artists etc. However, the question of whether we all have the same participation possibilities remains open.

Spatiality with emphasis on public spaces is a process, finished at a particular moment, but open in its shapebillity. That relates to Arendt's notion of action as an endless chain of activities. In fact, Arendt argues that our interventions in the public realm make the world inhabitable in the sense of appearance. However, to discuss terms such as freedom or plurality within the public may seem complicated because each of the participants enters the public realm with different expectations not only about public space itself but also about what those values mean for them and so "given this plurality of perspectives and projects, it may well be wondered how public agreement is possible at all" (Mensch 2007, 36).

Ideas about "the accessible public space" in its tangible and intangible layers thus differ. For that reason, I will add to that discussion arguments by Judith Butler, who opens a question concerning not only public life but also a sustainable life within the context of public and private. Butler seeks to distinguish between maintaining an individual and a collective valuable life in their writing. What I find to be their central point related to an Arendtian discussion about public and private is concern that while we might take care of our homes, decorate our apartments, and keep our flats clean and liveable, we often do not put the same effort into public spaces. It is easier to imagine how a good private life should be arranged in terms of material conditions like having a house, car, etc., but also in the sense of intangible things like having a good relationship, a good job, etc. But are we also capable of projecting this sense of care for our private lives into our deliberations about good public life?

1.7 Public is and is not about you

Considering Butler's question, Arendt's idea of plurality and public freedom highlights how crucial it is to realise oneself in the context of the public. We may live a good private life but fail in the broader context of a public one. Some writers even try to outline the notion of public or the common good, such as Svetlana Hristova, who describes the common good as "the fuel in the motor of any concerted public action" (Hristova 2018, 35). Likewise, Mariusz Czepczyński (2018), in his essay "Civic Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities", refers to public spaces as "a primary public good, which is a basis of a well-functioning civic society" (p. 65). He is also aware, like Arendt, that public spaces hold important values that play a role in the construction of society (p. 65). Butler is aware of the fluid concept of a good life, but to narrow it down, they propose not to define the notion of the good life itself but to find the basis on which one evaluates her or his life, such as moral conduct in relation to other human

beings, the role of politics and power and social configurations of life, “we might even say that the quest for the good life is the quest for the right form of politics” (Butler 2015a, 195). What Butler articulates is, for me, an essential question of the necessity of public spaces and their suitability for all living beings.

> My life is this life, lived here, in the spatio-temporal horizon established by my body, but it is also out there, implicated in other living processes of which I am but one. Further, it is implicated in the power differentials that decide whose life matters more, and whose life matters less, whose life becomes a paradigm for all living things, and whose life is a non-life within the contemporary terms that govern the value of living beings (Butler 2015a, 199).

During my research in Luhačovice, it was demanding to observe whether the lack of a sense of a public and common world plays any role in the relations between the local inhabitants. The feeling of loneliness and alienation was not only ubiquitous when referring to the public realm but also regarding the space of appearance. Between all the spa guests and underpaid labourers working in the spa services, it was hard to find someone willing to step out and appear to others. However, on the very last day of my stay, I found one woman who lived in a small apartment building with an open public backyard, and she told me a story of her effort to start a community garden in this town. The worst enemies to deal with were not bad soil or the drought but her neighbours -- those who did not notice the existence of public spaces until the garden appeared. They observed the growing garden from behind their apartment windows with a great dose of suspicion. Some of them even expressed their negative attitude verbally. Despite that, the founder of the garden, which was meant to be open to everyone, continued to plant pumpkins the same as the germs of community seeds. Within this ungrateful role, the absence of sense for common appeared in the fear of the unknown. As a result of alienation from public space, this seemingly trivial activity was a subject of control, not only from the municipality but also from the other inhabitants. In that sense, the community garden effort can be read not only as a form of resistance but also as a platform for cooperation, which echoes Sennett’s ideas. “As for resistance, so for cooperation - the place where people who differ might cooperate-in seemingly trivial activities such as managing a garden allotment or a playground - are shrinking as they become ever more subject to formalized rules” (Sennett 2017, 264).

We use the public space as a way of communicating with each other. Habermas pinpoints an essential but underestimated part of public space, which is the exchange of ideas, actions, etc. “Not the persuasion or invasiveness, this public is not a space of viewers or

listeners but an arena in which speakers and interlocutors exchange questions and answers“ (Habermas 2021,105). On that account, he argues that we should not confuse the public with publicity. Appearance is not meant to be a competition, and although, according to Arendt, to take action is to reveal “who you are,” it does not mean undoubtedly that the action has to be about oneself. Public appearance is something that transcends oneself and has a great impact on the lives of others, and theoretically, we are never alienated from the public; we are formed by it, whether consciously or unconsciously. The encounter teaches one the art of compromise in the points of our overlapping interests. As Mensch writes: “As the ‘art of compromise,’ it is the way we deal with the excessive-quality of our others. Uncover the areas of overlap which is the basis for further discussion” (Mensch 2007, 36).

1.8 If not in my backyard, then where?

The city is a unique place in that it concentrates the private and the public in the same geographical area. These two realms intertwine not only in terms of material essence but also in the lived experience. Sometimes we could not be sure if we attended public or private places. This uncertainty is also projected into our doubts about how we should behave in this place and what this place (and the presence of others) will allow us. As Butler suggests, we also hold different positions or relations to places in our private possessions that somehow influence our private lives. Proprietary inclinations and the associated application of different ways of conduct and efforts get a more concrete shape within the unofficial movement labelled as Not in My Backyard. The abbreviation NIMBY designates a person who “objects to the siting of something perceived as unpleasant or hazardous in their own neighbourhood, especially while raising no such objections to similar developments elsewhere” (Sypnowich, 2020). I perceive this phenomenon as a great example on which values carried by the public and private intangible realm could be observed. The core of the following paragraphs is erected around the Christine Sypnowich article “In Defence of Nimbyism” (2020), the main aim of which is to reveal that preserving our closest surroundings does not have to be a selfish statement. Rather, as I claim, it can also bear a positive note towards our perception of the common world, as Hannah Arendt advocates.

For most people, Sypnowich claims, the Not In My Backyard carries a negative connotation for apparent reasons. NIMBY are usually called selfish, irrational, or unfair because they tend to preserve only their closest environment. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of

Philosophy mentions the NIMBYs phenomena in the section on Civil Disobedience and proposes a connection with selfishness by stating that “some scholars highlight the pervasiveness of self-interested civil disobedience – of the ‘not in my backyard’ variety (e.g., people protesting against a new highway passing through their neighbourhood) – as a challenge to the supposed conscientiousness of all civil disobedience” (Delmas, Candice and Kimberley Brownlee, 2021).

Not in My Backyard, therefore, bears a certain ambiguity within, which means that the whole phenomenon could be perceived either from a negative or positive approach. The former describes NIMBY as a “pejorative term, especially in the world of urban planning, where it is used to discredit opponents to a project, portraying them as ignorant, irrational, hypocritical, selfish or unfair” (Sypnowich, 2020) and the later portrays it in brighter colours. “Yet those accused of NIMBYism are often in the right. Sometimes, the people whose backyard is at stake are best placed to see the value in preserving it – not just its value to them, but its intrinsic value. The problem of NIMBYism, then, can shed light on the complex relationship between justice and our connection to place” (Sypnowich, 2020). This discrepancy reveals different interests and motivations for our public appearance, namely the profit and self-interest on the one hand and the sense of commonality and feelings for a certain place on the other.

As evident from the title of her article, Sypnowich advocates in favour of NIMBY and tries to purge this term from negative connotations solely. She claims that this act does not have to be always related to a private possession; on the contrary, it is usually a neighbour’s and thus collective activity, which does not promote only a private interest but helps to articulate one's standpoint for all it may concern. On the other hand, she is aware that for some individuals, the motivation to act could be based on private interests. However, rather than promoting self-interest, she sees this inconsistent phenomenon as a tool for communication with each other and the time and effort one has to invest in it. “Of course, communities that rise to protest development projects may include individuals who are worried about the property value of their homes and motivated by economic self-interest. But getting involved in a campaign to save your neighbourhood is not easy. It costs considerable time and effort and can entail the sacrifice of a number of other important personal interests“ (Sypnowich, 2020). The private interests, which can be perceived as a negative input into the discussion concerning the shared common world, may, according to Sypnowich, play only the role of a trigger, which enables one to achieve a collective agreement that may further

affect a wider society. “Neighbourhood activists create social capital, forge alliances with other community groups, and hold municipalities to account” (Sypnowich, 2020).

The relations that are at stake are twofold. First of all, our affiliation with a certain place, sometimes called “topophilia” – love of place – was coined by geographers to evoke the importance of people’s connections to specific locations, to which they are bound by memories, experiences, relations, etc. The second reason is the relation with other users, consumers of that certain place. Sypnowich contends that local knowledge and, therefore, the broader view that offers a complete picture of costs and benefits for a certain place is a benefit of this phenomenon. However, she sees that emotion and lack of expertise may lead to short-term solutions. Assessing the benefits and handicaps makes one ask, as de Certeau proposes (see Chapter 4), whether those who claim to be experts or represent the state, developers, etc., are always right. While evaluating the consequences of NIMBY, one should not forget the motivation of those who are responsible for the planning, which is a point that would strengthen Sypnowich’s argument, although she does not take it into account. Nonetheless, she examines the public good in light of private interests. In addition to Butler's point, Sypnowich asks whether what is referred to as the public good is meant to be good for everyone. Or, as Butler highlights, “whose life becomes a paradigm for all living things” (Butler 2015a, 199).

Sypnowich defines the public good as a general state when no one should be harmed or oppressed. Arendt claims that the public good is found only in the common world, which we all share. However, she does not deny that it may not correlate to one's private interests.

> The "public good," the concerns of the citizens, is indeed the common good because it is localized in the world which we have in common without owning it. Quite frequently, it will be antagonistic to whatever we may deem good to ourselves in our private existence. The reckless pursuit of private interests in the public-political sphere is as ruinous for the public good as the arrogant attempts of governments to regulate the private lives of their citizens are ruinous for private happiness (PRPI, 104).

Likewise, Mariusz Czepczyński defines public good as the balance between positive and negative rights in the manner that public good should be equally distributed among individuals. “Public good as a good which all enjoy in common in the sense that each individual's consumption of such a good leads to no subtraction from any other individual's consumption of that good” (Czepczyński 2018, 66). Butler, on the other hand, does not ask about the public good but rather digs deeper into the notion of a good life to which the public good is part. Within the idea of the good life, they refer to the “relationship between morality,

ethics more broadly, and social and economic theory" (Butler 2015a, 194). Later, they question what living means, or life itself, on which account they ask how public life could be a good life (for me) when it is not something I solely control and lead.

> My life must appear to me as something I might lead, something that does not just lead me. And yet it is clear that I cannot 'lead' all aspects of the living organism that I am, even though I am compelled to ask: how might I lead my life? How does one lead a life when not all life processes that make up a life can be led, or when only certain aspects of a life can be directed or formed in a deliberate or reflective way, and others clearly not? (Butler 2015a, 196)

Whereas public good or good life have been considered as terms with quite wide ranges of understanding, we may also ask if those labelled as NIMBY may be those who are protecting the public good, in contrast to the statement that NIMBY are those who are selfish and acting only in favour of their private interests. Also, as aligned with Butler, they might be considered as someone who is trying to lead or control their own life. "They are often trying to preserve their shared way of life and place, a common good of some kind, which is at risk in such cases as, for example, a toxic dump that threatens residents' health, or a highway expansion that would destroy a natural habitat" (Sypnowich, 2020). In that sense, Synpnowich argues that "NIMBY are "stewards" of the valuable features of a place" (Sypnowich, 2020). Also, according to Czepczyński, NIMBY can be read as people who feel that the public good is taken from them (i.e., it is unequally distributed).

This positive angle of view, as advocated by Sypnowich, highlights the necessity of our attachment to space and also our ability to cooperate and feel for others; however, it does not mean that those whom we label as NIMBY are always doing so for the reasons as described above. In fact, there are many cases in which certain neighbourhood communities banished another one which was not that loud or visible or lacked the financial resources to do so. One of the examples a field sociologist researcher told me is about the wealthy community in one of the Prague housing estates, which decided to remove all the benches from their backyard to stop young people from spending their free time in that area. Sypnowich, in her article, also speculated upon different ways of possible exclusion from a place and community instead of promoting plurality and the common world. Is the motivation of that which is good for me must also be good for others the key to our understanding of NIMBY?

Recently I found myself as a person who could also be labelled as a part of NIMBY, which surprised me. I live in a small, relatively quiet part of town, where people know (at least partly) each other and their habits. There are a lot of old villas and one housing estate,

which includes a brutalist old building, which used to be a casino and bar; however, this place has been empty for a long time. Recently, the situation has changed. The new owner transformed it into a discount store with groceries, toys, and tacky accessories. Unfortunately, these stores are often followed by aggressive visual pollution. And it was no different in this case. As an outcome of this transition, three-quarters of the old building, which I have a direct view of from my desk, was covered by a bright magenta banner announcing the best prices in town. As a proper NIMBY person, I decided to alarm all the people in the neighbourhood who may have been affected and therefore feel the same way as I do. Some of them replied to my request, which was a paper including my email address and a brief description of my attitude that I put into post-boxes in the closest neighbourhood. On that account, I addressed the prompt letter to the Department of Public Property in our town hall. After one year, the banner is still in its place. Still, partly based on my complaint, the Department of Architecture has started (at least) to think about the integrated graphic manual, which would regulate the visual pollution in the city. Of course, I felt proud, but other thoughts and feelings also crossed my mind while I started to dig deeper into my intentions. What led me towards this movement? Would I have invested the same effort and time into that struggle if the banner had been placed in a different city district? The answer is, unsurprisingly, no. But should I feel selfish and wrong that I do not protest every visual pollution in my hometown? On that, my answer would be, again, no. Hence, my act may be perceived by others as twofold.

a) as a selfish decision to acquire back my window view,

b) as an act in which I advocated on behalf of what I think is a public good.

At the end of the day, the two options do not necessarily exclude each other.

As a part of the common world, I advocate for myself the same as I do for others. The general NIMBY accusation of being selfish may have been, from my own experience, one of the least stimulating acts towards the potential active citizens. To step out of the private realm into the public is not a matter of fact for everyone. It relates to a fragile revelation of our who-ness. However, in this small community such as the neighbourhood, our action is connected with an area we are already related to; we use it daily and share it with others. Acquisition of selfish NIMBY does not always have to be the correct way to deal with this phenomenon, although it could be driven by personal interest. Conserving our place may be a good start for an engagement with citizenship, not only an act of selfishness. The sense of understanding in the small-scale problem serves as a springboard for better understanding a particular issue (like protecting the environment or caring about public spaces). Therefore I

perceive it as short-sighted to make an *a priori* negative statement towards those whom we label as NIMBY because they are not only defending what is their own but also planting their sense for a common in the garden of neighbours' activities to understand better what the common world means in a global scale.[5]

1.9 Who owns public spaces?

The question I outlined at the beginning of this chapter – what does it mean to treat public spaces as public - acquires new meaning after implementing Arendt's distinctions between public and private, as well as the rise of the social and importance of the common world. First, we have a notion of public space as a place common to others, defined by its material essence. Secondly, we have the word 'public' itself, which is a phenomenon characterised by the presence of others and by sharing certain values and interests (and that, in the ideal case, should be in Arendt's thoughts plurality, freedom, and togetherness).

Arendt's central point, which highlights the common world, is that we live in a world, which all share without the necessity of owning it, the same as in her metaphor of the table we are sitting around. Thus, within this chapter, I evaluated the question of ownership in light of the common world within two different cases, the spa town Luhačovice and Not In My Back Yard. The former states how our notion of public is rooted in the perception of the common, dependent on the necessity of having public spaces. On the contrary, the second case stems from the protection of material space but exceeds it into the cultivation of our sense of the common world. Both cases, in line with Arendt's thoughts, state the mutual conditionality between spatiality (emphasising public spaces) and the sense of the public as something active that must be rehearsed and maintained. Both examples emphasise the importance of active agency, in the case of Luhačovice, action in the form of stepping out and becoming visible, for instance, as a founder of the community garden. In the case of NIMBY, action in the sense of engagement with others as the call for action.

[5] As one of the examples of our understanding of the common may serve the anthropological documentary movie *The Year In The Field: The Work of Anthropology* (2020), in which Joonas Plaan examines the impact of climate change on the small community living in Newfoundland fishing village. While on the global scale, understanding this phenomenon is hard for them, its local impact happens to be more visible and, therefore, more understandable for a community, which account makes them act in order to regulate the pollution. In that sense, we are far from stating that those people act purely on behalf of their self-interest (to protect themselves only). Still, the small-scale actions are way more easily understandable, creating a better environment for the call to action.

Arendt's ideas concerning the common world and plurality relate to Judith Butler's advocating for myself as part of others while not denying my uniqueness. Navigating within plurality leads Butler to ask questions about good public life or, rather, whose life should be the measure of it. To defend where the public good is based on in the stated cases, one can say that according to Arendt, the example of Luhačovice violated her description of the public as a necessary part of the human condition. Therefore, the public good is lacking because it is hidden within the private interests of business entrepreneurs. Within the case of NIMBY, the situation becomes more complicated because NIMBY is not a specific category but only a label placed by others. The defence of NIMBY resonates with Sartre's standpoint that "when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men" (Sartre 2007, 23). While taking responsibility for the space, which is not solely mine, one sets up role models for others and, therefore, becomes responsible for the whole of humanity. This statement does not deal with the cause of NIMBY (e.g. do not investigate whether they are done from selfishness, which, as I stated within my example, different motivations do not exclude each other), but it reveals its effect towards the whole of humankind. The important lesson that I see within the distinction between public and private in light of the public space is therefore imprinted into the fact that public spaces teach one how to think in general, not only in personal terms.

As Arendt writes, we are driven by "self-interests, which are always more urgent than the common good" (PRPI 105), but "the main characteristic of the common with respect to the individuals who share it is that it is much more permanent than the life of any one individual" (PRPI 105). Therefore, the answer to the question of how public is public space is that public spaces are as public as individuals are capable of engaging with them as a flagship of the common world.

Not only does this chapter reveal what the public in public spaces stands for, but it also states why it is so desperately needed. I highlight the necessity of public spaces not only in our daily lives but also in a life that transcends us. I advocate here for durability, plurality, and togetherness. In this manner, I follow Arendt's distinctions to reveal how fragile and vulnerable those terms could be, not only in her time, but I claim that they continue to play a crucial role in our current life as well.

What connects the philosophical insights of Judith Butler and Hannah Arendt with my deliberation about public space is an attitude which is embodied within the idea of adapting the notion of public spaces as that table to which we all belong and in light of which we are

all neighbours and therefore equal agents of what matters. Nonetheless, as Arendt proposes, "when we talk about equality, we must always ask what equalizes us" (PRPI 105).

CHAPTER 2. PUBLIC AS A NEW BEGINNING

According to Arendt, our ability to act, to start something new, and to become visible to others depends partly on the built environment. Her attitude towards public spaces follows the political track of connection between public and political; however, she reveals the political not only in relation to the built environment, much like Foucault's or de Certeau's thoughts as presented in the next chapter, but within the presence of others. Arendt refers mainly to the sphere of intangible places and spaces formed by actions. Following her distinctions enables me to distinguish between two essential conditions of public spaces - a distinction between having a place in its material sense and appearing, by which she means to reveal oneself. Bernard Debarbieux writes: "Arendt gives much importance to the spatial dimension of human condition, she mainly casts her attention, especially in *The Human Condition* on how places and spaces are arranged according to the requirements of each type of human activity" (Debarbieux 2017, 359).

2.1 Arendt and Spatiality

The first step is to dig deeper into Arendt's rich vocabulary on spatiality, in which she uses different terms to describe public spaces and life within them. Arendt distinguishes between several notions, such as space of appearance, public realm, the common world or public spaces. For her, anchoring human actions to a space is important as a base on which political actions could grow. She often refers to the fact that having a place to appear is necessary and vice versa. "The force that keeps them together, as distinguished from the space of appearances in which they gather and the power which keeps this public space in existence" (HC 244). Or, as Bernard Debarbieux stresses in his essay "Hannah Arendt's Spatial Thinking: An Introduction" (2017), "human beings 'take place' in a bio-physical setting, in natural space, and interact with/in it through experience" (p. 35).

The relationship between the space of appearance and the public realm is crucial for this thesis. For Arendt, the former has symbolic meaning and is created by the presence of others, which is distinct from the latter, which relates to the built structure of a city and depends on the various forms of power relations. The space of appearance is considered to be a contingent space for action. It provides men with the power or capacity to appear. It is a

basis for our political action; in that manner, it has to be protected as highly delicate. “This form of spatiality is fundamentally political, contextual and fragile” (Debarbieux 2017, 355).

On the other hand, the public realm serves as a form for the content of action and speech. It is ubiquitous, organised, durable, and created or/and shaped by man and their work. As Arendt writes:

> The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitutions of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized (HC 199).

The space of appearance depends on the presence of others and is relevant to Arendt “as the context shared by individuals living in a common world made of a multiplicity of appearances” (Debarbieux 2017, 355). According to Debarbieux, who did extensive research on Arendt’s understanding of spatiality, her definition of the space of appearance stems from a phenomenological perspective, which underlines the importance of the diversity of positions and points of view in the building of the common world with the same set of material things (p. 355). Debarbieux points out that the space of appearance is the most original and discussed concept of Arendt's spatial terminology that gives men the power to act.

However, the situation gets more blurred with the notion of public spaces. Arendt applies this term when discussing different actions that space should accommodate. She refers to public spaces as places “where this plurality gives way to action” (Arendt 1968, 30) and “where what is said can be heard by others” (Debarbieux 2017, 358). According to Arendt, public spaces should secure equality, plurality, and togetherness. Those are three fundamental values from which Arendt builds up a scaffolding, holding, and securing the construction of public spaces.

To dig deeper into Arendt’s ideas about public spaces, I suggest using a metaphor of theatre, which she very often applies as well. While comparing public spaces to theatrical stages, one reveals that, for Arendt, public spaces consist of the space of appearance (speech and action, the realm of actions) and the public realm as a possible scenography or stage for our action. However, on closer examination, one can see that scenography is always in the shadow of actors. Although Arendt does not deny the material essence of a space, in her thoughts, the space is never entirely (or only) materialised, and her ideas lean to the intangible sphere of values, interests, and human relations, which belong to the sphere of

acting, revealing, and appearing. The mutual relationship between the space of appearance and the public realm is revealed within this comparison. As Marieke Borren suggests: “The space of appearances takes a place analogous to the stage, since action and speech need an artificial environment which allows individuals to show themselves to others” (Borren 2010, 164). To make the vocabulary clear, within this chapter, I use Arendt's spatial terminology in the following way. The public realm in the sense of a built environment (square, park, etc.), the space of appearance as an intangible space consisting of action, and finally, public spaces as an intersection of those two categories, therefore, following Borren’s interpretation as a whole concept of theatrical performance.

What appears on the stage of the public realm, Arendt values a new beginning deeply rooted in her notion of natality. For her, natality is a connection between her spatial and political theory. Natality is an act connected with a new beginning and an act that inserts individuals into the world of public and politics. As D’Entreves argues, for Arendt, natality is rooted in the fact that “each birth represents a new beginning and the introduction of novelty in the world” (Passerin d’Entrèves 1994, 66). Novelty then appears within the stage of public spaces. Arendt’s view is “inspired directly by the political nature of the attic drama, one of the fundamental institutions of Greek democracy” (Zappulla 2011, 112). As Borren writes, she projects the play into her “concept of action and speech itself” (Borren 2010, 164). Within the theatre metaphor, she refers to an intangible essence of space as a part of the action. “Political praxis is spectacular, and like a play produces no tangible products” (Borren 2010, 164). What comes out is not forwarded by hands but only by words. Finally, the comparison to theatre also reveals the necessity of others, which is crucial for Arendt. “There simply is no such thing as a performance without being watched and without interaction“ (Borren 2010, 164).

This metaphor in which public spaces are compared with theatrical stages is plausible when one would like to dig deeper into the role of public spaces in our lives and understand Arendt's perception of the city itself. While writing about the city, she refers to a Greek polis, which is not strictly rooted in its physical form, but its essence is found at the symbolic level as a space of appearance in its broadest sense. “Wherever you go, you will be a polis” (HC 198). The city, with its origins in the Greek polis in Arendt's view, is thus inseparable from its inhabitants. As a matter of fact, it is created by its inhabitants, by their actions and speech, and hence requires the presence of others. The polis is, for Arendt, a romantic vision and idea anchored to reality by the presence of others. This predicts the fragility of human affairs and reveals us as a conditioned being.

> For Arendt, the polis as well as the state territory are mainly common worlds, anchored in phenomenological and praxeological ontologies, and their material aspect – 'an agglomeration of houses' or 'a piece of land' – is nothing more than a basis or instrument for their institutionalization (Debarbieux 2017, 359).

Within actions and speech, the space of appearance could be easily revived in the same manner as it could disappear. Yet, Arendt focuses on a particular act, which allows us to reveal ourselves to others to start something new without straightforward emphasis on the already built environment (in the manner, what kind of a stage we need to appear). I highlight this as one of the central distinctions between her attitude and the standpoints of Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault, which are discussed in the following chapters. For de Certeau and Foucault, the built environment plays a crucial role in the tasks of power distribution. De Certeau advocates a conditioned relation between our behaviour and the space one lives in, while Foucault describes the genesis of a town within a power spatial disposition. There is no reason to consider Foucault's and de Certeau's argumentation as opposite to Arendt's since she argues that men are conditioned beings not only in relation to each other but also in relation to the world itself. We live within a net of interactions which are mutually intertwined. Arendt is also clear that this is valid conversely - human beings and their activities could shape the environment. Thus, in this very close relationship, every action matters for all and could have an unexpected influence.

On the other hand, her emphasis is based on the intangible level of space which public spaces comprise. She highlights the novelty which can be revealed within and the presence of others as a starting point for our actions and speech. The structure of the city is thus beyond her scope, yet she does not deny or diminish its existence. However, Arendt is particularly interested in the space created by relations and actions. For that purpose, I choose to implement a different set of examples to work with in this chapter, some of which are not connected with a specific built environment but use public spaces as a stage where one might appear. To understand Arendt's spatial deliberation, further discussion of her political concepts, namely natality and action, is required.

Therefore, within this chapter, I will discuss Arendt's terms of natality and action, as presented in *The Human Condition* and anchor them in public spaces. Arendt is asking what it means to do something as opposed to thinking. For her, public spaces are the places for doing, appearing, revealing and acting, and in that manner, they play an essential role in human lives. In the following parts, I will elaborate on the nature of our actions and their

possible consequences. First, I will focus on natality as a new beginning and notion in which action is ontologically rooted.

2.2 Natality

To be born is significant for Arendt in an optimistic mode as opposed to Heidegger's notion of death and mortality. For Arendt, it is the past (that we were born) that influences our present and future activities rather than a vision of death, which we also have in common. To be born, to be created, is almost equal to being gifted. Arendt introduces novelty not in the sense of producing new things but in the sense of inserting novelty - revealing ourselves (Arendt 1960, 286). The awareness that we all come to this world in the same way and have the same origin, so to speak, makes Arendt believe that a solid base exists for humanity**.** As Karin Fry writes: “Focusing on natality suggests that individual action is important and earthly events are significant. Connected to her concepts of political action and plurality, natality is at the heart of Arendt's theory of politics” (Fry 2014, 23).

Being born brings faith and hope, two crucial “characteristics for human existence which Greek antiquity ignored altogether” (HC 247). For that, Arendt draws her attention to Christian thinker Saint Augustine (354-430), who builds up his theory on love and new beginnings. Within the spirit of faith and hope, Arendt claims that men are not “born in order to die, but in order to begin” (HC 247). To be born onto the stage of the world, to begin, is, for her, a central motive of political theory, which stands in opposition to the notion of death as a vicarious symbol of disappearance. For Arendt, natality does not represent the meaning of giving birth as a biological process but more likely refers to an ontological condition of appearance, the possibility of being visible through our actions and speech.

