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Weimar Migrations: Katherine Anne Porter in Berlin

Joseph Kuhn

Introduction: Weimar Berlin and Porter's "Plan" For Her Fiction

- ¹ In the spring of 1931 Katherine Anne Porter, then living in Mexico and already the author of the classic short story "Flowering Judas" (1930), won a Guggenheim fellowship and set sail for France on a German liner. Quite by chance—the difficulty was that she could not obtain a visa for France *en route*—Porter ended up not taking the usual Lost Generation route to Paris, but sailing all the way to Weimar Germany and living in Berlin between September 1931 and January 1932. Unbidden and unwanted, this short stay became the black swan event in Porter's literary career. Brief and bleak as it was, it arguably had a greater role in shaping her fiction—and the way that she reread her fiction up to that point—than did her longer stays in Mexico or France (she went on to live between 1932 and 1936 in Paris).¹ It was not only that the ocean voyage and the subsequent stay in a Berlin lodging house provided the germinative sources, respectively, of her two Weimar fictions: the short story "The Leaning Tower" (1941) and her only novel *Ship of Fools* (1962). It was also that, as she pointed out in her introduction to *Flowering Judas and Other Stories* (1940), Porter could relate the entire body of her fiction to the idea of a European crisis—the crisis that was concentrated on the demise of the German liberal state in the early 1930s (before Hitler's chancellorship of January 1933). In the preface to the volume she observes that these stories in the 1940 collection (none of them set directly in Germany) are "fragments of a much larger plan which I am still engaged in carrying out." This plan, which she formed during the "slowly darkening decade" of the 1930s, sought to "grasp the meaning" of "the heavy threat of world catastrophe," to "trace" it to its "sources" and to "understand" its "logic" (Porter, 2008 717-18). This essay will try to explain why Porter's short stay in Weimar Germany had such an impact on her fiction and why it was able to provide her

with an overarching “plan” for her entire literary output. For Porter, expatriation was a dominant literary figure, but where she differed from most of her American contemporaries in the period of the Lost Generation is that her variety of transatlantic modernism was attuned to the politics of interwar Europe: to the supplanting of the nineteenth-century liberal state by a new type of mass politics.² In her sensitivity to the political shape of modernity Porter should rather be placed in relation to the Weimar thinker, Hannah Arendt, who took the inverse trip from Berlin to the American continent and whose expatriate writing was likewise molded by the crisis years of the 1930s.

- 2 Porter and Arendt: isn't this a mismatch? Arendt was a Weimar Jewish philosopher, who subsequently belonged to the radical group of New York intellectuals, and if she is compared with any American fiction writer it is usually with another member of this group, her friend Mary McCarthy. On the other hand, Porter was a self-educated southern fiction writer whose family were Texan farmers and she hated German philosophy. Yet Porter and Arendt have a counterintuitive affinity that is based on their oddly analogous responses as literary migrants to the totalitarian “catastrophe” of interwar Europe. In reaction to this crisis each of them worked out a woman writer's way of being a modernist and wrote in a hard, juridical style that insisted on restoring responsibility to the modern self.³

***Ship of Fools*: Late Weimar Germany and “Negative” Evil**

- 3 What exactly was this “larger plan” of Porter's? Porter's remark about tracing events to “sources” suggested that she saw a historically-conditioned, psychological structure at the origin of the “catastrophe”: to use her language, it was the secret complicity of “good people” in acts of evil (Porter, 1987 67).⁴ This psychological structure is set forth by Dr. Schumann in *Ship of Fools*: “Our collusion with evil is only negative, consent by default you might say. I suppose in our hearts our sympathies are with the criminal because he really commits the deeds we only dream of doing!” (Porter, 1962 294). The structure operates in the passengers on the *Vera*, the German ship that crosses the Atlantic from Veracruz to Bremerhaven, a ship that is evidently an allegorical representation of the late Weimar state. Despite a very liberal constitution, by 1931 the Weimar Republic was being undermined by proto-totalitarian movements on the right and the left. The man at the helm of the ship of state, the monarchist Captain Thiele, is akin to the conservative nationalists, President Hindenburg and Chancellor Brüning, who were the heads of state in Germany when Porter was visiting Berlin. Captain Thiele is prevailed upon by the radical nationalists—the proto-Nazi characters, Hans Rieber and Lizzi Spöckenkieker—to expel Wilhelm Freytag from the Captain's table because Freytag is married to a Jewish woman. What Porter called her “parable of political action” in this novel is one in which the traditional right represented by figures such as Hindenburg is outmanoeuvred by the radical right (who in 1933 used Weimar laws of the state of emergency to create a totalitarian system) (Porter, 1990 501). In the novel, as in the last three Weimar governments, the conservative and the radical right share enough common ground in anti-semitism and a reliance on a strong, extra-legal executive to make this alliance possible. The late Weimar state is what Dr. Schumann calls “collusion” writ large.

- 4 In *Ship of Fools*, Porter orchestrates two parallel levels of action. There is the allegorical figure of the Weimar ship of state, mediated through Sebastian Brant's *Das Narrenschiff* (1494), in which the voyage toward the "mystic Fatherland" is also that of Brant's ship toward Narragonia, the paradise of fools (Porter, 1962 40). Then within this allegorical figure, and calibrated to its schema of decline, Porter sets off a series of interactions between the individual travelers, many of which exemplify "negative" evil.
- 5 To the central event—the "Freytag crisis" (Porter, 1962 244)—Porter subtends a number of analogous examples of "collusion," such as Herr Glocken's refusal to report the thievery of the zarzuela company in the shops of Tenerife. These examples seem apparently quite minor in comparison to the political gravity of the Freytag case, and this impression of slightness is confirmed in some of the examples of "collusion" from the 1940 collection *Flowering Judas and Other Stories*. For example, in the story "Theft" (1929), the nameless protagonist, a single woman in her late thirties, allows herself to be taken advantage of in a series of everyday infringements, including the theft of her purse by a janitress; but although the janitress and her devilish eyes make a convenient external source of evil, the woman-protagonist realizes that it is she who, through her moral inertia, is the responsible party, the "thief" of herself (Porter, 2008 71). Porter's focus on the marginal, everyday event can perhaps be seen as the personalistic mode of fiction associated with women writers. As Porter famously put it: "my fiction is reportage, only I do something to it" (Givner 206). But such attention to minor details is also her distinctly literary way of indicating how pretotalitarian government manifests itself in the interstices of everyday life.⁵

