

Introduction: Complicity and Dissent, or Why We Need Solidarity between Struggles

Nitzan Lebovic
Lehigh University

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Nitzan Lebovic,

"Introduction: Complicity and Dissent, or Why We Need Solidarity between Struggles"

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Contents of ***CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 21.3 (2019)***

Special Issue ***On Complicity and Dissent***. Ed. **Nitzan Lebovic**

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Abstract: Growing pressure from politicians and corporations has thrown into question the very legitimacy of opposition and critique. A language of political affirmation has confused and misled the public, driving many to adopt a cynical attitude to politics. The result has been a rapid decline of legitimate critique, the rise of populism, and a growing tendency to squelch civil disobedience with a militarized police force. The introduction to the special issue considers the role of the complicit/dissenting intellectual in history and literature, politics and law. It explores the genealogy of the terms, as well as conditions for their appearance in our contemporary world. The introduction follows the advice of leading scholars, who contributed to this issue, in calling for "solidarity between struggles"—when one extends a sense of right and wrong beyond one's immediate identity or a vague universal understanding of "right."

Nitzan LEBOVIC

Complicity and Dissent, or Why We Need Solidarity between Struggles

Contemporary life in the Middle East and the United States offers ample opportunities for discussions of complicity and dissent. The political language shared by the two places offers paradoxes in which complicity and dissent are blended: privatization is presented as a form of economic participation; military action and police brutality strengthen democracy; security, immigration, and crime are fused so that government can combat "internal enemies." In both places, as in other populist regimes, it is common to speak of social equality in order to *exclude* refugees, or to cite "rights" to empower the majority and the powerful. Such paradoxes undermine the possibility of differentiating complicity from dissent, eroding that essential separation between a friend and an enemy, treason and loyalty. Now that it is essential to differentiate complicity from dissent, how shall we begin?

For the past few decades -- while considering the neo-liberal revolution of the 1980s, the fall of Berlin wall, and the revival of fundamentalist and populist politics -- thinkers have pointed to a global transformation that is cultural and political. In self-identified democracies, growing pressure from conservatives and corporations has thrown into question the very legitimacy of opposition and critique. The spread of a language of political affirmation has confused and misled the public, driving many to adopt a cynical attitude to politics. The result has been a rapid decline of legitimate critique, the rise of populism, and a growing tendency to squelch civil disobedience with a militarized police force (Müller 42). The political effect, at least where democracy is concerned, has been disastrous. In my own experience I have discovered that any attempt to question Israeli militarism, populism, or neoliberalism runs into stout resistance, let alone any talk of Palestinian nationalism. In the late 1990s a Palestinian friend and I spoke out routinely against our own regimes. Nowadays we would be beaten (or worse), without knowing which side the blows were coming from. When taking a political position is so dangerous, what motivation is there to be involved, to care about the other, to separate complicity from dissent and cooptation from critique? Our experience, in Israel and Palestine, shows that during the past two decades many of our close friends and family members have chosen to step away from politics, sometimes into outright escapism. Others, myself included, have emigrated to countries that seemed more open, that guaranteed critique and freedom of expression as part of democracy. But history has a way of catching up with one. As an immigrant critical of his country of origin, I find myself, once again, and from afar, in the unenviable position of defending critique itself to conservative loyalists or liberal moderates who push instead for cooperation, whether active or passive. Rejection of that approach, they make clear, will keep me and my kind from power and money—if we're lucky. In that context, complicity is not always an active ideological position; it can be, particularly in academic circles, a quiet and nonideological stance that appeals to essentialists, or to "absolute certainties in the form of sovereign and universal laws" (Bloch, *Craft* 14). In other words, while the professoriate—in line with neoliberal forces—has come to see identity, on the one hand, and universal values, on the other hand, as a legitimate form of critique, more radical dissent is interpreted as unprofessional, too political, counterproductive. Most egregious are expressions of solidarity with other struggles, what radical feminists called "solidarity between struggles"—when one extends a sense of right and wrong beyond one's immediate identity or a vague universal understanding of "right."¹ While an identitarian or universalist stance could be construed to offer a position of power, solidarity must align one's fate with that of a seemingly doomed opposition.