In using a specific term, such as natality, in its symbolic sense, Arendt could not avoid the risk of comparison with the different meanings of this concept. For example, Adriana Cavarero points to the fact that Arendt misses biological and theological aspects of the notion of natality itself. “Arendt (…) never dedicated herself to a deep analysis of natality, either from the point of view of biological life or from the theological and creationistic perspective of Augustine. Natality, for her, is a fundamental category, but one she never accounts for with precision” (Cavarero 2014, 16).

According to the charitable description of Arendt, natality as a new beginning could bring, for example, a promise or forgiveness into public since we are born twice. The first birth she mentions is the coming into this world, and the second relates to our political

actions and appearance to others when one becomes a citizen and reveals oneself in the stage of the public space. Cavarero, in her article "A child has been born onto us" (2014), aptly points out the distinction between these two-fold ways of birth as outlined by Arendt when she describes the newborn as the "sole protagonist" (p. 18), who comes alone to this world within the private realm. On the other hand, Arendt points out that in the second birth, which is how we become citizens, the presence of others and the public realm play a crucial role. Another significant difference I would like to address relates to the body and speech. Arendt claims that the "articulation of our natality is action" (HC 246). However, action, according to Arendt, requires speech. She draws from Aristotle's standpoint because speech distinguishes us from animals. In any case, I would claim that when one is born into the world, they are a speechless sole protagonist, while when becoming a citizen and revealing to others, speech could be one of the main tools. These minor concerns reveal natality as far from being a narrow and precise concept; more likely, for Arendt, it serves as an umbrella metaphor, which presents our capacity to begin. Therefore, natality, as described by Arendt, only seems to have symbolic importance in the fact that we can begin rather than be born in its biological sense. As Caravero argues: "In *The Human Condition,* 'birth' and 'beginning' are recurring terms used almost interchangeably, but it is symptomatically the latter that decides the hermeneutic productivity of the former" (Cavarero 2014, 19).

We are beginners when we reveal ourselves to others, but we can never predict the consequences of our appearance. "This beginning is not the same as the beginning of the world; it is not the beginning of something but of somebody, who is a beginner himself" (HC 177). The beginner brings novelty to the world because every single person is a unique being. On that point, Cavarero points to Saint Augustine and his notion of the biblical creation of man as the primary source for Arendt while defining natality. Cavarero brings up the creation of Adam and Eve as a case of appearance and plurality, two facts that are crucial for Arendt when defining the term of action. Two persons, different from each other, appeared to each other as a base for plurality. In this reference, the symbolic meaning of Arendt's term of natality gains even greater importance because Adam, like Eve, "is the only human who was never born" (Cavarero 2014, 22) but has been created.

To sum up, I read Arendt's notion of natality as a metaphor for new beginnings and an open concept that is fruitful for observing the space of appearance. However, to do so, I claim, it needs to be more precise to serve as a springboard for study cases. For that, I abstract three terms connected with natality – action, invisibility, and the role of a body, which I see as necessary to re-evaluate in light of public spaces.

According to Arendt, action is our capacity to appear within the public realm and start something new and unexpected. For this chapter, I will dig deeper into what our possible action could bring to the public spaces. After exploring the notion of action as a fact we are capable of appearing and revealing who we are, I will ask what happens if we remain invisible, not by avoiding action but by not being heard and recognised by others. Thus, with the second point, I will consider the notion of invisibility, which is, as I claim, rooted in plurality and mutual dependency, or as Arendt calls it, humans as conditioned beings. The third issue I see strongly anchored within the notion of natality is the missing concept of a body, which could be perceived in the symbolic and biological reading of natality and is valid for both the newborn and the mother. I assume that being born (both in the biological sense and on the symbolic level of appearance) requires speech and a body. The notion of the body links natality and action, which Arendt more or less does not reflect in her work. On that point, I argue that bodily acts are essential for actions within public spaces.

2.3 Action

In its most general sense, to act means to "take an initiative to begin, to set something in motion" (HC 177). Action is a central term for Arendt's philosophy, which is rooted in natality. She directly connects natality and (political) action in her book *The Human Condition.* "Of all parts of the active life (labor, work, and action), political action is most connected to initiating something new, and that capacity is the result of natality, or the fact that humans are born with untold potential" (Fry 2014, 30).

Robaszkiewicz and Weinman make an important distinction to help readers understand action by introducing action within the context of thinking. Action and thinking belong, according to them, in "different worlds of experience", but they do not exclude each other; rather, they are "different modes of being active" (2023, 39). What distinguishes them is that thinking does not need space or the presence of others. Contrary to action, thinking is one's removal from the world. Also, Robaszkiewicz and Weinman point towards another distinction when they describe thinking as engaged with the general and action as concerned with particulars (2023, 36-37). Arendt, in *The Life of The Mind* (1981), reveals one more important contrast between thinking and acting through morality and values as she states that "for the thinker himself this moral side effect is a marginal affair. And thinking as such does society little good (…) It does not create values" (Arendt 1981, 192).

Additionally, what distinguishes action from other parts of the human condition is that it is the only thing that does not need mediation because it goes directly between men. Only men are capable of action, states Arendt. Action is for her more than a mere pointing out that someone is hungry or thirsty. By acting, men are able to reveal themselves. That disclosure is, according to Arendt, an answer to a question: "Who are you?" (HC 178) This self-reflective awareness differs from a question that seeks to understand the origin of men in general. (i.e., What is a man regarding his qualities, which they can share with others).

> In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world, while their physical identities appear without any activity of their own in the unique shape of the body and sound of the voice [...]. This disclosure of 'who' in contradistinction to 'what' somebody is – his qualities, gifts, talents, and shortcomings, which he may display or hide – is implicit in everything somebody says and does (HC179).

Since Arendt is concerned with individuals in relation to others, I see a certain form of personal engagement there. In this personal manner, the unique and the new are born into public space. As outlined in the case of Adam and Eve, two unique beings represent plurality, distinction, and equality. In that sense, according to Arendt, humans are equal in the capacity to act. She based this assumption on the notion of continuity. If men were not equal, the world could not be sustained. The line of continuity is mirrored in the past, present, and future and is based on equality and understanding. People not only understand the language but the signs as well, which is revealed within speech and action, "those are the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men" (HC 176). Therefore, our actions are not defined by physical presence but by setting our bodies into motion.

Arendt values the faculty of action as the highest. She claims that we can live without work and labor (or there could be someone to do it for us); however, with respect to an action, we (as individuals) are irreplaceable. Words and deeds connect us with the world and make us a part of it. Being born into the world of plurality and togetherness is a stage which provides one with new abilities. The naked individual body is inserted into an intricate relationship with others. According to Arendt, that act is voluntary and not conditioned by any particular need. Public spaces are realms of freedom, not places of necessity.

To anchor action within public spaces, the presence of others is needed because humans can reveal their potential through action only to others. Therefore, action only exists in this relation and not as an independent and self-sustained standpoint. The novelty and

unexpectedness of it are rooted within plurality. One's action is an actualisation of plurality revealed within public space, and Arendt compares it to birth in a manner of novelty that birth brings into a world. Public spaces are birthplaces of action, and as Arendt aptly points out, cities serve as their conservation through the words and memory of others.

Another important condition of action is speech. To understand why words play such an essential role for Arendt, we have to examine the origin of this argument. Within this point, Arendt draws from Aristotle's argument that words distinguish us from animals. And as mentioned above, action is assigned solely to a man. What is even more crucial for her is that we are capable of storytelling and preserving our deeds into stories due to words. "No other human performance requires speech to the same extent as an action" (HC 179). Within action, speech is not a mere means of communication, but it helps one to disclose oneself to others. Arendt also distinguishes between speech and "sign language" (HC 179), which, according to her, could never reach such a personal level as speech itself. When Arendt highlights the uniqueness and personality of a speech, she does not seem to consider the fact of a possible misunderstanding as, for example, Richard Sennett does. He claims that "speech is full of misunderstandings, ambiguities, unmeant suggestions and unspoken desires (...)" (Sennett 2018, 190), which stems from the fact that we are not copies but unique beings. Comparing those two different attitudes reveals that, for Arendt, the action does not lie in its consequences, to which the interpretation of speech belongs, but her concept is observed from the position of those who reveal themselves and appear as a persona on the stage of public spaces.

2.3.1 The silent action - The role of speech and symbols

To examine Arendt's theory in light of public spaces, I will describe one powerful example of an action that took place within public spaces, namely the Old Town Square in Prague, during the pandemic in March 2021. In this case, I am particularly interested in two points concerning action: the revealing of the "who" and the role of speech.

The number of deaths in the Czech Republic in 2021 radically increased within several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Czech newspapers were filled with headlines about congested morgues and dead bodies waiting in the school halls to be cremated. I have never experienced a feeling like this. The sense of death was ubiquitous. In the middle of all the loss and misery, voices asking for a person to blame appeared. People wanted to know who was responsible for these deaths. Of course, no one took the

responsibility on their own. As time passed, the dead bodies became mere numbers flashing on the side panel of a TV screen, and the members of the government continued to blame each other without any respect for those who lost their lives during the pandemic. In the end, several speeches were publicly addressed without sufficient responses. Everyone seemed tired of speaking since the COVID crisis had been dealt with as empty words without satisfactory results. During those uncertain times, people lost their trust in words.

The peak of the crisis was in March 2021, when the number of deaths reached the number of twenty-five thousand. Not only do I remember this number, but I also remember the date as well; it was the 22nd of March 2021. And it is not because I would have such an eidetic memory but because someone had decided to act after such a long period of silence and blaming others.

The activists from the organisation called Million Moments for Democracy drew twenty-five thousand white crosses with chalk in the early morning on the Old Town Square, which is situated in the centre of the Czech capital, Prague. Each cross symbolised the death of one Czech citizen who lost their life due to COVID-19. Hundreds of volunteers were involved in preparing for this event. The action was reported to police in advance, and washable chalk was used to maintain the cleanliness of the square afterwards. Those people who were only present in our lives as abstract numbers suddenly appeared in the form of small and countable white crosses. The whole action bears a symbolic dimension, which could be formulated as remembering death through the action of being born again, from the TV's flashing numbers, which were hard to imagine or fathom, to countable small crosses on the square, which one could easily approach and visualise.

Thus, what can we acquire from this example in the light of an action as described by Arendt? I aim to reveal several points concerning the role of language, temporality, and the role of actor and spectator. Purposefully, I chose an action in which the concepts described by Arendt became more blurred. In a way, we might even speculate whether this happening could be counted as an action at all. In conclusion, some modifications to Arendt's description of action, which stems from ancient Greece, must be made to understand better how action occurs in current times.

The first crucial condition is, for Arendt, the role of speech in the context of revealing who I am. Within this case, the agents remain silent. However, the white crosses as agents of sign language turned out to be more powerful than a thousand words in those uncertain times when people lost their ability to listen. On the other hand, one could not deny the role of speech within the act described above. The happening was described and presented in public

and to the media, and several statements were written to explain the importance of it. I assume Arendt is correct in saying that words perform the more personal statement. Sign language simplifies our thoughts (as an acting agent and as receiver) to certain objects (the white crosses in this case); however, within public spaces, the widely shared signs could have the same valuable impact as the most personal speech.

Arendt's vision of public spaces and their importance stems from an ancient Greek tradition where public spaces served as discussion platforms. On the other hand, she aptly points out that during certain times, speech becomes "mere talk" (HC 180). This happens when human togetherness is lost, and those who disclose themselves do so to pursue their interests or to argue with their enemies. Speech is, in this way, closely related to the task of the "who". In this case, when there is no "who" behind the action, the novelty and uniqueness of the disclosure are lost. It seems that Arendt's attitude towards anonymity, as opposed to togetherness, is cautious. "You designate as modern social phenomena the uprooting and loneliness of the masses and the triumph of a type of human being who finds satisfaction in the process of mere labor and consumption" (Arendt 2005, 20). She worries that the "who" becomes dissolved in the water of anonymity. Still, in the context of public spaces, I suggest that the Arendtian notion of action should be transformed and re-evaluated in the following way. What is necessary is to diminish "a shining brightness we once called glory, and which is possible only in the public realm" (HC 180) and draw our attention not only towards actors, "the who", but towards the act itself as a process of appearance, not only a particular person or people but also the act bearing a concrete message to the public. Although it seems contradictory to advocate for an individual hero and yet highlight the togetherness and our relation to the common world, Arendt made a point while stressing the fact that the world of individual heroes (plural) would be the world of togetherness, where the glory would be re-melted within its participants. As Loidolt writes: "For Arendt, this fundamental concern is human existence in the plural" (Loidolt 2018, 19). Heroes need others, just as public spaces need the public to fulfil their goals.

In her defence of the necessity to know "who", Arendt draws an interesting point. She claims that "action without an attached name and a "who", is meaningless, whereas "an artwork retains its relevance whether or not we know the master's name" (HC 180-181). Right away, she refers to the statues of the "Unknown Soldiers" (HC 181), which massively appeared after the First World War within public spaces, and she argues that there exists a need to reveal the "who" behind the word unknown.

> I bear testimony to the then still existing need for glorification, for finding a who, an identifiable somebody whom four years of mass slaughter should have revealed. The frustration of this wish and the unwillingness to resign oneself to the brutal fact that the agent of the war was actually nobody inspired the erection of the monuments to the unknown, to all those whom the war had failed to make known and had robbed thereby, not of their achievement but their human dignity (HC 181).

Hence, in the former example, concerning the art piece in general, Arendt points to the role of an author or artist, which she considers as not necessary; however, within the latter, she refers to the name of the soldier(s), which she sees as crucial. In her example, the soldier is the person who appeared and should be remembered, not the artist behind the artwork. Concerning her numerous references to theatrical examples, I argue that the role of a director/writer recedes into the background at the expense of the actor(s). The answer to why it is so is found in another important part of action, which, according to Arendt, is the presence of others. To reveal oneself, the first part of the given definition of action could succeed only when the second part of action, the presence of others, is also fulfilled. Only by revealing oneself to others is the action complete. The second birth is thus a fully public event when one is born into the world of others. In that manner, Arendt's notion of action seems almost like a ritual exercise of our human condition, which aims to break a mass of anonymity with a shining bright appearance. Unlike in the theatre, with action, the agent stands on his own and, therefore, is not representing someone else.

I am myself. Here. Within the presence of others. I appear. I am not a mean but an end itself. To follow the metaphor of theatrical performance, we must remember to stress another essential part of action: spontaneity. As all those who have ever visited theatre know, the space is set in advance; the scene is divided between actors and audience; however, within the notion of action, those boundaries do not exist. One could not buy a ticket in advance or reserve their seats.

Regarding the white crosses example, it is somewhat unclear who the actor is and who appears during the action. The crosses were made by hundreds of volunteers in the early morning without the presence of others. So, what appeared to morning walkers was twenty-five thousand small crosses. Thus, the question is, when the role of the director, or in this case, the organiser of the happening, was excluded from the notion of "who", can we consider the anonymous cross themselves as actors? Is this like the case of the monuments to the unknown soldiers? The missing notion of "who" could prevent us from labelling the white crosse in the town hall square of Prague as an action at all. However, what happened later that day changed the whole situation.

As more and more people appeared, the crosses were given the real names of those who lost their lives due to COVID-19. Suddenly, the "unknowns" were revealed and became a "who". They did not appear only as the name on the pathway, but personal messages (for a beloved daddy, etc.) were also written next to the crosses. So, while the numbers counting the COVID-related deaths were anonymous, they were subsequently visualised in the form of small countable crosses. In the end, those crosses acquired meaning through other people's participation.

When we value action for its novelty and capability of setting things into motion, I claim that this example has stated two points. The first is action as a never-ending process, which leads me to the second point of the blurred boundaries between those who appear and the others. The idea of blurred boundaries has been brought to me by Michael Arad as a mutual relevance of the who-ness which stems from his experience of 9/11. "Yet afterwards (9/11), it suddenly felt as if there were no strangers; we were all in it together. When we reveal our who-ness through grief - we can be unified since we know who we are" (Arad 2017, 107). The whole action did not remain as a "single vision or voice of a privileged designer, quite the contrary, it appeared as multiple voices of people most affected by that event" (Arad 125).

Action as an unpredictable and never-ending process is, for Arendt, connected with the fact that everyone is unique, and it is in their capacity to start something new, something which is unexpected and brings novelty into this world. She believes that with this unexpected capacity, our actions can change the world through one's appearance. This miracle, as she calls the fact that we came to this world, produces unpredictability in both directions. One could never be sure what appears our way; the result of action is insecure. Action is thus continuously shaped and bound to plurality and is conditioned by the presence of others. In this manner, the comparison with theatre is relevant because theatre creates an original experience (one could see Hamlet a thousand times, but it will always be unique). Theatrical plays are, in the sense of perception, never the same, not only depending on the actors' various performances but also on the audience's various responses. In that respect, action blurs boundaries between those who appear/act and those in the role of an audience.

The event in Prague revealed multiple levels of action as an ongoing process. Symbols of white crosses appeared as a controlled act; however afterwards, names were given to the anonymous crosses by others, by the spectators, whose name, unlike those represented by white crosses, remained unknown. In response to the connection between natality and action, we must ask, who was born then? The miracle of the new beginning, of

becoming a citizen, does not leave any tangible traces; on the contrary, it supports the role of intangible reality, which Arendt labels as a "web of human relationships" (HC 183) comprising of the fact that "men live together" (HC 184).

On the other hand, unlike birth, one's actions could be deliberately chosen. However, action is still conditioned by the historical continuum into which one was born. On that account, I claim that the second birth belongs not only to the stage of appearance or the realm of actors but also to the spectators, who could be born through the actions of others. What I see as an advantage of action is that it erases the boundaries in this theatrical metaphor and opens up a whole space to the public. To be caught within the web of human relationships fabricated from constantly "conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose" (HC 184). I assume that this so-called purpose could be better found in the fact of spectators being born through action, as Robaszkiewicz and Weinman (2023) state: "There is a need to be someone to make a beginning and there must be people who do not merely follow but much more co-act" (p. 18). If only that assumption is fulfilled, I consider the action has achieved its purpose.

In contrast to art, for example, action belongs to the category of intangible process whose impact is difficult to measure or categorise. It happens in the present; however, it is saved for the future in stories, some of which could be inscribed within art, such as monuments, books, etc. In that moment, the agent loses control over their action, which could be bent and retold differently. Arendt states that the nature of action differs from its outcome as conservation or preservation in a story. In action, there is no "invisible hand or actor behind the scenes" (HC 185-186) compared to stories (or theatre plays) connected with certain authorship. The key to action, among others, lies for Arendt in its novelty, same as spontaneity and unpredictability. Arendt is interested in creating conditions in which freedom can appear. She focuses on moments when things become visible. However, visibility as a part of public spaces "may raise stronger conflicts and contestation issues than commercial amenities. This suggests that "being visible in public space is strongly related to practical and political issues" (Sezer 2019, 226). Arendt's view is focused on the necessity of "who" and the fact that we all have equal opportunities concerning action. We are all equal in that we can start an action. What is then particularly interesting in Arendt's approach is not the role of consequences because actions are unpredictable; rather, it is the trigger point where we reveal ourselves in our purist version while remaining in relation to others. Using Arendt's optics to dig deeper into real examples within public spaces enables me to focus on different points within those acts, which are more connected with an individual (the who) and their

appearance. In that sense, the action is only "the beginning made by the initiator or the guide, which can be only one person or a handful of individuals, and completion in which several actors can participate by carrying or completing the action" (Sang Ong-Van-Cung 2013).

As described above, action may have been considered an umbrella concept for most activities within public spaces. Therefore, its vagueness might be its strength; while applying a different angle of view towards how the actions are created and considered as an engine of our public life, but it also bears certain weaknesses. Arendt states that we have an equal right to appear. But I must ask - do we have the same so-called right to be recognised and heard by others? To describe action and our appearance as a political act, one does not have to demand only recognition from politicians but recognition from others. As Erik Swyngedouw states: "The political therefore is not about expressing demands to the elites to rectify inequalities or unfreedoms, the daily choreography of interest and conflict intermediation in public policy arrangements, or a call on "the state" to undertake action, but, in contrast, it is demanded to be counted, named and recognised theatrically and publicly staged by those "that do not count" (Swyngedouw 2017, 53).

2.4 Cease to exist: The public realm, space of appearance and invisibility

Within concepts of natality and action, Arendt clearly distinguishes between appearance and disappearance. She refers to natality as a matter of appearance, of being born into the world of others; on the other hand, she sees disappearance with the notion of death. Jeffrey Goldfarb emphasises the relevance of this distinction. "For her, appearances are realities, and that which does not appear is politically insignificant" (Goldfarb 2007, 14).
Nonetheless, Arendt does not pay the same attention to invisibility, which I consider a liminal state between natality and death and between appearance and disappearance. For that reason, I see it as necessary to explore invisibility in public spaces because I claim that many people suffer from being invisible. Based on the chapter, 'Public as an Active Agency,' I will defend the right to have a public life in light of the right to be recognised and and to have control over one's life, based on Judith Butler's arguments introduced in the previous chapter.

Ceren Sezer states: "Being visible in public space as a way of contributing to public life can be related to the rights of being in the streets, to use them in certain ways and to invest them with a sense of community" (Sezer 2019, 222). Sezer, who relates invisibility to the spatial integration of immigrants, sees visibility as "a key feature of public spaces, which can promote civility in the public realm in the sense of mutual respect and recognition among

different urban groups without neglecting differences" (p. 224). As the previous chapter highlighted the relationship between built and lived environments, Sezer refers to amenities and the possibility of shaping or re-designing the space to adjust it to a specific need. On the other hand, Butler sees invisibility in the Arendtian light of appearance. I read Butler's notion of recognition as an extension of Arendt's emphasis on visibility and appearance, and I argue that these two approaches complement each other in a discussion centred around public spaces.

Additionally, Francis Fukuyama's argument based on his book *Identita: volání po důstojnosti a politika resentimentu* (2019), published initially as *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (2014) provides me with connections between invisibility, recognition, and dignity, which are also crucial for Arendt. Fukuyama claims that a lack of dignity may cause worse damage than a lack of material resources (Fukuyama 2019, 85). To build up his argument, Fukuyama refers to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), in which the main character illustrates how invisibility is not only about being mistreated but not being counted equally as a citizen due to their race in the United States.

By extension, for Fukuyma, invisibility is the position in which one lacks recognition and dignity. As a current example of invisibility, he uses the example of a homeless person asking for money. The key is not whether they will be given any change but whether others will recognise them by looking into their eyes and honouring their dignity (Fukuyama 2019, 86). During my stay in New York, I met a homeless person on the street begging for money while holding a cartoon board with a sign – 'I think I might be invisible', which felt like a very powerful demonstration of Fukuyama's thoughts. The invisibility gains a new dimension when the invisible person acknowledges their condition. I see that case as a valuable example in which someone appears but remains unrecognised and, therefore, invisible.

2.4.1 Invisibility

Within this section, I explore invisibility in relation to action. Arendt herself does not straightforwardly address this notion; rather, in the book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1964), she uses terms such as superfluous, the stateless, and holes of oblivion, which she draws from her own experience as a Jewish person, who lost her citizenship, and who does not belong to any political community anymore. She elaborates upon the fact that the Second World War "made hundreds of thousands of human beings homeless, stateless, outlawed and unwanted, while millions of human beings were made economically superfluous and socially

burdensome by unemployment" (Arendt 1964, 447). But before that experience, Arendt, in her letter addressed to Martin Heidegger, describes a feeling of not being recognised even if the person sees you in a memory that has haunted her since childhood. Once, her mother pretended, in a playful manner, that she did not recognise her, although little Arendt stood beside her. This painful feeling Arendt depicts in this way: "I still vividly recall the blind terror with which I kept crying, but I am your child, I am your Hannah…"(Arendt and Heidegger 2004, 51). Although Arendt experienced that feeling to the bone, she does not reflect it in her academic work.

Jana Marlene Mader claims that when one becomes superfluous and "therefore outlawed" (Mader 2020), one is considered a dangerous element that does not belong and thus lives within the state of liminality. What is essential for this liminal state of being is not having any place in its material sense. On the other hand, Judith Butler, in their essay "We the People"-Thoughts on Freedom of Assembly" (2015*),* extends this liminal state of being to those who do not necessarily lose a place where they can appear but to those, who have lost their voice in order to be recognised and evaluated as citizens (Butler 2015c, 187). In another essay, "Gender Politics and the Right to Appear" (2015), they ask "who can be seen, heard, and recognized" as a call for a paradigm of visibility (Butler 2015b, 41). In the book *Frames of War* (2009), they pose a question: what allows life to become visible in its precariousness and its need for shelter, and what keeps us from seeing or understanding certain lives this way? (Butler 2009, 51)

Aligned with Butler, Weinman and Robaszkiewicz (2023) point towards the fact stemming from Arendt's inspiration in the ancient polis. As they write:

> that action is only possible among equals. And then as now, our communities consist of those who belong, who are equals, and those who are, to different extents, seen and treated as unequal. As Arendt acknowledges, the Athenian democracy insisted on the equality of those who belong to the people and its institutions, all the while accepting as an absolute and necessary fact that most people neither were nor could be equal to the equals, and such 'unequal'—especially women, foreigners, and slaves—would secure means of existence for everyone, while the privileged could use their 'leisure time" for political activity (p. 141).

Additionally, Sharon Zukin connects visibility to practical and political issues, like sharing space and accepting and recognising diversity. (Zukin 1995, viii) Putting aside the thoughts of Butler, who works on this topic quite extensively, and Arendt, who draws from her own refugee experience, enables me to reveal another layer of public spaces: invisibility and the state of liminal being.

Arendt claims that “men *are* free—as distinguished from their possessing the gift for freedom—as long as they act, neither before nor after; for to be free and to act are the same“ (WF 151). Or “the new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and their probability (…) the new therefore always appears as a miracle” (HC 178). Closely aligned with her concept of the second birth, the action appears as a miracle in which freedom and new beginnings can be found, but whether they are sustained does not depend on those who act. While Arendt focuses strictly on the concept of action itself, other philosophers started to dig deeper into the possible consequences of:

a) taking action and appearing

b) taking action but remaining invisible and unrecognised

What possible consequences stem from taking action as a crucial part of the human condition but not being heard? And more importantly, how might this shape our understanding of public spaces as places of appearance? Another task is whether we could even refer to an action when we are not heard by others. However, as I already mentioned, Arendt is interested in action as appearing and beginning, but I claim one needs to pay more attention to its consequences. In that way, I consider not being heard as a consequence of action, which does not deny the essence of action itself. The critical point is to appear to others and reveal who we are. As Borren contends: “Fundamentally, to act, in contradistinction to laboring, working and behaving, means displaying oneself in the public sphere, through words and deeds and subsequently being seen and heard by others” (Borren 2010, 165).

Those questions gain more urgency because public spaces, in its general sense, as contrasted to the private realm, as Arendt claims, are constituted by our actions. “(...) action not only has the most intimate relationship to the public part of the world common to us all but is the one activity which constitutes it“ (HC 198). To acknowledge this, one assumes that there exists the risk of exclusion from the common world by not taking action or by not being heard or seen while trying to appear to others. In this thesis, I focus on the latter because it bears the threat of letting others speak/appear for us when our voices are not heard, and we become invisible to others.

As argued earlier, for Arendt, action is strongly connected with speech because we reveal who we are through action and speech. However, it seems that Arendt herself does not consider why (or if) some voices are prior to others. On that account, I choose to involve Butler in this discussion because they thoughtfully elaborate on the connection between invisibility and its consequences for constructing our understanding of public spaces. Butler

describes a situation prior to someone's appearance through discourse, which speaks to us even before someone else does. Influenced by Levinas, Butler defends why some voices are heard and others are not, based on the assumption that we are first spoken to before speaking. “More generally, discourse makes an ethical claim upon us precisely because, prior to speaking, something is spoken to us. In a simple sense, and perhaps not quite as Levinas intended, we are first spoken to, addressed, by an Other, before we assume language for ourselves“ (Butler 2004, 138).