Porter and Competing Styles of Transatlantic Modernism

- 6 Porter is an unusual case in interwar literary migration in that her distinctly juridical imagination fixes upon Weimar Berlin as the epicenter of post-Versailles Europe rather than the Paris of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Stein and Eugene Jolas. She insisted upon putting the modernity of the state at the heart of her aesthetic modernism—in particular she dramatized the way in which in the early twentieth century liberal governments such as those of the Weimar state and that of President Wilson in the United States in 1918 turned into constitutional dictatorships.⁶ In "The Wooden Umbrella" (1947), her demolition of Gertrude Stein, Porter dismissed the colony of American expatriates who gathered around Stein as being blind to "a falling world" and divided them up into two parties: "those who were full of an active, pragmatic unbelief" (she meant Hemingway and Fitzgerald) and those, such as Eugene Jolas, "who searched their own vitals and fished up strange horrors in the style of *transition*" (Porter, 2008 560). "The Wooden Umbrella" is a reminder that, as a literary traveler to post-Versailles Europe, Porter was at the forefront of an international movement of competing modernisms, selecting and synthesizing among them. In the main she was in the line of the formal, traditionalist modernism of the Southern New Critics: she saw herself as a disciple of Henry James and as such spoke for the "conscious, disciplined artist" (Porter, 2008 702). Porter's adherence to the formal control of the unconscious lay behind her quarrel with Eugene Jolas' *transition*. Although Porter had published "Magic" (1928) and "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" (1929) in this most experimental of transatlantic little magazines, she came

increasingly to detach herself from Jolas' expressionist poetics.⁷ In some unpublished notes, probably from the early part of the Second World War, Porter observed a parallel between Fascism and the experimental avant-garde (her examples are Joyce, Stein, and the surrealists) in that both Fascism and the avant-garde turned away from "the use of reason" to "myth and sleep": "Hitler is Surrealism in action, applied to politics" (McKeldin library, qtd. in Brinkmeyer 215).

Hannah Arendt: Porter's Weimar Twin?

- 7 Porter's emphasis on the centrality of the modern state in her transatlantic modernism brings her into proximity with another group of interwar migrants: the German intellectuals who left the Third Reich for the United States. At the same time that Porter was in Berlin another peripatetic young woman, Hannah Arendt, was also living in the city and working on her habilitation project on Rahel Varnhagen, after completing her doctorate on *Love and Saint Augustine* (1928). In 1933, however, she was forced to leave Hitler's Germany, and by 1941 ended up in the United States. Both Arendt and Porter were interwar *peregrini* who were drawn to Saint Augustine as a philosophical source of their thinking about travel (to each woman travel had its existential roots in the interwar loss of a co-habitable world and it spatially measured out the exile of the migrant from a transcendent point of origin).⁸ Each could say that their "bent" was "to the Left" (Porter, 2008 1008), although each had a streak of traditionalist elitism (of a southern plantocratic type in Porter's or of a Hellenophile in Arendt's); this unquantifiable streak could puzzle their liberal colleagues—as it did when both opposed desegregation of schooling in the South in the 1950s (Porter, 1987 39-40; Arendt, 2003 193-213). Their imaginations took shape around the "world catastrophe" of interwar Germany; later in the early 1960s they both were drawn into the acrimonious first public debates about the Holocaust through the critical reaction of the New York intellectuals (who were often of Jewish descent) to their two works: *Ship of Fools* in 1962 and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in 1963. In these books Porter and Arendt saw the political evil of their historical time not as a demonic force but as something commonplace and widely distributed—"negative" evil in Porter's description, the "banality of evil" in Arendt's (Arendt, 2006 250).
- 8 The novel element in Porter and Arendt's assessment was that it saw evil not so much as a presence as a lack, a puzzling withholding of the activity of thought in moral predicaments. This banal evil is very different from classical conceptions of evil. As Porter's Dr. Schumann says, "it takes a strong character to be really evil" and "most of us are too slack, halfhearted, or cowardly" (Porter, 1962 294). This "strong character," according to Arendt, was certainly not in Eichmann, who did not have the depth in evil found in such classical villains as Iago: "It was rather sheer thoughtlessness [...] that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period" (Arendt, 1968 287-288). This focus on banality or "slack" (which might be Porter's synonym for banality) caused both authors to be harshly reprimanded by many of their first critics, such as Theodore Solotaroff and Lionel Abel, for refusing to see an "active evil" in the work of the Nazis and allegedly replacing this with an aesthetic distaste for the triteness of their evildoers (Solotaroff 143).⁹
- 9 For Arendt, the central cause of the interwar crisis was the withdrawal of the citizenry from the *polis*, the public space where the *vita activa* necessary to human dignity could

be exercised (Arendt, 1998 198-199). Porter, who was not a political philosopher by education, nevertheless came to a parallel insight to Arendt's and showed it at the concrete level of composition because the action of Porter's stories is often organized around public, collective structures: ocean liner (*Ship of Fools*), Berlin boarding house ("The Leaning Tower"), hacienda (in the story of that name), and hospital ("Pale Horse, Pale Rider"). These are places where citizens are brought together, willy-nilly, in a common world, but from which each retreats into a form of inwardness or private existence. Porter says, for example, of the passengers embarking on the German vessel in Veracruz: "This common predicament did not by any means make of them fellow sufferers. On the contrary, each chose to maintain his pride and separateness within himself" (Porter, 1962 11). This "pride and separateness" has many manifestations: that of the ethnic solidarity of the Captain's table after the expulsion of Freytag or, in personal interactions, in the tendency of couples such as Jenny and David or the German families such as the Huttens and Baumgartners to form islands of sentiment, the equivalent of this tribal identification in the individual life.

