

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

–

Lecture 1: Justice, Guilt and Responsibility

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Arendt's Biography</i>	2
<i>Arendt's Methodology</i>	3
<i>The Context</i>	7
The Shoah – Lost for Words	7
Arendt's Critique of the Foundation of the State of Israel	8
<i>Justice, Guilt and Responsibility</i>	9
<i>Bibliography</i>	14

Introduction

This series is comprised of five lectures on Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* published in 1963. It will address different themes raised in the book. They include justice, guilt, responsibility, the banality of evil, action, conscience, authority, thinking, and judging.

Today's lecture is divided into four sections. First, we briefly review Arendt's biography. Second, we examine Arendt's methodology, not only in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* but throughout her work. Third, we examine the context of the Eichmann trial. Fourth, we illuminate the big controversy it sparked and address some of Arendt's theoretical interventions in the first two chapters, particularly her conception of justice, guilt and responsibility.

Arendt's Biography

Who was Hannah Arendt? Hannah Arendt was born to a Jewish family in Hannover (Germany) in 1906. She studied at Marburg University where she met Karl Jaspers who later became her PhD supervisor. Karl Jaspers was well-known German existentialist philosopher who first studied psychiatry before turning to philosophy. From 1926 to 1927, Arendt was a student at Freiburg University where she met Martin Heidegger who greatly influenced her thinking and with whom she had a love affair.

In 1929, Arendt completed her doctoral dissertation on the concept of love in Saint Augustine's work. In 1933, only four years after her graduation, the Nazis came to power and Arendt was arrested in Berlin. But she managed to flee to Paris where she got involved in organized politics by becoming a secretary-general of Youth Aliyah, a Zionist project that helped European Jews to emigrate to Palestine. Due to her political activities, Arendt was again detained in 1940. Luckily, she escaped to New York via Spain, and Portugal in 1941.

For 10 years, Arendt lived as a stateless person in the US – her experience of statelessness is central to her thinking. Once an American citizen in 1951, she started working at several prestigious universities until the end of her life, including the University of Notre Dame, the University of California, the University of Berkeley, Princeton University, Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, Yale University, Wesleyan University and the New School for Social Research.

With this short biography in mind, let us recall some of her major writings. Arendt was incredibly prolific throughout her academic career. Her most well-known books include, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* published in 1951 in which she analyses totalitarian regimes, *The Human Condition* in 1958 in which she develops her thoughts on the three central elements of the human condition: labour, work, and action. In 1963, she finished two books: *On Revolution* in which she praises the American Revolution and criticizes the French Revolution as well as *Eichmann in Jerusalem* which becomes the focal point of her later writings. Between 1968 and 1972, Arendt writes two more books: *Men in Dark Times* and *Crises of the Republic*. Furthermore, three books are published posthumously. They include *The Life of the Mind* in 1978, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* in 1982, and *Responsibility and Judgement* in 2003.

Arendt's Methodology



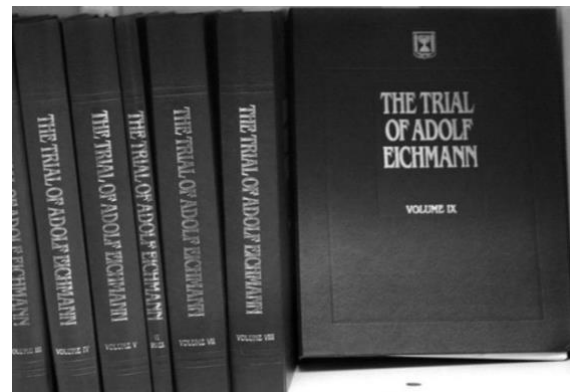
The Death of Socrates, Jacques-Louis David (1787)

How did Arendt approach her inquiries into these subjects? In other words, what was her method for studying, for example, the origins of totalitarianism? I believe Arendt's choice of method was greatly influenced by her distinction between political philosophy and political theory. In 1964, in an interview with Günther Gaus, a German journalist, Arendt revealed that she did not consider herself to be a political philosopher but a political theorist.

