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Totalitarianism and Hostility as Anthropological and Spiritual Wounds: Deconstructing Hatred in Our Time

Totalitarizem in sovražnost kot antropološka in duhovna rana: dekonstrukcija sovraštva v našem času

Abstract. This article argues that hatred, as seen in totalitarian regimes and contemporary social fragmentation, is a profound anthropological and spiritual wound. Drawing on the works of Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil, this exploration examines how dehumanization, ideological illusion, and thoughtlessness erode moral responsibility and contribute to systemic evil. Arendt highlights the collapse of judgment in totalitarianism; Weil examines how force, illusion, and spiritual disconnection nourish hatred. In response, the article proposes Christian spirituality as a transformative path: not a private refuge but a source of critical awareness, inner freedom, and social responsibility. Through spiritual discernment and solidarity, individuals can resist hatred and rebuild fraternity. This interdisciplinary dialogue between political philosophy and spirituality provides a holistic framework for addressing hostility and fostering peace.

Keywords: Hatred, Peace, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, Spirituality, Christianity

Povzetek: Članek zagovarja tezo, da je sovraštvo, kakršno vidimo v totalitarnih režimih in sodobni družbeni razklanosti, globoka antropološka in duhovna rana. Na podlagi del filozofin Hannah Arendt in Simone Weil se preučuje, kako razčlovečenje, ideološka iluzija in brezmiselnost spodkopavajo moralno odgovornost ter prispevajo k sistemskemu zlu. Arendtova poudarja propad presoje v totalitarizmu, Weilova pa, kako sila, iluzija in duhovna odtujenost hranijo sovraštvo. V odgovor članek predlaga krščansko duhovnost kot preobrazbeno pot: ne kot zasebno zatočišče, temveč kot vir kritične zavesti, notranje svobode in družbene odgovornosti. Skozi duhovno razločevanje in solidarnost lahko posamezniki nasprotujejo sovraštvu in ponovno gradijo bratstvo. Ta interdisciplinarni dialog med politično filozofijo in duhovnostjo ponuja celovit okvir za spopadanje s sovražnostjo in spodbujanje miru.

Ključne besede: sovraštvo, mir, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, duhovnost, krščanstvo

1. Introduction

Our time, wounded by three totalitarian regimes and two world wars, faces increasing challenges to human relationships and social unity. Global conflicts are not merely political disputes but signals of deep-seated hatred, reflected in widespread polarization, ideological rifts, and identity struggles, partially due to a lack of reflection and a genuine desire to accept the present reality.

This article argues that such hostility is not merely a political or moral phenomenon, but a deep anthropological and spiritual wound. Its roots lie in a damaged relationship to reality, to others, and to ourselves—shaped by ideological illusions, the erosion of conscience, and the inability to see the other as a human being. In this sense, hatred is not only the result of propaganda or systemic injustice, but also the fruit of an inner disconnection that fosters indifference, violence, and dehumanization.

To explore and support this thesis, the article proceeds in two complementary parts. The first analyses how Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) and Simone Weil (1909–1943)—two profound thinkers shaped by the catastrophes of the twentieth century—diagnose the mechanisms of totalitarianism, the logic of dehumanization, and the spiritual blindness that enables the banality and normalization of evil. Their thought reveals how the collapse of critical thinking, the surrender to ideological systems, and the repression of inner freedom contribute to the rise of hatred and the destruction of solidarity.

The second part proposes that Christian spirituality, when lived as a path of attentiveness, inner transformation, and moral responsibility, offers a powerful resource for resisting these dynamics. Spirituality is not understood here as a private refuge, but as a space for confronting reality and enabling personal and communal renewal. Through spiritual discernment, contemplation, and commitment to justice and peace, human beings can regain the inner clarity and relational depth needed to rebuild fraternity and resist dehumanizing forces in society.

In this way, the article seeks to demonstrate how a dialogue between political philosophy and spirituality can offer a more holistic and hopeful response to the wound of hatred in our time.

2. Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil Confronting Totalitarianism and Dehumanization

It would be an oversimplification to say that Arendt's and Weil's philosophical reflections are entirely overlapping; their ideas and conclusions both intersect and diverge. Roberto Esposito states that engaging Arendt and Weil in conversation creates mutual complication (Esposito 2017, 2). As Jewish women and intellectuals who never met in person, they paradoxically inspired each other and developed strikingly similar insights into the human condition, particularly in response to to-

talitarianism and dehumanization.¹ Arendt argued that modern mass movements and atomized individualism produced a widespread sense of homelessness, alienation, and rootlessness, preparing people for ideological fictions of totalitarian regimes. Her analyses show how the political, social, and phenomenological aspects of hatred manifest within societies and power structures. On the other side, Weil argued that modern industrial society stripped individuals of their spiritual and social roots, leading to a profound sense of uprootedness and alienation. This loss creates a spiritual void that is filled by the destructive forces of hatred. Weil explored the metaphysical, spiritual, and mystical aspects of hatred and peace, seeking their roots in the human soul and divine realms.

Reading Arendt and Weil together allows us to reflect on totalitarianism, accompanied by an unprecedented amount of suffering and pain (Livingstone and Lawson 2024). Their combined perspectives provide a nuanced understanding of how hatred threatens both individual and collective freedom and peace. Real peace and freedom require more than just political action; they demand a profound inner transformation and the active cultivation of humanity within ourselves and in our dealings with others.

2.1 Hannah Arendt: The Banality of Evil and the Collapse of Moral Judgment

Arendt and Weil elaborated a strong critique of *totalitarianism* with its *dehumanization*, which has a corrupting effect on the human condition and the potential for a just society. When examining the roots of Stalinism and Nazism, Arendt concluded that totalitarianism was “a novel form of government” (1994b, 460). When totalitarianism seized power, it dismantled existing political institutions and eradicated a nation’s social, legal, and political traditions, and transformed distinct social classes into undifferentiated masses. In short, totalitarianism attempts “to transform the nature of man” (347) with the aid of totalitarian propaganda (363). This propaganda shifts away from confrontation, meaningful discussion, and argumentation within democratic frameworks toward a steady stream of new issues related to totalitarian propaganda, which hides the fact that their arguments are weak and unreliable. This continuous flow is essential for members of the totalitarian regime because it sustains their beliefs.

This propaganda promotes ideologies, i.e., belief systems that explain all phenomena from a singular, empirically detached premise. They mimic scientific me-

¹ Although both Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil were of Jewish origin, the extent and nature of Jewish influence on their thought differ considerably. Arendt, significantly shaped by Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, also reflected on Jewish identity, ethics, history, and temporality in dialogue with Jewish thinkers such as Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Walter Benjamin, and Gershom Scholem (Young-Buehl 2004). Weil, by contrast, while ethnically Jewish, adopted a highly critical stance toward historical Judaism; nevertheless, her Jewish background and solidarity with the oppressed remained central to her ethical worldview. Her primary sources of inspiration were Ancient Greek philosophy, Christianity and Christian mysticism, Eastern traditions, and modern political and social thought, though occasional resonances with Baruch Spinoza and Philo of Alexandria may also be discerned (Pétrement 1976).

thodologies, presenting themselves as a “logic of an idea” to assert philosophical truths. This self-proclaimed rigor positions their concepts as the subject matter of a new science, often history, where ideas are applied to interpret and direct events. The result is not static knowledge but the presumed unfolding of a continuous, law-like process. Ideological interpretations refuse to see or accept anything as it is because everything is only a stage of further development (464).

Whoever stands against this process is automatically guilty and should be eliminated, even with the use of terror. This terror is the realization of the law of movement, making it possible for history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action (465). This terror seeks total domination and erodes all human spontaneity, dignity, and individuality. The final goal is not to rule over people but to transform human nature itself and create a system where men are no longer necessary. The creation of this system is where “radical evil” emerges (459).