"The Leaning Tower": Berlin as Phantasma and the Northern Renaissance

- 10 In Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) the central reason for the rise of the totalitarian state is the emergence of apolitical and "superfluous" mass communities in Europe after the First World War. But this is abetted by the retreat of the bourgeois into "private life" and their temporary reliance on the "mob" to conduct government on their behalf (Arendt, 1958 338, 124). In Porter's Weimar fiction "The Leaning Tower" there is also a withdrawal from the *polis* by the middle classes. The story concerns the stay of the young Texan painter, Charles Upton, in Berlin during the final days of 1931 at a time when Chancellor Brüning was imposing a strong deflationary policy as a way out of the Depression, a policy that spared large businesses, but cut working class incomes. Porter gets this shrinking liquidity into the story—every act of buying and selling on the part of small hoteliers and shopkeepers is a desperate one. There is no explicit mention in the story of the chief threat to the Weimar republic from the right, the National Socialists (they had become a sizeable minority—106 seats—in the Reichstag after the September 1930 elections). Instead Porter shows the descent of a dark mood on Charles, which flickers out in such expressionistic details as the white worms that wriggle out of the sausage he is served at the hotel. The mood is also a temporal one, as though for Charles the possibility of the future has been cut off. By the end of the story there is a stultification of the forward sense of time as Charles is left in the pension house on New Year's day in 1932 feeling the dying of the liberal state in his very bones, a dying which he senses as something "threatening [...] hanging over his head" (Porter, 2008 511).
- 11 The story focuses on Charles's stay at Rosa Riechl's pension house, which becomes a microcosm of social relations in Germany. Towards the end of the story Charles attends a New Year's Eve party with the student lodgers, Hans Gehring, who has a duelling scar, and the mathematician Otto Bussen. Each of them breaks out into the pan-Germanist views of the so-called conservative revolution in Weimar. Hans tells Charles that "pure power is what counts to a nation or a race": such crude concepts of government as power were, according to Arendt, the result of the nationalists' importation of

imperialistic concepts of colonial rule back into Europe (Porter, 2008 502; Arendt, 1998 138, 155). But more insidious than the students' frank politics of violence is the attitude of Rosa, the landlady with the "foxy smile," who makes a special favorite of Hans (Porter, 2008 510). With her plush and her feather beds, Rosa exemplifies a middle-class anxiety over insecure status that has turned inward and refuses to engage the political world. In a letter written in October 1933, Porter commented that "the suffocated middle-classes" in Germany felt they were "slip[ping] into the proletarian class" and fell back on the Nazis because they thought that this party would save "the plush on their chairs" (Porter, 2012 116-7).¹⁰ The attitude of the middle class is objectified in the clambering cupids that Charles observes on the roof opposite his room, which keep up their "senseless play" and "wanton" vulgarity even in the snow and rain (Porter, 2008 462). It is as though they are trying to freeze the "eternity" of middle class sentiment as a permanent attitude regardless of the withering circumstances of the Depression.¹¹ The central symbol of the story, the statuette of the leaning tower of Pisa, points to the precariousness of this hope. Rosa proudly exhibits this souvenir in memory of her marriage and it is inadvertently broken by Charles on his first visit. The souvenir captures Rosa's forlorn southern nostalgia for Italy, a forlornness that comes out of her sense that the middle-class world of the Wilhelmine period and its Mediterranean honeymoons has slipped away.

- 12 The narrative dynamic is that of Charles's slow absorption of the political stasis of late Weimar Berlin. He comes with a nineteenth-century romantic image of Germany as castles in the mist, derived from his childhood friend Kuno, but by the end of the story he comes to absorb the peculiar temporal mood of modern Berlin, its inability to open into a liveable future. He is left in a curled up, fetal position, refusing to be born into the new year: he cannot "think clearly" and feels "an infernal desolation of the spirit, the chill and the knowledge of death in him" (Porter, 2008 511).
- 13 Porter makes Charles an artist because this profession means that, like herself when she was in Berlin, he is forced to size up the Weimar crisis in terms of representational form. Charles tells himself that this city "is not right" for painters: "There's something wrong with the shapes, or the light, or something" (Porter, 2008 455). In trying to show this "something wrong with the shapes," Porter strategically uses an expressionist style to mark the intrusion of the unconscious into the rational sphere of the political. For example, she says: "The darkness closed over the strange city like the great fist of an enemy who had survived in full strength, a voiceless monster from a prehuman, older and colder and grimmer time of the world" (Porter, 2008 472). In such a description Porter temporarily adopts the night language of Eugene Jolas, who had initially acted as her guide to literary Berlin in 1931.¹² She seems indeed to be citing, with her own slant, Jolas's remark that "Nothing can ever destroy in [man] the immense night of the prehistoric" ("Literature and the New Man" [1930]) (Jolas 263). This expressionist image of the "fist" in Porter shows how in Berlin disorder and poverty seem to have moved into a state of ontological or archaic permanence. At times Charles appears to think that some of the German characters in their rigidity belong to this archaic state. When confronted with Hans's pride in his duelling wound Charles is baffled—he cannot comprehend the satisfaction in self-mutilation that in his home state of Texas would be regarded as the shameful evidence of a street fight. In Germany such wounds are exhibited with an "arrogance" that comes from some inner primitive certainty, "the mysterious place where Hans really lived" (Porter, 2008 479).

