

Post-Truth and Politics Departing from the Thought of Hannah Arendt

In 1967 Arendt published an article on 'Truth and Politics' in the New Yorker in response to historical exigencies that resonate with those presented today by a so-called 'post-truth society'.

While acknowledging the inevitable implication and interminable contest between truth and politics, Arendt attempts to make the case for a rigorous separation of truth-telling from political praxis, which is nonetheless supposed to operate within the framework afforded by factual and scientific truth. Today, given the intensifying political, and especially bio-political, impact of the sciences, it is no longer clear that such a distinction is tenable. Since Arendt wrote, the involvement of politics and epistemology, of power and knowledge, has undergone an intensive interdisciplinary investigation that has transformed the university, in particular the humanities. Interrogating this entanglement of truth and politics, the conference will ask whether academic discourse ought to be held responsible for the current 'post-truth' turn on account of the relativism it is alleged to propagate. Or is this placing of blame itself symptomatic of the problem inasmuch as it fuels the widespread disaffection with established institutions – especially those traditionally expected to speak the truth?

As alarm is raised about the attrition of factual truth and the preponderance of 'lying in politics', to cite another of Arendt's essays, the theoretical and historical precedents for such tendencies as well as the significance of the cultural and technical changes in the dissemination of news brought about by social media need to be considered. And beyond the university and the media, rational-scientific and factual truth, it is important not to neglect the implications for truth and politics of the peculiar kind of truth-telling Arendt attributed to poetry.

An ICI Berlin event, organized by Benjamin Lewis Robinson, in collaboration with Bard College Berlin and the Hannah Arendt Center at Bard College in New York

ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry

Christinenstr. 18/19, Haus 8

D-10119 Berlin

Tel: +49 30 473 72 91 10

www.ici-berlin.org

U-Bhf Senefelder Platz (U2)

Bard College Berlin
A LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

ici
KULTURLABOR
BERLIN INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY

HANNAH
ARENDT
CENTER
Bard College

Conference –
Saturday, 29 April 2017, ICI Berlin



Post-Truth and Politics

Departing from the Thought of Hannah Arendt

Programme

13:30	Catherine Toal (BARD COLLEGE BERLIN) WELCOMING REMARKS		
	Benjamin Lewis Robinson (ICI BERLIN) INTRODUCTION		
13:45	PANEL I: DEPARTURES (AFTER THE FACT)	17:15	PANEL III: POST-TRUTH?
	Samantha Rose Hill (HANNAH ARENDT CENTER - BARD COLLEGE) Departures from Truth		Moderator: Kerry Bystrom (BARD COLLEGE BERLIN)
	Jeffrey Champlin (BARENBOIM-SAID ACADEMY) On the Use and Abuse of Facts for Living		Pietro Daniel Omodeo (MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE) Structure, Subject, and Referent: Perspectives in Political Epistemology
14:45	Coffee break		Jan Völker (BERLIN UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS) Politics, Truth, and Ideology
15:15	PANEL II: HOME TRUTHS Moderator: Samantha Hill (HANNAH ARENDT CENTER - BARD COLLEGE)		Julie Gaillard (ICI BERLIN) Myth and the Republic
	Benjamin Lewis Robinson (ICI BERLIN) The Appearance of Poverty	18:45	Christian Volk (FU BERLIN) Concluding Remarks
	Nitzan Lebovic (LEHIGH UNIVERSITY) Arendt and the Problem of Self-Prophecy	19:00	Break
	Arnd Wedemeyer (ICI BERLIN) Pestzeit: Ernst Bloch in and out of and about... Time	19:30	KEYNOTE
16:45	Coffee break		Susannah Gottlieb (NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY) Poetry – Report: On Arendt’s Peculiarities of Tone