When Gaus asks Arendt whether she feels peculiar about being one of few female philosophers, Arendt responds: "I am afraid I have to protest. I do not belong to the [profession of philosophy]. My profession, if one can even speak of it at all, is political theory. I neither feel like a philosopher, nor do I believe that I have been accepted in the [profession of philosophy], as you so kindly suppose [...] I have said good-bye to philosophy once and for all [...] The expression 'political philosophy,' which I avoid, is extremely burdened by tradition. When I talk about these things, academically or nonacademically, I always mention that there is a vital tension between philosophy and politics. That is, between man as a thinking being and man as an acting being, there is a tension that does not exist in natural philosophy, for example. Like everyone else, the philosopher can be objective with regard to nature, and when he says what he thinks about it he speaks in the name of all mankind. But he cannot be objective or neutral with regard to politics. Not since Plato! [...] There is a kind of enmity against all politics in most philosophers, with very few exceptions. Kant is an exception. This enmity is extremely important for the whole problem, because it is not a personal question. It lies in the nature of the subject itself [...] I want no part in this enmity [...] I want to look at politics, so to speak, with eyes unclouded by philosophy." (Arendt, 2003, p. 1f.).

How did this hostility among philosophers towards politics come about? According to Arendt, it originates in the trial of Socrates. Rather than praising Socrates as the first philosopher to interfere in political affairs qua philosopher, the polis condemned him (Arendt, 1960b, p. 024807). Charged with offending the Gods and corrupting the youth, Socrates was ultimately sentenced to death. This verdict made Plato despise politics (Arendt, 2004, p. 427). In *The Republic*, he later argued that cities should not be governed by politicians, but by philosophers instead.

For Arendt, the tragedy of the trial lay in the fact that Socrates, who believed in the interrelationship between philosophy and politics, could neither convince the polis of the benefits of philosophy nor persuade other philosophers like Plato that he had to accept the death sentence for political reasons (Arendt, 2004, p. 428). In other words, he could not prevent the split between philosophy and politics (Arendt, 1960b, p. 024807). Arguably, this split still exists today, when philosophy is reduced to abstract thinking and politics to the solution of concrete problems (Dolan, 2000, p. 261). Arendt, however, rejects this separation. In her view, philosophers must engage with politics, and politicians with philosophy.



Trial of Adolf Eichmann (April to December 1961)

Following this motto, Arendt felt a strong urge to attend Eichmann's trial. She wanted to form her own opinion. When the *New Yorker* magazine offered her the opportunity to write a report, she couldn't refuse, even though she was aware of the enormous challenge such a report would entail. In an exchange of letters with her former doctoral supervisor, mentor, and friend Karl Jaspers, Arendt writes: "I wanted to know: Who was Eichmann? What were his deeds, not insofar as his crimes were part and parcel of the Nazi system, but insofar as he was a free agent. [...] It is the great advantage of the court procedure that it inevitably confronts you with the person and personal guilt, with individual motivation and decisions, with particulars, which in another context, the context of theory, are not relevant" (quoted from Renz, 2021, p. 17f. ebook). In response, Jaspers

recommended her to not be too controversial. Knowing Arendt and her way of thinking well, he already sensed the controversy that would soon arise.

Returning to Arendt's distinction between political philosophy and political theory, what general methodological commitments does she derive from this? As mentioned in the interview with Gaus, for her, political theory is never objective or neutral. When political theorists intervene in politics through their writings, they speak only for themselves. Their intervention is both an expression of thought and political action.

In her 1965 Cornell lecture *From Machiavelli to Marx*, Arendt takes the distinction between political philosophy and political theory a step further. She differentiates 'philosophers' from political theorists, arguing that the former – since Plato – not only stand outside politics: "They [also] want to impose non-political standards on politics" (Arendt, 1965, p. 023453). Political theorists, on the other hand, view politics as an end in itself. "They write out of political experiences and for the sake of politics" (Arendt, 1965, p. 023453).