While Arendt stresses that we are all equal in starting an action, Butler highlights that everyone does not have the same possibility to be seen and heard because words, thoughts, actions, etc, already cover the space one enters by one's own performance. This results in public invisibility, which is assigned to those whose voice is not publicly heard, although they are not denied to appear. I am not speaking about physical invisibility but what could be labelled as a denial of someone's existence, as described by Ong-Van-Cung: “to be part of this perspective, we must recognize that the public space is governed by frameworks that make possible or representable what can be visible, according to standards and objectives that are part of a political agenda” (Sang Ong-Van-Cung 2013). Similarly, Krzysztof Wodizcko writes: “The mere act of offering a podium, a lectern microphone, a megaphone or a cultural and political stage does not necessarily mean that these individuals will speak fearlessly or be heard“ (Wodiczko 2017, 146).

Implementing the notion of invisibility within Arendt's reflections on spatiality reveals a compelling distinction between the terms she uses, namely the public realm and space of appearance. Arendt describes our relation to a particular location as urgent, as something that partly defines us and plays a significant role in our identities' constitution. She writes about the threat of rootlessness, losing one's home or occupation, statelessness, and the earth and world alienation. Particularly in her essay “We Refugees” (1994) and the book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1964), Arendt describes the state of liminality when by losing our sense of belonging, we also lack social bonds, status, community, and things we previously took for granted. She refers to real, tangible places one can lose, like a home, and she reflects on the consequences of its possible loss. However, in the same way, she contemplates that we can lose the space of appearance, although it is not a tangible material space but a space created by our actions. In that sense, as outlined above, there is a difference between the public realm and the space of appearance. The public realm is a durable built environment, while the space of appearance is an intangible, non-permanent space created by our actions.

This distinction reveals a compelling paradox that can be spotted within public spaces concerning the question of invisibility. When we refer to someone as invisible, it is not caused by the impossibility of entering the public realm. We all (more or less) have the same access to enter[8] a street, a square or a park but what is at stake in the case of invisibility is the space of appearance created by one's action. On that account, Judith Butler points out that "the street cannot be taken for granted as the space of appearance, to use Hannah Arendt's phrase, the space of politics, since there is, as we know, a struggle to establish that very ground" (Butler 2016, 13). Only within this appearance are we capable of doing an action as an act of new beginning and change. But by not being heard, we are incapable of change or new beginnings, and thus, we are prevented from forming the discourse (Butler) or participating in the public part of the common world (Arendt). In that way, those who are invisible by not being heard cease to exist. They live within the liminality of being born and recognised as citizens. In one of her essays, "We Refugees" (initially published in 1943, re-published in 1994), Arendt describes the confusion after losing a political, legal, and social status. She claims that: "Man is a social animal and life is not easy for him when social bounds are cut off" (Arendt 1994, 116). What is problematic is that Arendt's version of humanity (becoming a citizen) is based on appearance, not class or gender; however, I claim that the right to appearance is not equal for everyone. "A man who lived only a private life, who like the slave was not permitted to enter the public realm, or like the barbarian had chosen not to establish such a realm, was not fully human" (HC 38).

What might be unclear is how (or whether) those two concepts, material space (as a public realm) and space of appearance (as a space created by action), relate to each other. I assume that although they differ in their definitions, they are not meant to be in opposition. On that account, I would agree with Butler when she writes,

> Arendt clearly presumes that the material conditions for gathering are separate from any particular space of appearance. But if politics is oriented toward the making and preserving of such conditions, then it seems that the space of appearance is not ever fully separable from questions of infrastructure and architecture (Butler 2016, 12).

[8] I refer to a current situation within Western democratic society. Of course, I can point to the situation in Afghanistan, where women were physically banned from the public realm when the Taliban took over and established a new non-democratic regime. Another example could be the inaccessibility of places by certain groups of people due to some material barriers, such as high curbs, which can prevent people in wheelchairs or parents with baby-carriage from access. However, for the purposes of my work, I consider it more fruitful to be concerned about the discrepancy between this intangible and tangible notion of space, as proposed by Arendt.

One needs a material space in which to appear, and in addition, to appear, we need the presence of others. All those clues lead to central points from which public spaces consist - built environments, actions, and the presence of others, which remain in constant tension to secure the plurality but also fulfil the togetherness. What I see as a problem within Arendt's writing is that she only partly reflects on the mutual relations of those elements. On the one hand, she frees herself from the material layer and describes the space of appearance as equally accessible to everyone by writing that we are all equal in that we are capable of action. "If men were not equal, they could neither understand each other and those who came before them nor plan for the future and foresee the needs of those who will come after them" (HC 175). On the other hand, she is aware of a built environment and its impact on one's life, as described by her experience of statelessness and loss of occupation. However, in the end, Arendt does not provide a satisfactory link between those two dimensions of space. She touches upon it in her book *Men in Dark Times* (1968), in which she introduces the function of the public realm as a place where things, which usually remain hidden in the darkness of privacy, are revealed and exposed in the light of the public.

> If it is the function of the public realm to throw light on the affairs of men by providing a space of appearances in which they can show in deed and word, for better and worse, who they are and what they can do, then darkness has come when this light is extinguished by "credibility gaps" and "invisible government," by speech that does not disclose what is but sweeps it under the carpet, by exhortations, moral and otherwise, that, under the pretext of upholding old truths, degrade all truth to meaningless triviality (Arendt 1968, 8).

In other words, the public realm creates the conditions for the space of appearance to happen, like a form ready to be filled with content. However, Arendt does not discuss the blueprint of the form; rather, she aims to reveal the intangible filling of the content. Her description mainly reflects on the definition of space as consisting of relations between the participants or, as Arendt writes, others. However, what I see as problematic with her approach and particularly visible in this case is aptly summarised by Weinman and Robaszkiewicz (2023) as follows: "Arendt was judging as herself, in the sense of trying to take as many perspectives as possible into consideration, but not stepping into someone else's shoes" (p. 180).

The notion of public, in general, is defined by principles and actions that take place in it and thus become visible to others, rather than the structure of a park or the number of benches in it, which may design out certain groups of people and thus prevent them from

appearing.[9] The advantage of Arendt's writing in light of public spaces, therefore, lies in the deep exploration of an intangible and rich world of mutual relations and concepts, which, according to her, do not necessarily relate to the material form, although they are placed within, but are also an inseparable part of the common world and public actions.

One of these elements is her understanding of plurality, which she sees as an engine for action since it is found in the presence of others. The other is her concept of conditionality, in which she mostly reflects upon the relationship between men but also the relations between men and space. I see plurality and conditionality as important concepts for expanding on action and invisibility. In the next section, I will defend the claim that we are not equally but mutually invisible with respect to action. To do so, I will use the concepts of plurality and conditionality outlined by Hannah Arendt. Also, I will work with the thoughts of Judith Butler since they directly responded to some points raised by Arendt. In the end, through a close discussion of invisibility, the distinction between the public realm and space of appearance is revealed and gains new importance.

2.4.2 Conditionality

According to Arendt, "men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence" (HC 9); by stating that, she means that the whole world is interdependent. Conditions also limit or constrain our existence. We are "earth-bound and world-inhabiting beings who are shaped and habituated by their environments" (Macready 2019). We live within a continuum of interactions which are mutually intertwined. We are shaped by others, just as we shape others. That also applies to an environment that human beings and their activities could modify. Thus, in this close relationship, every action matters for all and could have an unexpected impact. In light of action, the actor (the one who appears) and the spectator (the other) are mutually conditioned since a) they need each other to appear and b) they need to be seen and heard by each other. Also, as mentioned above, the public realm itself is a condition of action, a secure place where to appear. This place (in its material sense) could also be shaped by our actions and vice versa.

[9] Some of the specific examples are mentioned by Patricia Aelbrecht in the introduction to *Public Space Design and Social Cohesion: An International Comparison:* "The poor, the elderly, the teenagers, immigrant communities and the homeless are some of the user groups that are often left out of consideration or even designed out." (p.10).

The world is man-made in a twofold way; first, with respect to homo faber and the world of things, which were created by their work. Second, the intangible world consists of words and deeds. “The world in which the *vita activa* spends itself consists of things produced by human activities, but the things that owe their existence exclusively to men nevertheless constantly condition their human makers” (HC 9). Conditionality is not only ubiquitous between men but also between men and things with which they come into contact. It does not matter if men created them as an outcome of work or if their essence is natural. As Arendt writes: “In addition to the conditions under which life is given to man on earth, and partly out of them, men constantly create their own, self-made conditions, which, their human origin and their variability not-withstanding, possess the same conditioning power as natural things” (HC 9).

Arendt clarifies that what she refers to is not connected with human nature as a set of characteristics assigned to individuals. She elaborates on mutual ties, which is why whatever comes into the world becomes a part of our human condition. This conditionality, as described by Arendt, thus consists of unpredictability and interactions. It is a fluid and evolving process which could not be harboured in one simple fact. “This is why men, no matter what they do, are always conditioned beings” (HC 9). Arendt describes conditionality as a kind of power in the face of which we are partly powerless because we cannot foretell its consequences. Nonetheless, whether we like it or not, we are part of it. According to her, not being part of this state of conditionality is impossible even by leaving the earth for another planet, as Arendt refers to self-made conditionality:

> Neither labor nor work nor action, indeed, thought as we know it would then make sense any longer. Yet even these hypothetical wanderers from the earth would still be human; but the only statement we could make regarding their ‘nature’ is that they still are conditioned beings, even though their condition is now self-made to a considerable extent (HC 10).

That leaves little room for the abandonment of conditionality. On that account, Arendt asks in her essay “The Threat of Conformism” (1954) whether we are even aware of this mutual dependency on each other and the things surrounding us. Additionally, she sees conditionality within the framework of politics, in which man as a conditioned being is used for political purposes. “All the manifold experiments in modern science and politics to ‘condition’ man have no other aim than the transformation of human nature for the sake of society” (Arendt 1954, 440). Again, Arendt distinguishes between human nature (condition), which could be

transformed by certain political circumstances and human conditionality as a state that could not be changed (at least not permanently) due to its unpredictability.

Butler reflects on the unpredictability of conditionality throughout one's constitution. She claims that we can never fully understand ourselves because part of us is created by others. “(...) these ties constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us. It is not as if an ‘I’ exists independently over here and then simply loses a ‘you’ over there, especially if the attachment to ‘you’ is part of what composes who ‘I’ am” (Butler 2004, 22). On the other hand, Butler also elaborates, similarly to Arendt, on the role of mutual relations and bounds between I and others, which precedes our being and actions. “At the most intimate levels, we are social; we are comported toward a ‘you’; we are outside ourselves, constituted in cultural norms that precede and exceed us, given over to a set of cultural norms and a field of power that condition us fundamentally” (Butler 2004, 45).

What both Arendt and Butler have in common is a notion of unpredictability and mutual conditionality. Based on that, I assume we are mutually invisible within public spaces because our lives, actions, decisions, and consequences depend on each other. When Butler asks, “Who am I, without you?” (Butler 2004, 22), she reflects on visibility and invisibility in light of conditionality. To place the notion of action at the fore, we can extend this question to ‘Who am I - without you to see and listen to me?’ As Butler writes: “This fundamental dependency on anonymous others is not a condition that I can will away” (Butler 2004, xii). We are not entirely masters of our actions, and its primordial aim may have disappeared in an unpredictable outcome. Within conditionality as a fundamental part of action, as Arendt sees it, a key role is played by the plurality of others. Therefore, exploring the notion of plurality is the next step in uncovering the invisibility. Although we are mutually invisible with respect to conditionality, following the idea of plurality helps me to reveal the other part of my assumption, which is that we are not equally invisible.

2.4.3 Plurality

Arendt is interested in the common world, which is one that we all share. The common world enriches her spatial vocabulary about space, where the same things appear yet are recognised from different angles and observed from distinct positions.

> Under the conditions of a common world, reality is not guaranteed primarily by the ‘common nature’ of all men who constitute it, but rather by the fact that, differences of position and the

> resulting variety of perspectives notwithstanding, everybody is always concerned with the same object (HC 57–58).

The common world for Arendt consists of different positions and angles of view, which secure plurality. In that sense, spatiality refers to an intangible concept of space based on a phenomenological perception of the tangible sphere. The phenomenological approach is highlighted by Sophie Loidolt, who claims that "plurality is essentially more than a structure for Arendt. It is primarily a plurality of first-person perspectives that can be experienced as such in acting and speaking. Most likely owing to this subjective anchoring, plurality in Arendt is agonistic but not antagonistic" (Loidolt 2018, 153). According to Loidolt, plurality is not only a condition that allows different angles of view but also the fact that one can experience it. Plurality is not materialised, yet it relates to the public realm, where it appears and is a condition for an action.

By a plurality of individuals, Arendt means "a multiplicity of points of views and relative positions, which have to be shared and discussed for making possible common worlds" (Debarbieux 2017, 365). Arendt focuses on the fact that action is possible only within a condition of different views, since everyone brings their unique attitude within the public realm. To ground this claim, she uses a counter-example where actions and access to the public realms were denied in totalitarian regimes. Arendt, whose writing connects philosophical reflection with historical experience, highlights that the public realm, which secures the space of appearance, was destroyed during totalitarianism. Thus, plurality, which, according to her, secured democracy, was replaced by totality. "Plurality concerns the fact that all human beings are unique and different from one another, but also political equals" (Fry 2014, 30).

Politics, for Arendt, stems from the fact that although we have different perspectives, we can still communicate and share them with others. We all have the same possibility of appearing and being heard, which differs from being visible and thus being recognised. Arendt is criticised by Chantal Mouffe, who, contrary to Loidolt, argues that although Arendt "puts great emphasis on plurality and insists that politics deals with the community and the reciprocity of human beings who are different, she never acknowledges that this plurality is at the origin of antagonistic conflicts" (Mouffe 2017, 227). In that sense, Mouffe sees plurality as a base for our unequal condition of appearances.

Differences are not hidden in the diversity of our physical form but are more likely, visible in the input of our capacities, that "nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever

lived, lives, or will live" (HC 8). Those differences create tension within public life. As Debarbieux emphasises, the ideal model for Arendt is the Greek polis, "where the institutional and material shaping of spaces and places allowed individuals to hide in private realms and to appear to each other in public realms" (Debarbieux 2017, 365). Arendt's notion of plurality has to be secured by the fact that one has to have a place where plurality can appear. Thus, plurality is strongly connected with equal access to the public realm. "Relationships between men and the realm they constitute, springing simply from the fact of human plurality" (Arendt 1994, 360). However, I claim that the equal right to appear is distinct from the right to be equally recognised and thus to become visible to others, which is something that Arendt does not thoroughly reflect upon.

Arendt takes into consideration only two possibilities: a) "for what appears to all, this we call Being" and b) "whatever lacks this appearance comes and passes away like a dream, intimately and exclusively our own but without reality" (HC 199). She is right when she claims that we are all equally capable of action; however, the crucial point is that although we might have a place to appear, our voices have different weight and impact. Butler expands on Arendt's philosophy of plurality and conditioned being with her account of invisibility. According to Butler, the right to be heard and seen is not equal for every person, which generates an inevitable loneliness as a fertile ground for being invisible to others. Thus, I perceive our invisibility within public spaces as mutual, based on the fact of conditioned beings, but not as equal, based on plurality.

2.4.4 Recognition

As a part of our capacity to act, we are mutually invisible in the sense of reciprocal dependence; however, we are not equally invisible concerning our voices. Although we have a place to appear, we still need to be heard and recognised by others. Within Butler's approach, one already enters the public realm with certain expectations and from a specific position, at which point some voices could be diminished and marginalised. Butler argues that only some voices fit in, while others are prevented from appearing. "Lives are supported and maintained differently, and there are radically different ways in which human physical vulnerability is distributed across the globe" (Butler 2004, 32). Butler is interested in whether there are any voices that cannot be heard, whether there are people who are not visible and who lack the opportunity to find their (intangible) place within the common world, as Arendt refers to it. The common world relates people as conditioned beings but also separates them

with the presumption that every man is different. Likewise, Marieke Borren links plurality with temporality and fragility. “The temporal mode of plurality is fragility, more particularly irreversibility, unpredictability, and uncontrollability. Deeds and words run the risk of not even surviving their own performance” (Borren 2010, 65-66).

Plurality secures the preservation and transmission of stories, which are told by action. In that manner, action differs, for example, from statues or other public art placed within public spaces. The action lacks material durability and is associated with human activities as a process, not a product. Borren, in her dissertation, *Amor Mundi: Hannah Arendt's Political Phenomenology of World* (2010), aptly points to the fact that the space of action creates “the immaterial, intersubjective space of stories, opinions, judgments, relationships, etc” (p. 64), which in turn, are rooted in the “the conditions of plurality and natality (as) associated with the human activities of action and speech” (p. 64). However, only some are heard and remembered within this space of stories.

Judith Butler addresses the issue of visibility within the context of civic movements such as Black Lives Matter and Fridays for Future, which use public spaces to appear and be heard by others, inspire change, and start something new. She points out that the activist Greta Thunberg[10] could be used as an “example of individuals seeking to transform the value of their own lives” (Butler 2020).

For example, Black Lives Matter represents a civic movement active within public spaces with voices that had not been heard before and have gained increasing importance in the past few years. Hence, a closer look at these current civic movements could help us better understand the difference between the public realm and space of appearance, as well as the claim that we are mutually and unequally visible to each other. In my description, I withhold any political judgment or beliefs. In this case, the purpose is to trace the mechanism of action as “an initiative to begin, to set something in motion” (HC 177). This is a much broader concept connecting the usage of public spaces for action as a new beginning and as a birthplace of new identities. Among others, there is one more reason why I decided to follow Black Lives Matter (BLM) for further evaluation. Within the BLM movement, Judith Butler

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[10] see more on https://climateanalytics.org/blog/2020/black-lives-matter-the-link-between-climate-change-and-racial-justice/ or https://iai.tv/video/paul-mason-in-depth-interview-extinction-rebellion-protest-climate-change

points to the fact that people do not speak only for others but also for themselves, which is of crucial concern for the notion of action.[11]

> And for many who speak "Black Lives Matter" it is their own lives that are at stake, for historical and contemporary reasons black lives have been marginalized and portrayed as negligible. So, when they make use of the speech act, they are also speaking, and as speaking subjects, they are seeking to transform the value of their own lives or the lives of others who are in the same social condition of being devalued (Butler 2020).

Different civic movements use the built environment with the hope of being heard. Since 2013, when the BLM was officially established, thousands of protests and demonstrations have taken place within the public realm. By their actions, the members of this community reveal to others who they are and that their lives should also be counted. There should be no doubt that they lack access to the public realm as protests are occupying the streets, squares, etc. However, I claim they lack the space of appearance. In the context of action, we have to emphasise the notion of plurality and conditionality by enlarging the Arendtian question of 'Who am I?' to Butler's question, 'Who am I, without you?' As Butler writes: "I find that my very formation implicates the other in me, that my own foreignness to myself is, paradoxically, the source of my ethical connection with others. I am not fully known to myself, because part of what I am is the enigmatic traces of others" (Butler 2004, 46).

The method that both Arendt and Butler seem to adopt is harboured in highlighting the differences but not to reveal contrasts; on the contrary, they aim to find intersections. Those intersections should not only be about equal access to the public realm but also secure equal rights for the space of appearance and visibility to others.

> If black lives do not matter, then they are not really regarded as lives, since a life is supposed to matter. So, what we see is that some lives matter more than others, that some lives matter so much that they need to be protected at all costs, and that other lives matter less, or not at all (Butler and Yancy 2015).

This mechanism is common for most of the civic movements, claiming their voices to be heard and recognised as equal. BLM is the voice of those who have not been heard for a long time, those who suddenly appeared and, within their action, revealed who they are and that

[11] I found an interesting counter-example within an UNICEF video campaign for The United Nations children's fund. The girl, introduced as Stella, describes her life under a terrible condition in India, where she is forced to work in a clothing factory. Her talk ends by words, that this is not her story, but since no one would listen to those children who truly are behind this story, she (Stella) speaks for them.

their lives matter. However, neither the action nor the public realm secures our visibility. Action is only a tool or a way to appear. It is one small beginning in which the "new-born" lives its own life. However, whether this life will matter depends on others because "one is not born instead of others, but their birth takes place where nobody was before" (HC 178).

Conditionality binds us to others and makes us vulnerable. Plurality, on the other hand, secures different positions from which we enter public spaces. Within the different civic movements (BLM included) using public spaces to claim their right, the discrepancy between the space of appearance and the public realm may have been revealed. Using public spaces as a stage for our actions does not automatically secure the fact of being heard and seen. Although those kinds of action fulfil the notion of appearance, their consequences are not in the hands of those who appear, which is aligned with Arendt's thinking about action since the consequences do not play a major role in the action itself. However, it is worth pointing out that action only brings novelty while being recognised by others. At this point, I claim that appearance and recognition are two separate elements imprinted within the discussion of invisibility. To appear does not secure visibility; only while being recognised does one become visible in the sense of being capable of changing something through one's actions.

Public spaces play a major role in the process of revealing ourselves, as well as in the recognition of others. What is certain is that the public realm, in its material sense, is sustained. However, without action, for Arendt, the public realm remains only an empty realm. In this discrepancy between appearing and being recognised, I claim we have to ask about the presence of bodies as almost ubiquitous participants in public spaces. Although Arendt does not perceive the body as capable of action (to reveal who you are), I assume that corporeality is an equal part of public spaces, which should be explored from the standpoint of action.

2.5 (Why) should the body count as a part of action?

"[T]he body (...) is the only thing one could not share even if one wanted to. Nothing (...) is less common and less communicable, and therefore more securely shielded against the visibility and audibility of the public realm. Nothing (...) ejects one more radically from the world" (HC 112).

The final point I will draw with respect to natality is to explore the role of the body in light of action. The term ‘natality’ itself bears a strong corporeal significance connected with dependency and vulnerability, to which both mother and child are exposed. Following Arendt, we are born twice. First, as we come into this world and second, when we become citizens. This first birth is exclusively a corporeal act. What strikes me is that within the second birth of becoming a citizen, the notion of the body seems to disappear for Arendt. Contrary to that, I will defend the active presence of bodies as an equal contribution to public spaces since “without a body that we take time to nourish, care for, and cultivate, as subjects we would have no worldly reality” (Weinman and Robaszkiewicz 2023, 16). Although we may speak about the built environment and the space of appearance without mentioning corporeality, the body is nonetheless latently present in both. Therefore, what I see as problematic is that when focusing on action, Arendt does not consider the body as something that could play a role in revealing oneself to the public.

There are several ways to approach the role of the body within public spaces. The body may be a tool that helps us to explore the environment. When speaking about the built environment, bodies could be used as material, to create a living barrier or blockades (as in the case of demonstrations) or to express solidarity (like The Baltic Chain). Among others, the body is connected with a movement, as Judith Butler puts it with a “politics of mobility – what architectural supports have to be in place for each of us to exercise a certain freedom of movement, one that is necessary in order to exercise the right to public assembly” (Butler 2016, 19). With these examples, the body is more connected with the public realm and the built environment, which can either follow or resist. However, the centre of Arendt's action is not only the public realm but also the space of appearance. On that account, we have to ask whether and how the body could appear, become visible, and be recognised by others and how or whether the body could reveal “who” we are. To continue with Arendt's metaphor of theatre, I focus on different aspects of bodily appearance, which are not connected with our everyday practices, such as walking, but which exceed it. To do that, I will draw attention to the following questions:

How does the (conscious and purposeful) disclosure of our own body contribute to
a) understanding of action and
b) reveal who we are?

Understanding why Arendt does not perceive the body as an equal part of action could help one better grasp its role and highlight its importance within public spaces. My central assumption is that the corporeal act could bear the same significant importance as Arendt attributes to action: setting things into motion, bringing novelty, and revealing ourselves to others.

In the article "Locating the Body: Corporeality and Politics in Hannah Arendt", bodies are introduced as "important non-political sources" (Tambornino 1999, 181). The key to understanding the rejection or the lack of reflection on the body as a part of action lies in Arendt's distinction between public and private, where the body is a term assigned to labor and belongs in the private sphere. Arendt considers labor anti-political because "man is neither together with the world nor with other people, but alone with his body, facing the naked necessity to keep himself alive" (HC 212). The primary function of bodies is to maintain our life. Thus, on that account, Arendt assumes that bodies should be kept away from the public and political realm. Our speech and actions define political life, but the body never fully participates in it (Tambornino 1999, 176).

> Arendt assumes that the body contributes little to such inspiration and beginnings, an assumption repeated in her conception of the role of the body in the self, and the body's defining attributes - need, passion, desire, mood and feeling - in thinking and judging. Instead, selfhood and identity, thinking and judging, draw little from the body (Tambornino 1999, 182).

An important point to mention is that although Arendt advocates for the body as part of the private sphere, she generally does not perceive private and public as two opposite realms. On the contrary, she later introduces them as subsequent and intertwined phenomena. On that ground, I state that the biological (private) and acting body could not be divorced from the public one; therefore, public/political should be embodied as well. In her book *Life of the Mind* (1971), Arendt claims that "being and appearing coincide" (LoM 19). In other words, everything is meant to be visible to spectators. We are "beings" as part of a plurality. We are both subjects and objects, part of the private and public. "Living beings, men and animals, are not just in the world, they are of the world, and this precisely because they are subjects and objects - perceiving and being perceived at the same time" (LoM 20). In this manner, I claim that the body also belongs to the realm of appearance, to which Arendt assigns her notion of action. Also, what stems from this claim, and I assume it is necessary to bring it up, is that Arendt does not distinguish between body and mind; she speaks about the lived experience

and the role of our senses within our perception of the world.[12] The body is thus not a mere tomb or shell of our being, but it also contributes to it (LoM 20-21).

However, what seems to be an obstacle for Arendt is that she perceives the body as something universal, and, in this manner, it differs for her from action as an act which brings about novelty and spontaneity. According to Arendt, the body secures our main life functions but does not contribute to building our identities. She draws a line between behaviour as non-political, corporeal, and repetitive on the one hand and action as a spontaneous political act on the other. Above all, regarding the necessary bodily function, Arendt describes the notion of the body as a container/storage of emotions, needs, urges, etc. However, she distinguishes between emotions/needs/urges and their expression. The former inside of the body she assumes is universal, but the latter she perceives as unique. Two following quotes reveal the distinction between inner and its manifestation on the examples of sexual urge and anger.

> For example, Arendt explains, although the sexual urge, rooted in the reproductive organs, is basically the same across individuals, every manifestation of love is unique. This is her tendency to view bodies as largely homogeneous and undifferentiated, and consequently contributing little to individuality (Tambornino 2019, 183).

As Tamborino states, Arendt sees no difference in our inner urges, but what is interesting is its manifestation, as the second quote shows. I read this discrepancy again in light of her distinction of public and private. Whereas private remains hidden (as the basic urge in our body), the public is deliberately chosen, as Arendt says, to be visible.

> Every show of anger, as distinct from the anger I feel, already contains a reflection on it, and it is this reflection that gives the emotion the highly individualized form which is meaningful for all surface phenomena. To show one's anger is one form of self-presentation: I decide what is fit for appearance (LoM 31).

While defending the body and its contribution to action, I am interested in what this manifestation or expression of needs and emotions means for Arendt's perception of corporeal acts. Kazue Koishikawa, in the article "Arendt, The Body and The Self" (2014), claims that our emotions and bodily expressions are inseparable. However, she points out that "emotion without speech remains merely a bodily gesture. What makes a particular emotion

[12] This statement could be related to Merleau-Ponty, whom Arendt quotes when he argued that the lived body is not an object, "*je ne suis pas devant mon corps, je suis dans mon corps, ou plutôt je suis mon corps.* [I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather, I am it]" (Merleau-Ponty, 2010, 834 in (Des Portes 2022, 146)

uniquely mine and marks my individuality from yours is the expression of that emotion. Such expression is a deliberate choice as a result of thinking reflection, which involves speech" (Koishikawa). The expression of emotions, which may come out as shrugging shoulders or yawning, is thus lagged behind the speech as a mere bodily gesture. Koishikawa sees in Arendt's writing the connection between thinking and speech, as well as between emotions and body expressions. Body and emotions are assigned with the private sphere with the cycles of nature, and with causality, because thinking, speech and the public realm "cannot be reduced to the law of nature, i.e., the law of causality. If everything is explicable by causality, there is no room for human freedom, which by definition must be spontaneous" (Koishikawa).