In *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Arendt 1994a), Arendt examines totalitarian evil through Adolf Eichmann’s defence during his trial in Jerusalem, where he, as a German Nazi official, claimed not to be guilty because he was a mere functionary obeying orders (134–135). Arendt observed Eichmann’s reliance on self-invented clichés and stock phrases, demonstrating a profound detachment from reality and an inability to articulate coherent thoughts. This cognitive disarray, coupled with his poor communication skills, made him an ideal conduit for the Nazi regime’s coded language, such as “final solution” for extermination (26–30; 43). Eichmann’s case highlighted how individuals could become instruments of evil not through monstrous intent, but through uncritical internalization of ideology and a pervasive inability to perceive reality from alternative perspectives. As an ordinary individual driven by a desire for professional advancement, Eichmann was a bureaucrat who performed horrific acts with dispassionate efficiency, motivated by careerism and a willingness to unquestioningly obey authority. His evil stemmed from a profound “thoughtlessness,” an incapacity for critical reflection, an inability to grasp the moral ramifications of his deeds, and a failure to empathize (Kohn). Arendt concluded that under specific conditions, such as totalitarianism, ordinary individuals can become perpetrators of immense evil through a deficit of independent moral judgment and a failure to engage in critical thought, marked by “the reluctance ever to imagine what the other person is experiencing. That is the banality of evil” (American Masters 2025).

Arendt provided profound insights into the hatred of past centuries, which is more than an emotion; it is a cold, ideological, and thoughtless system that leads to dehumanization and the destruction of public space. As a way forward, Arendt elaborated on a concept of peace as a profound reflection on human flourishing that fosters the public sphere and the ongoing practice of thinking and judging.²

² As an alternative to evil and ideological thinking, Hannah conceived peace as an active state, intrinsically linked to *natality*—the human capacity for new beginnings (Arendt 2006, 142–169)—and *plurality*—the coexistence of diverse individuals (Arendt 2018, 50–58). This peace fosters a “common world” sustained by shared institutions, demanding mutual respect and critical judgment to resist ideological

2.2 Simone Weil: Force, Illusion, and the Spiritual Roots of Hatred

Unlike Arendt, Simone Weil highlighted the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of freedom, seeing it as liberation from hatred and the material world. In her essay, *The Iliad, or the Poem of Force* (Weil 2003). Weil claimed that force is the true hero of Homer's epic, "making a thing of whoever submits to it" (49). Both victims and perpetrators are robbed of their humanity; victims become corpses before death, and perpetrators become intoxicated and blinded, losing their reason and judgment. Force reduces humans to objects either through direct violence or the psychological pressure of an oppressive system. Force, once unleashed, has an almost irresistible temptation to excess, which possesses us rather than being truly possessed. Force destroys us physically, spiritually, and morally. This can happen with the arrest of thought. When we stop thinking, the boundary between good and evil collapses, and evil becomes banal—in Arendt's words—or superficial, dreary, monotonous, barren, and tedious, in Weil's reflection. Evil becomes normal, responding to a norm or law that evil itself has posited. Force inherently possesses individuals, creating a moral vacuum where hatred flourishes and ultimately subjects both the weak and the strong to its "blind destiny" (53), highlighting humanity's profound vulnerability to overwhelming power.

Weil continues that the totalitarian machine tends towards the annihilation of human presence via *derealization* of that which exists, and via the ideological construction of a world that is so false that the real appears to be unbelievable. Once deprived of any notion of reality, "men are ready for the experience of uprooting and subsequent deportation that consequently allows totalitarianism to reach its ultimate goal; that is, to treat them like things in order to render them 'superfluous.'" (Esposito 2017, 3) This can happen with the arrest of thought.

Hatred can also stem from a deep sense of meaninglessness and purposelessness, especially during war. For instance, when the goal of a war is unclear or morally wrong, when fighting over meaningless symbols, or when the objectives of the conflict are hollow and abstract, the aims become empty. In such cases, something irrational must fill the void and fuel the conflict. According to Weil's reflection, this is the raw emotion of hatred, which becomes the core or motivation for war. The simple urge to destroy others turns into an end itself. "The nothingness of national, class, or racial myth must receive an apparent substance, not from intelligible content but from the will to destroy and be destroyed." (Rozoff 2021) The will to destroy gives substance to what is otherwise objectively void.

