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Vivasvan Soni

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A CLASSICAL POLITICS WITHOUT HAPPINESS?

HANNAH ARENDT AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Vivasvan Soni

Implicit in Hannah Arendt's *On Revolution* (1965) is a narrative about the advent of modern politics. According to Arendt, one of the deplorable novelties of the French Revolution was to make happiness rather than freedom the guiding idea of politics. Indeed, she dates the moment of the Fall into modernity rather precisely, to the collapse of the Gironde and the rise of the Jacobins: "After the downfall of the Gironde, it was no longer freedom but happiness that became the 'new idea in Europe'" (69). Happiness, which for her pertains to social rather than political questions, becomes the mainstay of the revolutionary tradition in the wake of the Jacobins and contaminates politics at every level. Since social questions ask only about the provision of necessities, the concern for happiness undermines the freedom of the political sphere. The emancipatory impulses of the revolutionary tradition end, paradoxically, in totalitarian catastrophe. By contrast, the American revolutionaries, not seduced by what Arendt views as a disastrous compassion for poverty, founded their political order on freedom instead of happiness. Arendt's task in *On Revolution*, then, is to offer an alternative, almost Burkean, account of political foundation, taking as her paradigm the American Revolution and its interpretation of revolution as a restoration of ancient liberties, instead of the French Revolution and its obsession with the "new idea" of happiness.¹

For Arendt, the American Revolution is one of the last outposts of a classical politics of the *polis*, characterized by *isonomia* and the thrill of participation in public life. Arendt does not explicitly thematize the emergent American Republic as a new Athens.² On the contrary, Rome is the more immediate model (1965, 199–215). But anyone who is familiar with *The Human Condition* (1958) cannot miss the analogies between its argument and that of *On Revolution*. Both texts attempt

to constitute the political as an autonomous realm, shielded from the dictates of biological necessity; both draw a stark distinction between freedom and happiness, and privilege only the former as an appropriately political issue; both lament that social questions encroach on politics in modernity. Only, in *The Human Condition*, it is the *polis* rather than the American Revolution that embodies the alternative conception of politics Arendt wants to recuperate, namely the politics of freedom rather than the pseudo-politics of happiness characteristic of modernity. In the narrative of *The Human Condition*, the Fall occurs earlier, with Rome, where the social, a category unavailable to the Greeks, is invented (23–24). Athens and America, Rome and the Jacobins—we can only speculate about how the historical relays might be reconstituted. But we can be certain that in Arendt’s account, the American Revolution is an exercise in “Classical Reception and the Political.” Indeed, her argument is a stronger one. The political is on the verge of vanishing in modernity. Through an exercise in classical reception, by remembering what politics meant in the *polis* or the early American republic, we can secure for ourselves the space of the political.³

The irony of Arendt’s account, however, is that it is perhaps the most unlikely instance of the historical forgetfulness characteristic of political modernity: the erasure of a classical politics of happiness. I say “most unlikely” because Arendt’s is a heroic effort to remember, unlike those modern theorists who simply sweep aside the past and start anew. Nevertheless, in its basic structure and form, Arendt’s politics is fundamentally modern. It makes freedom the purpose of politics to the exclusion of happiness; it relegates happiness to the level of privacy, necessity, animality, and immaturity. Kant, that most paradigmatic of modern thinkers, articulates rigorously the same opposition between freedom and happiness, excluding happiness from politics:

But the concept of an external right as such [the governing concept of politics] proceeds entirely from the concept of *freedom* in the external relation of the people to one another and has nothing at all to do with the end that all of them naturally have (their aim of happiness) and with the prescribing of means for attaining it. (*On the Common Saying*, 8:289, in Kant 1996, 290)

Before Kant, one would be hard pressed to find such a radical exclusion of happiness from the realm of the political, whereas after Kant,

the opposition of freedom and happiness becomes commonplace.⁴ My purpose here is not to conflate Arendt with Kant, or to expose Arendt as a crypto-liberal thinker.⁵ Undoubtedly, Arendt has a more robust and positive conception of freedom, and she would be critical of Kant's rights-oriented notion of freedom as a set of protections against the encroachments of other individuals or the state (1958, 132). Rather, I want to implicate Arendt in what I call the political horizon of modernity. This is a broad hermeneutic structure that privileges freedom *to the exclusion of happiness*, placing emphasis on the forms of politics without regard for its ends and purposes. In Arendt, the simple fact of participation in a political process becomes the point of politics itself: "They knew very well, and John Adams was bold enough to formulate this knowledge time and again, that the people went to the town assemblies . . . neither exclusively because of duty nor, and even less, to serve their own interests but most of all because they enjoyed the discussions, the deliberations, and the making of decisions" (1965, 115). That these decisions might have to do with the people's genuine concerns (their happiness), with the public interest or public matter, the *res publica*, hardly seems to matter. It is the process only that is fetishized and becomes its own endless end (cf. Zerilli, 179). Surprisingly, then, Arendt, like Kant and innumerable others, founds the political on the exclusion of happiness.