To understand this difference, it is helpful to examine Arendt's conception of politics. For Arendt, politics is inextricably tied to freedom. She argues that "[i]f, then we understand the political in the sense of the polis, its end [...] would be to establish and keep in existence a space where freedom as virtuosity can appear" (Arendt, 1960a, p. 35). According to Arendt, this freedom can only be achieved if two conditions are met. Arendt writes: "in order to be free, man must have liberated himself from the necessities of life. But the status of freedom did not follow automatically upon the act of liberation. Freedom needed in addition to mere liberation the company of other men who were in the same state, and it needed a common public space [...] into which each of the free-men could insert himself by word and deed" (Arendt, 1960a, p. 29f.). Put differently, politics is only possible if we live in community and all members can engage with in communal life.

So, what are the non-political standards that philosophers like Plato wanted to impose on politics? While Arendt does not mention them directly, we can take a guess from her juxtaposition of Socrates and Plato. Unlike Plato's philosophy, Socrates' still fit Arendt's concept of politics. Socrates accepted his death sentence to preserve the common public space, whereas Plato destroyed it by dividing it in two: on the one hand, the philosophers and, on the other hand, the polis. Rather than freedom Plato sought justice and order.

Closely related to this point is Arendt's emphasis on the context. While political theorists describe their political experience and judge the conditions under which they come about, political philosophers engage in abstract thinking and justification. She writes: "You cannot interpret [the political theorists] as though they were philosophers and wanted to teach wisdom. You can't demand the same standards of consistency because this is not important from them. There is an atmosphere and a consistency of thinking,

approaching things; there are fundamental convictions but there are no systems” (Arendt, 1965, p. 023453).

In her 1955 Berkeley lecture on Ideologies, Arendt furthermore distinguishes political theory before and after Marx. For her, Marxism, Italian Fascism, French Existentialism, Pragmatism, Positivism, and Behaviourism all signify “an escape from theory into action” (Arendt, 1955, p. 024108). They “relegate thought into the background” where it is measured by action and denied its independent value (Arendt, 1955, p. 024108).

For Arendt, this escape is highly problematic, because “without political theory, we live in a chaos of opinions, in a labyrinth of isms that have their roots in the 19th century. [...] [Under such conditions,] anyone who can demonstrate consistency can win over the masses. But consistency is not truth” (Arendt, 1955, p. 024108). Following the Greeks, Arendt argues that truth is inherent only in facts, not in reason or consistency. Taking Arendt as a point of reference, we seem to have descended even deeper into the chaos of opinions today. The populists of this world have demonstrated that even consistency is no longer necessary to win over the masses: mere belief and action are enough. For Arendt, however, such an attack by populists is not an attack on theory per se; rather, it shows that they “want their own theory [...] to be accepted as gospel of truth” (Arendt, 1955, p. 024108).

What methodology does Arendt then propose for political theory? Regarding the regime of totalitarianism, she writes: “What I propose is to look for the theory behind [totalitarianism], but not those theories which [its proponents] profess to have – racism and historical materialism, which belong [to the chaos of opinions] – but: Can we find from their deeds and the occasional accompanying words the underlying theoretical assumptions? Where do we find this? In the sources. What are the sources: 1. Official pronouncements [...]. 2. Not-so-official pronouncements: Table-talks – discussion at headquarters. [...]. 3. Documents [in archives] [...]. 4. Literature... by adherents, by ‘scholars’, and by opponents. 5. Actions with or without words: Example: First thing Hitler did at the outbreak of the war, was to sign the decree to kill all incurably ill people. There is a theory underlying such action. In the case of the Nazis, this theory is spelled out; in the case of the Russians a) The deeds are frequently not admitted, b) the theory is not spelled out but clouded in ideological propaganda” (Arendt, 1955, p. 024108f.).

Following these distinctions, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is, arguably, a work of political theory. In the book, Arendt describes, contextualises, and seeks to understand and eventually theorise Eichmann’s deeds. Her sources include files by the prosecution and defence, records of the testimonies, a 3564 pages transcription of the police interrogation as well as hundreds of pages of the 1957 interview between Nazi journalist Sassen and Eichmann (Renz, 2021, p. 38 ebook). Besides consulting written documents, Arendt also spent 29 out of 121 days at the trial (Renz, 2021, p. 32 ebook).