1. The Role of the Intellectual

There is nothing new in this demand for communal or institutional complicity, or the institutional home that brings together those ready to comply and those who demand complicity. Complicity sheds a strange light on agency; it changes the environment, but it does not have to act. As Marc Bloch explained in 1940, it does not take more than passivity, or "laziness and cowardice" in his words, to become complicit. Reflecting on the anti-Semitic regulations imposed on France during the German occupation, and his own failure to stand up to them, one of the two fathers of the Annales School clarified: "Out of laziness and cowardice we let things take their course. We feared the opposition of the mob... We preferred to lock ourselves into the fear-haunted tranquility of our studies" (*Strange* 172). This "mob" needs the cooperation of the elite more than it needs to be in the majority. As Mark

¹ The term was used by Mexico's Seminario Marxista Leninista Feminista de Lesbianas in order to unite different struggles against the regime under one banner. For a short discussion of "the work of solidarity" and the call for "solidarity between struggles," see Borland.

Bray shows in *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook*, "It doesn't take that many fascists to make fascism" (140). Indeed, in both Mussolini's and Hitler's cases, the number of party members was quite small—7 to 8% of the overall population in Italy in 1922, 1.3% in Germany in 1933. But if ideological fundamentalists amount only to a minority, where does the rest of the support come from? The rest, we argue in this issue, comes from different forms of complicity and the rejection of solidarity between struggles. "These regimes," said Bray, "consolidated their power by winning the support of conservative elites" (140) and on those liberals whose "alternative to militant anti-fascism is to have faith in the power of rational discourse, the police, and the institutions of government." (158) Among those elites one must acknowledge the intellectual elite.

Let us consider one way that writers, scholars, and philosophers have supported coercive regimes. Following Hannah Arendt's reports on the Eichmann trial, Gershom Scholem criticized her for a lack of *Ahavat Israel*, "love of Israel." For Scholem, Arendt's stress on mechanisms that worked across identities and were shared by perpetrator and victim, seemed nothing less than treasonous. In contrast, Arendt's well-known response was that while her identity as a Jew was a "pre-political" fact, a love that embraced an entire people, any people, struck her as unwise. "I am Jewish myself," she wrote; "I don't love myself or anything I know that belongs to the substance of my being" (Arendt and Scholem, 206-210). If identity was "pre-political," what was the political? For Arendt, it had to do with the condition that enables free speech: "To speak politically about the matter," Arendt argued, would be "to discuss the question of patriotism . . . [which] is impossible without constant opposition and critique" (Arendt and Scholem 207). In other words, a political discussion of identity cannot be affirmative and must be critical. But how critical? Is there a sort of critique that is separate from one's sense of self or a more general understanding of identity? Is the critical principle, one that Kant—and Arendt following him—equated with reason, peace, internal cooperation, and cultural development, devoid of self-affirmation? (Arendt, *Lectures* 52). And if so, how come Arendt herself came to oppose the civil rights movement after the enrollment of nine African American students at the otherwise all-white Little Rock Central High School in 1957, siding with the opponents of integration?²

We must not think of critique as an autonomous intellectual endeavor. Arendt saw it in the context of a philosophical tradition, taking inspiration from Kant, but like him failing to identify with struggles that were not specifically hers—that would have been a real expression of truth in the face of power. As Thomas Docherty argues in this issue, it is difficult to avoid self-affirmation, but not so difficult as seeking positive reinforcement. Even sophisticated thinkers, Scholem and Arendt among them, have always demanded a form of complicity; if not with state institutions, then with professional ones. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman identified this tendency with the pursuit of symbolic power and expertise in the academic community: "Standing up to the status quo demands courage, considering the terrifying might of the powers supporting it; courage, however, is a quality which intellectuals, once known for their bravura, or downright heroic fearlessness, have lost in their dash for new roles and 'niches' as experts, academic gurus and media celebrities" (50). Solidarity between struggles implies a clear understanding of complicity and dissent, including in those cases where one becomes the other. As Chad Kautzer's article in this issue demonstrates, Arendt betrayed her earlier call for dissent and joined the forces of affirmation and complicity due to her own confusion about American politics; she forgot "her critique of violence and the violent logic of a different order."