Now, I would argue that Arendt's account of the eighteenth-century situation is nearly the reverse of what we actually find. For much of the period, happiness is the unquestioned guiding idea in the realm of practical activity (ethics and politics). It would be impossible to recite the full litany of thinkers for whom the concept is indispensable, but they include Jefferson, Rousseau, Chastellux, Smith, Mandeville, and Hutcheson. It is only in the late eighteenth century, for reasons I will describe in a moment, that the hegemony of the idea of happiness is seriously challenged, and the concept falls precipitously into disrepute. Contrary to Saint Just's claim that "happiness is a new idea in Europe," it is one of the oldest, as eighteenth-century thinkers knew (see Jones, 63–98; Potkay, 12; Røstvig; McMahon, 233, 252, 262).

If the evidence for happiness as a political horizon is as widespread as I am suggesting, how is Arendt able to ignore it, particularly in the case of the American Revolution? She can only do so through

her own exercise in reception, by translating “public happiness” in the American context in such a way as to narrow its meaning to freedom and participation in political life: “This freedom they called later, when they had come to taste it, ‘public happiness,’ and it consisted in the citizen’s right of access to the public realm, in his share in public power” (1965, 124). The phrase “public happiness” means many things in the period, but it cannot be limited to freedom, as Arendt claims; it is far more expansive (see, for example, Chastellux, 1:203). I can only offer one example here, but a significant one from a figure Arendt views as emblematic of the values of the American Revolution.⁶ In his influential pamphlet *Thoughts on Government* (1776), John Adams confirms, at the very moment he is arguing the virtues of political participation and representation, that happiness is the ultimate horizon for republican politics, and that it is not reducible to “access to the public realm.” Having declared earlier that “the divine science of politics is the science of social happiness,” Adams continues:

We ought to consider what is the end of government, before we determine which is the best form. Upon this point *all speculative politicians will agree*, that the happiness of society is the end of government, as all divines and moral philosophers will agree that the happiness of the individual is the end of man. (402, my emphasis, in Hyneman and Lutz)

Adams insists, as do Dickinson and Wilson in their pamphlets, that happiness is the only proper horizon for politics.⁷ The indeterminate concept of happiness forms the bottomless ground on which the space of politics must be erected. At this point, Arendt could still conceivably maintain that by “social happiness” and “the happiness of society” Adams means nothing but the virtues of political participation. But Adams closes the door to this interpretation in his very next sentence: “From this principle it will follow, that the form of government which communicates ease, comfort, security, or, in one word, happiness, to the greatest number of persons, and in the greatest degree, is the best” (402). Adams’s conception of happiness is far more capacious than Arendt can allow, encompassing not only freedom but also what she would call “social questions.” “Ease” and “comfort” refer to more than participation in the process of public decision-making. However, ease and comfort do not constitute the entirety of what is meant by happiness, especially given republican fears about the corrupting

influence of luxury (Wood 1969, 53; Pocock 431ff). In fact, for Adams happiness remains inseparable from virtue, as it was classically: “If there is a form of government, then, whose principle and foundation is virtue, will not every sober man acknowledge it better calculated to promote the general happiness than any other form?” (402). In these contexts then, happiness is not merely political participation, virtue, comfort, pleasure, or security but an indeterminate and capacious idea that is the subject of public deliberation and available to public scrutiny and judgment.