Weil's reflection on hatred reaches new depths in her *Gravity and Grace* (Weil 1972), a collection of intense, aphoristic notes and fragments, with which she analyses how human existence is exposed to spiritual and physical laws. Gravity

manipulation. In direct contrast to totalitarianism's suppression of individuality and agency, natality signifies continuous world renewal through generational creativity. Arendt's peace necessitates a political community that actively cultivates the public sphere, political freedom, discourse, and respect for diversity, all sustained by continuous critical thinking and judgment, thereby defending human freedom from ideologies that undermine critical thinking.

represents the downward pull of evil and the human inclination toward despair; it is the force of necessity, compulsion, mechanism, self-interest, and the ego. Gravity shows itself in various ways. Just as physical objects are attracted to the earth, human desires, habits, and psychological impulses often pull us toward selfish behaviours. Our attachments to possessions, social status, reputation, and personal opinions bind us to the material world, preventing genuine connection to the divine. In the social realm, gravity can dehumanize individuals, reducing them to mere cogs in a machine and stripping them of their dignity. On the other side is grace, symbolizing the supernatural, transformative power that enables liberation and spiritual ascent. As such, it represents divine intervention that allows for spiritual uplift and freedom. It is a gift from God, originating beyond natural causes and human effort. Therefore, it is connected to divine love, beauty, moments of pure affection, and acts of true compassion. Grace introduces an element of genuine freedom and spontaneous action, permitting choices and movements that oppose natural tendencies. Ultimately, grace is the foundation of all that is truly good, beautiful, and true (1–4).

When reflecting on gravity and grace, Weil analyses imagination, illusion, and delusion in perpetuating hatred and war (45–52). When faced with life's harsh realities, the human mind creates illusions and imaginations to provide a sense of order or justification for meaning. When confronted with a lack, suffering, or a difficult truth that the ego cannot accept, the imagination forms fantasies to fill the void. Every unresolved void breeds hatred, sourness, bitterness, and negative emotions like hatred. Imagination inherently destroys reality and simplifies complex realities into flat, two-dimensional images, simplistic and often self-serving narratives. Imagination is essentially a liar (16).

The imagination is closely tied to the ego's instinct for self-preservation. It constructs illusions that support the ego's false view of itself as the centre of the world, reinforcing feelings of importance, control, and moral superiority. When the ego is challenged or threatened, the imagination can develop new ways to survive without any real change. It allows an average human being to "become prisoners, slaves, prostitutes and pass through no matter what suffering without being purified" (17). Illusions also form attachments to things, people, or outcomes, creating comforting fictions that justify these attachments. Similarly, human illusion assigns false and exaggerated values to worldly possessions, even though they are shadowy imitations of goodness. Weil suggests that illusion and evil are deeply connected. "When we are the victims of an illusion, we do not feel it to be an illusion but a reality. It is the same, perhaps, with evil. Evil, when we are in its power, is not felt as evil but as a necessity, or even a duty." (64) Evil blinds us to the true nature of reality, including the reality of evil, making it seem necessary or even good. As a counter-movement against the natural tendencies of the imagination, Weil proposes attention, decreation, acceptance of necessity, and engagement with reality as the paths to peace. These ideas are inseparable because they are inherently connected and intertwined.

3. Christian Spirituality as a Space for Confronting Reality and Enabling Transformation

To understand and overcome the hostility that permeates our time—manifested in totalitarian tendencies, dehumanization, and ideological illusion—political reform, ideological critique, or social analysis alone are not sufficient (Lopez Cambroner 2025). What is also needed is a spiritual dimension—one that opens us to deeper layers of reality and enables us to engage with the world honestly, including its cruelty, evil, and suffering (Vodičar 2020, 264). In this sense, spirituality is not an escape from reality but its very opposite: a profound dwelling in truth that allows us to perceive the world not merely through the lenses of power, success, or utility, but primarily through the eyes of vulnerable love (Globokar 2022, 9–13). And thus resists the ideological illusions and mechanisms of derealization that enable thoughtlessness and spiritual numbness in totalitarian cultures.³

It is from this perspective that the thoughts of Arendt and Weil become particularly significant. Both recognized that hostility does not arise solely from political propaganda, but also from unreflective attachment to ideological illusions, from a lack of critical thinking, and most of all, from the inability to see reality as it truly is. This is where the role of spirituality emerges—as an inner disposition that creates space for truth, no matter how difficult or painful that truth may be.