In conclusion, Arendt tends to assign the body to the private realm. She perceives the body through the causality and natural cycles. Bodily gestures are, according to her, something which could hardly contribute to building our identity and helping to reveal who we are. She perceives a corporeal act as the opposite of thinking and speech as a part of the public and political realm, in which bodily expression does not play a significant role. As Arendt writes:

> The animal laborans, driven by the needs of its body, does not use this body freely as homo faber uses his hands, his primordial tools, which is why Plato suggested that laborers and slaves were not only subject to necessity and incapable of freedom but also unable to rule the "animal" part within them (HC 118).

To understand the body as part of action, we have to shift our perspective from the body as a tool, which only fulfils our needs and thus is driven by necessity, to the body as something that can bring novelty and set things into motion. As Edward S. Casey puts it "the enactive vehicle of being-in-place is the body" (Casey 2001, 687). We can thus distinguish different ways that our corporeal acts could be read within public spaces. I claim that one could reveal oneself and one's identity not only within speech but also within postures and corporeal performances. Butler's work, which enlarges Arendt's theory of appearance towards the corporeal act, can demonstrate this. What I see as particularly important is building our identities through corporeal action, something that Arendt does not stress but that Butler advocates for. Also, unlike Arendt, Butler perceives the body as a part of public and political life. The body could be used as a political agent, which I consider crucial when speaking about the way the body acts within public spaces. As Butler writes: "For the body to move, it must usually have a surface of some kind, and it must have at its disposal whatever technical

supports allow for movement to take place. So the pavement and the street are already to be understood as requirements of the body as it exercises its rights of mobility. No one moves without a supportive environment and set of technologies“ (Butler 2016, 15). Therefore, for Butler, the body is not only an instrument but also an agent capable of acting.

> The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine (Butler 2004, 26).

Within the claim that "my body is and is not mine," Butler assumes that through our bodies, one relates to one another but not only. She is also aware of the mutual dependency between our bodies and the built infrastructure as the institutional condition of our being. She highlights that all of these factors were present even before we appeared, either in the sense of a first or a second birth, as stated by Arendt. In this way, the body could never be excluded from the public realm since it is influenced by it from the very beginning. The question of the body (either in the sense of private or public) within the built environment is the one that has to be explored to understand corporeal action within public spaces. To do so, Butler outlines the relationship between infrastructure and body in the following way. The infrastructure for them serves as a kind of discourse, which creates certain expectations that the body should follow. "I have suggested that we rethink the relationship between the human body and infrastructure so that we might call into question the body as discrete, singular, and self-sufficient and I have proposed instead to understand embodiment as both performative and relational; relationality includes dependency on infrastructural conditions and legacies of discourse and institutional power that precede and condition our existence" (Butler 2016, 21).

When labelling the body as a public matter, Butler raises a question concerning expectations and anticipations as a part of the common world. She assumes that we have certain expectations of a corporeal appearance within public spaces and that we share different expectations depending on race, gender, or nationality. Those expectations play a major role in how our bodies act and condition our behaviour within public space. In private, we could behave according to our manner; however, within the public realm, we are bound by them. With respect to Arendt, she reframes the biological to a political and acting body. For Arendt, the body is part of the vita activa as opposed to *vita contemplativa* as the realm of eternity (Des Portes 2022, 143). The body has another role in the human condition (in *vita*

activa), namely the appearing body that “functions as a vehicle of the speech and deeds of political action” (Des Portes 2022, 145). Therefore, she does not see the body as capable of disclosure but only as a tool, which plays a significant role in this process.

In contrast, Butler states that the body could contribute to building our identities. In the next section, I evaluate those two statements in the case of a corporeal performance to support my claim of the body as an actor, not as a mere tool. In the following example, I explore how or if the perception of a performative body, in terms of action, can bring novelty into the public space. What remains important is the revelation of the ‘who’ within public space since there is “no evidence of Arendt’s embodied action or about the embodied-who” and that the “who-ness exists only in a specific space of appearance, where who someone can be disclosed to others” (Des Portes 2022, 147). Additionally, since Judith Butler focuses on the role of gender, I will also ask what role female performers play.

Understanding the body as a public phenomenon opens up many possibilities of interpretation, but the primary assumption is that the corporeal action could have the same influence and set things into motion in the same manner as speech. As Charles des Portes asks, can embodiment be a disclosure that reveals who instead of what? In that manner, des Portres claims that embodiment always brings something new that was not present within the public before and, therefore, secures novelty as something which is, according to Arendt, necessary when action is discussed (Des Portes 2022, 146). What I consider essential is that in this space, our bodies may appear prior to our speech. Thus, the point that I call to be re-evaluated is that, according to Arendt, the body is not enough for appearance, “although human beings are appearances by virtue of being born into a body, that is, a what, or natural man, they need a space of appearances in order to appear as citizens or who they are” (Borren 2010, 165). In other words, in Arendt's writings, public spaces are filled with anonymous bodies, following the pattern of the public realm. Those bodies stay unrecognised unless they reveal themselves in the manner of speech. To defend the role of the body and its influence within public space, I choose to involve one particular artist from the Czech Republic, whose performance I have witnessed several times and whose attitude towards the body is unique and perceived as controversial by the wider society. Her name is Káča Olivová and she is currently the Head of the New Media Department at Czech Academy of Fine Art.

2.5.1 Performative activism

Káča was born in 1984. She received her master's degree at the Atelier of Body Design at Brno University of Technology (CZ). From the beginning, her art focused on gender and the role of sexuality. She searches for a way to her body through nakedness. She describes the shape of her body as modern Venus, "it's soft, wonderful and big, I love it."[13] The body becomes an aim of public attention during her acts since all of her statements are corporeal. I clearly remember when I saw her for the first time. It was during a theatre festival held annually in my hometown. Her performance was planned around five o'clock when the town was crowded with people leaving work. In the middle of those rushing people, she appeared naked on the top of the stairs leading from the old square to a main street with a straightforward and self-confident gaze. This gesture drew many people's attention and made them stop. After that, she knelt on all fours and licked the stairs while slowly crawling down. During this, the first wave of the spontaneous audience left the performance. The rest had an opportunity to see much more. In the middle of her way down the stairs, she plopped down and started to pee in them. After that, she cleaned them with her spacious breasts. She took a few more bodily poses on her way back, bowed for those who remained, and her performance was over. Stairs remained clear, unlike the minds of the audience, who incomprehensibly shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders as a sign of incomprehension and confusion, and I am not afraid to say disgust as well. For most of the people, it was something new and very unexpected. This act is not the only one from Káča and her colleagues I have seen so far, but their narratives are mostly the same. Active bodies as agents liberated from the private realm, appearing in the public. Therefore, this corporeal performance offers a rich foundation for questioning Arendt's arguments concerning the body as assigned to the private realm and hardly contributing to novelty and uniqueness. Hence, together with Arendt and Butler's insights, I suggest beginning a journey of exploration about the role of who-ness and novelty within this particular example.

For Butler, the body within space first creates certain anticipation and is then exposed to vulnerability. The ambiguity is, for Butler, in the fact that within public spaces, the body is perceived from the liminal position between public and private. Butler refers to two distinct ways the body is perceived within space. The first way is in its materiality (which is similar to Arendt's biological body), and the second is as a social body, whose boundaries are

[13] Profile of the artist: https://www.artlist.cz/katerina-olivova-108635/

amorphised and ontologically rooted in its political meaning. The clash is evident within the given example. Káča's body appeared as private, naked, and biological, while at the same time, as public and political.

> If we make the matter individual, we can say that every single body has a certain right to food and shelter. Although we universalize in such a statement ("every" body has this right), we also particularize, understanding the body as discrete, as an individual matter, and that individual body is itself a norm of what the body is, and how it ought to be conceptualized) (Butler 2016, 15).

A similar dichotomy can be found in Arendt's deliberation about tangible and intangible. For her, the private body is tangible and material, while the action itself is immaterial. Also, the body is perishable, and our actions are immortal in their conservation (LoM 34). In this sense, despite the body being capable of appearing within a public space, it never could carry who-ness, only what-ness. While action depends on words, one must ask how our bodies are related to language. Butler claims that language is prior to our actions and thus forms our bodies and how we think about them. As she argues: "For if language acts upon us before we act, and continues acting in every instant in which we act, then we have to think about gender performativity first as "gender assignment" – all those ways in which we are, as it were, called a name, and gendered prior to understanding anything about how gender norms act upon and shape us, and prior to our capacity to reproduce those norms in ways that we might choose" (Butler 2016, 17).

Káča's performative example may serve as a springboard for discussing how the body, by its appearance, could resist and not only reproduce societal norms. In this so-called 'resistance', the body is not before language. However, it could rebuild and shape our understanding of norms maintained by it. Thus, I argue that the body could contribute to revealing who-ness as one of the main preconditions of action. Butler follows the aspect of language on the notion of gender and performativity. Moreover, they claim that our performativity (gestures, acts) serves as the basis for the construction of our gender. Thus, gestures and acts are not secondary features but play a primary role in the creation of gender.

Butler claims we are taught what it means to be a man or woman from a shared social construct, which, as they point out, could be changed by society. In "Performance Acts and gender constitution"(1988), Butler reflects on Simone de Beauvoir's argument about becoming a woman rather than being born one. We constitute our gender through various movements and acts, as well as the stylisation of our bodies. At the same time, we use bodily movements according to a predetermined framework in our everyday (repetitive) activities.

"The possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (Butler 1988, 520). What is thus the relation between performativity as our everyday activities and performance, as the one by Káča Olivová, as described above?

Performance (performative art) works like a theatre without a stage because the material barrier between the audience and the actors is gone. There is no curtain and usually no seats, so the strictly divided space between fiction and reality, stage and the auditorium, disappears, and the body becomes more vulnerable. The performance is forcefully exposed to the real world, where coincidence or direct interaction could play an important role. Performative art is an event that combines two aspects of human action, as described by Butler: theatrical acting and non-theatrical performativity. I claim that these two categories overlap in performance. Body performance stands in between theatre and gender social performativity, which is, in her sense, composed of gestures and bodily movements that appear as repetitive acts, almost like a ritual. What Káča's performance revealed to its audience was not an ordinary corporeal movement nor a well-prepared theatrical performance. To provide a comparison with Arendt's thought about the role of the speech, one could say that in the case of Káča, her act is not mere talk, nor is Hamlet speaking from a stage to his audience.

Public artistic performances transcend gender-based acting in non-theatrical contexts driven by specific social regulations, introducing something unexpected to the public. Actors themselves set up the context of their performance. In this manner, the performance also differs from the behaviour assigned by Arendt to the role of the body within public spaces. Performance also differs from theatrical acting, which, according to Butler, is less dangerous because we all know what we watch is fiction. In theatre, a naked lady peeing on the stairs would probably be perceived as something unusual. However, there are no strict mental or material borders between performers and the audience during a public performance. If performance is neither defined as theatre nor behaviour, should we consider it as action?

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, performance art is described as "a type of interdisciplinary, time-bound expression focusing attention on the artist's body and psyche" (Morgan 2007). The stage space is usually not precisely defined, just as the role of the audience is left open so that they might interact with the performance more expressively and spontaneously. Some audience members might not be aware that they are a part of a fictional act. As I stated in this study case, some people in the audience were passing through and became spectators only by chance. However, what about those who came to watch the

performance? They entered the world of fiction because they were aware that what would happen was not a part of everyday experience. However, I would argue that two aspects bring the art of performance closer to reality than to the world of drama and thus affect our perception of the act itself.

The first aspect is the presumption that performance artists commonly play themselves. Usually, there is no scenario or role-playing. In one interview, Káča Olivová claims that the act of performance is the way to present herself. This is the difference between an actor and a performer. "The glitters and the gold jumpsuit are part of me; it is not a costume. This makes me feel good and helps me to be myself" ("Ráda pracuju s trapností. Šokovat se ale nesnažím říká Kateřina Olivová nominovaná na cenu Jindřicha Chalupeckého." 2018). Although the word "play" is still used, one perceives the distinction between an actor playing Hamlet on stage and Káča playing herself in the public space. Performance art could thus be understood as engaging with social reality by using the unique realm of public spaces. So, what happens when we see a girl on the street acting with her body in a manner one is not used to? She takes up all the space she needs with her body. Her body rules/fulfils the space and appears as something unexpected, which springs from the distinction between theatre and performance, as mentioned above.

In her essay "Throwing Like a Girl" (1990), Iris Marion Young observes how a woman's body appears within a space. She is concerned about the space a woman's body takes for herself to fulfil an action. Her central assumption is that living within a patriarchal society is something that limits a women's movement (Young 1990, 31). She traced it from everyday activities, how females hold their bodies or how much space they take up in a tram or a bus. Additionally, Butler points to the fact that besides dependency on others (and their framework of expectation), our movements are also connected with the possibilities of a built environment, in which Butler also sees potential threats of gender-based limits. In her performance, Káča Olivová reflects upon all those points. She takes as much space as she needs. She presents the body in a new and unexpected way, and she appears not only in a unique corporeal shape but also reveals her body in action. However, according to Arendt, we must ask what this performance reveals about her as an individual and the disclosure of who she is. In my interpretation, Káča disrupts the realm of language and discourse with her own body.

Moreover, she opens up new possibilities for how to perceive a body within public space, primarily by attacking our expectations in a twofold way. First, she attacks the realm of our expectations to make distinctions between public and private concerning the role of the

body, which is close to Arendt's understanding. Secondly, Káča’s performance points to our expectations concerning gender, which I claim links to Butler’s interpretation. In both ways, the action was not lacking in novelty and uniqueness. Indeed, as Arendt writes:

> In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world, while their physical identities appear without any activity of their own in the unique shape of the body and sound of the voice. This disclosure of "who" in contradistinction to "what" somebody is—his qualities, gifts, talents, and short-comings, which he may display or hide—is implicit in everything somebody says and does (HC 179, my emphasis).

The body is always an inseparable part of action. However, in the case of Arendt, it is never the agent who would gain attention and set things into motion. Although she does not deny its unique shape, she points out that the body is revealed without any activity. The unique shape remains, even without taking action. On the other hand, a distinctive shape does not belong to the realm of our talents, gifts, or qualities. How can we assume who Káča is then? And did her act tell us more about her or us? There is one further point concerning action that needs to be evaluated, which is, as Butler calls it, the dual performativity in our body, whereby we are acting but also have been acted upon. This, for me, is an essential observation in the debate about public space appearances since it seems to be present under each layer of action. In my observation of action, I underline that actions not only reveal the who-ness of those who are acting but even more importantly, action reveals the who-ness of the audience.

2.5.2 The Who-ness of others

Butler raises the question of whether we can even consider actions as ours. Do we see ourselves as those who are acting but are not acted upon? As she writes: “I have suggested that we rethink the relationship between the human body and infrastructure so that we might call into question the body as discrete, singular, and self-sufficient, and I have proposed instead to understand embodiment as both performative and relational, where relationality includes dependency on infrastructural conditions and legacies of discourse and institutional power that precede and condition our existence“ (Butler 2016, 21). What is true for Arendt and Butler is that actions are not isolated moments. Instead, they exist in a certain continuum as described in the case of bodily performance or the case of the “white crosses happening”. Arendt states that one does not have control over the consequences of one’s actions. In contrast, Butler asks whether we can be sure that our initial disclosure is something we can

control. This fact reveals an essential discrepancy between Butler's and Arendt's views towards action. According to Butler, one could say that in the case of Káča Olivová, her performance was shocking and disclosed based on the audience's expectations, which were dashed during her act. However, from the standpoint of Arendt, Káča's action is liberated from the framework of expectations. She appears that way not to break expectations but rather to state who she is. This who-ness is not a mere presence. It is an active participation in which plurality has been actualised. In that way, I claim there is room to accommodate corporeal acts – not in the manner of behaviour or the consumption of space, nor in the manner of a theatrical performance, but through the actualisation of plurality. Arendt assumes that the 'who' is a precondition of being part of the political/public world, in which one can change things by its appearance. Becoming a citizen differs from being a family member or part of the football team. Action is a leap into the dark in the sense of unpredictability. Appearance is a moment in which the relevance of who-ness is a spark of the process, grounded in the present, secured by the presence of others. It sounds almost like an initiating process, which does not leave any tangible traces. But its importance lies in the assignment of individuals into the common world. In this way, Arendt's theory is unique concerning the public space because it highlights its essence in the sense of publicness and shared world.

In conclusion, this chapter aimed to explore liminal cases of actions and to compare them with the philosophical insights proposed by Hannah Arendt. The understanding of action helps us to enlarge our perception of the lived environment of public spaces based on mutual relations, freedom, and plurality. Arendt's theory is mainly based on dichotomies such as public and private, intangible and tangible, *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. However, the key to understanding Arendtian terms is not to handle them as opposites but rather to explore them as intersections, which naturally mingle and intertwine with each other, as components of the human condition, not as different stages of it. In the case of corporeal acts, the body branches out from the biological and private into public and political. From its material constitution, an intangible space of action grew and appeared to reveal its identity through movements, acts and postures. Living in the continuum of actions helps us understand its consequences and the action itself. Within appearance, one can not only reveal one's own identity but also offer a different perspective to others, which is the common point for Arendt and Butler.

Charles des Portres concludes his article "Hannah Arendt's Hidden Phenomenology of

the Body" (2021) in the following way: "While for Heidegger Befindlichkeit[14] was the finding of oneself to itself, for Arendt it is the *finding of oneself to others*" (Portres 2021, 151, my emphasis). I agree that revealing or finding oneself to others is the central part of action; however, in the cases I have discussed in conjunction with Butler, action is also about finding oneself through others.

This chapter uncovers the layers of action in relation to public spaces. It introduces Hannah Arendt as a thinker who advocates for public spaces as a part of the common world and flagships of plurality with the potential to reveal one's unique being. Arendt points to the fact that most of us fail "when we raise the question: And who are we?" (HC 11) And without "who," public spaces become only unidentified masses of mere talking and bodies. In the end, the theatrical metaphor can be helpful while observing the difference between the public realm and the space of appearance, however it might be misleading in the observation of who-ness. Within the framework of theatre performance, one can say that who is not only one who came to see the performance, neither the director nor the actor or character they embody, but on the other hand, it could be any of them if they appear to others and reveal who they are, no matter what their role is. Who-ness should not be a privilege only assigned to a certain group, as according to Arendt, we are all equal to act. To reveal who you are within public spaces breaks anonymity and creates togetherness, which Arendt emphasises.

In the 'white crosses' example, Black Lives Matter and Káča Olivová's performance, the individual(s) state who they are concerning others. The ones who lost their relatives, the ones who mourned, the ones who are not afraid to speak for their rights, the ones who fought for equality, the ones who loved their bodies, and the ones who wished that people could be more open and positive. There is novelty hidden in each of these actions; without them, the public spaces would become only places of unidentifiable mass, which is something that Arendt fears. The loss of our actions would lead to the loss of our uniqueness, which makes us part of the common world. According to my reading of Arendt, this is the latent danger hidden within public spaces. She does not draw any utopian or dystopian vision of the world; rather, she shifts her focus towards how, in the modern world, the rise of the social and private can be inscribed into our everyday lives and prevent us from actualising our pluralities.

[14] In *Being and Time*, the word *Befindlichkeit* that could be translated as mood or feeling goes against our traditional understanding of what feelings are (Portes 2021, 149).

CHAPTER 3. PUBLIC THROUGH THE LENS OF POWER

When Arendt thinks about public spaces, she perceives them primarily as spaces for our appearance, spaces where we, as citizens, are born. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, she is aware of the fact that they are built by acknowledging their durability and structure. Indeed, she states that the space of appearance "precedes all formal constitutions of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized" (HC 199). The following chapters shift the focus from the space of appearance towards the notion of power and its exercise within public spaces through the built environment. For that reason, these chapters will introduce the work of Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau as thinkers who work with the concepts of spatiality and power. Their point of view partly undermines Arendt's argument that the space of appearance anticipates the built environment and puts the blueprint of space into the foreground in order to pose the question of how space is organised and whose needs it follows. I will introduce their ideas separately to describe the built environment as a form of power exercise. Then, I will discuss this act as enabling in Foucault's work or preventing, as de Certeau argues.

3.1 Genesis of Towns

The connection between space and the exercise of power can be traced through the historical roots of the structure of a town and its role in maintaining the population. As Michel Foucault writes: "Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power." (SKP 252). In this chapter, I introduce historical cases which Foucault uses in the book *Security, Territory and Population* (2009, originally 1978) as examples of deliberation about towns and their purpose, which will lead me to the genesis of the modern state with particular emphasis on the constitution and maintenance of society that lives within. Additionally, this chapter builds upon Paul's Rabinow interview conducted with Foucault and published in *The Foucault Reader* (1984) under the title "Space, Knowledge, and Power". This reveals a different attitude towards the conditionality between lived and

built environments not only through a disciplinary mechanism, but as I will argue later in the chapter, also through the constitution of oneself.

Every town has its specific structure. In some cities, the structure is more present or memorable than in others. Some might feel monotonous, like a walk around the rectangular canals in Amsterdam, or challenging, like getting lost every five minutes in the tiny streets of Venice. It is essential to realise the connection between the structure of a city and its purpose. At the beginning of *STP,* Foucault distinguishes different forms of power and their practices within the public realm. Using historical cases, he traces conditionality between the lived and built environment from a historical perspective and describes how the structures of a town were modified according to discipline, sovereignty, and security. Foucault takes the design of the city as exemplary because, according to him, all those forms of power are dissolving and visible within it.

His analysis starts at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century when each town had its specific administration and position compared to the rest of the territory. As the number of inhabitants increased during this period, cities, mostly surrounded by walls, had to deal with new problems concerning the lack of space and the new economic situation. Foucault uses several historical sources. The first is a study by Jean-Claude Perrot, who describes how the territory of Caen became a city. Perrot notices that different dispositions of a town influenced demographic factors such as natality, number of marriages, and mortality. During 1730 and 1770, Caen grew outside the walls. As peasants and people from the countryside started to live within it, bringing about a change through economic circulation, the structure of the town had to adapt to a new situation. Perrot, in his description, points out the statistics and changes in different facilities. However, what is essential to take away from his description is a radical shift due to the large number of new residents.

The second source that Foucault quotes is a text from Alexandre La Maître called La Metropolitée. Its content concerns the central question: Must a country have a capital city, and if so, what should it consist of? (Foucault 2009, 13) Maître dedicated this hypothetical deliberation about the ideal town structure to the king of Sweden. In searching for an answer, he divided citizens into three groups and identified each with a significant place within a city. As he claims, peasants should live in the suburbs "unseen but ensuring the solidity of the whole" (STP 13). The sovereign and their officers should live in the city's heart, and the artisans occupy the place between peasants and those in power.

Maître's work describes this arrangement as a geometrical relationship. "A good country must have the form of a circle, and the capital must be right at the centre of a circle"

(STP 14). Following the pattern of a territory, the city could copy the similar shape that "no tiny corner of a realm escapes this general network of the sovereign's orders and laws" (STP 14). This observation of historical examples and early deliberation about towns helps anchor my arguments regarding the relationship between structure and power, in which surveillance goes hand in hand with good morals. The capital should be centrally located to spread good moral examples. Although Foucault labels this theory utopian, the importance he abstracts from it, connects to the political effectiveness of sovereignty and spatial distribution. Foucault analyses the urban problems and solutions at the time and advances in spatial layout through the keyword "circulation". Spatial distribution would encourage the circulation of economy, ideas, wills, or orders (STP 15).

As a third example, Foucault introduces the birth of a small town called Richelieu, which originated on a greenfield project using the form of a Roman camp that was rediscovered and re-used as a floor plan for cities mainly in Protestant countries.[20] The town's structure played an important role and was precisely divided into the geometrical figures of squares and rectangles. As Foucault argues, spatial distribution corresponded to a division of inhabitants according to their social status and abilities. The connection with Maître's writing is crucial because it is a case of structuring space. As he states, discipline belongs to the order of construction (in the broad sense of construction) (STP 17). Thus, the town was structured to enable discipline.

The last example that Foucault analyses clarifies this requirement in the case of the French town, Nantes, which, during the 18th century, addressed the question of a new structure to offer more growth possibilities. The main requirement was that of economical circulation. When the town walls slowly opened up for new relationships, cities stood on the threshold of new challenges and the need for growth was inevitable. As outlined in the previous cases, the inspiration for structure mainly stems from disciplinary patterns. In Nantes, history was, however, written differently. Several architects brought up plans for reconstruction, one of which was reorganising the town in the shape of a heart as a metaphor for (economic) circulation.

Nevertheless, a solution was found in the spatial extension. Whereas now it sounds logical, in the 18th century, it was a step towards the unknown. The city council had to admit and approve the town as an open form, which will change according to the current situation. As a result of which, together with the opening of the town gates, they lost control over the

[20] As other examples, Foucault also mentions Kristiania or Gothenburg (STP 16).

territory. The concern for possible lack of control stems from the step towards the unknown, which Foucault articulates as follows: "The more the town is elongated, the more one loses the benefit of that kind of clear, coherent grid of subdivision. Will it be possible to administer a town of such considerable extent, and will circulation be able to take place if the town is indefinitely elongated?" (STP 19). In contrast to structured space, the governmentality of empty space faced a new problem.

At the end of the 18th century, a new form of the modern state appeared in response to distinctively urban problems, which also brought a new form of power. In *STP,* Foucault lectured on the genesis of power, from the sovereign power of the monarch to the modern art of governance, which relies on a complex web of governing institutions and practices. As more and more people moved to cities, it was no longer possible to maintain them through the sovereign's power over life and death. To illustrate that shift, Foucault discussed the example of a thief. Before the eighteenth century, thieves were exposed to punishment by cutting off one's hand or death. However, the early eighteenth century brought changes to those punishments. Hence, the sovereign right to kill was adapted to fostering life, as evidenced in the architectural design of prisons and psychiatric hospitals. The circumstances of a crime and the thief's profile were considered, and punishment belonged to disciplinary institutions such as prisons and detention centres. Densely populated areas raised new questions concerning hygiene, social order, and health. As Foucault argues, the population in France suddenly became the target of a growing set of institutions and practices of governance. It should be noted that Foucault later uses the term "governance" in an expansive sense. It not only implies political structures or matters of state but also covers a different way of controlling individuals, groups, and families (Foucault 1982, 790).

This chapter traces the constitution of a town from a historical perspective to call for its connection with power. What I am interested in is not how Nantes or any other city was developed, but how the problem of a growing population was solved through the built environment. The transformation of different pressures and obstacles into a general problem enabled individuals to search for answers at that time. In the case of the historical development of Nantes, it is portrayed as a spatial extension, which created the general problem of maintaining an ever-growing population. The solution to that emerged with new ways of governance. Within Nantes, I point out how the shift in thinking about population creates a modern society and opens up related urban questions. Through the measures taken, we can deduce the main qualities of how governance perceives the image of society. Foucault opens his interview 'Space, Knowledge and Power' with Paul Rabinow, reflecting on the 18th

century shift. He then sees architecture as "a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies" (SKP 239). And highlights a fact: "that from the eighteenth century on, every discussion of politics as the art of the government of men necessarily includes a chapter or a series of chapters on urbanism, on collective facilities, on hygiene, and on private architecture" (SKP 240). Foucault traces the governmental development of cities, which become parts of an extensive power infrastructure and portrays them as a spatial model for a territorial power execution. "The cities were no longer islands beyond the common law. Instead, the cities, with the problems that they raised, and the particular forms that they took, served 'as the models for the governmental rationality that was to apply to the whole of the territory" (SKP 241).

Foucault presents a similar way of thinking in his writing on madness and the changing architecture of asylums and hospitals, when in *History of Madness* (2006, originally 1961), he describes Hôpital Général not as a medical institution but as a "semi-judicial structure, an administrative entity that was granted powers to deliberate, judge and pass sentence independently of other pre-existing authorities and courts" (Foucault 2006, 49). Carol Bachci highlights how Foucault thinks when he does not only reveal the phenomena *per se* (the madness, or in the case of this thesis, the genesis of the town), but he examines these practices to understand how they "came to mean" (Bacchi 2015, 4). For Foucault, examining a particular phenomenon leads to a general conclusion related to broader facts. Within the public realm, we speak about specific models in which the built environment becomes modified to sustain and maintain the lived one. In my case, the question is not the construction itself but how it takes society into consideration and brings different forms of power into play.