But if, as I claim, happiness has a much longer history as a political concept, how is Arendt able to ignore this history and claim that happiness was first politicized during the French Revolution? The implicit parallel Arendt sees between the American Revolution and the *polis* is established by parallel interpretive gestures in *On Revolution* and *The Human Condition*. Just as *On Revolution* reads “public happiness” to mean political participation, *The Human Condition* interprets the Greek concept of *eudaimonia*, usually translated as “happiness,” to mean “freedom.”⁸ Political freedom, Arendt claims, or liberation from the realm of necessity, “is the essential condition of what the Greeks called felicity, *eudaimonia*” (1958, 31). Her description of Aristotle’s conception of the “good life” (*eudaimonia*) leaves little doubt that the reduction in meaning is systematic and ineradicable. Freedom is not merely the *condition* of happiness but is indistinguishable from it: “It was ‘good’ to the extent that by having mastered the necessities of sheer life, by being freed from labor and work, and by overcoming the innate urge of all living creatures for their own survival, it was *no longer bound* to the biological life process” (1958, 37, my emphasis). The interpretation of *eudaimonia* as freedom is precisely what allows Arendt to locate the political use of the idea of happiness in the eighteenth century, against the evidence of a long tradition. But, to take only one example, Arendt’s reading cannot be squared with the following passage from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*: for Aristotle, the constituents of happiness are “good birth, plenty of friends, good friends, wealth, good children, plenty of children, a happy old age, also such bodily virtues as health, beauty, strength, large stature, athletic powers, together with fame, honour, good luck, and excellence” (1360b 19–24).⁹ There is in principle no way to limit this list, and even emotional well-being can be included among the many constituents of happiness.

The classical horizon of happiness is absolutely capacious, even indeterminate, encompassing all concerns germane to a life's narrative. What is apparent from Aristotle's account, and what is implied in Solon's proverb on happiness ("Call nobody happy until dead"), is that no question that we might pose to a life's narrative is irrelevant as far as happiness is concerned. The question of happiness asks about *everything* in a life, and every biographical narrative is a narrative about happiness. Happiness does not concern one aspect of a life; it is what is at stake in the entire narrative. This becomes clear in Herodotus's account of the Solon-Croesus story where Solon, describing the happiest person, offers the following narrative of Tellus's life, in which public and private, social and political, are indissociably linked:

First, because his country was flourishing in his days, and he himself had sons both beautiful and good, and he lived to see children born to each of them, and these children all grew up; and further because, after a life spent in what our people look upon as comfort, his end was surpassingly glorious. . . . The Athenians gave him a public funeral on the spot where he fell, and paid him the highest honours. (1.30)

Happiness, according to Aristotle and Herodotus, certainly includes freedom as an essential condition, but it can hardly be confined to freedom, as Arendt wants to argue.

I have suggested that happiness, in its more capacious classical sense, functions as a guiding idea in the course of the American Revolution, in a way that Arendt chooses to ignore. But there is in fact some truth to Arendt's account, albeit a more tragic one than she is willing to acknowledge. The concept of happiness is not in the process of being invented but of being written out of political discourse during the later eighteenth century, and the American Revolution is one of the crucial arenas in which this happens. The revolutionaries desperately want to preserve a republican politics that orients itself by some notion of public happiness, but ultimately, for reasons we must discern, they abandon the project for a politics of freedom alone. Although Arendt is correct that the American Revolution exemplifies a politics of freedom, it is not the case that the Americans heroically preserve a classical politics but rather that they abandon it in a way that typifies the modern amnesia about political happiness. Let us

turn our attention to Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, which is symptomatic of the struggle over the place of happiness in political discourse.

The Declaration appears to confirm Arendt's interpretation that freedom is all that matters to the founders. In this text, freedom is not only the revolutionary act of freeing or separation that marks a transition to a different narrative, hermeneutic, and political order. At least two other kinds of freedom are involved: first, the freedom that confers legitimacy on the newly constituted authority ("consent of the governed"), and second, the freedom that legitimate authority is constituted to safeguard (the "inalienable rights" of "life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness") (in Wills, 374).¹⁰ Now, the rights of "life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness" are only multiple in appearance. In fact, there is only one right: the right of freedom. The Declaration appears to be in keeping with Kant's later theorization that the right of freedom is fundamental, and all other rights must be derived from it.¹¹ The right to life without freedom would be hollow, a mere right to be enslaved, and freedom can mean nothing but the freedom to pursue happiness. To specify that the "pursuit of happiness" is protected amounts to no more than a promise of freedom. Guaranteeing the "pursuit of happiness" in a public document like the Declaration does not make happiness a matter of political responsibility. Rather, it is the very gesture by which happiness is transformed into a purely *private* concern. If the "pursuit of happiness" was all the Declaration had to say about this subject, there would be no question that it had abandoned happiness as a properly political concern.