- 14 Such descriptions might suggest that interwar Germany is for Porter only the irrational Other, coded with an emotive surplus as in the scene of the shoppers in “a trance of pig worship” before the confectionery pigs (Porter, 2008 458). Certainly Porter is known for her anti-Germanism. But the model of “collusion”—her belief that “none of us has any real alibi in this world”—also applies to the American visitor (Porter, 2012 183). Charles as visiting American is both benefactor and late enemy, both “the rich American who pays the rent for all of us” in Tadeusz Mey’s description (Porter, 2008 482) and a citizen of a country that, as Rosa and Hans Gehring remind him, brought about the final defeat of Germany in the last war. Behind Charles stand the American politicians and bankers who in an economic game of hot and cold with Germany supported German payment of reparations, then invested in the Weimar boom between 1924 and 1928, and then withdrew short-term loans to Germany in 1929.
- 15 Charles’s insensitivity as an American benefactor is summed up in the episode of his coat, a would-be gift to the impoverished Herr Bussen. Tadeusz Mey, the Polish boarder, advises against this gift, saying that Bussen will feel Charles’s “contempt” in his act of generosity and will only respond with hatred. Thinking perhaps of the examples of Dawes, Young and Hoover—American politicians who wanted to give financial aid to defeated Germany between 1924 and 1931—Tadeusz says “you Americans have some very odd notions. Why all this benevolence?” “If you set yourself up as a benefactor,” Tadeusz says, “you must expect to be hated” (Porter, 2008 490-491). In unconscious ways Charles’s relationship to Bussen, even as he feels pity for him, is predatory and he imagines Bussen’s indebtedness as a late medieval scene on a par with the emblematic allegory of Holbein and Sebastian Brant, German artists Porter admired. He sees Hans Bussen fleeing like a stag across snowy wastes, with he, Hans, Tadeusz and Rosa bringing him down by the throat like hunting dogs and this with the contradictory aim of giving him “aid and comfort” (Porter, 2008 492).
- 16 Porter published “The Leaning Tower” in the New Critical mainstay, *The Southern Review*, which was edited by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren. Nevertheless, it is not quite enough to say that the story only demonstrates her New Critical aesthetic of Jamesian control. In the story, and in another story published in the journal, “Pale Horse, Pale Rider,” it is evident that new forms of state power (seen in the constitutional dictatorships in Weimar Germany and in the wartime United States) intrude into Porter’s poised prose and threaten to unbalance it. This is explicit in “Pale Horse, Pale Rider,” the last story in the autobiographical Miranda series, in which Porter’s protagonist, Miranda Gay, falls ill during the influenza epidemic in the last days of the Great War. Her hallucinations during her illness incorporate her recent encounters with the Wilson security state of 1918 and its Liberty Bond promoters, but they do so in a wild and expressionistic style in which her inner voice becomes incoherent (for example, she dreams of the German doctor in the hospital as a well poisoner and baby murderer). Porter’s compositional problem is to be both within this dream state and to register it rationally. “The Leaning Tower” shows Porter searching for another way, apart from expressionism and surrealism, of understanding these phantasmal images in the Weimar landscape; as a result, she goes back to a completely different tradition in pre-modern Europe than that of T.S. Eliot and his liking for Dante and the Latin countries. She found this different tradition, that of the Northern Renaissance, while staying in Basel in 1932, shortly after the Berlin trip, when she began to read Erasmus and Sebastian Brant. For what the hunting scene shows is that

Porter sometimes uses a hallucinatory register that incorporates the late medieval allegorism of Holbein and Dürer. This is a moral understanding of the night that is distinct from the understanding of romantic-expressionism: Charles discovers a truth about himself in his dream; he does not submerge himself in irrationalism. In one of his early walks around Berlin Charles confronts the “skull of famine” of a young unemployed man on the street. He secretly sketches the man in hard Düreresque lines; these are the lines of Porter’s own style as it turns from a documentary or sociological record toward a Northern Renaissance art of mortality, exemplified by Holbein’s “Dance of Death”. Because the man is so emaciated “his teeth stood out in ridges under the mottled tight skin of his cheeks” (Porter, 2008 456). He becomes a baroque autographic of himself and etches out the outline of his skull by using his own famished skin as paper. Modern Berlin is seen through a religious-humanist dimension of truth and the symbolism of the mortal that goes with it—a dimension that originates in an older, pre-secular Germany. These images might seem expressionistic, but they are allegorical in the manner of the Northern Renaissance writers.

Porter and Arendt: Responsibility and Judgment in Dark Times

- 17 Porter returned to her fictionalization of Weimar Germany in *Ship of Fools*, a novel whose schema of the fool as traveler was derived from Sebastian Brant’s *Das Narrenschiff*. The outline of this novel was already available to Porter in 1931 in a journal that she wrote on the voyage, but it took thirty years to put together and it was therefore shaped by the whole post-Second World War question of how it was possible for citizens of a modern European state to carry out the genocide of peoples. It is in *Ship of Fools* that Porter’s proximity to Arendt, the Weimar exile, comes particularly close: it was Arendt’s Eichmann book that made the American reading public aware of the subjects of guilt and responsibility in the Second World War, subjects that became pressing in America in the early 1960s after some fifteen years of discussion of the Holocaust (at least, as Peter Novick argues in *The Holocaust in American Life* [1999], as a specifically ethnic crime against the Jewish people). It is just these questions of responsibility that Porter raises in her novel, which appeared a year before the publication of Arendt’s book. In her writings from 1945 onwards Arendt had sharply distinguished guilt from responsibility: guilt was a private feeling of wrong, while responsibility was a public category and one which involved being answerable to a specific legal charge (King 25-42). Porter also tried to bring her characters in *Ship of Fools* under the legal category of judgment, and she seemed to share Arendt’s suspicion of guilt as a loose feeling that could easily slide into empathy with the accused. The professor’s wife in the novel, Frau Hutten, undoubtedly speaks with Porter’s voice when she says that “we have lost our sense of justice” because of a “sentimental dishonesty” about the offender (Porter, 1962 295). Most of the first critics of *Ship of Fools* missed this juristic aspect in Porter’s narrative voice. One critic, Theodore Solotaroff in *Commentary*, indeed accused Porter of projecting a vague sense of collective guilt over all her characters on the vessel—Germans, Jews, Spaniards and Americans—and seeing them all as equally damnable, all on a highway to hell (for Solotaroff, whose grandfather was an Odessa Jew, this allowed the specific crimes of Germans in the Third Reich to be diffused in the general culpability of the human). In Solotaroff’s

opinion the novel's repetitive structure showed that the characters cannot change, and this demonstrated the author's "misanthropy" (Solotaroff 149). Such arguments got under the skin of Porter because they diminished the role she saw for responsible self-reflection in her characters. Porter sets the reflectiveness of Dr. Schumann, Jenny, Herr Glocken and even Wilhelm Freytag against the spread of "negative" evil on the ship. For example, after La Condesa has disembarked, Dr. Schumann has a lightning-like perception of his "guilty love" for her, of his supplying her with sedatives and kissing her when she is in a narcotic trance. He subsequently resolves not to be "a coward" (Porter, 1962 373). Dr. Schumann thus becomes an exponent of that Socratic self-examination that Arendt called judgment, a two-in-oneness that is able to resist the fungus-like expansion of evil by seeing oneself from outside, from the standpoint of another. Dr. Schumann here mediates Porter's own authorial position of objective distance, a distance that is always judging and assessing her characters in a quasi-legal way. For Porter, this authorial act of judgment was "the most important thing in any book" (Porter, 2012 195) and its perceived absence, for example, in the works of William Faulkner, was why she regarded novels such as *Sanctuary*, with their non-judgmental immersion in evil, as the antithesis of her own fiction. Faulkner, she told her students in the 1950s, "does not want to think" (Givner 392).