The power mechanisms inscribed within the built environment and lived environment are one of the possible angles from which to approach its conditionality. The manifestation of power is not only imprinted within architecture but also within the relationships between individuals and groups, as well as towards ourselves. Further paragraphs then introduce the different forms of power, not only based on architecture and urbanism but also on mutual relationships between individuals.

3.2 Forms of power

Foucault argues that power is a process which transforms the human being into a subject and examines the mechanisms involved in this process. “My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Foucault 1982, 777). One must address Foucault’s term ‘biopower’ to understand this process. Biopower is a distinct regime of power whose objects and methods occur within a particular type of rationality. Foucault contrasts modern rationality (and its associated practices) with the one it preceded, that of sovereign power: “One might say that the ancient right to take life or let live was replaced by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death” (Foucault 1978, 138).

Biopower is related to urban life through state structures since it aims to integrate individuals within it. More importantly, I read biopower in light of Arendt's concept of natality through the maximalimazation of life.[25] While Arendt focuses on life as a new beginning, Foucault further asks how life is maintained. However, for both, there is no “who” before entering the public space as in the sense of second birth. For Arendt, who-ness is connected with one’s appearance; for Foucault, it is the process of becoming a member of society bound by certain rules.

> Biopower names and groups together these concerns (health and illness, statistics, the census, epidemiology, and demography, science of race, eugenics, population, abortion and dilemmas over new reproductive technology etc.) with the management of the phenomena that characterize groups of living human beings. It relates the exercise of this form of power to varying conceptions of the nature of human individuals and collectivities, their apparent biological variability – race, fertility, gender, constitution - and the ways in which these characteristics can be shaped, managed, and selected in order to achieve political objectives (Rabinow and Rose 2003, 5).

Foucault suggests there are similar processes of integration in religion. For example, when someone becomes a member of the church, they become part of the power structure, which maintains and sets the rules of one's life - go to church every Sunday, love your neighbour. He also mentions cultural institutions such as the Boy Scouts, where its members have to follow certain procedures, such as wearing unique folk costumes or collecting points for badges. The values we learn as members of these communities are acquired by our inclusion into a system and exposure to surveillance. In an exact way, we understand how to integrate

[25] I am thankful to Simona Forti for helping me to establish that connection.

in public spaces, where our bodies become political and collective, and our actions become visible.

The advantage of Foucault's argument is its structuralist correlations since the different mechanisms he describes do not exist separately but rather in relation to one another. According to Foucault, a city is an excellent example since it accumulates human relations, history, and spatiality (Foucault 1986, 25). Indeed, Foucault argues: “The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void inside which we could place individuals and things” (Foucault 1986, 23). As Foucault notes in his essay “Of Other Spaces” (1986), different places influence different sets of relations and vice versa.

> For example, describing the set of relations that define the sites of transportation, streets, trains (a train is an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one goes, it is also something by means of which one can go from one point to another, and then it is also something that goes by). One could describe, via the cluster of relations that allows them to be defined, the sites of temporary relaxation—cafes, cinemas, beaches (p. 24).

Spatiality is closely tied to our lives, to the set of relations that are performed, and also to different power mechanisms. As Foucault focuses on the genesis of power within urban institutions and practices, urban theorists such as David Harvey ask how dramatic urbanisation has contributed to human well-being (Harvey 2019, 4). To answer that question, we have to shift our focus to Foucault’s notion of power and its connection to society. As Foucault scholar Chantal Mouffe puts it: “Every society is a product of a series of practices attempting to establish order in a context of contingency” (Mouffe 2017, 212). The built environment is one way how to maintain and establish that order. Quil Kukkla provides the reader with a list which relates architecture to the way of forming the life of society. “Top-down planning creates spaces designed to shape forms of life—parks for people to engage in family activities; monuments for them to celebrate icons of power; walls to keep groups separated; highways to move people along a certain path and to make specific flows of motion more efficient; malls for people to spend money. But the designed built environment does not always well serve people’s local needs” (Kukla 2021, 20).

The results of the power strategies present a discourse, which, however, is not inevitable. It is only one of many possible configurations since, in the ever-changing world, knowledge and truth are continuously redefined. According to Foucault, the government has to be understood “in the broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human

behaviour" (Foucault 1997a, 81). In the interview "Space, Knowledge and Power" (1984) with Paul Rabinow, Foucault provides readers with a link between society, power and architecture, which he introduces as a phenomenon that newly appeared in the eighteenth century. Architecture and urbanism were tools to solve problems that society suffered at that time. "I referred to disease and the political architecture as a very important role to play. The reflections on urbanism and on the design of workers' housing all of these questions are an area of reflection upon architecture" (SKP 244).

The problems we try to solve nowadays are quite different and appear with our increasing awareness, scientific knowledge, and modern technologies. We need experts to plan roads and streets, scientists and engineers to keep the CO2 levels low and, thus, create an ecologically sustainable city. Also, the pandemic was a perfect example of how biopolitics can be exercised concerning population and the built environment. Our knowledge constantly evolves, "but the links between the exercise of political power and the space of a territory, or the space of cities," I claim, remain (SKP 244). For that, to understand how public spaces were formed, we first need to know how power worked in any given place and time. The cultural landscape is a palimpsest, representing and reconstructing the relationships of power and history through signs written on many layers, including aesthetic, political, ethical, economic, infrastructural, legal, etc (Czepczyński 2018, 65). Cities (including public spaces) are strategic points for exercising and distributing power by posing questions such as: What purposes was it designed to serve? Whose needs does it fulfil? To answer those questions, it is necessary to clarify what Foucault means by the distribution of power.

In his essay "The Subject and Power" (1982), Foucault argues that we usually tend to resent power as mysterious and fatalistic by asking the wrong questions about "how" power limits us. He suggests that "how" should not be perceived in the sense of "How does it manifest itself?" but "By what means is it exercised?" and "What happens when individuals exert (as they say) power over others?" (SP 786) As Foucault claims at the beginning of the essay, he sees the human subject as "placed in power relations which are very complex" (SP 778). I claim that by analysing power relations in public spaces, one can see how they are constructed and gain meaning through "the antagonism of strategies" (SP 780). Thus, as Foucault continues, "it is not power but the subject which is the general theme of my research" (SP 780).

In my reading of Foucault, power could be defined as a strategy, set of practices, or a relationship that is not owned but practised, and which overlaps with the active agency as a vital part of public spaces, as introduced in Chapter 1, since for both Arendt and Foucault,

power is relational; it is not a substance or a thing. Another common point for their arguments about power is its connection to freedom.

Foucault makes a significant point about the exercise of power and freedom. He writes, "Power is exercised on free subjects" (STP 14). The prisoner exposed on the square with his head and hand locked in a pulley is not exposed to power but to violence as an instrument. Power is thus open to a wide range of options. He sees relationships between individuals as a set of activities that we can initiate or perceive. According to Foucault, when one is forced to do something as an enslaved person, we do not speak about power. Instead, power indirectly affects us as a set of tactics but does not directly affect our bodies. Thus, the purpose of power is not only to oppress. It is not only discipline and punishment; power also has positive effects as a supportive phenomenon which can encourage others to speak or act. For Arendt, power also bears potentiality and new promises since it is the freedom to give birth to something new (public, political). "Power springs up whenever people get together and act in concert, but it derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together rather than from any action that then may follow" (Arendt 1970, 52).The danger of power is, for her, in its absence. That means that power and, therefore, the possibility of freedom was replaced by totality. In that sense, she distinguishes between power and violence; whereas power emerges within the condition of freedom, violence is for Arendt in its opposite. When Foucault gives an explanation and tools of power relations, Arendt does not follow that path and does not provide the reader with any definition of how we can governed. On the other hand, Foucault is keen on introducing mechanisms involved in power distribution.

First, he mentions communication. However, as he notes, communication and power should not be confused, although he maintains that communication could serve as a mechanism for "certain ways of acting upon another person or persons" (SP 786). A second factor involved in power distribution is objective capacities, which Foucault defines as abilities exerted over things. Such capacity allows human beings to use, destroy or modify things. The third factor is that power is relational because it brings into play relations between individuals. The exercise of power is thus a matter of those abilities: we use language or other signs and symbols to communicate and understand each other. Further, we have control over certain things that we could use (e.g., computers, tools, or the built environment) and also as part of the larger unit we live in, which is a structure of specific power relations that we use or modify. To sum it up, objective capacities, power relations, and communication are all factors of power distribution. As Foucault emphasises, they are mutual, not constant. They

are established according to a distinct model at any given space and time. On the other hand, they may also appear as a comprehensive system.

A good example of power distributi is the educational system, where the stratification of those relations is predetermined. We have followed a specific language; we respect the rules and the hierarchy and maintain discipline. As pupils and teachers, we follow a system with clearly set rules. Foucault admits that there are disciplines where one of those three relationships prevails and is more articulated—power relations and obedience in monasteries, communication relationships in the educational system or objective capacities in workshops. Foucault emphasises the development of increasingly effective processes for distributing power relationships within a society. If we relate Foucault's ideas to the example of a built environment, we can perceive urban design as one of the tools of the exercise of power. "This is visible in the proliferation of new strategies and mechanisms to control behaviour in our public spaces" (Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha 2019, 11). Quentin Stevens's essay "Designing for difficulty" outlines: "First, design can enhance spatial access and control, decreasing the effort and increasing the rewards of public settings for a range of users" (Stevens 2019, 270). By extension, Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha write that we perceive the built environment in two ways with respect to urbanism. "There is an increasing belief that urban design is more about enabling than authoring, a means rather than an end, and a process rather than a product" (Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha 2019, 4). Or, urban design is a process of preventing and maintaining in which the discipline regulates "the patterns of relations among strangers in everyday spaces such as workspaces, neighbourhoods and public spaces" (Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha 2019, 11).

In addition, scholars such as Sharon Zukin shift their focus towards different mechanisms of control appearing within public spaces, namely the military and the police. "Yet, central public spaces near the halls of power are fiercely defended by the forces of order: the military and police. Challenging the dominant view of who is permitted to occupy them and for how long and for which goals, may provoke a brutal response" (Zukin 2018, 17). Finally, an important power source in public spaces needs to be acknowledged - the presence of others. Sharon Zukin refers to William H. Whyte's experiment with a park, where he removes all tall trees and bushes to make people visible to each other to secure mutual surveillance - creating an urban 'panopticon' (Zukin 2018, 25).

Power distribution manifests itself in several layers of public spaces. To maintain and control them, a built environment appears as a result of a particular strategy. Secondly, different disciplinary mechanisms control public spaces and maintain the power relations

between participants. Thirdly, one needs the presence of citizens and their mutual relations. In all these, Foucault's three power distribution principles - objective capacities, power relations, and communication - are applied and intertwined. Nonetheless, the exercise of power cannot be reduced to simply a relationship; it is a peculiar manner in which certain activities modify and control others. We are not surrounded by power as we are with air. Instead, Foucault argues that power is connected with action, or even webs of relationships and is thus not ubiquitous. “In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future” (SP 789). It is not action as appearance but the action in the chain of consequences that Foucault examines through the lens of power.

Unlike physical violence, power does not directly affect our bodies but influences our actions. Power, for Foucault, “is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action” (SP 790). Power is inscribed in our everyday life within society. As citizens, we play several different roles in everyday life. We are employees, scholars, parents, or travellers passing by. According to each role, our demands and needs change. They are maintained by a plurality of professional and institutional „agencies“ and discourses that shape us, our lives, and our environments. Rabinow and Rose likewise point out the tension which appears in everyday life.

> And, from this perspective, the analysis of issues of state and politics, of political authority itself, took on a different shape: curiously the key critical dimension now appeared as an ethical one. This was not because they now had to be addressed within ethical theory, but because they all involved issues of who should govern us, how should we be governed, what should be governed and to what ends: that is to say, they raised the question of who ‘we’ -- the governed -- were as the subjects of these kinds of practices and the kinds of lives we have come to lead (Rabinow and Rose 2003, 5).

In sum, power is materialised by the institution, while power relations are manifest in their influence on individual actions. As stated earlier, power could make things unreachable but also more accessible. It could provoke us as well as protect us. Power only makes us voluntarily enslave people once we want to. Foucault uses the word 'strategy', which refers to different tactics between agents. One of the results of power could be domination, which is

perceived as the universal pattern of power. As he points out, many people perceive domination as the obvious state of affairs. Foucault adds that domination is when strategies remain blocked or frozen, and relations become immobile (Foucault 1997c, 283). Control mechanisms are not necessarily the opposite of freedom; they are its principal engine. It is possible, Foucault claims, to find freedom in one's relation or care of the self.

3.3 Inner freedom

Although the thoughts of Foucault and Arendt intertwined as described above, he approaches the notion of freedom from a slightly different angle. For Foucault, inner freedom lies in the ability of what I am able to create from myself. Therefore, one has to find a way to relate to oneself to become part of the plurality. Exercising power over oneself is our personal choice. He writes about the care of the self, which is involved in the relations to others. "The care of the self is ethical in itself; but it implies complex relationships with others insofar as this ethos of freedom is also a way of caring for others. This is why it is important for a free man who conducts himself as he should to be able to govern his wife, his children, his household; (...)The man who does this properly is able to conduct himself in relation to others and for others" (Foucault 1997c, 287). However, he warns of becoming a slave to our appetites or desires as an abusive way to use the power incompatible with the definition of freedom and self-care.

Foucault is interested in how a human subject could define "itself as a speaking, living, working individual" (Foucault 1997c, 281). He claims that the technology of the self allows us to do certain operations with our bodies, souls, minds, and actions, which help us to achieve happiness, purity, wisdom, etc. Also, approaching the question of governmentality from a different point of view allows us to see "the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relations with others" (Foucault 1997b, 88). His analysis of power is made through governing and freedom: "Thus, the basis for all this is freedom, the relationship of the self to itself and the relationship to the other" (Foucault 1997c, 300). If the analysis were made only through political institutions, as added by Foucault, it would show only a subject of law, not freedom (Foucault 1997c, 300).

When Arendt discusses appearance as a new beginning, Foucault draws from the Greek principle of *parrhesia* (fearless speech). He says, "the parrhesiast is the person who tells all" (Foucault 2011, 15). In this principle, he sees "a freedom which gives one the right to exercise one's privileges in the midst of others, in relation to others, and over others"

(Foucault 2011, 35). Hence, parrhesia implies a risk of life; in other words, those who do not fear death are free. The aim here is not to describe parrhesia *per se* but to relate it to the concept of self-governance as a way that one navigates oneself as part of the public because, as Foucault writes, it "is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty" (Foucault 2001, 19).

Nancy Luxon, in her essay "Ethics and Subjectivity Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault" (2018), draws from Foucault's lectures related to the theory of freedom built on the Greek principle of parrhesia (fearless speech) in which Foucault argues for the construction of the self. We are not only our body and our properties but also the principle that allows us to use all these means. Luxon describes his attitude to self-governing as something that lies within the practices and is thus connected with the ability to act independently to things belonging to an external order. Although his research reflects how citizens are turned into political objects within modern societies, we are free to manifest ourselves, grow up, and foster our lives based on imposed rules.

> The practices of fearless speech accomplish this task without fabricating a distinction between internal soul and external body; by creating not a 'body of knowledge' but a 'body of practices'; and without reference to an external order such as nature, custom, tradition, or religion. The result is an 'expressive subject' defined through expressive practices sustained by a simultaneous relationship to herself and to others. Individuals develop themselves not through their ability to 'dare to know' but as those who 'dare to act (Luxon 2008, 377).

Luxon describes the model of expressive subjectivity stemming from Foucault's book *Fearless Speech*, which connects understanding the power mechanisms, harmony with oneself, and respect for others. "Instead, I argue that these lectures offer a model of 'expressive subjectivity' composed of practices of ethical self-governance that would prepare individuals for ethical subjectivity, prompt them towards political action, and find them in their relations to others rather than founding them on claims to knowledge" (Luxon 2008, 378).

Hence, Foucault focuses on individuals and their relations, crucial for understanding how power works within public spaces. In my reading, Foucault enlarges Arendt's ideas about public freedom by approaching it from the standpoint of individuals and their relations instead of the common world. As Luxon writes: "Rather than beginning with individuals as divided against themselves, Foucault instead examines the external, personal relationships

that bind the doer to a deed and one person to another. Solitary individuals are not to be taken as starting points; the relations that bind them to one another are" (Luxon 2008, 379).

The words that Foucault incorporates into his analysis of freedom and fearless speech are responsibility and solidarity. He emphasises that we are a part of a particular culture, which is not individualistic, but as subjects, we depend on it. Foucault outlines the role of others as an essential element within which space and its inhabitants are defined. This provides a helpful example of the functioning of public spaces filled with intricate relationships where one is dependent on the other and maintained by the rules of the systems we live in. The principle of self-governance is bound by the limits of pre-set rules, e.g. I am waiting for a green light at a crosswalk, although no police officer controls me. I claim that Foucault's term of self-governance is crucial in the light of public spaces because "the first thing to understand is that the public peace – the sidewalk and street peace-of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost uncounscious, network of voluntary controls and standarts among people themselves and enforced by the people themselves" (Jacobs 1992, 32).

Such manifestation of indirect power relations (as described above – actions upon actions) is present within public spaces since, by its definition, there are no written rules that would directly adjust our manners. As an counter-example, I would use New York as a place where the principle of self-governance was replaced/secured by omnipresent signs and strict rules that tell its inhabitants how to behave on a daily basis. In addition to Arendt's public freedom, in which our spatial being depends on what others allow us, we guide what is permitted within self-governance. But those two do not exclude each other. We are still subject to governance; however, as Foucault insists, we exist in relation to other subjects.

According to Rabinow and Rose, Foucault "enabled us to visualise different kinds of relations between practices that sought to know and manage human individuals and the emergence of conceptions of ourselves as subjects with certain capacities, rights and a human nature that can ground all sorts of demands for recognition" (Rabinow and Rose 2003, 3). We live in a society with certain kinds of institutions that make us certain kinds of individuals. But both institutions and kinds of individuals are historically malleable, as are forms of dissent and activism. "To sum up, the main objective of these struggles is to attack not so much 'such or such' an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class but rather a technique, a form of power" (SP 781).

One of the questions that Paul Rabinow asked Foucault aimed to unpack whether Foucault sees architecture as a form of power was "Do you see any particular architectural

projects, either in the past or the present, as forces of liberation or resistance?" (SKP 245) On that account, Foucault stated that it was impossible to frame architecture according to those two categories since "liberty is a practice. So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints, to loosen, or even to break them, but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically, that it will be established by the project itself" (SKP 245). However, from Foucault's perspective, architecture plays a role in the city. In answering Rabinow's question of whether architecture itself can be a solution to some social issues, he responded: "I think that it can and does produce positive effects when the liberating intentions of the architect coincide with the real practice of people in the exercise of their freedom" (SKP 246). Later in his answer, he touched on another Arendtian term, introduced in the previous chapters, which is the mutual conditionality between the built environment, social relations and practising liberty. "If they are separated, they become impossible to understand. Each can only be understood through the other" (SKP 246).

For this chapter, I trace power mechanisms in the example of a Norwegian art project entitled "Crossroads'" where three artists change the perspective of public space for the inhabitants of a tiny village. Even more importantly, this example highlights the changing relations not only towards space but also of individuals towards themselves to show and uncover power mechanisms and their influence on the built environment and the lives of individuals. The example reveals how power is distributed through objective capacities, power relations, and communication as outlined above. My interpretation is based on the documentary movie *Villagers and Vagabonds* (2020), directed by Merethe Offerdal Tveit (Tveit 2020), which reveals that "the best strategies are those that bring the presence and voices of the people that are involved in the making, occupation and reception of the spatial environment more firmly into the design process" (Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha 2019, 22).

3.4 If this is art, they need to change the definition

To create art in a public space, one needs thoughtful evaluation and discussion with the local inhabitants, especially in a tiny village where everyone knows their neighbour by name. Three artists from the *FFB Architecture Collective* (Felleskapsprosjektet å Fortette Byen)[29] were invited to a small town, Kvam, situated in the heart of Norway, to do an art installation

[29] The Collective Project: For a Denser Concentration of the City

in the square located in its centre. The artists appeared as strangers in the middle of the night and took over the square by parking trucks full of their equipment. One of the villagers reflected on this situation: “First, they build a gipsy camp. They brought a smoke machine and lights and played music. It looked strange.” After a couple of days, the collective disappeared and had not talked to anyone; the village was left with a piece of art that brought massive discontent from the locals and caused a media storm. Norwegian newspapers used headlines like: “Local refuse to accept the artwork.”

What was left in the middle of the square was a sculpture consisting of a big rock, an old tractor wheel and a wooden branch. After days of arguing and confusion, the citizens' anger culminated in removing the art. The Mayor of Kvam stated: “Art in public spaces is difficult. This project proves that, and I must take people's opinions seriously.” In contrast, the spokesman of FFB Architecture Collective, Joar Nango, perceived the process as a big disappointment.

Nonetheless, the whole situation led to a series of municipal discussions about the role and purpose of art in public spaces. During the meetings, local inhabitants tried to figure out a definition of art amongst themselves to determine what kind of aesthetic could bring the village. Their negotiations ended with an unexpected result. The villagers decide to invite the artists back and let them continue with their artwork.

After a year, the artists occupied the square again. Initially, suspicious citizens of Kvam slowly started to communicate with the artists and participate in their work. Even the worst critics of this project opened their minds and started a discussion with the artists. The second attempt ended with a ceremonial unveiling of the new sculpture in the presence of artists and the whole village. The point of this story is that the new art installation was visually almost identical to the previous one. However, unlike the first time, the new art piece was celebrated as a collective art effort, which manifested the shift from “theirs” to “ours.”

When one thinks about power relations, power is manifested as a top-down disciplinary mechanism, such as town halls, educational institutions, or health centres. That was true for the first attempt, which the citizens refused as an act of resistance. The second try, however, brought into play different ways of distribution of power - objective capacities, power relations, and communication; by building up a mutual relationship, communicating with locals, and inviting them to become an active part of the project, which changed their perspective towards it and underlined the idea I am advocating for - public spaces as a process which I am part of, not as a product, that is given to me.

What is then highlighted is Foucault’s way of understanding power as a complex relationship which maintains and influences our lives. In this example, power is a two-way relationship visible in the public space and in how we shape it according to our needs and understanding of it. In this case, the artists opened their relations to the villagers through the first visit and an unfinished piece of art as an indirect action. In Foucault's terms, power relations are defined as actions upon actions. An indirect influence of the first visit was raising awareness about the shared space and art in general. The art was removed from an initiative by citizens rather than by town hall members. Although the mayor commented that the piece of art was “something we certainly did not expect,” he only fulfilled the citizens' demands to remove it. What is striking is that the re-invitation of the artists stemmed again from the citizens. One of the inhabitants who had a direct view from his window to the square commented: “We missed it; suddenly, the square became empty and sad.” First, they (citizens of Kvam) felt that the intervention of strangers limited their freedom. However, when the villagers accepted the idea of the statue being placed at the square, they made it into their project.

Although Foucault stresses the importance of action, an event in which power relations are revealed, his approach differs from Arendt's because he does not argue for the common world but for the possibility of participating in actions of which the idea of the common world consists. From this standpoint, the exercise of power is not limited to relations with others, but it exceeds it also towards relations to oneself. The relation to oneself is highlighted by artist Krzysztof Wodiczko (2017), who connects parrhesia to our appearances in public spaces. He stresses that parrhesia is not only a public speaking technique but also “care for oneself” (Wodiczko 2017, 134). Based on that, he reads public spaces as a healing environment (Wodiczko 134), which puts together not only those who tell the stories but also those who listen to them; as he states, “to animate public space, one must animate oneself” (Wodiczko 146). Wodiczko also aptly points out, similar to Zukin in her criticism of Arendt’s Greek philosophical roots, that the risk in using the term parrhesia is hidden in its Greek origin, where public spaces were designated as homogenous places that belonged only to old white men (Wodiczko 134). For that, this thesis frames the theory with praxis to actualise Greek roots in the light of a current plurality of participants in public spaces.

In public, we not only appear in our who-ness, as Arendt claims, but we also show what we are able to create in ourselves, as Foucault highlights. While Arendt emphasises public freedom (through the relation to others), Foucault's starting point is the relation to oneself. Hence, the inhabitants of Kvam first needed to define what they wanted, state it our

loud and describe how they see themselves in relation to art and public spaces through various means of power, such as objective capacities, power relations, and communication.

Defining or knowing oneself is thus, according to Foucault, the first step for participating in public life. In the second phase, one must realise oneself in the context of others. As Foucault writes in *Fearless Speech*: “Seneca's student Serenus’ discomfort results not from epistemological uncertainty—he knows the relevant ethical guidelines—but an uncertainty of how to dispose of these guidelines in his relations to others“ (Foucault 2001, 153).

Although Foucault does not directly address public spaces, he offers one of the possible approaches towards them by observing and analysing power relations manifested within. Moreover, he offers a complex way of perceiving the connection between discipline mechanisms and society to counter the critique of his opponents. “There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it” (Foucault 1978, p. 101). He portrays power in relation not only to the presence of others but also to oneself and the role of the built environment because architecture “is not only considered as an element in space, but is especially thought of as a plunge into a field of social relations in which it brings about some specific effects” (SKP 253).

In conclusion, one should acknowledge the development of Foucault’s theory of power. In his early writing, he focused on how individuals became subjects through disciplinary mechanisms. Later, he revealed how subjects could also define themselves. As the example in this chapter shows, the space is controlled not only by disciplinary mechanisms but also by its participants and their exercise of power.

Foucault did not perceive the term ‘power’ as solely negative because he also introduced ways in which power can be enabling, encouraging, and fostering. Which I read as a resemblance to the Arendtian notion of power described by Marieke Borren as “a positive one, very similar to the recent concept of empowerment“ (Borren 2013, 205). To reveal an opposite point of view to power, in the next chapter, I will engage with one of Foucault's critics, Michel de Certeau, for whom power bound to space is a negative phenomenon and argues that neither self-governance nor the experience of the common world, but the act of resistance is the only way out.

CHAPTER 4. PUBLIC AS AN EVERYDAY BATTLE, WALKING TOWARDS FREEDOM

While Arendt claims that action (in general) is not a mere statement or an act of pointed resistance towards something, and Foucault portrays power as an enabling part of action, the work of Michel de Certeau provokes new kinds of engagement. De Certeau's attitude lies in cultural studies, history, philosophy, and linguistic metaphors. His writing covers many topics, but the one that resonates with my work the most is his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), dedicated to spatial practices, primarily as acts of resistance. In PEL, he discusses the role of our everyday activities in relation to the imposed system in which we live. De Certeau introduces the 'everyday' as political, as a tool of resistance and liberation from a mass society. Under the 'everyday practices' umbrella term, de Certeau sees various actions, from cooking, wandering, and speaking to walking. For this thesis, I focus on spatial practices as acts that are deeply connected with living within cities and using public spaces, such as walking or sitting on a bench in the park, which plays an essential role in our everyday life and, according to de Certeau, might bring forms of resistance but also offers us different forms of perception of public spaces.

In the chapter 'Walking in the City', de Certeau analyses what role our spatial movements play in everyday life and how they shape our perception of a town. The key word for him is 'perception', to which I will return later in that chapter. However, it is essential to outline his understanding of power to draw a broader picture of de Certeau's philosophy since he is especially critical of Foucault's definition of it. This chapter, thus, compares de Certeau and Foucault's thoughts on power in light of urban practices. Two areas of interest lie at the centre of de Certeau's book. The first introduces space as a metaphor for language and compares walkers to readers and the creators of space to writers. The second one focuses on the power relations between these two groups. For de Certeau, the reason why we have to resist is because our so-called normal state of being is oppression. Within the first part of his book, he argues that space maintains our movements and conditions our behaviour, while in the second part, de Certeau brings forms of resistance to the question of freedom within an imposed system into discussion. In that way, he relates not only to Foucault and his concept

of power but also to Arendt when he reveals conditions in which freedom appears. De Certeau is interested in the possibilities of free movement within a built environment, which may be limited by material and mental barriers.

4.1 Burden of power

De Certeau perceives society as bound by power principles. He sees the predetermination of space in exactly lined pathways, which we are destined to follow, and where the lack of freedom does not allow one to develop their potential and/or creativity. He compares power to the repression practised through the built environment when travelling on the train. Passengers sit quietly; everyone has their seat. The schedule of activities is set in advance; one shows their tickets, makes a purchase with the dining trolley, and watches the landscape from the window. In his train metaphor, de Certeau sees freedom only in the way of the bathroom, where one could finally freely express oneself behind closed doors.