But if we listen carefully to the text again, we will hear the muted strain of a politics of happiness, even if its intelligibility must be painstakingly reconstituted. It is to be found not in the ever-popular "pursuit of happiness" clause but in the "safety & happiness" clause that follows soon after it: "that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends [life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness], it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying it's [*sic*] foundation on such principles, & organising it's [*sic*] powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness" (in Wills, 374). If I have called this a muted strain in the text, it is only because the politics of happiness is not articulated elsewhere in the Declaration, not because the

clause itself is marginal. On the contrary, this clause has a claim to being the most important one in the text, though it is not the one we choose to remember, because we can no longer read its politics of happiness.¹² Not only is it the clause that offers the conceptual justification for the right to revolution, the very act the Declaration is reluctantly attempting to authorize. It is also the clause that looks to the future, specifying the principles on which a state must be constituted after the revolution. It is the clause that tells us the substantive purpose of government, which is not simply to safeguard the people's right to pursue happiness but "to *effect* their safety and happiness" (my emphasis). As is the case with classical happiness, the Declaration leaves the content of the idea of happiness indeterminate, allowing the people themselves to decide, according to the appropriate political processes, what will constitute happiness for them ("as to them shall seem most likely"). In this, it echoes the democratic formula that prefaced Athenian laws (*edoke tōi dēmōi*).¹³

The Declaration is torn between two political horizons, then, the horizon of freedom that predominates, and the horizon of happiness that emerges briefly but forcefully in the "safety and happiness" clause. The extent of the Declaration's retreat from a politics of happiness can be measured by situating it in the context of other documents that deploy a similar language. Consider this sentence from Jefferson's own *Summary View*, a pamphlet intended to instruct Virginia's delegates to Congress:

To remind him [the King] that our ancestors . . . possessed a right . . . of departing from the country in which chance, not choice, has placed them, of going in quest of new habitations, and of there establishing new societies, under such laws and regulations as, to them, shall seem most likely to promote public happiness. (in Jefferson 1944, 7)

The conclusion of this sentence is nearly identical to the "safety and happiness" clause, but in the Declaration the crucial qualifier "public" has been erased, as though Jefferson is unsure of whether one can even speak of a public happiness any longer. Indeed, if Jefferson retreats from the more obviously political concept of happiness found in the *Summary View*, his "pursuit of happiness" clause also mutes the radicalism of other contemporaneous formulations about the importance of happiness as a political idea. As Howard Mumford Jones has

shown, Jefferson's language in the Declaration resembles that of George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights of June 1776, which was taken up into the Virginia Constitution of 1776. Mason's formulation is as follows:

All men . . . have certain inherent natural rights . . . ; among which are the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. (quoted in Jones, 12)

For Mason, it is not simply pursuing happiness, but *obtaining* it too, that is an "inherent natural right." This is the difference between having only freedom as a political horizon and having freedom and happiness as political horizons. Mason's more radical formulation of "pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety" can be found in a number of state constitutions from the period, following the wave of constitution making in 1776 and 1777 (Jones, 23).¹⁴ However, by the time of the Federal Constitution of 1787, the concept of happiness appears unable to sustain a politics, even though a key architect of the constitution, James Madison, had insisted on its importance in the *Federalist Papers* and elsewhere. Indeed, when working on the Bill of Rights, Madison had drafted a first amendment to the constitution which preserved the "right of . . . pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety," but this amendment was ultimately rejected by Congress (Jones, 21–22). In the Federal Constitution, all that remains is the merest vestige of the horizon of happiness, in the "general welfare" clause of the preamble.

The process by which happiness is written out of political discourse in the American Revolution is not an isolated one in the period. A similar process is traceable in a number of other crucial and exemplary sites, such as the political theories of Rousseau and Kant. What accounts for this phenomenon, so faithfully repeated in such different contexts? How is it that so many thinkers can have a commitment to "public happiness" as the aim of politics, and yet none of them seems able to articulate such a politics? The reason, I believe, is that none of these thinkers knows anymore what "public happiness" could mean. The concept had become so irrecoverably private by the end of the eighteenth century that the phrase "public happiness" comes to sound like a contradiction in terms. In his *Autobiography*, Jefferson tells

the narrative of his life as though everything in it were a matter for public concern, as though he were making it available for a public judgment of happiness in Solonian fashion (in Jefferson 1944, 441; cf. Fliegelman, 121). But the appearance is deceptive. When Jefferson does speak about his happiness, what he says is that it would be a mistake to construe the *Autobiography* as a narrative of happiness, because happiness as affective communion defies narrativization: “I had, two months before that, lost the cherished companion of my life, in whose affections, unabated on both sides, I had lived the last ten years in unchequered happiness” (441). For Jefferson, that part of his biography that is happiness he is unable or unwilling to narrate, since he tells us nothing of this time with his wife; that part which he narrates has nothing to do with happiness.¹⁵ Once happiness is structured according to this logic, it makes no sense to speak of a politics of happiness. If happiness is not accessible to narrativization, there is no way for the individual’s happiness to be a matter of public, which is to say political, concern.¹⁶ The absolute separation of happiness from narrative destroys the possibility of a viable modern politics of happiness. Once happiness has been completely privatized, a politics based on this concept will lie somewhere between paternalism and totalitarianism on the political spectrum.¹⁷