3.1 Spiritual Attitude as Critical Awareness and Rejection of Illusion

Christian spirituality is an individual and communal way of living the Christian faith. Such spirituality becomes especially relevant in the face of what Arendt described as ‘thoughtlessness’—a failure to engage in critical reflection and moral responsibility—and in resisting the ideological systems that, as Weil noted, are rooted in illusion and spiritual passivity, enabling the derealization of truth and paving the way for systemic dehumanization.

Through their spirituality, Christians courageously and sincerely face reality—including evil, suffering, and injustice—both within themselves and in the world, in the light of the active presence of God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (Roszak et al. 2024). It is a path of transformation in which, through personal and communal prayer, reflection on the Word of God, celebration of the sacraments, and spiritual discernment, attention, sobriety, and inner freedom gradually develop (Ps 51:8; Jn 8:32). In this sense, spiritual life is inseparable from critical awareness, since it seeks the truth that sets us free and is not satisfied with ideological certainties, populist slogans, or superficial judgments (1 Thess 5:21; Eph 4:15).

Pope Francis invites Christians to discern as keeping a watchful conscience, which enables us to recognize what comes from God and what leads away from truth and peace (GE, 166–175). He emphasizes: “We must remember that pra-

³ Several studies show that spirituality also plays an important role in coping with life trials and traumas (Jerebic, Bošnjaković and Jerebic 2023, 355–367).

yerful discernment must be born of a readiness to listen: to the Lord and to others, and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways.” (172) Discernment thus acts as a counter-force to totalitarian mechanisms of manipulation, enabling believers to resist the normalization of evil through habits of prayer, conscience formation, and communal reflection.

Discernment is not merely a personal disposition or intuition, but a process in which, through prayer, the Scriptures⁴, and in the light of the community and the Church’s teaching, we examine where the Spirit of God is leading us (Acts 15:28). This ability is deeply spiritual and is a prerequisite for inner peace and healthy interpersonal relationships (Num 11:26-29). (Szamocki 2021, 637–638)

As emphasized in Church documents, formation in spiritual discernment is essential for developing a mature conscience and engaging in responsible action in the world. “*Gaudium et Spes*” (16) teaches that conscience is not something external, but “the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths”—the place where a person discerns what is right and wrong. It is there that the capacity for critical judgment of reality in the light of the Gospel is born, not based on criteria of utility or ideological alignment.

Where the rational-reflective dimension of spirituality is realized, there is room for fraternity, for only a person who sees clearly and loves the truth can recognize a sister or brother in another person, rather than an enemy.

3.2 Building Peace as a Spiritual Task

True peace does not grow out of compromises between interests but arises from a profound inner transformation of the heart—one that resists the violence of totalitarian systems and the depersonalizing logic of ideological control. It takes place in prayerful and sacramental union with God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit who dwells in him (Rom 5:1-11). Such peace is not merely the absence of violence, but the active presence of justice, respect, goodness, mutuality, and solidarity (CCC, 2303–2306).

Peace always begins in the human heart. It is there that it is decided whether another person will be seen as an enemy or a brother, an object or a person, a competitor or a fellow human being. As Pope Francis (2024) emphasizes in his message for the World Day of Peace, peace begins at home, in the family, in the heart of each individual. There can be no social peace without inner peace in every human being.

Christian spirituality, rooted in the Gospel, enables Christians to overcome the purely instinctive, often emotional response to injustice (EG, 226–230). They do not remain passive or fall into a spiral of revenge, but with the power of God’s love and forgiveness, they become active builders of peace (Mt 5:38-48; Rom 12:17-21). As spiritual fathers, especially Thomas Merton (1971, 112–216), point

⁴ Discernment is also needed in the choice of a translation that is faithful to the original and does not impose the translator’s point of view (Skralovnik 2021, 47–68).

out, contemplative prayer opens the eyes of the heart to the reality of God and neighbour and enables man to see the world through Christ's eyes in truth and compassion.