Dedicating an issue to complicity and dissent forces us to explain each term, as well as their areas of congruence. As rhetorical figures, complicity and dissent are opposites; one demands agreement, the other disagreement. But do they really mark political opposites? Is complicity the same as accepting an affirmative approach to one's identity? Is it apolitical, as Arendt argued, rather than the opposite of political dissent? To put it otherwise, history provides countless examples of situations that fall somewhere between the two poles. So what does it mean to be a dissenting accomplice or a complicit dissenter? How can we build a systematic analysis of the political, grounded in the solidarity among the many different struggles with power? This issue tries to answer such questions by a brief series of semantic, historical, and literary readings of complicity and dissent.

2. The etymology and semantics of complicity/dissent

The word *complicity*, as Stephen Clingman explained in his article on Nazi Germany and apartheid, comes from the Latin *complicitas*, "derived from *complex* . . . meaning 'to entwine around a person or

² It is interesting to note that Arendt failed to live up to her own ideals: during the Eichmann trial she mocked the Mizrahi Jews in attendance; as part of her critique of *Brown v. Board of Education*, she attacked black activists. For a critical consideration of those failings, see Gines.

thing" (281). Indeed, complicity expresses a variety of cooperative political forms whose ambiguity is anchored in an institutional language. In this issue we have gathered a series of articles questioning conventional attitudes toward complicity and dissent. As contributors were chosen for their commitment to dissenting and critical worldviews, none was likely to offer a particularly accommodating picture for champions of unity, harmony, and the rule of the big fish. Dissent is not only an abstract political or ethical term; it is a way of life. It must begin at our actual and institutional homes, with our ability to imagine an alternative: For ourselves as well as for others.

The word *dissent* comes from the Latin *dissentire*, "differ in sentiment, disagreement." Its historical semantics connect the affective to the political. When the word is inserted into Google's Ngram search engine, which searches a vast database of books and charts the frequency of a term's use over time, one notices that it was widely used during revolutionary eras. The use of the word reached its peak shortly before the Spring of Nations in 1848, and again since the 1960s, and its popularity has been on the rise since the early 1980s. It is discussed, in the present, in the context of current democratic norms and the memory of oppression. Following on Arendt's anti-totalitarian plea for dissent and critique, Jacques Rancière explained in *On the Shores of Politics* that *the political* exists thanks to *democracy*. If democracy is founded on the possibility of dissent—*dis*-agreement—then there is no politics without the actual expression of dissent (94). For Rancière the political is conditioned on the pursuit of equality as the ultimate goal, and equality assumes an open and a critical conversation in the public sphere. For him, "politics arises from a count of community 'parts.' . . . [It] exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part" (*Dis-agreement* 6, 11). In other words, politics and democracy are codependent, and without disagreement neither one is possible.

In a recent book on "agonistic democracy," Dimitris Vardoulakis drew on the thinking of Hannah Arendt, Jacques Rancière, and Jacques Derrida to explore the "distinction between unconditionality and sovereignty or . . . between democracy and sovereignty, between judgment and justification. . . . Instead of separating them, what matters is the fact that their distinction necessitates 'a principle of resistance or of dissent'" (39). Building on Rancière's analysis of democracy, the thinker Wendy Brown argued that "democracy stands opposed not only to tyranny and dictatorship . . . but also to a contemporary phenomenon in which rule transmutes into governance and management in the order that neoliberal rationality is bringing about" (20). Contemporary academic institutions argue in favor of democracy but act in accordance with neoliberal protocols. They show the face of multiculturalism but only as far as their ranking and endowment allows. Brown explained this paradox in plain terms: "The saturation of higher education by market rationality has converted higher education from a social and public good to a personal investment in individual futures, futures construed mainly in terms of earning capacity" (181). Such saturation has eroded critique, opposition, solidarity and dissent by "vanquishing the rationale for unions, consumer groups, or other forms of economic solidarity" or giving absolute precedence to *Homo economicus* over *Homo politicus* (65, 99).