How might we learn to imagine a politics of happiness again? What could “public happiness” mean? In order to make sense of this paradoxical phrase, we need to undertake our own act of classical reception. I believe that Solon’s proverb, “Call no man happy until he is dead,” can point the way toward understanding “public happiness” concretely. The Solonian conception of happiness is absolutely capacious: it asks about everything in a life, and it solicits a biographical narrative in which every aspect of a life can come to matter, both those that are usually designated public and those that are designated private, as in the case of Tellus’s life. Because the Solonian conception of happiness remains indeterminate until it is given meaning in the judgment about a life’s narrative, it does not specify in advance some norm, some transcendent goal toward which politics should work. It simply affirms that the happiness of every individual matters, and we have an absolute responsibility toward it. Solonian happiness provides the basis, ground without ground, for a radically anti-foundationalist humanism. It also implies a *concrete institutional site* where a politics

of happiness can find social expression through the act of biographical narration. After all, if nobody can be judged happy until after death, the funeral oration is an ideal site for making a Solonian judgment of happiness, for reflecting on a life and our responsibilities toward it. This is perhaps what Solon refers to when he speaks of the “public funeral” that the Athenians gave to Tellus. Indeed, I would argue that the Athenian funeral oration (*epitaphios logos*) actually served the function of performing a Solonian judgment of happiness, of instantiating a politics of happiness in the city, albeit in a limited and ideological way.¹⁸

Would it be too much to hear a call to a Solonian politics of happiness encrypted in the signature of the *Federalist Papers*? Publius, after all, is not simply a generic example of a Roman republican, as Cato or Brutus sometimes seem to be in eighteenth-century republican discourse. The Roman counterpart to Solon in Plutarch’s *Lives*, and vying with Solon for the honor of having instituted the funeral oration as a political institution, Publius is none other than the Solonian happy man, according to Plutarch. After recounting briefly the narrative of Publius’s life, Plutarch continues:

his death did not only draw tears from his friends and acquaintance, but was the object of universal regret and sorrow through the whole city. . . . So that if Solon was reputed the wisest man, we must allow Poplicola to be the happiest; for what Solon wished for as the greatest and most perfect good, this Poplicola had, and used and enjoyed to his death. (131)

Publius is happy for many reasons, but he is happy above all because he is mourned; in the public act of mourning lies his public happiness, a happiness that does not lurk in the private recesses of an inscrutable subject. To sign the *Federalist Papers* in the name of Publius is to affirm this politics of happiness that is at the same time a politics of mourning. Yet, the Solonian funeral oration is nowhere in sight. If the signature of the *Federalist Papers* is indeed an affirmation of a Solonian politics of happiness, it is a secret affirmation, as though happiness itself were an embarrassment. And to affirm *public* happiness *in secret* is surely to ruin it.

By contrast with Arendt, then, what I am attempting to demonstrate here is that both the American and French Revolutions are acts of classical reception, desperate attempts to reinvent a classical politics of happiness.¹⁹ These attempts fail because the rich Solonian conception

of happiness, based in narrative and available for public judgment, has become inaccessible. The revolutionaries have already come under the sway of a concept of happiness that is largely private, domestic, sentimentalized, and psychologized, that is to say, under the sway of the concept of happiness that is still ours today.²⁰ The Declaration's injunction "to institute new government, laying it's foundation on such principles, & organising it's powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness" can only serve as a cryptic reminder of a politics we have forgotten how to think. In order to make a politics of happiness viable, it is not enough to speak emptily of happiness. Arendt's critique will remain valid for as long as we attempt to build a politics of happiness on the modern conception of happiness that resists politicization. By reinterpreting, through our own acts of classical reception, Solon's proverb, Attic funeral orations and classical tragedy, we can learn to imagine once again, *in concretely utopian ways*, the kinds of institutions that could make happiness a political reality for us.