> Immobile inside the train, seeing immobile things slip by. What is happening? Nothing is moving inside or outside the train. The unchanging traveller is pigeonholed, numbered, and regulated in the grid of the railway car, which is a perfect actualization of the rational utopia. Control and food move from pigeonhole to pigeonhole: 'Tickets, please . . . ' 'Sandwiches? Beer? Coffee? ... ' Only the restrooms offer an escape from the closed system. (..)..Except for this lapse given over to excesses, everything has its place in a gridwork (de Certeau 1984, 111).

His rigid description of power becomes a target of critique. He is accused of a dichotomous worldview, which leads to a simplification of power relations and puts the human being into the position of a slave of the system; as Natalie Collie points out in her article, "Walking in the City: urban space, stories, and gender": "Certeau provides an overly simplified top-down model of power and its operations which produces a set of rigid either/or binaries: the official versus the everyday, the authorities versus the ordinary people, the symbolic versus the unconscious, strategies versus tactics, and compliance versus resistance, et cetera" (Collie 2013, 2).

What is left for the citizens is to obey or resist. Resistance, as the way out from this "machinery," became one of de Certeau's main objectives - how to find freedom, not only in the train's bathroom but, even more importantly, in our everyday lives. Hence, de Certeau argues for a different attitude toward power. The dichotomy between his and Foucault's views could be framed as an agonistic versus antagonistic approach towards politics and public spaces. Chantal Mouffe describes antagonists as two enemies or conflicting parties to be

destroyed. On the other hand, as she writes, "agonists recognize the legitimacy of the claims of their opponents" (Mouffe 2017, 226). Although agonists "are in conflict they see themselves as belonging to the same political association as their opponents, as sharing a common symbolic space within which their conflict takes place"(Mouffe 226). Influenced by the philosophy of Foucault, Mouffe leans towards the agonists' policy by stating that "we need to grasp the nature of politics and the necessity to engage with a multiplicity of agonistic democrats struggles"(Mouffe 231). There (as a part of public spaces) is an ongoing conflict, yes, and there always will be a conflict. Still, as Mohsen Mostafavi frames it, "the agonistic pluralism is a form of ongoing yet positive struggle," (Mostafavi 2017, 13) which outlines power as enabling rather than preventing.

If Michel Foucault is interested in how individuals became subjects of power mechanisms, de Certeau emphasises how individuals resist being reduced to subjects. Therefore, he stems from a different angle and builds his theory in contrast to Foucault. The main emphasis of *The Practice of Everyday Life* lies in various forms of resistance imprinted in everyday practices. For de Certeau, the most visible is the act of walking. In this activity, he sees the encounter, or more accurately, the clash, between those who are in power and create space and those who use them. "These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility" (PEL 93). He describes this collision as an interweaving of strategies and tactics.

4.2 Strategies and Tactics

A framework of strategies and practices allows de Certeau to distinguish activities carried by institutions and other disciplinary mechanisms from everyday life practices to describe how power is spatially manifested. In his view, strategy is imposed by institutions such as the city or an enterprise. It inherently has a spatial logic or requires a space for its existence or definition, such as the city, which is defined by the space it occupies. He describes how power relations are manifested within a space through this dichotomy. He argues that strategically planned space affects our behaviour because "the public is moulded by the products imposed on it" (PEL 166). One such formative factor is the built environment. For example, de Certeau describes a city park controlled by the town hall. The park is designated in a specific manner and leads citizens to spend their free time in a required way,

corresponding to the interests of those imposed by the town hall. To draw from my own experience, the government's long-term strategy is to keep citizens healthy and strong, and for that reason, every park offers space to exercise. Others could point out that the primary reason is to keep citizens passive, maintain their movements with pathways or benches, which are precisely situated two and a half metres away and prevent them from social gathering.

Brian Morris, whose field of research lies in the cultural politics of cities, in his essay "What we talk about when we talk about 'walking in the city" (2004), asks how these strategies are not only imprinted in our movements but also influence our behaviour, characteristics, and values that we share, which are beyond the horizon of our everyday activities. As he writes:

> An example of a strategy might be that of a city park controlled by a local statutory authority. The park is a site officially circumscribed as a space for everyday leisure, a haven from traffic where particular modes of walking based around the aesthetic consumption of ordered 'nature', or healthy recreation and exercise, or even displays of heterosexual romance (walking hand- in-hand), take place (Morris 2004, 679).

Morris connects spatial strategies imprinted in the park's structure with deviation suppression from the main discourse. He suggests that public spaces are primarily designed for white heterosexual men, which he subsequently develops in his essay dedicated to the exclusion of LGBTQ2+ communities from the public sphere. The argument he stresses in de Certeau's discussion is thus that not only our material body or our movements are targets for the design strategies. The way of consuming space is also present in long-term thinking and self-formation.

A general question concerning the role of space in one self-formation emerges and, in that case, could be formulated as follows: How can we define a built space that is not heterosexually based? In the article 'Queering Architecture: The Possibilities Of Space(s)', Matthew J. Cottrill uses Foucault's concepts of heterotopias to "define a concept of queer theory at a societal level" (Cottrill 2006, 361). However, what is common for Foucault's heterotopias is that they are time-bound activities like parades or demonstrations, which means that there is a beginning and end in which a certain space is created. In that sense, queer spaces are not built but lived spaces. Some theorists (Joey-Michelle Hutchison, Christopher Reed) try to offer a perspective in which architecture mingled with queer theories to develop a built environment liberated from heterosexual norms. They both agreed that queer space should be space which is not only time-bound, not fluid, but a visible and

permanent part of the built environment; however, they do not provide an answer to the specific form of it. The most recent article from Sarah Bonnemaison states that "queer architecture is understood to be buildings created by queer architects as well as designs aimed at the queer community" (Bonnemaison 2022). She proposes several examples that would make spaces more accessible to a queer community, such as better lighting, brighter colours, establishing a dialogue between architecture and nature, and horizontal instead of vertical compositions. On the theoretical level, there is a strong belief that the built environment conditions the lived one; for that, this thesis focuses on that conditionality by navigating all the aspects of what public spaces consist of.

For de Certeau, the conditioned relationship between strategies and behaviour is a framework for certain kinds of calculation or manipulation. In his view, power belongs to the strong, and institutions serve as a basis from which they, the strong, give orders through the built environment. This argument serves as the basis of his criticism of Foucault. According to de Certeau, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) presents only a narrow power description. De Certeau compares Foucault's attitude towards power to a situation where one observes a cancer in the body while leaving the rest without noticing the rest. Thus, he 'extracts' from the body only what he wants and does not leave space for a different power relation or for a different form of resistance, which are the key terms for de Certeau. Foucault himself did not reply to de Certeau's critiques directly. Still, in the interview "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom" carried by Paul Rabinow he reacts to the general critique of his description of power as follows. "But the claim that 'you see power everywhere, *thus* there is no room for freedom' seems to me absolutely inadequate. The idea that power is a system of domination that controls everything and leaves no room for freedom cannot be attributed to me" (Foucault 1997c, 293). In other words, Foucault claims that if there is power, there must also be freedom.

The act of resistance, for de Certeau, lies in tactics, which are manoeuvres in the enemy's field of view. "It has no possibilities of general planning as a strategy has. It takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them. Tactics are as fluid as everyday practices. In short, a tactic is an art of the weak“ (PEL 37). As Mostafavi writes with respect to the city, tactics are labelled, "the revanchist practices form a new type of austerity urbanism, also called tactical urbanism. They are associated with a number of practices that are characterized for being temporary, pop-up, guerrilla, and do-it-yourself types of urban interventions in often disagreement spaces, which subvert orthodox planning practices, property laws or public policy" (Mostafavi 2017, 12). To stay with the example of the public park, de Certeau

considers walking or any other use of the space which is counter to imposed strategies. In a similar way, Morris outlines tactics as the "use of a particular space that runs against its dominant and 'proper' heteronormative construction. For de Certeau, 'tactical' appropriations of space are an "instance of 'resistance' to an official order, a victory of the weak over the strong" (Morris 2004, 678). Therefore, tactics have a political dimension, allowing the weak to prevail over the strong. "The tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices" (PEL 17). Tension, struggle, and inequality are things that de Certeau observes on the battlefield and are called everyday life. Unlike Arendt's definition of action, de Certeau values the everyday as political.

4.3 Readers or writers

De Certeau perceives the city as an imposed system of symbols that creates inequalities between the people. He follows traces of the struggle and discrepancies in everyday practices, acts where inequity is mirrored and gains a political dimension. His theory draws from the assumption that one could express a certain political outlook through walking, reading, or cooking (things he considered everyday activities). Our everyday activities, therefore, have a tactical role.

De Certeau argues that our relation to space is never neutral. There is always a kind of tension present, and the strongest one prevails. Space is not a blank paper. Instead, he understands space as a palimpsest, where different layers shine through the current text or image. De Certeau thus develops the idea of the city as a narrative or a story, which allows him to describe the tensions through established linguistic nomenclature. His metaphor stems from perceiving power as language, as the ability to rule words. Since we do not all have the same access to language, de Certeau argues, space can never be a neutral place. He does not explicitly define the strongest one according to their funds or real estate but rather according to their access to language. The strongest are creators, and de Certeau places them in the position of writers, who hold power over the spatial text, represented by a map as a political tool. In his view, maps work as narrative forms that organise our movements within space. Space, like language, is a system constructed on pre-set conventions. For de Certeau, it is a symbolic place that goes behind the built environment into a set of symbols. "The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor

spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other" (PEL 93).

Maps and urban texts are perceived by readers, who are, according to de Certeau, consumers of space. In this distinction, walkers are space consumers and read the city in their movements and trajectories. "The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below', below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk—an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmänner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text,' they write without being able to read it" (PEL 93).

The literary framework works in the example of former colonies, where natives were "taught" how to consume by imposed rules and laws, which differed from the system they were used to. De Certeau depicts language as a system we live in, which helps us to orient ourselves within space and relationships and is maintained by institutions belonging to the order of power mechanisms.

> They made something else out of them; they subverted them from within—not by rejecting them or by transforming them (though that occurred as well), but by many different ways of using them in the service of rules, customs, or convictions foreign to the colonisation which they could not escape. They metaphorized the dominant order: they made it function in another register. They remained other within the system which they assimilated, and which assimilated them externally. They diverted it without leaving it. Procedures of consumption maintained their difference in the very space that the occupier was organising (PEL 13).

In this process, language plays the role of a mechanism which maintains not only our communication skills but is also reflected in our social hierarchy and influences our approach to space. According to de Certeau, examples of former colonies appear in different forms nowadays. Exclusion from public spaces for those who cannot adapt to an imposed system, either from a lack of knowledge or from the position of their social status. Exclusion is not in the sense of banishment from the space itself but rather in the confusion that prevents us from using the space properly and using its advantages. De Certeau's critique of spatial distribution presents space as a rigid and schematic framework. Everyone and everything has its own place. Its primary purpose is not to foster life and support creativity. In contrast, it maintains one's movements and conditions one's behaviour.

I read de Certeau's narrative of the city as analogous to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), a dystopian film based on the conflict between good and evil, weak and strong. This duality is inscribed in, or rather predetermined by, the city's architecture (Metropolis) in the same way that de Certeau perceives space. The city Fritz Lang created for the film's purposes

is a metaphor for a divided society. It is a complex of impenetrable layers, where skyscrapers are the place for members of high society (heads), and the subterranean level is occupied by the workers (hands).

The preview for *Metropolis* was found in the nascent urbanist vision of New York, which is one of de Certeau's famous examples of unequal access to space and a spatially divided society. A view from the World Trade Center offers the gaze of gods, panopticon surveillance over the city far away from the hustle of everyday life. The spatial distinction in Fritz Lang's movie, as in de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life,* supported a strong vision of a strictly hierarchical society. Lang's dystopian science fiction reveals how spatial hierarchy conditioned social structure. Every character has its place and mechanically follows daily routines. A rigid regime does not allow them to think about other possibilities or ways, which might lead them to delineate everyday practices. Like in Lang's *Metropolis*, de Certeau's critique of our conditioned relations focuses on the mechanisation of everyday practices. The mechanisation of our movements is the easiest way to follow space.

Moreover, a well-organised space is the best way to provide consumption. Without further thinking, walkers mechanically use the pathways, the same as the labourers in the opening scene of Lang's movie. With the same uniform, mechanical movements, and absent gaze, it is sometimes hard to say if they are a group of workers or robots. However radical this comparison may sound, it outlined de Certeau's main worries related to the mechanisation of our movement, which inscribes itself into the mechanisation of our thoughts.

In the first part of this chapter, I outlined de Certeau's sceptical attitude towards power as presented in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. As mentioned in the introduction, his second intention belongs to the art of resistance, to the possibilities of leakage from this mechanical wheel. De Certeau asks how it might be possible to show our disagreement and reveal our creativity through everyday practices. In daily ordinary operations, de Certeau sees the possibility for freedom and our own opinions, which are micro steps out from the delineated world. His aim is not to describe the form of disciplines but “rather to bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and make-shift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline’. Pushed to their ideal limits, these procedures and ruses of consumers compose the network of an antidiscipline which is the subject of this book” (PEL xv).

4.4 Resistance as a source of creativity

Although de Certeau's list of everyday activities is very generous, its description is not precise. He considers everyday practice on the scale from cooking to window shopping and walking and other ways citizens could explore the city. The importance is not on what but on the how since he emphasises how everyday practices could contribute to a way out of the imposed system. In that sense, walking can be an activity for people who want to go beyond the geometrical construction of the built environment or any other kind of surveillance. De Certeau draws attention to Foucault’s panopticon as a metaphor for surveillance in modern society and argues that we are under constant surveillance, which does not allow individuals to express themselves fully. “Escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible. Within this ensemble, I shall try to locate the practices that are foreign to the ‘geometrical’ or ‘geographical’ space of visual, panoptic, or theoretical constructions” (PEL 93).

Everyday practices are oars for unrestricted movement. They play a crucial role in this inevitable struggle and mirror the omnipresent resistance in our everyday lives. There is a myriad of different forms of establishing rules for one’s own practices. “Beneath what one might call the ‘monotheistic’ privilege that panoptic apparatuses have won for themselves, a ‘polytheism’ of scattered practices survives, dominated but not erased by the triumphal success of one of their number” (PEL 48).

In the context of power, Certeau uses Foucault’s panopticon surveillance as an oppressive source. However, Foucault thinks about the surveillance gaze differently, not only as a ruling gaze but as a never-ending process. Additionally, the panopticon depends not only on one source of surveillance but also on mutual control. “Foucault’s version of surveillance gaze does not have an endpoint. Rather, it is like a giant spider web — everyone watches everyone everywhere, but we don’t know where the starting point is. In this way, Foucault interprets the gaze as a source of political and social power to discipline” (Thiele 1990, 908). For de Certeau, the gaze is omnipresent and has a beginning, end, and direction (from top to bottom). De Certeau describes the surveillance gaze as a voyeuristic practice: “Having taken a voluptuous pleasure in it, I wonder what is the source of this pleasure of ‘seeing the whole,’ of looking down on, totalizing the most immoderate of human texts” (PEL 92). On that account, he wonders how to escape that gaze since he sees the area for freedom and space for

creativity only outside of it. Quite contrary, as mentioned above, freedom does not exclude power for Foucault since individuals can change their position within that spider web.

The gaze is metaphorical for de Certeau because it is inscribed in outcomes of different disciplinary mechanisms such as architecture. To resist the gaze in a personal manner of everyday activities (such as walking), de Certeau sees a way out from discursive strategies. “By challenging ‘consumption’ as it is conceived and (of course) confirmed by these ‘authorial’ enterprises, we may be able to discover creative activity where it has been denied that any exists” (PEL 167).

The overarching question for Certeau can be formulated as follows: What do we, as citizens, do with given things such as streets, squares, etc? These questions mirror his critique of only mindlessly following what is pre-set without developing the creative potentiality of things. In that manner, resistance is a spark of creativity for him. He illustrates this point with the example of a TV broadcast. On the one hand, there are images that de Certeau considers to be representations. On the other hand, he claims that those images have conditioned particular behaviour. The relation between representation and behaviour is central to his research. In the realm of a built environment, this dichotomy appears as a relation between the space (representation) and our activities (behaviour). The art of everyday practices could open up a new role concerning the use of space. Although one does not participate in creating space, one still has a task there. In that way, readers become writers of their own everyday stories.

A question that suggests a tension between representation and behaviour is, how are we using something created for us? Certeau warns that passive consumption makes one a worker of creators who stand behind those pictures or, in the case of public space, behind architectures or designs imposed on parks or squares, etc. On the other hand, the critical reading of space, in which it is necessary to go beyond consumption and seek a different way of using space, is something Certeau is interested in. He assumes that space demands and presupposes specific kinds of behaviour. However, his assumption of using space differently as a mere form of resistance needs to be revised. De Certeau suggests the predetermined schema of pathways as a guidance system, which one can go against to ensure own independence. In his prejudice or scepticism towards a system, de Certeau missed important aspects such as the presence of others, the diversity of ideas, and identities occupying space. He highlights everyday life practices as belonging only to specific groups of people and strategies of power over others. “One can analyze the microbe-like, singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress” (PEL 96) or “One can follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or

eliminated by panoptic administration" (PEL 96).

I frame this situation differently by stating that there are many positions from which one enters public spaces. I am a student but also a politician, a female, an architect, a parent, a citizen, etc. I do not deny that struggle as a part of everyday practices has its place and sometimes plays a crucial role in shaping the built environment and the sense of community. However, as an enabling phenomenon, the built environment also has its place here. What is essential for this thesis is an abstraction of Certeau's direct idea of conditionality between strategies and tactics and between representation (the structure of the park) and behaviour (walking in the park), which are, for example, enlarged by Brian Morris, into the shaping of one's identities or the quality of life. As Mariusz Czepczynski writes: "More and more of us seem to notice that the values and quality of the landscape, and especially its civic and public aspects, directly influence our quality of everyday life" (Czepczyński 2018, 73).

In his philosophy, de Certeau calls for an act of resistance, which can be read as twofold. Morris points out that when de Certeau describes a walker, he is interested in things other than movements from A to B, e.g., away from home to work or from home to a shop. He perceives walking in terms of a flâneur on an aimless Sunday walk. What is important is the time when one is not carrying the burden of shopping bags and when a mechanical learned pattern does not drive one‘s movements. Thus, I assume that wandering for Certeau has an unconscious essence. When I wander, I obey my senses; I spontaneously follow my body and move without predefined scenarios. I liberate myself from a form and follow "indirect" or "errant" trajectories obeying their own logic" (PEL 18).

At this point, he draws on French sociologist, pedagogist and cartographer Fernand Deligny. In the collection of his essays, originally written during the 1970s and published as a book, *The Arachnean and Other Texts,* in 2015, Deligny introduces the concept of "wandering lines" and "net trajectories" (p. 38). In that experiment, Deligny follows the movements and trajectories of children with autism spectrum disorder. He aims to transfer the trajectories of walkers who are not bound by the imposed linguistic framework to paper and thus have, according to de Certeau, different perspectives considering the perception of space. De Certeau leans on Deligny‘s theory as something that could help him understand how one can liberate oneself from the rigid framework of space. "The curious Delignian neologism 'Arachnean' (*Arachnéen*) gestures toward the web-weaving propensities of the spider as the basis for imagining a different mode of social organization — indeed, an entirely new political *ethos* — that would not be structured around the assumption of universal access to language and speech. The system imposed on the language and speech"

(Hilton 2015). Deligny's thinking, like de Certeau's, stems from the comparison of dichotomies such as freedom and fatality, doing and acting and between acquired and innate (Deligny 2015, 177).

Two layers of de Certeau's argument concerning resistance can be abstracted. First, he presents conscious forms of resistance, which bend the space and use it in their way. This path is followed by Brian Morris, who is interested in conscious civic activism such as parades, demonstrations, and activities in which people use public spaces to express their attitudes in calling for change. This is where tactics struggle with strategies, and those who feel oppressed start to bend the unwritten rules of using the space and turn it from a place of consumption to an active element. For example, to block the street and turn it into a place of public protest rather than use it as a piece of transport infrastructure. I see this layer as closer connected to Arendtion's notion of action as a conscious activity, in which, however, Certeau does not stress the role of others. Instead, he highlights the act of resistance towards those in power.

The second approach towards space stems from de Certeau's consideration of unconscious wandering activity connected with our perception of space. The idea of thoughtless browsing through parks, ignoring maps, even the names of the streets, and following our inner sense is close to Merleau-Ponty, "from which he borrows the distinction between anthropological or symbolic and geometric or administrative spaces" (Conley 2012, 29). Anthropological space offers "the spatial experience that an interested subject might acquire of the world or the perceptual field itself" (Shengli 2009, 137). On the other hand, geometric spaces impose pre-set rules of disciplinary regime on users of spaces. The second approach encourages citizens to go beyond the geometrical sphere into the realm of perception and experiences.

De Certeau introduces space as a story where every citizen could write their narrative through different perceptions of space. Natalie Collie, who is interested in the role of gender in public space, summarises de Certeau's main point as a way to express oneself freely. "Pedestrians, in effect, tell urban stories through their movements. A multitude of intertwined paths and detours weave the urban fabric. They give their shape to spaces and weave together places in ways that potentially transgress, from within, the abstract map imposed from above by the panoptic gaze and administrative strategies of corporate and government interests" (Collie 2013, 1).

Therefore, both points that I abstract from de Certeau go beyond the mechanical consumption of space, consciously or unconsciously. I want to emphasise ways in which we

can go beyond mere consumption into the perception of space as a new element enriching one's experience of public spaces. I assume that the material layer of a town (the built environment) is taken for granted and does not receive sufficient attention from its inhabitants; that is where I meet with de Certeau, and this is the point I claim that reveals an additional approach to discussion about public spaces. In the following section, I argue for the importance of the built environment as the fundamental layer on which we build our other activities, not based on resistance but on our perception of it.

4.5 The story of one bench

There is a beautiful cycle path outside my house, lined with benches and old trees. It usually serves as a meeting point where many social interactions occur. I often see teenagers hanging around with their friends, parents with kids enjoying an ice cream from a nearby kiosk, or construction workers having a smoke break. These scenes from everyday life started to change, and eventually disappeared, as the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic were put in place. Social interactions were cut to a minimum and all cultural activities were banned. What remained were the objects that typically fill public space in cities. Benches still lined the path, and the linden trees were not trimmed, but they were orphaned from social gatherings and public activities. One particular bench became an object of study for me, as I was able to see it from my work desk and could observe it for hours each day for almost a year.

After a few days of staying at home, local residents started to use this bench in a different way, and it gained new importance. It began to be occupied by people from different social groups, and their presence was not connected with any particular activity—quite the contrary. People would sit and watch the street and, according to my observation, live in the moment. Some of them stayed for a couple of minutes, others for more than an hour. There were no other activities to distract them from the concentrated perception of space, so they wrapped their arms over the backrest and just sat. This observation made me think about what this situation offered us, and how the COVID-19 restrictions changed our perception of the built environment.

The crucial point here is to understand the role space plays in our lives. Most of our activities are connected to spatial dispositions. It does not matter if we live in the rush of a city centre or in the suburbs of a town; we enter public space nearly every day, on our way to work or when meeting our friends. We use squares for public gatherings, while parks serve as

settings for cultural events or leisure pursuits. The structure or placement of various objects in public space, which I call the "material layer," creates the basis for our cultural and social activities. In this bench example, I examine what we lost during the pandemic in terms of public space, and what we gained. Although we might think primarily about the time we lost due to lockdowns, I would argue that this period was a chance to experience a different perception of space, one that de Certeau argues for. To precise his thoughts, I draw on the ideas of Henri Lefebvre, which are focused on the practices of everyday life and their connection with spatial activities. Additionally, to frame this case, I discuss the ideas of phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who was concerned with how we perceive the world.

Adam Nadolny (2015) clarifies Lefebvre's perspective toward the town and reveals his consideration of space in general. Lefebvre assigns a great role to citizens as creators of space. His work relies on the active role and participation of a creative class. He sees public spaces and towns as opportunities, as places where human life could be made to flourish. The role of the inhabitants is to create new products—public spaces. In other words, he puts citizens into the role of creators, not just consumers, of public spaces. This is a crucial point for the application of our right to the city:

> People who use the city—who live, trade, walk there—create it themselves, both at the mental and material levels. The city, he [Lefebvre] believes, serves only as a starting point triggering spatial situations which transform and create the diversity we need so much. It is this diversity which makes the philosopher believe that the modern city is a form open to changes brought about by modern times, even if he is critical of its consumptions (Nadolny 2015, 33).

However, to better understand the idea of a town as a whole, we turn to Lefebvre's theory, in which he explores different layers of space and his central interest, which is the conceptualisation of space. To clarify, the notion of "space" features prominently in Lefebvre's work, for example the statement "in philosophical terms, space is neither subject nor object" (Lefebvre 1991, 92) or his claim that space "is at once a precondition and a result of social superstructures" (Lefebvre 1991, 85). This broad definition, which sees space as a process, enables him to divide the notion of space into different categories. One should see the city not as a mere material structure but as a larger network that also includes life within, along with mutual relations and the syntheses of different phenomena.

This limits the observation of space to the city itself, whereas the city and life within it also exist in space. This consists, according to Lefebvre, of the synthesis of three different layers. I draw here from Günter Nest and Elisa T. Bertuzzo (2009), who describe Lefebvre's

spatial triad as follows. The first layer that deserves our attention is the physical and material aspects of space, which include houses, infrastructure, and actions connected with daily routines. One could label this "perceived space," a space that one can explore through the senses. In contrast to this, the second layer could be called "conceived, abstract space," and is related to culture and formed by religion and rituals. It contains our perception of space that is occupied with theories, visions, and ideas. The third layer is the social field, in which all interactions take place. This is the lived space created by the social interactions of the inhabitants. (Bertuzzo and Günter 2009) To relate Lefebvre's categories to my example of the bench outside my home: perceived space is the material essence of the bench—the wooden armrests and the iron legs. Conceived space relates to social and political practice, in this case, certain urbanistic or municipal plans or visions for the bench. Lived space includes the interactions of inhabitants that take place on this particular bench.

These layers are mutually related and, according to Lefebvre, should be equal and balanced in order to maintain a good life. "The space" is understood by Lefebvre as the sum total of the intermingled phenomena and production processes that interact to create the city and the urban environment. The city is a mix of our perceptions, memories, interactions, activities, and material dispositions. In other words, the essence of a good life within the city is linked to all these layers, which should not be perceived as separate elements but more like a kaleidoscope of constantly overflowing elements. Elisa T. Bertuzzo and Günter Nest aptly point out that we have many experts (for example, architects, ecologists), who focus on their specific field, whereas the city works as a system that must be evaluated from a multidisciplinary standpoint. What makes us citizens is the basic fact that we are capable of participation, which is, according to Lefebvre, nothing special. On the contrary, it is a natural part of living in society. However, to become a full-fledged citizen, it is necessary to go beyond the material construction of a space, to the abstract and social sphere.

Lefebvre's theory introduces "the space" as a process consisting of various mutually conditioned parts, which enables the inhabitants to participate in its creation. However, during the pandemic, the understanding of being a citizen became fragmented when social interactions were cut to a minimum. The role of abstract space was diminished since all political and power relations were focused on how to manage the pandemic.

In these difficult times, we were left with the material layer of space. And, in most cases, we were allowed to only use our immediate surroundings since government restrictions strictly determined where we could go. As a result, benches were orphaned from social gatherings, though their material essence remained the same. The observation of the bench

from my window became a small island of reassurance not only for me as a spectator but also for other local residents as actors. This poses new questions. How can we enjoy space without cultural activities, social contacts, and abstract visions? Is there any way to benefit from this situation?

Our results-oriented society drives us to live so fast that we hardly notice the shape of the bench in front of our house or the view we could enjoy from it. However, the pandemic has forced us to implement new ways of perceiving the town through personal engagement. This personal way of using space is projected onto a wide range of activities, such as the focused observation of architecture, the exploration of unknown places, or the use of our sensory perceptions to delve into our surroundings. The situation engages our awareness of spatial usage. While de Certeau focuses on the different forms of our resistance to following prescribed paths, he also highlights the material and the visible layers of space and the way in which we navigate ourselves within them.