3. The complicity/dissent of the intellectual

If in the 1940s Victor Klemperer and George Orwell, Primo Levi and the young Hannah Arendt followed the impact of the Holocaust on democratic culture. Their ideal was the public intellectual who placed justice before any other consideration. The worst of all denunciations was "Collaborator!" One thinks of Julien Benda's *Treason of the Intellectuals* (*La trahison des clercs*, 1927). Benda has recently been identified as "a fierce defender of the autonomy of intellectual life," his book being the basis of a set of "transcendental truths" (Wurgaft 11). Zvi Ben-Dor Benite shows in this issue that Benda's argument became "code for an array of intellectual modes of behavior and choices concerning their responsibility towards their vocation." Ben-Dor Benite rejects both Romanticism's "timeless morality" and contemporary "integral realism" in favor of an older but more explicit "positioning" of ruler and sage, a relationship mapped out by Kongzi (aka Confucius) and held up as a political ideal throughout the history of imperial China. Ergo, the first commitment of the intellectual is not to abstractions of justice and truth, but to a clear-eyed understanding of power relations. Maria Mühle confirms in her theoretical analysis that "There cannot be . . . any place for politics beyond power." For that reason, "power and counter-power are to be thought in their intrinsic interlacing" as a condition for resistance.

A bit more than a decade after *The Treason of the Intellectuals* appeared, Marc Bloch wrote *Strange Defeat* (*L'Étrange Défaite*, 1940). In contrast to Benda's judgmental tone, Bloch, a distinguished French historian of Jewish descent, later executed by the Gestapo, wrote a more reflective account of his time, a personal record of the failure of the intellectuals. As mentioned above, he used "laziness" and "cowardice" as synonyms for complicity—intellectual, economic, and political—

and pointed out how the failure to express solidarity disturbed the social and political texture of his time (104).

But are these works, and particularly the reflections triggered by the Second World War, the right model for our contemporary thinking on complicity and dissent? Or has the anti-totalitarian Benda-model overshadowed any chance for dissent, even within democracy? (Rosanvallon). Does the interruptive mode of democratic politics, a la Arendt, Rancière, and Brown, enable, even assume, the existence of complicity? In order to answer such questions, we need to pay more attention to the specific power relations and intellectual discourses that occupy the heart of our post-1945 political consciousness. The articles by Sa'ed Atshan and Raef Zreik join Ben-Dor Benite and Docherty in examining strategies of intellectual survival and dissent. While Atshan applies his findings to develop a positive view of the Palestinian intellectual in Palestine and the United States, Zreik is calling for a critical examination of complicity among both academics and politicians. I will return below to the specific interpretations proposed in this issue, but before I do, a few words about the historical model.

4. History: Complicity in Nazi Germany

The concepts of complicity and dissent framed the discussions of power relations inspired by the rise of fascism. Hitler's and Mussolini's insistence on unquestioning obedience to the state, and the threat of retribution for every sign of dissent were not fully appreciated by historians until recently. Mark Mazower's *Hitler's Empire* (2008) and Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands* (2010) demonstrate that without massive and varied forms of complicity, the Nazis would not have been able to hold onto much of their occupied territory, let alone carry out the massive slaughter they accomplished. Ukrainians, Latvians, Romanians, Hungarians, Frenchmen, and Russians joined the Waffen-SS, making up international divisions that Himmler kept secret from the racially puritanical Führer (Mazower 416-70). As Robert Ericksen's *Complicity in the Holocaust* (2012) shows, German universities and churches took the lead in declaring their institutional approval of the Nazis, portraying Hitler as "God's gift to Germany," making complicity a civic, as well as intellectual, requirement (21). Complicity was necessary not only where it contributed to a murderous campaign, but also for a stable administration, intellectual cooptation, and governmental autonomy. Yet the boundary between complicity and dissent was not evident. As Dan Stone (2014) and Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (2018) showed, a postwar politics of memory did much to erode the boundary: antifascist consensus relied on a suppression of the truth about the widespread wartime collaboration; complicity can be seen both as a strategy of dissent and, simultaneously, as a requirement for ideological continuity on both sides, German and French (Stone viii).