- 18 Arendt observed that what was striking about Eichmann was "an inability to *think*, namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else" (*italics in original*) (Arendt, 1968 49). The thinking that Arendt had in mind was not thinking through ideas or even thinking with moral concepts. She had too much evidence of how her friends in Germany easily reversed their humanist ideas and moralities in the early days of the Third Reich and coordinated themselves with the new government—as though all they were changing was a set of table manners. Porter likewise shows how Professor Hutten, a professional representative of the German mind, quickly accommodates himself within the Captain's tightening "ring" of "blood and sympathy" that excludes Freytag, even though the professor had in an earlier discussion exposed the fictional biology of racial thought (Porter, 1962 247). Instead of finding a point of anchorage against banality in ideas or norms, Arendt found this point in the faculty of judgment: the ability to stop and reflect on particular relevant examples. She felt the faculty of judgment was called for particularly "in times of crisis" and that it is "the most political of man's mental abilities" (Arendt, 2003 104, 188). Both Porter and Arendt—exhibiting a similar coldness—saw that the faculty of judgment had to set itself apart from pity or emotionalism because this served to dissolve the moral distinctness of actions. The dangers of pity are evident. Just before his "lightning stroke" of reflection in *Ship of Fools* Dr. Schumann feels that his "guilty love" draws him into a "wallow of compassion for every suffering thing" so that "he could no longer tell the difference between [...] the violator and the violated" (Porter, 1962 372).
- 19 In the Kantian scheme that Arendt draws upon, the reflective or legal judgment is similar to the aesthetic sensibility because each focuses on a singular object without subsuming it under a general concept. That is to say, aesthetic judgement is an immediate response, like that of the sensation of taste, and it bypasses the processes of cognition and moral reasoning because in these latter cases the object under consideration is indeed subsumed into a general law. But even though taste is an absolutely individual response, Arendt lays much emphasis on Kant's argument that the aesthetic judgment is also outer-directed because it appeals to the agreement of

others who also make their own judgments in taste about the object. Another point about the aesthetic judgment for Arendt is that it allows the perceiver to see the world in all of its newness and thick particularity. This places the community of receptive selves not only in a kind of cosmopolitan mini-state but also within a co-habitable planet or ecology. It is curious that in *Ship of Fools* the only moment when the passengers are “cleansed of death and violence” is when they observe the aesthetic splendor of three whales swimming alongside their vessel. Even the twins of the Spanish dancers, Ric and Rac, who are the apparent incarnations of a radical evil, break out in “pure ecstasy”: “Whales, whales, whales, whales!” (Porter, 1962 329). For a moment all of the passengers are united as a community of spectators around a purposeless object of beauty. They become connected to what Kant called an “enlarged mentality,” one that is consistent with a universal or cosmopolitan viewpoint and thereby potentially resistant to the thoughtlessness of evil (Arendt, 1977, location 7972). It is evident that this “enlarged mentality” could prevent the pre-totalitarian drift in Porter’s passengers and in political terms correlates with institutional structures of liberalism that are able to secure a civic plurality. For both Arendt and Porter these structures were quintessentially found in the structures created by the Founding Fathers (Arendt in *On Revolution* [1963] and Porter in “Act of Faith: 4 July 1942”).

- 20 How might this aesthetic judgement work in Porter’s fictional practice? In both of the Weimar works Porter often shows her characters in a process of mental weaving around the singular object. At the end of “The Leaning Tower” this activity is especially foregrounded with the reappearance in Charles’s room of the statuette of the tower of Pisa; it is now repaired and stored safely behind glass, away from his clumsy fingers. The tower, as was said earlier, relates to the fragile Weimar nexus of middle-class German sentiment and Porter perhaps suggests that it has now found a way of shielding itself from further breakage (its alliance with “pure power”). Its reappearance puts Charles on the spot, insisting on its aesthetic triteness, and his reflective judgment begins to work or, as Arendt puts it, “go visiting”: “Well, what? [...] What had the silly little thing reminded him of before? There was an answer if he could think what it was, but this was not the time.” So Charles’s reflection in his drunken haze gets arrested, even though his need to “go visiting” is at this historical moment “terribly urgent” (Arendt, 1992 43; Porter, 2008 511).
- 21 There are similar objects of potential reflection in *Ship of Fools*: the whales, the sculptural body of the drowned woodcarver, the sodden form of the Huttens’ bulldog that he selflessly rescues. In addition, Porter, through the rotational interactions of the characters, creates a potential version of an intersubjective community on the ship although it is one that keeps breaking down. The characters can voice penetrating insights (for example, Dr. Schumann and Frau Hutten on “negative” evil) but they act at variance with these insights in moments of crisis (neither character objects to Freytag’s expulsion); they can speak versions of what Arendt calls the ideological logic of “supersense” (Professor Hutten “was not interested in discussion, but in speaking his own thoughts aloud in company”); and their dialogues are often more defensive assertions than they are reflections from the other’s point of view (Arendt, 1998 458; Porter, 1962 289). An example of this last point is when Freytag meets Mrs. Treadwell—the middle-aged divorcee who informed Lizzi of his wife’s Jewishness—and reproaches her for the “indifference” and “boredom” that prompted this betrayal of a secret. These remarks evidently make the Arendtian point about the banality of evil-doing. But

Freytag is himself suspect: not only is he as racist as any anti-semitic about his German blood, but his indignation with Mrs. Treadwell is his stage manager's way of "enjoying the scene." The pair's reconciliation, facilitated by her drop into "shapeless" empathy, is not genuine and it is as if they used words such as "friends" and "forgive" as empty chips (Porter, 1962 257, 258, 262). The reader has to relativize all of these positions within what Robert Penn Warren, in his classic essay "Irony with a Center: Katherine Anne Porter" (1942), called a "total circumstantiality" and work out the moral "center" of these ironic relativizations (Warren 155).