Christians see confrontations with evil as opportunities for transformation. They follow Christ's example, who did not defeat evil with greater violence, but with the power of self-giving love (GS, 38). Peacemakers do not place themselves above others, but enter into relationships with others with humility, understanding, and spiritual strength, which is the result of a deep personal and communal unity with God. In this light, building peace is an important spiritual task for Christians.

According to the spiritual tradition of the Church, peace is also a gift of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). This gift renews us internally and sends us out into the world as witnesses of reconciliation. As the Second Vatican Council emphasizes, peace is never something achieved once and for all, but is a constant work of justice and an expression of love (GS, 78).

3.3 Christian Spirituality that Realizes Solidarity

A Christian who lives according to the Gospel cannot understand spirituality as a private consolation or an individual path to salvation. Spirituality fosters solidarity stands in direct opposition to the social atomization and moral indifference that both Arendt and Weil recognized as fertile ground for totalitarianism and dehumanization.

Pope Francis emphasizes that there is no true peace without solidarity that comes from the spirituality of encounter with others (FT, 216–217). Spiritual life, rooted in the sacraments and the Word of God, takes place within history and does not flee from the world, but rather enables man to be responsibly present in it. In this way, spirituality becomes an internal source for the creation of social justice, a culture of closeness, and a sense of community (EG, 183).

According to Paul, "faith expressing itself through love" (Gal 5:6) should be expressed in concrete commitment to others. This is more than social sensitivity; it is a spiritual attitude oriented toward creative and responsible action for the common good.

Pope Francis highlights this dynamic in "Fratelli tutti", where he distinguishes between two forms of love: "elicited" love, which arises directly from the virtue of charity and responds to the immediate needs of individuals, and "commanded" love, which inspires broader efforts to shape more just institutions and social conditions. "It is an equally indispensable act of love," he writes, "to strive to organize and structure society so that one's neighbour will not find himself in poverty" (186). This perspective shows that authentic charity does not end with spontaneous gestures of help but extends to systemic change. A politician who builds a bridge or creates employment engages in a lofty form of charity that ennobles political action and reflects the Gospel imperative to care not only for individuals but for the structures that shape their lives. Christians are called not only to alleviate the effects of evil, but also to participate in its elimination at its source. This

means that spirituality shapes a sense of justice, social responsibility, and solidarity that is structured and lasting. Love is expressed not only in momentary compassion, but also in the pursuit of laws, institutions, and social relationships that respect human dignity.

This way of life transcends the logic of utility, ideological boundaries, and tribalism. When Jesus says in Matthew 25:40, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me," he sets a fundamental spiritual and ethical standard: genuine spirituality is manifested in sensitivity to the most vulnerable. This is not an abstract idea of solidarity, but a life capable of creating communities in which no one is forgotten, where closeness is not conditioned by ideological affiliation, but by the love that comes from God.

This attitude is also confirmed by the Second Vatican Council, which places great emphasis on respect for every human being: "Everyone must consider his every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all His life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus." (GS, 27)

A spirituality that recognizes the other as "another self" fosters a fundamental communal attitude that subverts the cultural logic of dehumanization and the objectification of persons typical of totalitarian structures. The solidarity born of such spirituality becomes the foundation for a renewed form of life together—one that embraces closeness, responsibility, and the pursuit of a more just and humane society in which no one is rendered "superfluous".

4. Conclusion

The research has confirmed the thesis that hatred, as expressed in totalitarian systems and contemporary social fragmentation, is not merely a political or moral issue, but a profound anthropological and spiritual wound. A critical and analytical reading of Hannah Arendt and Simone Weil has explored that totalitarianism, with its force and violence, carries a corrosive effect on the human condition and the possibility of a just society. Although their personal experiences with Nazism differed, Arendt and Weil came to the conclusion that the totalitarian machine tends towards the annihilation of the human presence via derealization of that which exists, and via ideological construction of a world that is so false that the real appears to be unbelievable. Once deprived of any notion of reality, "men are ready for the experience of uprooting and subsequent deportation that consequently allows totalitarianism to reach its ultimate goal; that is, to treat them like things in order to render them 'superfluous'" (Esposito 2017, 3). This can happen with the arrest of thought or thoughtlessness, leading to widespread dehumanization.