As Thomas Docherty argues in this issue, the intellectual's function "is to raise embarrassing questions publicly, to confront orthodoxy and dogma"; this function becomes part of "the economics of free speech" in democratic society. During the Nazi time a simple iteration, humorous or unintentional, could get someone killed. After the war, the ideological dictates of the Nazi regime were forbidden, but not the underlying exclusionary mechanisms; in response to the chorus of contrite apologies from Germans who with their next breath insisted that the Jews had it coming, post-World War II thinkers from the Jewish Italian writer Primo Levi to the American sociologist Everett Hughes pondered ideological continuity under the guise of dissent or regret (4-8). A rhetoric of shame served the purpose of self-cleansing while the victim was implicitly blamed. Levi identified this rhetoric as an extension of a moral "gray zone" the Nazis encouraged in the camps, a move that erased responsibility, fostering a more efficient climate of exclusion, dehumanization, and killing (37).³ From a different angle, as the historian Martina Kessel has recently shown, Nazis used anti-Semitic jokes as a cultural performance that was meant to reinforce the exclusionary mechanisms of the racist regime without being explicitly racist (380-401). In other words, contextualizing and historicizing the (totalitarian, in this case) discourse enables us to ask new questions about disciplinary mechanisms, and further, where one succeeds or fails to bend them. As Klemperer put it, "There were no great differences to be registered, no, in fact there were absolutely none at all... [S]upporters and opponents, beneficiaries and victims all conformed to the same models" (10). The only way for the historian to avoid the temptation of such uniform models, dictated from above or accepted from

³ "In the Lager, and outside, there exist gray, ambiguous persons, ready to compromise. The extreme pressure of the Lager tends to increase their ranks; they are the rightful owners of a quota of guilt . . . and the vectors and instruments of the system's guilt" (Levi 37). Forty years before the publication of Levi's last book in 1986, Karl Jaspers gave a series of lectures, later published as *Collective Guilt*, in which he made a courageous attempt to clarify this problematic terrain. For a good analysis of this topic, see the article by Thomas Docherty in the present issue.

below, is to pay attention to discursive phenomena as a process and not as a single event. In simple historical terms, it will be a mistake to separate the Nazi stress on linguistic and cultural *Gleichschaltung* (coordination), from the ambiguous "Gray Zone," which extended beyond identities and time periods, as Primo Levi argued (153-83). As a third generation to Holocaust survivors in the state of Israel, I have witnessed such exclusionary mechanisms in action, while hanging to the absolute separateness of victims, for justification.

4. Law and Literature: Postwar

As Clingman explains, after World War II the concept of complicity found a place in the laws created to adjudicate war crimes, and in the post-1945 politics of memory. Crucial to this were the Nuremberg Trials (1945–1946), the de-Nazification of Germany (1946–1951), and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1951). In particular, the last framed complicity as an ethical-legal issue for the first time. From the rise of apartheid in South Africa (1948) to the rash of genocides in the former Yugoslavia (1992–1995), Rwanda (1994), Darfur (2003–2004), and Myanmar (2016-17) gave the concept increased legal-political significance. The creation of the Palestinian refugee problem (the Nakba in 1948), and later the occupation of the West Bank (1967), forced legal scholars, historians, and authors to consider the complex situation of a victim of persecution who turned into an oppressor (Zertal). The political translation of the new discourse encouraged thinkers to reposition complicity and dissent in the heart of modern political representation and symbolic order.

The literary world readily engaged with this theme, and some of the best literary writing of the last three decades addressed complicity and dissent in South Africa and Palestine. The outstanding representatives of this trend are Nadine Gordimer and J. M. Coetzee. In addition, literary scholars have investigated the veiled expression of complicity and dissent in everyday language as opposed to baldly ideological statements. As Thomas Docherty wrote in *Complicity*, "Complicity, considered now in . . . linguistic terms, is established through...a reduced lexicon: the change in the language is actually a reduction of the vocabulary available for discussion and debate. It leads to the assertion that the existing conditions in which we live constitute something called 'reality'" (19). Docherty sees these questions addressed in Julian Barnes's *The Noise of Time* (2014), which traces the ways Shostakovich worked under Stalin, "where cowardice becomes not so much a question of morality, but a simple condition of survival" (77). Indeed, Docherty argues, "in totalitarian regimes... complicity with power reduces us to bare humanity, a 'technique for survival' as Barnes has it" (78).