- 22 Many of the first critics of the novel misread this strategy of cold irony. Solotaroff called it "misanthropy" and thought that Porter was laying the blame for contemporary disorder on the "stage Jew," Herr Löwenthal (Solotaroff 149, 144). It is Löwenthal however who perspicuously voices what is perhaps at the "center" of Porter's accumulating perspectives: an insistence on human dignity. For Porter, as for Arendt, the chief crime of totalitarian regimes was their attempts to strip away the human status of their victims and make them things; a tampering with the conservative givens of human nature. Löwenthal therefore puts forward a simple human claim: "All he wanted in the world was the right to be himself, to go where he pleased and do what he wanted" (Porter, 1962 336). In a letter to Julius S. Held, a German-American art historian, Porter affirms Löwenthal's position: "I like him. He has self-respect."¹³

"Holiday" and the Biopolitical Community

- 23 To think in the "two-in-one" relation of Dr. Schumann is to have a dialogic relationship to an outer plurality or, put differently, to the intersubjective space of co-judging selves that is postulated in Kant's aesthetics (as in the observation of the whales). But, as Porter shows, this public and universal space constantly threatens to break away into ethnic and personal partialities—Porter keeps showing how the passengers split off into smaller units (including that of families such as the Baumgartners or of pairs of lovers such as Jenny and David). On the question of the quasi-organic partialism of ethnic communities, notably that of the Captain's table, it is pertinent here to refer to one of Porter's earliest stories, "Holiday," begun in 1923 and finally published in 1960, which, like her novel, depicts part of the early twentieth-century German diaspora on the American continent (it is set in Texas). The story shows that even at the very beginning of her fictional career (when she had published just two stories set in Mexico), Porter was already thinking about the moral dangers of fused communities, particularly German ones, although she did not directly relate them yet to constitutional or totalitarian dictatorships. The narrator goes to stay with a German-Texan farming family just before the First World War and she observes how their lives are completely absorbed in the primary, cyclical activity of work. In this context it is perhaps helpful to recall two categories of human activity that Arendt described in *The Human Condition* (1958): action, or participation in a public space, and labor, a type of act that is part of the life process and is fundamentally apolitical (it belongs to the sphere Arendt calls the social). The Müller family are caught up in labor, that is in a seasonal, repetitive process of farmwork, animal husbandry, childbirth, weddings and so on—activities that are webbed together as a single organic process. Porter emphasizes the thoughtlessness of this cycle: "the almost mystical inertia of their [the

Müllers'] minds in the midst of this muscular life" (Porter, 2008 432). To be such a *homo laborans* might seem to be something archaic, but in Arendt's analysis this is a very modern condition, one central to the rise of the modern bio-political state because this state bases itself on the supplanting of a public political sphere by the organic domain of the social. The Müllers strike the narrator as "one human being divided into several separate appearances" (Porter, 2008 431).

- 24 In this corporate entity there is, the narrator remarks, only one person who is an individual and this is the daughter Otilie, who after a childhood accident lost her reasoning and has become the family servant. Otilie has "been stripped of everything but her mere existence" (Porter, 2008 442), and she resembles the pariah existences of Herr Löwenthal the Jew and Herr Glocken the hunchback from *Ship of Fools* in her raw biological being. She is a bio-political caesura in the mini-state of the Müller family. It happens in the story that she is sustained by the supporting wholeness of her family, but she might in other circumstances serve as a point of eugenic intervention. Otilie turns into the moral crux of the story: the narrator cannot forget her and feels held "to our inescapable common source" by her (Porter, 2008 441). In the last scene of the story the narrator and Otilie absent themselves—their "holiday"—from the funeral train of the matriarch Mrs. Müller, who suddenly dies and whose funeral becomes another addition to the repetitive organic cycle. With their cart moving "in a truly broad comedy swagger," the narrator and Otilie become "the fools of life": they try to invest the life principle with a joyous and different meaning from that of the *homo laborans* (Porter, 2008 448-9).
- 25 The "inescapable common source" that unites the narrator and Otilie is perhaps the fundamental ground of Porter's fiction. For her, as for Arendt, it is goodness that has roots (in contrast to the depthless nature of evil) and that has a deep place in memory. There is a curious insistence in "Holiday" on the narrator remembering Otilie "for the rest of my life" while the Müllers "forgot her in pure self-defense" (Porter, 2008 441). This insistence on the ethical value of memory as a bulwark against thoughtlessness is also brought out in Arendt's late work on responsibility and judgment: "For human beings, thinking of past matters means moving in the dimension of depth, striking roots and thus stabilizing themselves, so as not to be swept away by whatever may occur—the *Zeitgeist*, or History or simple temptation" (Arendt, 2003 95). Memory, according to Arendt, is a way of reaching back to natality, that is the "new beginning" that starts with the birth of each individual and which is referred to again with each free action or judgment of that individual (Arendt, 1998 171). In her lectures on Kant's political philosophy Arendt explains that the "sociality" of free-judging aesthetic selves has been there from the beginning of human association; "sociality" is an "origin" and not a construction that results out of mutual need (Arendt, 1991 74). In the much earlier Weimar work *Love and Saint Augustine*, however, Arendt prefers to trace natality back to Saint Augustine's theology of the creation.¹⁴ This is another point of congruence between Porter and Arendt. Their ethics of memory points to a common derivation from Saint Augustine, who is the subject of Porter's essay "St. Augustine and the Bullfight" (1955). Both women writers acknowledge that turning backwards to the "source" in Augustine's philosophy (Arendt, 1996 50)—to the life-giving act of creation—is a way of renewing and understanding experience, of turning random sensation into knowledge or that which is informed by "truth" (without "truth," Porter said in her essay, showing here an Augustinian insight into her own migrations, travel was just

“adventure”: “truth” forced her to confront her own contradictory joy in the Mexican bullfight) (Porter, 2008 808). Porter and Arendt both mobilize Augustine’s thought to counter the cruelty of their times: in other words they go back to the source, to natality, rather than to the frequent orientation toward death found in Weimar existentialism and the expressionist style.¹⁵ This orientation, most pertinently found in Heidegger’s notion of being-toward-death, is a symptom of the breakdown of the liberal state into tribalisms and dark personal sensibilities. Without grounding in an institutional structure guaranteeing plurality, this type of thought, which is located in the isolated, existential self, has a particular occasion to flourish. It is fixated on its own end and its own expressive complex of fear and desire around that end. When Charles tries to think of the future, in the last paragraph of “The Leaning Tower,” he conceives of it, in Heideggerian fashion, as a death’s head, the “chill and the knowledge of death” (Porter, 2008 511).¹⁶ There are other politically pointed fantasies of death in *Ship of Fools* such as when the Captain, an admirer of gangster films, imagines mowing down the zarzuela company and “other people whom it was lawful to kill” with a machine gun (Porter, 1962 427). Similar fantasies also play their role in the sexual life of those on board. It is part of the Augustinian structure of *Ship of Fools* that all of the characters are seeking a home to fill out their insufficiency of being, but they are often looking in the wrong direction, most often looking toward a narrow erotic desire that must finally be disappointed. Like Jenny they see a “death’s-head” between themselves and their partner or like Dr. Schumann mutter “Death, death” in departing from La Condesa (Porter, 1962 93, 369). Augustinian concepts of beginning again are a release from this fixation on death. One of the few times that Jenny finds peace in the novel is when she remembers swimming with the porpoises off the coast of Mexico, connecting with natality and coming to a reconciliation with the spontaneity of nature that temporarily stills her war with David.