Pandemic restrictions opened up our capacity for a different kind of spatial awareness, forcing people to implement a mechanism of personal engagement and exploration of the conditioned relation between the structure of a town and our behaviour. Hence, tactics prevailed over strategies. This raises the question of the role that space plays in our lives. At this point, I would argue, people started to develop their relationship with the material layer of the town. The bench itself became our partner during the endless days, providing its visitors with new stimuli. It ceased to be only a place for other activities; sitting on the bench became a primary activity in itself. This phenomenological approach leads one toward different ways of exploration of how we make sense of our experiences. One could follow one's senses and acquire direct contact with a city, which, I argue, is something that usually lags behind the social and cultural layers. Before the pandemic, the bench was used for various kinds of activities, such as social gatherings, which were disconnected from the perception of the bench itself. The new situation encouraged people to explore the material of the bench, the position of the armrest, etc. Some went further and laid down, while others spent several minutes trying to find the most comfortable position. Others adopted the bench as their daily ritual, and I saw that some people actually appeared at the same time each day.

What Merleau-Ponty suggests is that "at every moment we are forced to adopt a certain point of view" (Merleau-Ponty 2004, 53) or, as Shengli surmises, adopt a certain "form of perception" (Shengli 2009, 138), which plays a central role in our understanding of the world. De Certeau advocates for the implementation of different points of view when he is concerned about our alienation from space itself (the built environment) in favour of mere

consumption. The effect of consumption, de Certeau argues, is that we often take spatial dispositions for granted, and therefore, as I abstract from de Certeau, we lack our own point of view. The alienation of people from their dwelling space leads to a disconnection from the world, in which the material layer of space "works as a fundamental dimension of our being and acting in the world" (Ciolfi and Bannon 2005, 221). De Certeau's argument in favour of better understanding and personal engagement with the material layer of space is aligned with our better understanding of the world.

For Lefebvre, space is a process consisting of a synthesis of different layers. However, with respect to perception, Lefebvre agrees with Merleau-Ponty when he claims that space consists of different materials, such as stones, wood, etc., and that people experience space through the senses. Both Lefebvre and Merleau-Ponty consider this to be crucial for getting to know the city and developing the feeling of belonging in it. Lefebvre (1991) considers perceived space to be "the practical basis of the perception of the outside world" (p. 40). As examples of direct contact, Lefebvre uses everyday activities such as sitting on a bench or exploring architecture, which involve interaction not only between human beings, but also between oneself and a space. Without the ability to perceive our surroundings with a certain sensibility, Lefebvre contends, space will come to play a less important role in the context of human life.

I argue that previously marginal everyday activities, such as going outside and sitting on a bench, became the highlight of the day during the lockdown. This implies a personal engagement with the bench itself—touching it and feeling its material and structure, thinking about its shape and spatial orientation. A similar kind of experience comes from directing our attention to architecture. Once, during the lockdown, I spotted a couple admiring a small statue that decorated the entrance to their house. Their conversation expressed amazement: "Wow, this is the first time I've noticed this facade. Isn't it beautiful?" Things that were usually overlooked gained new importance as objects of our observation.

These facts, which may seem like minor details, can play a crucial role in our perception of the town and the space in which we live, especially when restrictions on social interaction and cultural events increase our capacity to perceive a city in its material sense. The structure of a town thus acts like the foundation stone on which other abstract layers balance. If we diminish the symbolic use of objects, we might focus on their meaning, which would help us to develop their potential for better use. And sometimes simplifying things to their bare essence helps us better understand the next layers we build on them.

William Hollingsworth Whyte Jr., an American urbanist, known for his research on public spaces in New York, composed his theory of social life in squares around the notion of sittable places as a key factor of well-planned public spaces (Whyte 2020, 484–86). If Whyte asks how many benches we need, I ask what makes people actually sit and spend some time on those benches. What I, therefore, abstract from de Certeau's theory of resistance is not the notion of civic disobedience *per se* but the creativity through which one acquires a new meaning of the built environment that enhances imagination.

Foucault, in his essay "Of Other Spaces"(1986), argues that outer spaces lead us away from the inner ones. What de Certeau stresses is the importance of knowing outer space to know oneself better. Unlike Arendt, de Certeau emphasises everyday life as political, as a "constant field of appropriation" and perception, which animates architecture and makes it real (Hunt 2003, 63). In my reading, everyday practices function as acts through which one can liberate our body and mind from an imposed system by enhancing creativity, which is, according to de Certeau, a way to achieve independence. Such practices allow individuals to follow different frameworks than the imposed one and thus to better understand oneself without barriers. The form of resistance I outlined in this chapter is not connected with destroying the built environment but with a better understanding of it.

Additionally, the metaphor of spiderwebs is woven throughout the chapter to reveal a distinction between Arendt, Foucault and de Certeau's approaches not only towards power present in public spaces but also concerning the notion of freedom in public. If, for Arendt, it is essential to explore the condition in which the spiderweb can be freely woven, then Foucault sees power as an intricate web within which it is possible to change positions but not to jump off. And finally, de Certeau considers it necessary to constantly reweave the spiderweb by stripping it into its core. Only then can one create their own story and space.[37] As Conley writes: "The existential practitioner uses stories and narratives to relocate the places where they are told. He or she inserts space into place" (Conley 2012, 36).

De Certeau's approach highlights the conditionality between lived and built space. One learns how to perceive space differently (not only to follow but also to operate in places controlled by others). At the same time, he emphasises the relationship between the individual and space, which expands thinking about public spaces into the sphere of perception. De Certeau thus offers a different perspective on becoming part of public spaces -- less through relations to others and more through relations to space itself. As he writes, he

[37] The *flâneur* creates a third or other space (Conley 2012, p. 44)

“tried to trace the intricate forms of the operations proper to the recomposition of a space by familial practices” (PEL xv). More importantly, to see space as an extension of ourselves, helps one to understand the kind of freedom that one can use as a part of public spaces. “Understanding human perception and the experience of one’s own body helps us to understand the freedom of the temporal structures of the body and world” (Viljoen 2010, 326). Although their ways differ, de Certeau, like Arendt, developed his ideas from the tangible to the realm of the intangible to describe a relation between the built and the lived environment.

This chapter outlined the role of everyday practices within public spaces and how one can build a relationship towards space through them. To draw a complex picture of public spaces, in the next chapter, I shift my focus from the everyday to the monumental. Most importantly, I will pose a question asked by Richard Sennett: “What kind of inner strength allows people to resist and combine with others?” (Sennett 2017, 261). Sennett’s question asks us to provide a connection between the built environment and different forms of resistance, appearance, power, and togetherness.

CHAPTER 5. PUBLIC AND MONUMENTAL. TEARING DOWN THE STATUES, BUILDING UP THE VALUES

In the previous chapter, I focused on everyday practices and spaces in the city, such as benches, streets and different ways of spatial engagement. Following the ideas of Aelbrecht, Stevens and Nisha, public spaces have their symbolic meanings. As they write, "they (public spaces), are recognized as the physical manifestation of symbolic values, collective memory, association, celebration and conflict" (Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha 2019, 18). In light of that, statues and monuments as a part of the built environment appear as something different then benches and streets as something more dramatic and deliberate. Moreover, their design and positions in public are more powerful because monuments can directly ignite debates about the values and desires of society.

> [D]esign, uses and meanings of public settings that transgress social, cultural, and aesthetic norms may encourage discovery, reflection and debate about values and even the reconciliation and transformation of collective social identity. (...)Art (...) are all aspects of social life that step outside of everyday conventions of behaviour, interactions and meaning (Stevens 2019, 261).

The toppling of statues demonstrates how people attribute meanings to space and, even more specifically, to art within public spaces. Our perception and behaviour, as conditioned by the role of statues and monuments, clearly demonstrate how the clash between the built and lived environment permeates our lives. As an art historian interested in public spaces, Rosalyn Deutsche contends, art within public spaces is inscribed into space itself; however, it is strongly imprinted into the perception of all participants of public spaces, and it engages them in a political discussion (Deutsche 2011, 145).

Deutsche points to the fact that public spaces are connected with political ideals inscribed within public art in the case of statues and monuments. She highlights that because public art is made by deliberative procurement, and by definition, it should be understandable and accessible to all participants in public spaces. Deutsche further emphasises that although the public is meant to be inclusive, access to it may remain very exclusive. On that account, she reads urban planning (with emphasis on art) as a certain form of "social responsibility" (Deutsche 1996, 4). Urban design, in its general sense, is not only concerned with

infrastructure, economic growth, and power relations but also involves people who live within, which brings the term responsibility as introduced by Deutsche. Therefore, the topics and questions raised in the previous chapters are brought together for a more extensive discussion in relation to the toppling of statues. Namely, there is a strong connection between power relations, civic activism, discrepancy between public and private, invisibility, bodies and values that should be introduced and promoted by public spaces. I consider the recent removal of statues as an appropriate concluding chapter of my thesis, which sheds light on cooperation between the built and lived environment.

Within this relation I believe that the term I have labelled as 'the ethics of public spaces' can be unfolded. The most precise definition I have found so far is the one Richard Sennett gave in his book *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (2018). He claims that the ethics of public spaces could be perceived as a way in which the city deals with cultural differences. "We might picture ethics in the city in another way, in terms of how it deals with cultural difference. A closed city is hostile to people whose religion, race, ethnicity or sexuality differs from the majority, whereas an open city accepts them" (Sennett 2018, 121).

In this claim, the city is perceived as a built static environment, while the cultural differences have a liquid content by which the static form is filled. Those differences appear within the presence of others, which I contend, in conjunction with Arendt, to be the essence of public spaces. Sennett points to the influence of others as participants in public spaces in the context of the city's built environment. It is precisely this connection between the "city's built forms and its way of life" which plays a central role in the debates around monuments and statues (Sennett 2018, 121). In *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (2018), Sennett highlights Arendt as one of the thinkers who influenced his attitude towards the public sphere as a place "where people can discuss and debate freely and equally because they are cut loose from their particular, private circumstances" (p. 299). He especially mentions *The Human Condition,* in which Arendt ignites his thinking about the conditionality between material space and the life of its inhabitants.

Influenced by Arendt's notions of the tangible (the public realm) and the intangible (space of appearance), Sennett uses the French words 'ville' and 'cité' to distinguish different ways of being in the city. While ville refers to a solid part of the town, cité expresses its liquid content within a stable form. "Initially these named big and small: ville referred to the overall city, whereas cité designated a particular place. Sometime in the sixteenth century the cité came to mean the character of life in a neighbourhood, the feelings people harboured about neighbours and strangers" (Sennett 2018, 1).

What is problematic, then, is that the solid form, which is meant to last, is constantly filled with new content. The one which is fluid and unstable. In other words, Sennett observes Arendt's terms that I introduced within Chapter 1, namely the public realm and space of appearance. Again, those two phenomena are observed separately but not to keep them apart, quite contrary in order to provide links between them. Like Arendt and Michel de Certeau, Sennett seeks certain conditions and connections between ville and cité. However, he is also interested in edges stemming from the friction of the two concepts. "It might seem that cité and ville should fit together seamlessly: how people want to live should be expressed in how cities are built. But just here lies a great problem. Experience in a city, as in the bedroom or on the battlefield, is rarely seamless; it is much more often full of contradictions and jagged edges" (Sennett 2018, 2).

As a sociologist, Sennett often draws from the field research he carried out worldwide. The conclusion he abstracts from his observations, which I find very fitting into a discussion about the relation between the built and lived environment, is as follows: "This is the ethical problem in cities today. Should urbanism represent society as it is, or seek to change it?" (Sennett 2018, 3-4). This question resonates with Foucault's observations of the genesis of towns and the role of the built environment in the maintenance of society. However, as Foucault stresses, architecture (and urban planning) have been used to maintain the growing number of people living in towns, as well as to enable them access to hygiene, etc. In that sense, from the historical perspective, the answer to Sennett's question is – both. Urbanism represents society but also seeks to change it, in the ideal case, based on its needs.

Mohsen Mostafavi, editor of *Ethics of the Urban, The City and the Spaces of the Political* (2017), unpacks the mutual relation between the physical and social dimensions of urbanism from the perspective of architecture. "The dynamics of the relationship between the physical and the social dimension of the urban is one of the key factors that help define our everyday interactions with others" (Mostafavi 2017, 9). Mostafavi is even more specific than Arendt and Sennett because he directly connects the built environment and urbanism as a way we think and plan cities in general and as a tool by which society can be maintained. Indeed, he emphasises "the tension between socio-economic forces and design solutions" (Mostafavi 2017, 9). According to him, the ethical and the political in the context of urbanism are two sides of the same coin. Namely, Mostafavi sees ethics as our values, the term he freely uses for human attitudes and ways of conducting oneself. At the same time, he connects the political with the structure of the environment. Again, what can be read here, as in the

thoughts of Arendt, Sennett, and de Certeau, is the connection between one's way of life and the place where one's life takes place.

Most importantly, Mostafavi contends that the structural part can amend and/or shape our values. "In the case of the urban, the ethical addresses the question of our values and our code of conduct as individuals and as a community and beyond, while the political represents the structural means by which we can address the actualization of values that matter to us" (Mostafavi 2017,12). As he labels it, the built environment, as the structural tool, has the potential to actualise the values of citizens, which resonates with Sennett's question of architecture as a representation or shape-shifter of our values, as well as with Foucault's observations.

With the ideas of Sennett, Arendt and Mostafavi in mind, I ask what kind of values and emotions are evoked by monuments and statues that are placed in shared public spaces. My question could be outlined as follows: What role do monuments play in our lives, and how do they shape the ways that we perceive the world?

5.1 Why do monuments matter?

The question of monuments has been observed from many different angles, which ignites ongoing debates concerned with the aesthetic, political or historical implications of representing the past. Monuments became a lens through which individuals examine the representation of the past (Kattago), collective memory (Halbwachs), the cult of the dead (Koselleck), the question of visibility and invisibility (Musil), or the discrepancy between memory and history (Nora). This discussion also involves dividing sculptural art into groups such as statues, monuments, and memorials. For the sake of my argument, I will not research the branch that includes memorials as "sites of death, places attached to a certain event" (Koselleck 2002, 320). On the contrary, my observation focuses on statues and monuments erected within public spaces, predominantly squares or centres of parks - the most noticeable places in the town, to serve their stated purpose of being visible to people who pass by.

I use the terms, statues and monuments, interchangeably in this chapter. A statue has its own more or less closed logic, which intersects with the logic of monuments. They are often a celebratory depiction of the past and are closely tied to a certain place. Due to their representative function, statues and monuments are mostly figurative and placed on pillars, which are an inseparable part of the art (Krauss 2011, 131). Plinths are part of the statues since they highlight their monumentality and importance. "(…) Public artworks placed high

above the ground provide opportunities only for contemplation, whereas those at ground level are more likely to triangulate social interactions" (Stevens 2019, 267). In that sense, monuments and statues do not refer only to themselves, but they are part of a broader context (Kraus 2011, 134). This definition is valid for the examples mentioned in this chapter. Additionally, I introduce monuments and statues as tools by which I further develop the theory of conditionality between the lived and built environment, which is at the core of my argument.

In the first part, I ask why some monuments and statues evoke such anger and desire for destruction. In order to do so, we have to ask what they represent. Ann Rigney, in her article "Toxic Monuments and Mnemonic Regime Change" (2022), claims that "monuments are materialisations of larger narratives that operate within a broader culture of memory" (Rigney 2022, 7). In that sense, monuments "never stand alone" (Rigney 2022, 14). They embody certain values; therefore, with their removal, people struggle with what they represent, not the object itself. This conflict of dynamics is a "resource for effecting change" (Rigney 2022, 11), in which groups that have been marginalised raise their voice to become represented in the narrative created by the built environment. "They not only give symbolic expression to the values with which the depicted figures are associated, their very physical presence is itself a way of imposing those values on society while claiming to speak on behalf of the community at large" (Rigney 2022, 17). The material presence of statues highlights the intangible. Statues materialise the absence of someone, usually the monarch, the chieftain, the poet etc. In that way, they pass past values into the present. As Deutsche frames it, they embodied an image of a "glorious past" (Deutsche 1996, 5).

With turbulent changes in society, how are we capable of building or maintaining the current values on the past ones? As Gary Younge writes, clashes over statues express more than aesthetic differences. "(…) the issue was never confined to the statue itself. It was always about what the statue represented: the prevailing and persistent issues that remained, and the legacy of whatever the statue was erected to symbolise" (Younge 2021).

In a similar way, Erika Naginski emphasises the role of an allegory that statues and monuments generate. According to Naginski, allegory is an "ability to create a significant link between ideas and things" (Naginski 2017, 87). The more people are exposed to a particular image, the more they become familiar not only with a thing itself but with its meaning (Naginski 2017, 88). In that sense, the statue becomes a bearer of embodied ideas (Naginski 2017, 100). The central point of Naginski's argument is statues do not represent a real person but are an allegory of a new social order (p. 101).

According to Sandra Shapshay, monuments are created with a particular awareness of adoring and celebrating certain political or religious acts held by individuals. They arouse strong emotions and maintain memories and discourse. “The purpose of any work of art (schöne Kunst), for Kant (as well as for Danto) is to embody ideas, particularly for Kant, moral ideas, and to spark a free play with these ideas” (Shapshay 2021, 151). I claim that one does not put as much effort into discussing monuments’ political and moral impact when speaking about the role of art within public spaces. Shapshay aptly points out that this impact received almost no attention from aestheticians, and she aims to establish a category called monumental, where the aesthetic and political influence appear as an intertwined phenomenon. She defines the “monumental” as follows: “monument—that is, a work of public, commemorative art—succeeds in being monumental (or eliciting a ‘monumental response’ in a spectator) when that spectator:

- *feels* a combination of awe (feeling small and humbled in the presence of something great) and ennoblement (by feeling in some way connected/unified with that great thing or what it represents), and

- *reflects* at least in part *favorably* upon the intended moral and political lesson embodied in the public, commemorative art” (Shapshay 2021, 155).

Shapshay, like Rigney, expects statues and monuments to engage with the inhabitants' emotions. They both await a reaction from the audience. As Rigney states with respect to monuments: “In their very materiality, they are designed to edify, generate awe, display power, inspire enthusiasm or, as in the case of more recent memorials, quiet reflection” (Rigney 2022, 18). Or, as architect Michael Arad contends, “architects and planners rarely discuss emotions” (Arad 2017, 107). In that sense, the question is not a matter of aesthetic taste or whether a monument is beautiful but whether it is appropriate to feel certain emotions while using public spaces. Arad same as other highlights the fact that our existence is directly conditioned by the built environment in which our lives take place. That provides us with a direct connection between Richard Sennett and Martin Heidegger and his notion of dwelling.

5.2 Built environment as a part of dwelling

Sennett was not only influenced by Arendt but also by Martin Heidegger, whose term *Dasein*, in the sense of ‘dwelling’ or ‘being there’ (Sennett 2018, 124) he uses quite extensively. As

evident, the name of Sennett's book, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* is a direct reference to Heidegger's article "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1971)[38], in which Heidegger argues that building (the built environment) is part of our dwelling (the lived environment).

> Bridges and hangars, stadiums and power stations are buildings but not dwellings; railway stations and highways, dams and market halls are built, but they are not dwelling places. Even so, these buildings are in the domain of our dwelling. That domain extends over these buildings and yet is not limited to the dwelling place. The truck driver is at home on the highway, but he does not have his shelter there; the working woman is at home in the spinning mill, but does not have her dwelling place there; the chief engineer is at home in the power station, but he does not dwell there. These buildings house man (Heidegger 1971, 143).

Heidegger claims, "We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are dwellers" (Heidegger 1971, 146). To dwell is, according to Heidegger, a special type of human existence. People dwell in spatiotemporal dispositions and in the presence of others. Dwelling, therefore, highlights the connection between people and their surroundings. In order to dwell, we build houses; however, as Heidegger argues, "not every building is a dwelling" (Heidegger 1971, 143). The dwelling is linked to public spaces because it connects the built and the lived environment. Heidegger is even more specific in the definition of its relations when he suggests that "dwelling and building are related as end and means" (Heidegger 1971, 144), or that "building belongs to dwelling" (Heidegger 1971, 158). What is problematic in the context of statues is that dwelling is rarely considered "*the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals exist" (Heidegger 1971, 146). Therefore, according to Heidegger, we build without having the notion of dwelling in mind. However, dwelling is as important as belonging to a certain place and belonging to "men's being with one another" (Heidegger 1971, 147). In my reading of public spaces, dwelling plays an important role that is aligned with the Arendtian notion of the common world since we dwell with others in spatiotemporal conditions. What also needs to be highlighted from Heidegger's thought in the context of public spaces is that dwelling preceeds building. We build out of the need for dwelling.

On that account, Sharon Zukin highlights the unique role of public spaces within the context of dwelling when she writes that "public spaces construct broad social identities. These refer to people's ability to think of themselves as city dwellers, citizens of a nation-state, and free human beings" (Zukin 2018, 21). To discuss the role of statues, one's dwelling might be at stake because one does not feel welcome in a certain place. While Heidegger

[38] Originally a lecture "Bauen, Wohnen, Denken" that Heidegger presented in 1951.

reflects on the relation between man and space, I claim that statues and monuments have a specific position of indirect forms of discrimination. The indirect means that no signs would prevent a certain group of people from the public space where the statue is located. Still, they carry certain values that can be read as the reproduction of spatial inequality and exclusion.

That part, I argue, is not emphasised within Arendt's writing and, therefore, needs to be addressed. "The question of structural political injustice is absent from her account: some citizens—for example, women or ethnic minorities—are marginalized and underprivileged based on cultural, legal, and political situations" (Weinman and Robaszkiewicz 2023, 148).

What I defend in this chapter is the built environment, as a part of the disciplinary mechanism, plays a role in marginalisation and injustice. As Foucault states, in regard to power mechanisms, our actions indirectly maintain or foster the population. Or, as Robert Sampson argues, indirect forms of discrimination are indeed present; although they are rarely obvious, they mostly remain unnoticed (Sampson 2017, 76–77). Iris Marion Young frames this situation with the notion of spatial justice by asking whether the spatial conditions are distributed fairly among strangers. In other words, the built environment has its specific location where mutual interactions occur, which creates a life within the cities. "By "city life" I mean a form of social relations which I define as the being together of strangers. In the city persons and groups interact within spaces and institutions they all experience themselves as belonging to, but without those interactions dissolving into unity or commonness" (Young 2011, 237).

Spatial justice is also a term closely related to the notion of ethics of public spaces as articulated by Mostafavi, who defines it "as a recognition of how the settings of our everyday actions and relations, infrastructure, retail, housing, places of work and leisure are all components of how justice is practised in actuality, and not only in an abstract and generalizable fashion" (Mostafavi 2017, 15). According to his reading of architecture and urbanism spatial justice is distributed and practised through the formal structure of architecture, which directly influences or conditions our well-being in the built environment. For instance, Mostafavi asks why it's possible to change laws to be more just and to change the healthcare system to be more accessible, while transforming public spaces seems to be more complicated. "In considering how to make cities healthy, there is a need for constant attention to the diversity of environmental, legal and social issues that affect the lives of the citizens" (Mostafavi 2017, 14).

For Sennett, exclusion through a built environment is a form of political expression. In addition, architect Quentin Stevens argues that the sense of belonging is a crucial part of

an inclusive built environment within the context of our everyday life practices. Inclusion helps one to acquire meaning in the place and community that one lives in. As he writes: "Planning for place identity, sense of belonging to place and inclusive communities must in particular be seen as a matter of generating meaning for places, their communities and everyday lives. The plural city is the city of multiple meanings regarding qualities of place and life" (Stevens 2019, 261). As argued earlier, Arendt connects dwelling, the space of appearance, and plurality with the task of durability while stating that the built environment "cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal men. Without this transcendence into potential earthly immortality, no politics, strictly speaking, no common world and no public realm, is possible" (HC 55).

Building and dwelling have their parallel in Arendtion's notion of homo faber and action. Homo Faber creates objects for the world, such as buildings and public spaces, in which action (but also labour) takes place. As Serena Parekh stresses with regard to Arendt's distinction of labor, work and action, "we build objects through fabrication, we build political institutions, through our political activities, action and speech" (Parekh 2009, 70). Therefore, all three conditions are intertwined in public spaces to create an environment where the human condition may be developed. The strong connection between building and dwelling also resonates in Heidegger's essay, where he concludes that one has to "build out of dwelling, and think for the sake of dwelling" (Heidegger 1971, 159). Are statues and monuments erected with that in mind?

The power of monuments lies, according to Shapshay, first in "their political/ideological/moral content and, second, in their essentially public address" (Shapshay 2021, 148). Although I agree with Shapshay's argument, I would like to point out the problem of exposing individual values or interests. In particular, I perceive monuments as promoting one specific value instead of a plurality of interests which appear in public spaces. To frame it with Arendt's ideas, the problem is denying the actualisation of pluralities through pursuing an individual interest in public spaces, which leads to alienation from the common, or as aligned with Heidegger's experience, the sense of not belonging, or spatial injustice (Young and Mostafavi), marginalisation of certain group of people (Weinman and Robaszkiewicz). However, within the core of all of these approaches is the conditionality between the lived and the built environment. The spatial is in the case of statutes and monuments intertwined with politics, since its connect with both - space of appereance and the public realm.

As Shapshay claims: "Monuments are prime examples of works of art that aim to express specifically political ideas" (Shapshay 2021, 151). Figurative statues as monuments

are caught between honouring and venerating someone in the past and the needs and values of the present, which may clash with the values sculpted into stone. To enter the public realm, to appear and reveal oneself to others, is, according to Arendt, a way for citizens to become a part of a political world. Similarly, monuments seem to appear in public and become part of our common world. Although they do not speak and act, they still strongly impact our experience of space.

In his essay, “On The Use and Abuse of History for Life” (2010, originally 1874), Friedrich Nietzsche reflects on the term monumental, not solely with respect to specific statues but more broadly with respect to a monumental perception of history. Monumental history is, for him, how we perceive the past. We build our present and future upon the foundation of the past. Like a tree, Nietzsche writes, humans have roots that connect them deeply with their history. “The feeling of the tree that clings to its roots, the happiness of knowing one's growth to be not merely arbitrary and fortuitous, but the inheritance, the fruit and blossom of a past, that does not merely justify but crown the present” (Nietzsche 2010, 15). Our interconnectedness with the past means that we are growing from the past into the present, which also provides one with the knowledge that what was possible before may repeat itself. As Nietzsche argues: “Now, what purpose is served for contemporary man by the monumental consideration of the past, busying ourselves with the classics and rarities of earlier times? He derives from that the fact that the greatness which was once there at all events once was possible and therefore will really be possible once again” (Nietzsche 2010, 10).

Nietzsche criticises monumental history for its ability to create false narratives due to selectiveness favouring great events and individuals. Moreover, monumental history triggers the hope that great history may occur again. Nietzsche argues for the limitation of monumental history because, it cannot have “complete truth” (Nietzsche 2010, 11). To connect Nietzsche’s critique of monumental history with the role of monuments within public spaces, he reveals the conflation of the individual with the general good. To rip out and glorify only certain personalities from our history we are running a risk in which we may mistake individual motivations for the general good.

Similar to Nietzsche, Gary Younge claims that history can become distorted in the shadow of monuments. We may even envision monuments as a public representation of a certain time. Moreover, statues and monuments can easily be mistaken for tradition and history. Younge wrote his article “Why every single statue should come down” during the peak of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2021, in the spirit of that time, he not only

agrees with the removal of controversial statues, but goes even further by arguing that every human or figurative statue should be toppled.

> The problem isn't that we have too few statues, but too many. I think it is a good thing that so many of these statues of pillagers, plunderers, bigots and thieves have been taken down. I think they are offensive. But I don't think they should be taken down because they are offensive. I think they should be taken down because I think all statues should be taken down (Younge 2021).