Fiction allows us to consider how formal cooperation and disagreement echo within the private sphere. It does so slowly and gradually, while building a whole universe around a character. In this issue, Lital Levy connects this discourse to the family, focusing on the function and place of the child, its most vulnerable unit. In this context, the meeting between the private and the public must be mediated by the public language of the law and the private language of psychology. Both are institutionalized and supervised by the state, while claiming to keep their autonomy. Drawing on novels by Nadine Gordimer and Hisham Matar, Levy explains, "The scholarly research on child witnessing, based primarily in psychology and legal studies, is heavily focused on the issue of suggestibility during testimony. But the contemporary novel itself is rife with child witnesses of trauma." Both Docherty and Levy point to the epistemological and ontological role of language in facilitating truth and lies, quietist and rebellious approaches to political reality. As Arendt argued, where regular distortions of the truth are common, the ground is primed for "abolishing the capacity for distinguishing between truth and falsehood, between reality and fiction... The outstanding negative quality of the totalitarian elite is that the Leader, like a talisman, assures the ultimate victory of lie and fiction over truth and reality" (*Origins* 385). It is remarkable that Arendt missed, in this context, the pretense of intellectual autonomy as an enabler of exclusion. Intellectuals as Carl Schmitt and Martin Heidegger, authors as Ernst Jünger, and institutions such as the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute were not simply "treasonous." In fact, Jünger and Heidegger may have criticized, in private, the crudeness of Nazis. But they did not care enough about dissent, to ask themselves about complicity; they were more invested in their own symbolic power. Arendt would fail here again, three decades later.

In *Complicities: The Intellectual and the Apartheid* (2002), Marc Sanders showed that neither complicity nor dissent are unitary: there are many complicities, countless means to dissenting. He also dwelt on the role of intellectuals in building up an ethics of complicity/dissent around those multiplicities. In the book, Sanders traced both the forced and the willing complicity of intellectuals with the apartheid regime, as well as paradigmatic cases of dissent. His intellectual history begins with Karl Jaspers and goes via Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, Antonio Gramsci, and Jacques Derrida, to Gordimer and Coetzee. While the complicity of the intellectual class with totalitarianism always

involves the textual, legal, and explicitly political, Sanders read intellectual complicity as the grounds upon which notions of responsibility and political awareness can be created as well. In order to test those murky waters, Sanders analyzed testimony and discussions from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings held between 1995 and 2002. As he demonstrates, the testimony offered countless examples of the different modes of allying with and denouncing the regime. Complicity, he found, transcended not only the boundaries of the most obvious oppositions but the scientific boundaries used to separate life from death. (As Walter Benjamin warned, "Even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he is victorious" [391]). Sanders's conclusion was that we ought to talk about "complicities" rather than a single form of complicity. This complexity did not imply a relaxed demand for responsibility but a more stringent one. The articles by Sa'ed Atshan and Vincent Lloyd in this issue point to the dissenting intellectual, one who identifies with a minority under coercive political force—be it a Palestinian or an African-American—as a paradigmatic case for engaging with a world full of complicities. Lloyd's intellectual responds with the bold coupling of rage and dignity: He realizes that rage, and not respectability, will result with "an embrace of self-care and loving community...so that his anger can continue to rage." Atshan attaches dignity to "a sense of accountability to Palestinian society, and the requisite disavowal of regimes of power."

The ambivalent and complex sources of complicity demonstrate the difficulty of reaching agreement on its precise meaning and operation. Even the dry legal definition of the term offered by the Genocide Convention of 1946, instrumental in the special international tribunals convened for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, confused complicity as a "stand-alone crime" and as a form of legal liability (Greenfield).

At the same time, this ambivalence supplied a fertile ground for literature and literary criticism. One thinks of Arendt's critique of Stefan Zweig's naïve complicity and proudly apolitical perspective: "It never occurred to him that, politically speaking, it might be an honor for him to stand outside the law when all men were no longer equal before it" ("Stefan" 59). She contrasted this with Franz Kafka's "society of 'nobodies'" and with the commitment of Hermann Broch, Karl Kraus, and Bertold Brecht to investigating the "role of inverts" ("Between" 162).

The literary imagination allows for more sophisticated and complex understandings of complicity and dissent, beyond mere divisions between apolitical and political, and even between complicity and dissent. Arendt was interested in the authors I named because, in addition to possessing keen critical and political sensitivities, they explored the minds of those who did not. One might think here of the Kafkaesque magistrate in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982) or the Kafkaesque registrar and clerks in José Saramago's *All the Names* (*Todos os Nomes*, 1999), both exploring the limits of dissent while cooperating with the regime (Both the fictional protagonist and the very real authors respond, as Lloyd would predict, with rage.) As Raef Zreik demonstrates here, the novelists Ghassan Kanafani and Elias Khoury join Coetzee and Saramago by unpacking the complex weaving of quiet resistance and loud obedience—or the reverse.