Notes

1. According to Arendt, the word "revolution" originally means a restoration or return (see, for example, Burke, 106), and only in the French Revolution comes to refer to an irruption of the new. See Arendt 1965, 13–52.

2. For a fuller discussion of the relation between American and Athenian democracy, see Euben, Wallach, and Ober, especially Roberts's essay in that collection. Roberts details the generally low esteem in which Athenian democracy was held during the eighteenth century. See also Finley.

3. Arendt does identify other sites where the political finds exemplary expression, even if only briefly (1965, 108, 265–69). On the emergence of an Arendtian conception of the political in the *polis*, see Meier.

4. There is a strain of political thought and historiography—including Kant; Constant, 326; Arendt 1965; Schama; and McMahon, 252, 266, 342—that links the political concern for happiness to despotism and even modern totalitarianism from the French Revolution onward. I mean to offer a counter-narrative to that discourse.

5. Robin, in a provocative reading, sees Arendt as continuous with a liberal tradition of politics secretly premised on fear (95–129).

6. For the widespread importance of happiness in the American context, see also Wood 1992; Jones; Maier, 67, 75, 93, 95, 134.

7. Dickinson, 16, 48, 67; Wilson, 49. According to Wood (1969, 5) and Bailyn (209), one of the remarkable characteristics of political pamphlets from the American

revolutionary period is that they are not only concerned with the particular crisis at hand, but return insistently to political fundamentals.

8. *Eudaimonia* is not adequately translated “happiness,” as I explain below. It means something more capacious, like “human flourishing” (Nussbaum, 15n5). However, “freedom” belongs to an entirely different semantic register. I know of nobody but Arendt who proposes it as a possible translation.

9. According to Kraut, Aristotle is simply discussing “a number of alternatives” here (291). For my purposes, it is sufficient that an orator could assume these attitudes to be culturally prevalent.

10. Ganter shows that the phrase “pursuit of happiness” was widely used throughout the eighteenth century (1936a, 1936b).

11. See Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:237–38 in Kant, 393–94.

12. Maier argues that the “safety and happiness” clause was the most important one during the constitutional debates (169). However, the clause is erased at the Jefferson memorial (210). According to Wills, the list of grievances was most important for Congress, not the preamble (64). However, the ongoing interest in the Declaration lies in the political philosophy articulated in its preamble. Becker explicates this in the context of eighteenth-century political thought, paying particular attention to its Lockean and commonwealth strains. Wills, by contrast, emphasizes the importance of the French Enlightenment and Scottish communitarian philosophy for Jefferson’s politics.

13. My argument is not that Jefferson was consciously classicizing here, since he had other sources for a politics of happiness. On Jefferson’s anti-classical tendencies, see Appleby, 15. By contrast, Winterer makes the case for Jefferson’s classicism (21).

14. For the Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia constitutions respectively, see Thorpe, 3:1889; 5:3082; 7:3813. According to Jones, Mason’s formula is found in thirty state constitutions between 1776 and 1907 (26).

15. On the life of Horatian retirement as the ideal of happiness, see Jones, 75–80; Røstvig.

16. The contrast between a public life devoted to service and a private life that alone affords the possibility of happiness is replicated in Jefferson’s 9 June 1793 letter to Madison (1995, 239–40). In his *Notes*, Jefferson oscillates between a public and a private notion of happiness (1982, 174, 229). On the tension between a public (rhetorical) and private (affective) conception of language in Jefferson, see Fliegelman.

17. For other examples of the privatization of happiness, see Rousseau’s series of fragments “On Public Happiness,” especially fragment 3 (40–44) and Bentham, 267. Contemporary “positive psychology,” despite gestures in the direction of a narrative understanding of happiness (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000b, 10), still resorts to a bio-psychological reductionism (8). Within this discourse, happiness remains subjective (Diener, 36).

18. For a more detailed exploration of this interpretation of the classical idea

of happiness, and an account of its political implications, see my forthcoming *Mourning Happiness*.

19. On the importance of happiness in the French Revolution, see Arendt 1965, 53–110; Schama; McMahon, 253–67; Denby. However, texts like the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen betray an ambivalence similar to Jefferson's Declaration about the place of happiness in politics.

20. Despite her bold attempt to understand happiness as freedom, Arendt's language betrays that she still understands happiness in a modern way, as affective and experiential. For example: "a feeling of happiness they could acquire nowhere else" (1965, 115). To rethink happiness politically, it is not enough to relocate the source of pleasure in the public realm. Happiness itself must concern narrative, not affect.

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