Younge's article also links to Chapter 2 and Judith Butler's arguments about invisibility. Not only does he refer to a time when certain statues became visible, but also to a period in which certain people found a way to be heard and recognised. The BLM movement put things into motion not by using speech but by the acting bodies of protestors. For that, Younge frames the placement of statues in public spaces as arrogant because they are built with eternity in mind and thereby limit societal change (Younge, 2021). The narrative's inequity and selectiveness, represented in statues, are linked to the possible creation of a cult erected around one person. The space of appearance in the public realm is always more complex than statues may symbolise. Sculpted individuals are only the tip of the iceberg in the complex chain of history from which they are torn out and placed onto a pedestal of the past.

What stems from the above description is the fact that the public realm is not meant as an end but primarily as a means, which this discussion circles back to Heidegger's claim that "dwelling and building are related as end and means" (Heidegger 1971, 144). As described above, statues are a means of symbolic appropriation of public spaces. They selectively represent certain aspects of the past while ignoring or downplaying others. For Zukin, "these symbols repress memories of some eras while selectively reinforcing others" (Zukin 2018, 26). Influenced by Nietzsche, Younge and Shapshay's critical category of monumental history, we can find ways to understand better the role of public art and complex moral views in the monuments and statues that surround us. The tendency to make public space more inclusive and widen its plural significance is opposed to what statues represent. They made spaces more exclusive by pursuing the feeling of 'not belonging' to the public. According to Deutsche, the built environment is a celebration of a specific power and understanding of history (Deutsche 1996, 4). Thus, the framing of toppled statues reveals a discourse in which we aim to celebrate power but not the people itself (Deutsche, Younge). As Younge states concerning the toppling of the Colston slaveowner statue in Bristol: "But you've just shown that this (the statue) is not a particularly effective way to remember people" (Younge, 2021).

The answer to the initial question of what statues and monuments represent is that they carry very strong emotions of awe or humility. They also offer a false or at least fragmented picture of the past from which an incomplete narrative stems. Statues are erected to maintain power discourse but not to spark power relations itself, but to maintain domination. We can read them as agonists, not antagonists, with the lens of Chantal Mouffe. Moreover, they may exclude people from the common world and public appearances and prevent them from dwelling with others. Given the exclusive nature of statutes, I examine the collective act or action of toppling during protests in public space in the second part of this chapter. I also address our capacity for new beginnings and change through the built environment.

5.3 The change

I open this part with a counterargument to what was written. In the previous section, I described statues and monuments as representative of a certain narrative and as a visible part of the built environment. In contrast, Robert Musil writes:

> [M]onuments are so conspicuously inconspicuous. There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument. They are no doubt erected to be seen — indeed to attract attention. But you never look at them, and do not generally have the slightest notion of whom they are supposed to represent, except that maybe you know if it's a man or a woman (Musil 2006, 64–65).

The toppling of statues and monuments sheds light on what they represent and the context in which they were built. The act of toppling also makes the statues visible, even for those who have been living next door to them for the past forty years. Therefore, within the context of broader political and social change, a question emerges regarding another layer in this discussion. When we dig deeper into why only certain monuments are visible and spark public interest, we can also ask - why now? Hence, why are some monuments visible in the public space?

This question was central to Reinhart Koselleck's research on war memorials and the semantics of historical time. Our sensibility towards the built environment is fluid and constantly shifting in time; for that, I see Musil's claim as only a partial truth. "The connection between a demand for meaning in political and social terms and its visual expression is established by the formal language of memorials that are supposed to reach the sensibility of observers. Both the forms and the sensibility are subject to historical

transformation, but they apparently change along different temporal rhythms" (Koselleck 2002, 324). I perceive tearing down the statues as a litmus paper of change in our built environment through a lived one. As stated within Chapter 1, according to Arendt, the value of a certain thing (in that case, a statue) appears as an exchange between members of society. The clash that stands in the centre of my thesis became omnipresent after the murder of George Floyd in 2020, especially in the United States. More than a hundred statues and monuments were torn down in that year as a result of a fight to end systematic racial injustice that was, among others, distributed and maintained spatially. It was not only the call for a different built environment but also for a new way of living together. As Kattago puts it, "One of the first signs of regime change is the tearing down of statues and monuments. This symbolic break with the old regime and beginning of a new one leads to a myriad of other questions" (Kattago 2015, 180).

The action, as described through the lens of Hannah Arendt, is manifested in its destructive potential – in order to start something new, something else has to vanish. A new beginning is introduced through the end of something else within the toppling of statues. However, according to my reading, this act does not provide answers or solutions but poses questions as a new beginning to a previously missing dialogue. Additionally, it not only influences the communities but also changes how we think about public spaces and their meaning. The toppling of statues often takes place as a result of collective action and protest. As Zukin writes, protests occur in public spaces and can also change how we perceive those spaces. "Though central places have no monopoly as a site of protest demonstrations, they carry a significant moral weight in the history of the nation, (...) they also command widespread attention. For both reasons, collective actions in these spaces have a strong potential to shape public opinion" (Zukin 2018, 17).

As I argued throughout this thesis, we can change society through space and the city. Moreover, protest and action in public spaces are linked to what David Harvey calls 'the right to the city'. The term 'right to the city', which is the original title of Henri Lefebvre's essay from 1967, is translated by Harvey into "cry and demand" as a reply to an existential pain of everyday life (Harvey 2019, 10). What is crucial to emphasise is that the whole designation of the right to the city did not arise as an academic expression. Instead, it originated from Lefebvre's observation of grassroots movements, communities, and urban life. Harvey, like de Certeau, portrays a city and its life within it as a form of a revolution that takes place in our everyday practices (Harvey 2019, xvii). It's not systematic but instead very specific and related to current issues. Hence, the right to the city is unpredictable and open (Harvey 2019,

xiv). As Harvey emphasises, “The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights” (Harvey 2019, 4).

Harvey’s ideas about the right to a city as a kind of human right resonate with the arguments of Richard Sennett, who perceives the city as a symbol of openness and change in both the material and lived environment. Sennett warns that “what you gain in clarity, however, you will lose in freedom” (Sennett 2018, 10-11). Because freedom may be understood as freedom to implement a change into a rigid urban blueprint, public spaces have to be constantly renewed and actualised. In a similar vein, Krzysztof Wodiczko argues the importance of rights within the public space. Without accommodating all voices, the democratic assumption of public space ceased. “The democratic process depends on the vitality of public space. Public space is the space of rights“ (Wodiczko 2017, 126). Such as two lithospheric plates, the durability of a built environment and understandings of the past represented by people colliding together in public spaces.

What equalises us in that earthquake situation is the possibility to participate in a political narrative. However, there is a difference between being represented (e.g. someone is speaking for us) or creating a condition for being able to speak for oneself. I argue that being part of the environment, which is occupied by statues that represent a person connected with non-belonging and exclusive ideals, steals the voice from those who are marginalised or traumatised and puts them aside from the public. However, as Wodiczko states, the role of artists should be to equip people with the tools necessary for communication rather than to speak for them. “Media art and performative public art can play a role in recovering or unfreezing the capacity to speak by creating a situation in which marginalized or traumatized people might insert their experience into public discourse” (Wodiczko 2017, 126).

Art within public spaces should create the conditions for being heard and giving voice to the silenced. Only then might public spaces become a part of the “healing environment for free and open speaking” (Wodiczko 2017, 134). Wodiczko’s ideas echo Arendt's writings on the common world. While Arendt provides the connection between speech and our action, Wodiczko, like Butler in Chapter 2, adds a new layer by asking about the equal conditions for our speech. “Who is able to tell the truth? What are the consequences of telling the truth? What are its anticipated positive effects for the city, for the city's rulers, for the individual etc.?“ (Wodiczko 2017, 134-135) He reframes the role of artists as those who empower people as opposed to sculpture as a mere celebration of power. I see a connection between Arendt's action as dependent on speech and Foucault's term “Parrhesia”, which I refer to in

Chapter 3. Both Arendt and Foucault consider words and speech as tools of self-representation, just as Wodiczko does in his art. Wodiczko's work is mainly based on video art, in which he accommodates stories of homeless people performed and told on camera. He then screens those videos in a loop as a part of public spaces. In that way, he undermines the durability of statues by using a visual and audio loop of people telling stories. He enters a public realm with a temporary message, showing the lives of people who are usually rendered invisible or banished from the public.

Although he uses different techniques than a sculptor, I still see his work as fitting into the category of the monumental as understood by Rosalind Krauss, who argues that the new becomes more acceptable when we can associate it with forms we already know that have grown from the past, and that might develop into the future (Krauss 2011, 131). Wodiczko's digital statues and holograms did not lose their monumental dimension; instead, they were used in a different manner. There is something particular about human-shaped statues and monuments when they are torn down, and that is the fact that the crowd treats them as humans. Indeed, they are very often tied up and decapitated. I see this as an act in which the crowd acquires the ownership of public spaces. Not only in its spatial dispositions but also in the intangible sense, as I outlined with respect to Arendt.

Wodiczko's attitude towards public art underscores the question crucial to Shapshay's category of the monumental and Nietzsche's term monumental history – namely, what stories are worthy of being told? Secondly, his public art dives deeper into how we tell stories. In his projects, Wodiczko sheds light on public taboos such as illegal detention, imprisonment, domestic violence, work-related abuse, mental well-being, family issues, etc. These experiences are part of everyday life yet often hidden from the public realm. However, their message is spread in a temporal form because the statues are not permanent. They are not erected with eternity in mind; on the contrary, they tend to be a flickering reflection of the personal past. Nonetheless, Wodiczko tends to arouse strong emotions and promote values of inclusion. In that sense, his artistic attitude leans toward the ville rather than a cité, or space of appearance more than a public realm. Also, his art can be read as a case closer to Arendt's notion of action since durability is not secured by its temporality or a world of objects (homo faber) but by words and memories.

Another approach that moves towards eternity and attempts to reshape our sense of monumentality, has been brought up in Antony Gormley's fourth plinth project in Trafalgar Square, called *One & Other* (2009).

There has been ongoing discussion about what to add to the empty fourth plinth in London's Trafalgar Square. Gary Younge summarised its history as follows.

> The story starts in the mid-19th century, when the designers of Trafalgar Square decided that there would be one huge column for Horatio Nelson and four smaller plinths for statues surrounding it. They managed to put statues on three of the plinths before running out of money, leaving the fourth one bare (Younge 2021).

Younge, who was Chair of the Committee formed to devise a solution for the empty plinth, described some of the proposed ideas. "Over the years there have been requests to put David Beckham, Bill Morris, Mary Seacole, Benny Hill and Paul Gascoigne up there" (Younge 2021). At the end of the day, the committee decided to leave the plinth as an empty pedestal for various rotating arts projects. The best known was the one formed by Antony Gormley, in which he selected two thousand and four hundred real people, each of whom could spend sixty minutes on that empty fourth plinth. In total, Gormley received almost 35,000 applications, of which he randomly chose 2,400. Within this performance, Gormley raised several questions: "Who can be represented in art? How can we make it? How can we experience it?" (Gormley 2010) In addition, he argued that an open space provides individuals with the "possibility to test their sense of self and how they might communicate this to a wider world" (Gormley 2010).

Changing public space, as outlined by Harvey, Lefebvre, Sennett, and others, is the possibility of participating within the built environment and, therefore, demands the openness of the city. Such openness could mean direct intervention towards the built space, for example, destruction, as in the case of tearing down the statues. However, openness can also mean starting something new. Such a possibility of creation is closely aligned with Hannah Arendt's concept of natality. In the cases stated above, the discussion was scaffolded around the intangible, within stories, participation in the narrative, and being visible in public spaces. Therefore, in my last example, I will unpack the example known as the 'Buddha of Oakland', in which a statue was erected to promote specific values and to protect its neighbourhood.

5.4 The Case of the Buddha of Oakland

In a fifteen-issue ('He is Neutral', 2015) of an American podcast series, "This is Criminal", the reporter invited Dan Stevenson, who has lived in Oakland's Eastlake neighbourhood for forty years. Eastlake was a part of town known for its high criminality, which was also

inscribed into Stevenson's life. Once, he found an unarmed man on his balcony; however, the police did not do anything. Likewise, they did not help Stevenson solve his biggest problem - the giant pile of garbage that people used to pile up next to his house. For many, leaving garbage on the corner of 11th Avenue and 19th Street had become a habit. As Stevenson recounted on the Podcast: “Mattresses, tables, just junk, just continual junk, a lot of graffiti, a lot of urination and drug use kind of thing.”

Since police were inactive, Stevenson decided to act on his own to prevent people from creating a dump next to his door. He came up with a unique solution by placing a statue of Buddha in the spot where people used to leave their garbage. The statue was not a colossal piece of concrete; it was only a half-metre, relatively inconspicuous sitting Buddha. When a reporter asked Stevenson why he chose Buddha, he said it was because “he is neutral.”

Stevenson did not ask any authority for permission to place the statue.“It is best not to ask; you just do it and see what is happening.” Since 2009, the year he put a Buddha statue in his neighbourhood, people began to leave small gifts like oranges and coins there. As an unpredictable consequence of Stevenson's act, the statue of Buddha re-connected Oakland’s Vietnamese community. As days passed, individuals in the community built a small house around Buddha to pray and worship even when it rained. Even more importantly, for Stevenson, the statue helped lower the neighbourhood's crime rate by 85%. Drug dealing ended, and there were no long piles of garbage in front of his door.

After a year from the initial radio interview, Stevenson was invited back to share the current state of his neighbourhood. In hindsight, he said that “Buddha brings tranquillity and peace to the neighbourhood. He even has a Google map point.” In this new episode of “This is Criminal”, Stevenson drew a broader picture of Buddha's impact on Oakland's community. He highlighted the positive perception of the statue. “In a world where we hear the bad parts only, the positive becomes visible. It inspires people to do better things.” In a broader way, Stevenson diminished the importance of so-called hostile architecture as something designed to prevent crime and maintain a certain order such as benches with spikes or, as I argue in this chapter, statues as well.

Instead, he saw his way of dealing with crime as more powerful by changing people's attitudes in society. He did not intend to banish people from certain places as a soothing solution but instead offered common ground. Creation, in the sense of starting something new, is not about restriction as a final solution but a long process of the evolving possibility of change. Although the form of the city is well-planned, the content, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, remains fluid.

David Harvey maintains that "the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire" (Harvey 2008, 23). In other words, the nature of the city cannot be divorced from the nature of its inhabitants. Suppose we continue to be surrounded by hostile architecture and/or statues and monuments celebrating ultimate power and injustice as our common ground. In that case, there is a risk that we remain an imprint of it, which prevents us from creating places to dwell. "Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is focused on keeping away bad influences and bad people," (Stevens 2019, 268). However, Quentin Stevens maintains that being part of public spaces "also helps people to develop empathy and can lead to cooperation and solidarity" (Stevens 2019, 269).

5.5 Plurality without consensus

The toppling of monuments happens to be a platform for our disagreement with the values that statues and monuments carry. As tempting as this might be, Rigney considers overthrowing their durability. Monuments were built to last; however, by tearing them down, the opposite might be proven. Powerful moments of outmanoeuvring eternity bring hope that the built environment and the values that statues represent may be changed. The moment of transformation that Michael Arad describes is a sudden connection within an anonymous crowd. Those who considered themselves as strangers were suddenly unified (Arad 2017, 107). In Chapter 2, I described natality as a miracle of a new beginning; natality also presupposes our mortality. Men are not meant to last forever, neither as living beings nor as beings set into stone. Yet, we (as human beings) are much more than statues can tell us. Because statues, as Gary Younge adds, always tell us more about the values of the period when they were put up than about the story of the person depicted. "As the evolution of public spaces is inevitable, their degree of inclusivity also evolves in time in relation with local and global contexts" (Ercan and Memlük 2019, 101).

The question of change, however, cannot be solved only by removing or erecting them. The toppling of statues is not a direct pathway to equality or social transformation. Racism does not disappear the very minute that a statue falls, as described by Rigney in the example of the statue of Edvard Colston, the slave trader from Royal African Company. "Yes, it is argued, Colston has been decommissioned and racism is no longer publicly tolerated in the city's monuments; in that sense a corner has been turned. However, there is still inequality in housing and access to resources: so, what has really changed?" (Rigney

2022, 33). Rigney doubts the idea of change in its broader sense by asking what changes. As Harvey points out, civic disobedience usually does not happen as a systematic form of resistance; on the contrary, he sees it as a particular form of resistance because it is concerned with a specific spatial disposition (statues, parks, parking lots, etc.) (Harvey 2019, xiv). In the same way, Certeau describes the struggle between tactics and strategies. However, as stated in Chapter 2, change, like public space, is transferable as an intangible idea within the consequences of our actions.

Change is sometimes also mistaken for deletion by those who claim to be against toppling, but "removing statues does not erase our history"(Younge 2021). In addition, Younge aptly points out that statues are not history; they are representatives of historical figures. In their toppling, we do not change history; we only transform our collective narrative (Rigney 2022, 33). "Nobody thinks that when Iraqis removed statues of Saddam Hussein from around the country, they wanted him to be forgotten. Quite the opposite. They wanted him, and his crimes, to be remembered. They just didn't want him to be revered" (Younge 2021).

I state that monuments and statues attract attention because they are part of the public space. They gain different meanings if displayed in an exhibition or museum. "Displayed in this way, alongside some of the posters left by protesters, it has become a historical curiosity rather than an irritant in the public space" (Rigney 2022, 31). Foucault depicts museums and galleries as places of accumulated time, where time is locked and therefore perceived differently (Foucault 1986, 26). Deutsche considers museums and galleries as the opposite of public spaces in the context of art (Deutsche 2011,163). The difference between the perception of statues placed in museums and those located in public spaces reveals the meaning we assign to public spaces. Additionally, museums usually have an entrance fee, which may create a paradox. While displaying the cultural heritage of a certain minority, the minority cannot afford to pay and see it.

Rosalyn Deutsche claims that public spaces denote relationships with others through which we structure our discourse (Deutsche 2011, 160). To frame Deutsche's claim with other presented theories, our relations with others form our worldview; however, they are conditioned by the built environment (de Certeau, Harvey). Deutsche agrees with Harvey that the current fragmentalization of public spaces politically or economically causes problems with our perception of the common space, through which we create our place in the public/political life and which creates the sense that we are capable of change (Deutsche 2011, 168).

Ann Rigney writes, "we are carriers of stories "(Rigney 2022, 32). I would add that material objects are also 'carriers of stories.' Some of their presence may be toxic; however, their toppling assigns them a different position in our stories. Sometimes, their toppling can also shed light on a person embodied in the statue. Sometimes, as Rigney claims, "it is a criminal to leave the statue, rather than to tear it down" (Rigney, p. 29). The key difference is that we cannot avoid what is part of the public since we are part of it or conditioned by it. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 2, together with conditionality, we also have to include plurality. Public spaces have to accommodate myriads of unique individuals at once. What can be highlighted is that the toppling of the statues is not a result of a general consensus; it belongs to the agenda of a specific group of people. However, the same can be said about their erection. As stated in Chapter 1, universal consensus is not the purpose of public spaces. Therefore, there is no agreement on whether the toppling of statues should be labelled as beneficial or useless; with that in mind, we can conclude by saying that it happened to be a habitual part of our history. "It is not an attack on history, it is history itself" (Rigney 2022, 32).

To return to Nietzsche's metaphor of a tree, I agree with Wodiczko's claim that public spaces play a role in the process of healing. Hence, I consider toppling statues as a collective healing process that does not deny or erase the roots we stem from, only slightly shaping how its branches develop. As Robert Musil writes with respect to statues: "It is easy for them to stand around quietly, accepting occasional glances; we have a right to ask more out of monuments today" (Musil 2006, 67). As he suggests, I claim that in the recent toppling of monuments, we can read much more than our history by asking where we are going instead of where we came from. I perceive tearing down statues as a lack of previous dialogue,[39] which crystallised into an action that opened questions that were not answered before. "Urban design is (...) increasingly contingent on the social, political, economic and cultural context, and, by doing so, dependent on the users, owners, managers and the designers of that space, which act as its conscious agent and define its outcomes" (Aelbrecht, Stevens, and Nisha 2019, 4).

In his article, Younge portrays an excellent example highlighting the responsibility towards the built environment and its durability. Also, it puts to the fore the spontaneity and unpredictability of action.

[39] This point was brought to my attention by my friend and PhD fellow student at Tartu University Andrej Gavrilin.

> In the small town of Lake Charles, Louisiana, nature presented the local parish police jury with a challenge. In mid-August last year, the jury voted 10-4 to keep a memorial monument to the soldiers who died defending the Confederacy in the civil war. Two weeks later, Hurricane Laura blew it down. Now the jury has to decide not whether to take it down, but whether to put it back up again (Younge 2021).

This whole shift ignited a new discussion, as a result of which the pedestal remained empty as Hurricane Laura took responsibility, and there was, therefore, no one else to blame. Therefore, in that case, it was the wind that shaped the 'Nietzschean' branches in the time of silence.

CONCLUSION – WHAT IS PUBLIC ABOUT PUBLIC SPACES?

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody" (Jacobs 1992, 238).

This thesis highlights that creation does not happen only within the visible material sphere but also within the intangible realm of values, actions, and relations. It is not only our right to build, occupy the public realm, and stay in the villé, but it is also dwelling, being recognised within the space of appearance and participating in the cité. The challenge of the material part of public spaces in comparison to privately owned ones is in the design that is expected to accommodate all the pluralities. When designing for private spaces, its users set the expectations and aims in advance. Within the public realm, the boundaries of anticipation are unclear and fluctuate. The weakness but also the strength of public spaces is their flexibility to accommodate all the voices and bodies that appear not only in the time of being but also generations after.

Another paradox hidden in the discussion of public spaces is their durability on the one hand and fragility on the other. The fragility and openness of public spaces are aptly summarised by Quill Kukla's conclusion when they state: "I realized that there is nothing like a single, unified conception of public space" (Kukla 2021, 259). They refer to a city comprising an intricate net of different types of spaces, from private to semi-public, public, shared, etc. I suggest approaching the distinction between public and private, not from a perspective of ownership, since, as argued within Chapter 1, we live in a world that we have in common without owning it. However, that does not mean to deny the role of the built environment; quite contrary, it requires a deeper exploration and questioning of its meaning.

To fully understand the meaning and function of public spaces in our lives, some thinkers tried to highlight that their main essence is the presence of others, like Arendt's (1998) term, the common world or Kukla's (2021) notion of shared spaces. Moreover, I read public spaces as places of active spatial agency that allow interaction with a built environment. However, this thesis defends the conditionality of those two elements. To explain it with the table metaphor proposed by Hannah Arendt (Chapter 1), there would be no

place to sit and meet if there were no table. To re-frame it with proposed real examples, If there were no square, the white crosses (Chapter 1) would not connect strangers; if there were no statue in the little Norwegian Village (Chapter 3), people would be more likely to discuss the public space itself, same as in the case of the visual pollution (Chapter 1) etc. On the other hand, as said many times, this works vice versa as well; if there were no people, the table would remain empty; if it were not for Black Lives Matter and other activist movements (Chapters 2 and 5), we would live surrounded by an exclusive environment. If there were no active neighbours in Luhačovice, the place would not have had its community garden as a first seed of the common place (Chapter 1). If we take the table for granted, we not only diminish our role in fostering the tangible but also the intangible that exceeds it.

For that, I see Arendt's ideas as a call for active participation and practice of our common sense before totalitarianism unifies the plurality (Arendt 1964, 438, 465).What threatens the publicness of public spaces, according to the intersection of selected thinkers and cases stated in my thesis, is the alienation of the common world (Arendt), the possibility of not being recognised (Butler), the indirect exclusion from the built environment (Foucault), the mechanisation of our movement inscribed into the mechanisation of one's behaviour (de Certeau) or its unification and closeness (Sennett).

Public spaces can be read as trigger points and results, such as the beginning and the end. For that, think of them as a process rather than a product based on plurality, actions, and different forms of power relations by which public spaces are defined but also conditioned. They are constantly filled with new content. The new content appears in the presence of others, in which the actualisation of plurality is the actualisation of our values. That creates a paradox: everyone tries to get their spot, but the public realm has its spatial limits. That is why we have to understand its mutual conditionality better.

After constantly re-reading my thesis, I shaped the initial triangle of spatial division, which I outlined in my introduction (active citizens - passive citizens – politicians), into the following categories: I - others - the built environment, which highlights my newly acquired point of view. What this thesis suggests is to read public spaces throughout those categories in order to provide answers to initial questions: What is public about public spaces? What role do public spaces play in our lives? And how do they shape the way we perceive the world?

What I stress in Arendt is her approach to the common world, which is intertwined with public spaces through practising one's active agency. Therefore, public spaces are as public for as much as individuals can engage with them and others in them. With Foucault, I

emphasised the role of understanding public spaces to understand their roles in one's life - that if we want to understand how public spaces were formed, we first need to know how power worked in any given place and time. Also, understanding plays a central role in the relationship between the built environment, myself and others since, as he wrote, they can be understood only through each other, not as separate elements. With de Certeau, I highlight the perception of the built environment, which would prevent us from mechanically following the space and opening up new exploration possibilities beyond the pre-set framework. In that sense, they shape how we experience the world on both tangible and intangible levels.

Although the initial standpoints of selected thinkers' differ, in the end, they aptly complement each other to draw a complex portrait of public spaces. Arendt starts from the wide-term 'common world', which we are born into. In order to engage with the common world, one has to appear to others through action and reveal one's who-ness. Public, for her, is a mode of existence. Through our actions, we create a space of appearance which stems from the public realm but exceeds it. What I see as problematic with Arendt's action in the context of public spaces is that she does not evaluate its consequences, although she presents it as a never-ending chain of activities. For that, I enlarge her descriptive and political approach with Judith Butler, whose normative standpoint is keen on what we can consider as good or bad in relation to public spaces and the presence of others. For Arendt, what appears is visible. However, Butler stretches that point into the notion of recognition – not everything that appears is recognised and maintained equally. To intertwine the thoughts of Arendt and Butler, we need to reshape Arendt's central term 'action' towards its praxis as it appears within public spaces.

On the same note, Foucault considers spatial dispositions to be a fundamental aspect of communal life but also a crucial element of the exercise of power. He traces the conditionality between the built and lived environment from a historical perspective, stressing various forms of governance and population maintenance. For him, the common world is already filled with an intricate web of power relations, which one may perceive as enabling or preventing. Contrary to Arendt, he does not see action as appearance but in its causality of the exercise of power, which happens as action upon action. Actions and their indirect influence also underscore the role of the built environment as a tool to maintain one's behaviour and for understanding how the world can be shaped. Foucault is interested in relations that appear in public and among individuals, that are inseparable parts of it. He draws a complex picture of how we are governed, both through the built environment and the relation to oneself. The

principle of self-governance again enlarges Arendt's action because it asks how we appear and how we enter relations with others and spatial dispositions.

Although Michel de Certeau criticises Foucault's narrow description of power, in the end, their outcomes do not really differ because resistance, while not denying the Foucauldian interpretation of power relations, remains the main point of the power struggle. However, what distinguishes de Certeau from Arendt, Foucault, and Butler is his antagonistic approach towards spatial power relations, in which he does not consider the presence of others. While Arendt directly stresses plurality and its actualisation as a crucial condition of the public, Butler and Foucault also see plurality within the individual since one is not only self-producing but also produced by others. What I see as the novelty that de Certeau brings into the discussion, which aptly complements Arendt as my main guide, is the concept of perceived space and the role of spatial experience. The spatial experience stems from a conditionality between the lived (our behaviour) and the built environment and from his argument, that our relation to space is never neutral. The way to go beyond the mere consumption of what was given to us is to follow our senses. By doing that, one enlarges their experience of public spaces towards the role of the built environment as an essential part of public spaces.

The last crucial point is the connection between public spaces and ethics. As Arendt states, public spaces are realms of freedom, not places of necessity. To further develop her thought, I follow Foucault when he suggests that ethics is a considered practice of freedom. Additionally, Sennett's definition of ethics is how the city deals with its differences. However, the differences appear in the presence of others, which is crucial for both Foucault and Sennett's definitions of ethics, as well as for Butler, who claims that my own foreignness represented by others is my ethical connection to them. Within plurality, we are born through the actions of others, the same as through our appearances. This lies in the connection between tangible and intangible. The ethics of public spaces can be found, practised, and developed in the intersection of those realms, only when there are, at least, some public spaces left.

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