5. Discourse: Neoliberalism and Complicity in Academia

Literature is able to depict the gradual, almost unseen process that leads from democracy to totalitarianism. Karl Löwith, taking his cue from Nietzsche's literary fantasies, wrote of the "total politicization of life," a condition Giorgio Agamben sees in contemporary neoliberal democracy (71). Docherty refers to the mechanisms of "total politicization" described by Klemperer during the 1930s and 1940s as "a reduction of the vocabulary available for discussion and debate" (Docherty 19). For Docherty, as for Sanders, intellectuals and academic institutions became complicit with power when they abandoned the vocabulary of dissent, adopting instead the lexicon of petty politics, social norms, and economic dictates. As Alice Gast, the president of London's Imperial College (she was previously president of my own institution, Lehigh University), put it, professors are expected to behave like "small business owners" (Docherty 46). Needless to mention, business owners are not expected to offer critiques; they are expected to sell their products to happy clients.

Why do those examples matter to our discussion of complicity and dissent? Raising embarrassing questions and confronting truisms require both historical and discursive sensitivity. Both Primo Levi and Edward Said saw this as a critical and spiritual ideal. A serious consideration of complicity and dissent requires a deep understanding of the intricate operations of the "economy of free speech" in our society and others. Examining this economy from a Foucauldian perspective, Maria Mühle argues here, opens up a layer usually hidden from political interpreters. Foucault's work on plebs, Mühle writes, helped expose "all those lives destined to pass beneath any discourse and disappear." In other words, any analysis of exiting power relations, and their exclusionary mechanisms, must consider the meeting point of explicit and implicit ideological structures, exposed and hidden interests, upper- and

lower-class references and known and unknown historical contexts. It needs to consider, then, solidarity between struggles.

If we wish to understand complicity and dissent in the academy, we must scrutinize not just other intellectuals and institutions, but ourselves. Anthropologists are uniquely situated to carry out this exercise, and the work of Fiona Wright, Smadar Lavie, and Maia Hallward cuts against the usual division between critical and complicit voices. They show that even explicit calls for dissent could serve as a form of complicity. As Wright explained it, she arrived at her self-awareness by working with left-wing dissenters who expressed, unwillingly and perhaps unconsciously, what she called "uncomfortable entanglements with the histories and regimes they challenge" (130). While the image of "small business owners" owes its existence to competition, an ideal of solidarity also offers an affirmative image of excellence and professionalism—indeed, Bloch speaks of a "solidarity of the ages" (*Craft* 43). But giving up competition means committing to critical self-reflection while going beyond differences and interest-based groups. As Vincent Lloyd shows in this issue, James Baldwin and black feminists realized that solidarity alone could redefine the legitimate critique of power. Baldwin emphasized suffering—"The suffering of any people is really universal"—but the outcome was a dynamic call for action. Solidarity between struggles goes beyond Arendt's commitment to international law and constitutional democracy, which all too often fail to perceive their own failures. *Homo politicus* will not obey the rules, pursuing instead a critical vision of power. Only once we see this can we safely separate complicity from dissent. Only then can we reconsider the principle of the political, not as a binary relation between friend and enemy, but as a network of solidarity, united against abuse and coercive power.

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Author's profile: Nitzan Lebovic is an associate professor of history and the Apter Chair of Holocaust Studies and Ethical Values at Lehigh University, Pennsylvania. He is the author *The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of a Nazi Biopolitics*. New York, 2013; *On Zionism and Melancholy: The Short Life of Israel Zarchi*. Indiana University Press, 2019. He co-edited *Catastrophe: A History and Theory of an Operative Concept*. With Andreas Killen. Berlin, 2014. And *The Politics of Nihilism: From Nineteenth century Germany to Contemporary Israel*. London, 2014. He is the editor of special issues of *Zmanim*, *New German Critique*, *Rethinking History*, and *Political Theology*. E-mail: <nil210@lehigh.edu>