- 26 What, to return to an earlier question, might explain the parallel minds of Porter and Arendt? Both were mid-century migrants moving between the Americas and a “falling” Europe (Porter, 2008 1016). Each used a style that many called one of “heartless malice” to counteract the banality of the modern self and reset it to an older, more conservative model of human nature (“heartless malice” is Porter’s description of how one Jewish exile, Freytag’s wife Mary, might respond to the dullness of the Captain’s table [Porter, 1962 335]). This made Porter and Arendt unpredictable combinations of liberalism and conservatism; and it is probable that the Weimar background of Arendt and the southern one of Porter helped to create this combination, particularly when seen in contrast to the more unquestioned progressivism of their northern literary colleagues. What fitted this liberal-conservative combination was the political philosophy of Kant or perhaps, more precisely, what Arendt constructs as this philosophy. Kant was central to Arendt’s secular-Jewish beginnings in Weimar thought. But he was also a philosophical influence on the Southern New Criticism with which Porter was closely associated. In “Criticism as Pure Speculation” (1941) John Crowe Ransom, Porter’s favourite poet, brought his Kantian definition of a poem close to Porter’s central concerns when he said that: “A poem is, so to speak, a democratic state, whereas a prose discourse—mathematical, scientific, ethical, or practical and vernacular—is a totalitarian state.” Ransom observes that in a totalitarian state citizens are “functional members” while in a democratic state they have “free exercise of their private and independent characters.” In this trope of poem as state, totalitarian subjects are the equivalent of the logical paraphrase of the poem, its “structure,” while

democratic subjects stand for “the particularity asserted by the parts in a poem” or its “texture” (Ransom 137, 138). The main purpose of a poem is to reveal “texture,” the unique qualities of the world as body. This is a Kantian distinction: it is the intellectual judgment that takes care of the logical statement in a poem, while the aesthetic judgment comprehends the textural. Robert Penn Warren adopts Ransom’s model in his essay “Irony with a Center: Katherine Anne Porter,” published in Ransom’s *Kenyon Review* in 1942. Implicit in Warren’s notion of irony as diversity of viewpoints is a Kantian politics. By deploying a “delicate balancing of rival considerations” and a “counterpoint of incident and implication,” Porter (Warren says) refuses “the straight line, the formula, through the material at hand” (refuses, that is, its reduction to scientific statement) (Warren 155). From both Porter’s and Warren’s perspective such a view of irony is congenial to a southern, Jeffersonian localism trying to resist the incursions of a powerful twentieth-century state (the scientific state).

Conclusion

- 27 In her 1940 preface Katherine Anne Porter observed that she was not one who “could flourish in the conditions of the past two decades” because literature needs “a green and growing world,” whereas she had had to find “order and form and statement” in “grotesque dislocations” of the political body (Porter, 2008 717). It was her visit to Weimar Berlin over 1931 to 1932 that compelled her to take account of the post-Versailles decline of the liberal state or, to put the question in Arendt’s existential terms, the decomposition of a co-habitable world or polis. In response to this “falling world” Porter shaped a modernist narrative form that melded Jamesian control, dream state and Northern Renaissance symbolism. This narrative form has a strong ethical imperative. As *Ship of Fools* above all shows, her imagination is distinctly juridical and puts an emphasis on the faculty of judgment in historical times of “collusion” and “negative” evil.

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NOTES

1. The personal bleakness of the stay is seen in Porter's poem "Bouquet for October," written in Berlin, in which the author's dispirited love for her partner (Eugene Pressly) emanates outwards into the "bereaved branches" of autumn and into the inert "monuments" of "potbellied kings" and "Statesmen" (Porter, 1996 93-94).
2. The nearest equivalent in Anglo-American modernism to Porter's writing about Weimar Germany is Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939). For Isherwood, as for fellow English modernists W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender, Berlin embodied sexual otherness and fostered an anti-bourgeois frisson that came through an encounter with the late enemy. Isherwood,

however, is more of a modernist flâneur than is Porter. Despite his powerful impressionistic sense of the Nazi threat, he is not so concerned as she is with laying bare the “logic” of a state in crisis.

3. Deborah Nelson sees the “heartless” style of Arendt and McCarthy as a strategy, also found in other mid-century women artists, that tries to confront facts through pain (*Tough Enough: Arbus, Arendt, Didion, McCarthy, Sontag, Weil* [2017]). She does not include Porter in her list but she could well have done so.

4. Porter in interviews of the 1960s sometimes elaborated on her thesis that Weimar politicians surreptitiously abetted the rise of Hitler. Referring to the coming to power of “these criminals—these clowns—like Hitler,” Porter observed in 1961 that “the good people who didn’t believe in the clowns [...] still let the clowns commit the crimes good worthy people would commit if only they had the nerve” (Porter, 1987 67). In her interviews with Hank Lopez she even places herself in a Berlin political soiree in the winter of 1931-32 at which Goering, Goebbels and Lord Halifax are all in attendance and where she alone voices the danger posed by the Nazis (Lopez 175-189).

5. This focus on the marginal event is also one variant of the regional modernism of the South. Robert Penn Warren, speaking of John Crowe Ransom, named this variant the “pastoral” or “the dramatization of great issues by reduction.” Where writers such as Eliot and Pound, Warren observed, set forth “the crisis of culture” on a “world stage,” for southern pastoralists such as Ransom “the great issues are most poignantly or forcefully dramatized in the local and the small” (Warren, 1968, 326).

6. The war administration of Wilson is depicted in her story “Pale Horse, Pale Rider” (1937). In “The Never-Ending Wrong” (1977), her essay on the Sacco and Vanzetti case, Porter quoted Nietzsche: “The state is the coldest of all cold monsters” (Porter, 2008 865).

7. In “The Wooden Umbrella” Porter attributed to Jolas a “hoarse, anxious, corrupted mysticism speaking in a thick German accent” (Porter, 2008 560).