Totalitarianism isolates and atomizes individuals, turns ordinary people into parts of an oppressive machine, ready to blindly follow and obey authority, which Arendt describes as the banality of evil, with its widespread dehumanization. Si-

Similarly, Weil talks about destroying aspects of force, robbing victims and perpetrators of their reasoning and judgment, and destroying them physically, spiritually, and morally. When we stop thinking, the boundary between good and evil collapses, and evil becomes banal.

Both philosophers agreed that attention and acceptance of reality is the way out of evil through an engaged inner life. For Arendt, attention is a specific interaction between will and intellect, which helps properly understand the self, establish a critical distance from the object of their consideration, and prepare for an appropriate action (Arendt 1978, 101). Attention, merged with thinking, is crucial for resisting conformity and exercising independent judgment, especially in political engagement. Weil focused on freedom through the spiritual transformation of the individual soul. She pursued inward and spiritual freedom, emphasizing decreation—emptying the ego and self-will to welcome divine grace. Genuine attention and a connection to the uncreated lead to deep reflection, unmediated grasp of truth, beauty, and goodness, ultimately leading to a connection with God (Weil 2004, 416).

Arendt and Weil recognized hope in inner discipline, which encompasses attentiveness, the renunciation of ego, and the awakening of both spiritual and intellectual freedom. In this light, the second part of the article presented Christian spirituality not as a private refuge, but as a crucial path of transformation—one that enables the individual to resist ideological manipulation, reclaim moral responsibility, moves away from thoughtlessness, and cultivate new forms of solidarity. When lived deeply, spirituality becomes a space in which truth is welcomed, conscience is formed, and peace is built from the inside out.

This illustrates how the synthesis of political philosophy and Christian spirituality provides a profound and multifaceted response to the pervasive challenge of hatred in both historical and contemporary contexts. While Arendt and Weil opened crucial philosophical and spiritual pathways, Christian spirituality deepens, purifies, and fulfils their intuitions by grounding attention, responsibility, and human dignity in the reality of divine love. The healing of dehumanization must pass through interior dehumanization—a process involving discernment, contemplative clarity, and ethical commitment. It is not merely a new way of understanding the world, but a new way of seeing the other: no longer as a threat, but as a brother or sister. This is a Christian spiritual anthropology of peace, grounded in attentiveness, critical reflection, and active solidarity.

Christian spirituality offers more than general moral insight—it proclaims the inestimable value of every human being, created in the image of God and called to live in truth, freedom, and love. It invites us to resist ideological manipulation not merely by reason or emotion, but by a transformation of the heart,⁵ nourished

⁵ As shown in research on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage, such transformation often involves a significant increase in care for others—manifested in greater empathy, compassion, patience, and willingness to help—core dimensions of moral and spiritual renewal that counteract depersonalization and ideological numbness (Brumec and Aracki Rosenfeld 2021, 707–708).

through prayer, Scripture⁶, sacraments, and community. It teaches us that true attentiveness is not passivity, but the fruit of grace, and that genuine responsibility is born from encounter with the crucified and risen Christ, who identifies with the most vulnerable (Vodičar 2022, 698). In this light, Christian spirituality offers a powerful and hopeful resource for responding to the wounds of the twentieth century—especially those inflicted by totalitarianism, violence, and depersonalization.

The struggle against hatred, therefore, unfolds not only in public discourse or political measures, but first and foremost in the human heart—when freedom, compassion, and the true image of the other are rediscovered. This other, in his or her very essence, reflects the image of God and is thus recognized as our brother or sister. Ultimately, this reflection hopes to inspire a deeper commitment—in scholarship, formation, and civic life—to view the other not through the lens of ideology or fear, but as a sacred presence who calls us into responsibility, reconciliation, and the shared pursuit of peace—a peace built not on power, but on grace and communion.

Abbreviations

- CCC – Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993.
 EG – Francis 2013 [Evangelii Gaudium].
 FT – Francis 2020 [Fratelli Tutti].
 GE – Francis 2018 [Gaudete et Exsultate].
 GS – Second Vatican Council 1965 [Gaudium et Spes].

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⁶ The understanding of Scripture has changed throughout the history of the Church and has not always supported the (same) presented view (Skralovnik 2023, 290–301).

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