8. In one of her letters from Berlin Porter mentions taking out a map of the ancient world and tracing out Augustine’s travels on it as though her modern peregrination could be overlaid upon his (Porter, 1990 66).

9. This is a misunderstanding of the argument of the two women writers, who are not aesthetes. They do use a moral criterion to gauge the absence of the moral in the evildoer.

10. In a letter sent from Berlin Porter wrote—in what could be an exposition of Rosa’s “foxy smile”—that “Middle class virtue is a kind of code of behavior based on fear of consequences, an artificial line set up, but to [be] sneaked over if one can manage it with secrecy” (Porter, 1990 65).

11. Kracauer says that the middle classes tried to keep up a social status that had no basis in reality—ignoring political allies in the working class who might have helped protect liberal democracy—and these “emotional fixations” meant that they surrendered to the Nazis (Kracauer 10, 23). Rosa as the embodiment of this “mental forlornness” has a favorite in Gehring (a proto-Nazi) “because he fought a *mensur*” (Porter, 2012 485).

12. It was Jolas who provided Porter with an introduction to the Expressionist poet Gottfried Benn in Berlin, a meeting that fell flat because of linguistic barriers. “I went in,” Porter wrote, “in serious hopes of saying something I wished to say, and of hearing him say certain things I had been told he would say in a particularly interesting manner” (Porter, 2012 90). Jolas himself went on a literary trip to Berlin in 1930, a forerunner of Porter’s own stay, and there he met Benn and other representatives of Expressionism; like Porter he observed that political nationalism was becoming stronger in the Depression. Later, when in Paris, Porter seems to have distanced herself from Jolas and he makes no reference to her in his autobiography, *Man from Babel* (1998).

13. Letter to Julius S. Held, 28 April 1963, Katherine Anne Porter papers, University of Maryland. I should like to thank Beth Alvarez for kindly supplying a copy of this letter.

14. Kant and Augustine are aligned sources of natality in Arendt’s thought, but perhaps she never finally quite reconciled these two approaches.

15. In *Love and Saint Augustine* Arendt observes that what for Augustine determines “man” as a “remembering being” is “natality” while what determines “man” as a desiring being is a sense of mortality. What “ultimately stills the fear of death is not hope or desire, but remembrance and gratitude” (Arendt, 1996 51-52).

16. Arendt’s thought about natality was developed in her Augustine book in opposition to the prominent role of death in the thought of her mentor, Martin Heidegger. In his phenomenology of the Weimar years Heidegger said that the self’s expectation of death could become its “own most potentiality-for-Being” (Heidegger 294). The self can either flee this scene or it can face this possibility resolutely. This seems like an exclusively existential drama, but in 1933 Heidegger, on becoming a National Socialist, argued that this capacity for resolute decision should be turned toward making a decision for the Reich. Porter, without being a reader of Heidegger, seems to sense the role that death plays in the political ontology of Weimar existentialism, which is why Charles’s plight at the end of “The Leaning Tower” can be seen as a critical presentation of a Heideggerian narrative that does not lead to decision but becomes a *cul-de-sac*.

ABSTRACTS

In the 1920s and the 1930s the Texas author Katherine Anne Porter lived out the life of a modernist expatriate, restlessly moving from one country to another, but it was a short trip to Weimar Berlin between September 1931 and January 1932 that had the strongest influence on her fiction. Porter came to feel by 1940 that her Berlin stay shaped what she called the entire “plan” for her literary output. This is because she found exemplified most starkly in late Weimar Germany the moral predicament that most of her fiction is about: a “collusion with evil” on the part of supposedly “good people.” In Berlin she witnessed at close hand the demise of the nineteenth-century liberal state and the rise of a new type of total or biopolitical state, one that was specific to twentieth-century modernity. Her two Weimar fictions, the novel *Ship of Fools* (1962) and the long story “The Leaning Tower” (1941), attempt to find modernistic literary forms that can represent this shift. The political element in Porter’s writing makes her transatlantic modernism quite unlike that of the Lost Generation writers. It is more appropriate to compare Porter’s work with that of a Weimar expatriate, Hannah Arendt, especially in their mutual emphasis on the thoughtlessness of evil; on the particular need for the exercise of the faculty of judgment in times of crisis; and on Saint Augustine’s concept of natality as a means for counteracting the existential despair of interwar Europe.

Dans les années vingt et trente, l’auteure texane Katherine Anne Porter vécut en expatriée moderniste, voyageant sans répit d’un pays à un autre. Mais c’est un court séjour à Berlin, de septembre 1931 à janvier 1932, qui marqua le plus profondément son œuvre. Dès avant 1940 elle considérait que ce voyage avait façonné ce qu’elle appelait le « plan d’ensemble » de son œuvre, au sens où la République de Weimar chancelante était l’illustration saisissante d’un des pivots de sa fiction : la collusion avec le mal des « braves gens ». À Berlin, Porter fut le témoin direct de la chute de l’État libéral du XIX^e siècle et de la montée en puissance d’un nouveau type d’État total, ou biopolitique, associé à l’époque moderne. Dans les deux œuvres inspirées par ce séjour, le roman *Ship of Fools* (1962) et la longue nouvelle « The Leaning Tower » (1941), Porter s’efforce d’élaborer des formes modernistes susceptibles de représenter cette mutation. La dimension politique de l’écriture de Porter en fait toute la singularité comparée au modernisme

transatlantique des écrivains de la Génération Perdue. Il serait plus approprié de rapprocher son œuvre de celle d'une autre expatriée de Weimar, Hannah Arendt, ne serait-ce que pour l'accent qui y est mis sur l'insouciance du mal, sur le besoin impérieux d'exercer sa faculté de jugement en des temps de crise et sur le recours au concept de natalité d'inspiration augustinienne pour contrer le désespoir existentiel de l'Europe de l'entre-deux-guerres.

INDEX

Keywords: Ship of Fools, The Leaning Tower, Holiday, transatlantic modernism, literary migration, Weimar Germany, banality of evil, Hannah Arendt, biopolitics, the Kantian faculty of judgment, Saint Augustine

Mots-clés: Ship of Fools, The Leaning Tower, Holiday, modernisme transatlantique, migration littéraire, République de Weimar, banalité du mal, Hannah Arendt, biopolitique, Kant, faculté de jugement, Saint Augustin

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