The Context

The Shoah – Lost for Words



Liberation of Auschwitz Concentration Camp (27 January 1945)

Before discussing the first two chapters of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, let me offer some broader reflections on Arendt's work. Arendt argues that the Shoah marks a decisive break in the Western philosophical tradition. This is because the horrors committed by the Nazis were so brutal that all previous philosophy needed to be questioned. For Arendt, it seemed impossible to understand the Shoah by merely relying on the traditional Western philosophical concepts such as Kant's concept of radical evil (Renz, 2021, p. 8f. ebook). Instead, she is convinced that we need to think anew. For her, the Shoah demands a reorientation of philosophy: the question of evil must become its central theme. In "Nightmare and Flight", she writes: "The reality is that 'the Nazis are men like ourselves'; the nightmare is that they have shown, have proven beyond doubt what man is capable of. In other words, the problem of evil will be the fundamental question of postwar intellectual life in Europe" (Arendt, 1994, p. 277 ebook).

The Eichmann trial thus presented an enormous intellectual challenge: how could one understand and judge without a foundation (Renz, 2021, p. 10 ebook). This also posed a problem for the prosecutors; how could they administer justice without positive legislation and precedent? They were confronted not only with a new type of criminal, but also with a new crime, far worse than genocide (Arendt, 2022, p. 41 ebook). Given the brutality and scale of the atrocities, there was no adequate punishment. Responding to Jasper's *The Question of German Guilt*, Arendt had already previously argued, with regard, to Nuremberg trial that the death sentences for the accused were legally necessary but morally inadequate (Renz, 2021, p. 12 ebook).

Arendt's Critique of the Foundation of the State of Israel



Foundation of the State of Israel (14 May 1948)

Despite these difficulties Arendt did not shy away from judgement. Eichman was not her only target. Arendt also raised the question of Jewish complicity. To better understand the great controversy this triggered, it is important to understand that Arendt had already previously alienated the Jewish public. Contrary to prevailing Jewish opinion, she strongly rejected a sovereign Jewish nation-state based on the ideas of Theodor Herzl. She was instead a proponent of dialogue between Jews and Arabs (Renz, 2021, p. 22 ebook). In her writing, Arendt distinguishes two competing Zionist traditions: one chauvinist and nationalist, associated with Theodor Herzl, the other cultural and socialist, associated with Ahad Haam. She argued that Herzl believed in an eternal, global antisemitism and therefore in the “[...] absolute necessity of a full-fledged sovereign Jewish state [...] [whereas Haam] saw in Palestine the Jewish cultural centre which would inspire the spiritual development of all Jews in other countries, but would not need ethnic homogeneity and national sovereignty” (Arendt, 2009b, p. 442).

For Arendt, the foundation of Israel based on the ideas of Theodor Herzl was prudentially as well as morally wrong. It was prudentially wrong because no state can peacefully exist among neighbours who treat one as an enemy (Arendt, 2009b, p. 22). In 1945, Arendt writes: “A home that my neighbor does not recognize and respect is not a home. A Jewish national home that is not recognized and respected by its neighboring people is no home but an illusion – until it becomes a battlefield” (Arendt, 2009b, p. 235). Furthermore, the foundation of the Herzlian State of Israel was also morally wrong because it produced a new group of stateless people. In 1951, Arendt argues: “[a]fter the [Second World] war it turned out that the Jewish question, which was considered the only unsolvable one, was indeed solved – namely, by means of a colonized and then conquered territory – but this solved neither the problem of minorities nor the stateless. On the contrary, like virtually all other events of our century, the solution of the Jewish question merely produced a new category of refugees, the Arabs, thereby increasing the number of the stateless by another 700,000 to 800,000 people” (Arendt, 1951, p. 290).

Justice, Guilt and Responsibility

With this context in mind, Arendt's analysis of the trial of Eichman focuses on four themes: first, a critique of the prosecutors and their strategy, second, a conceptualisation of the banality of evil, third, a critique of the Jewish councils and their complicity, and fourth, a critique of Germany's failure to come to terms with the past.

The big controversy centred on the first three and primarily the third theme. Arendt's critique of the German government's reluctance to denazify state institutions and the German public's silence were not addressed (Renz, 2021, p. 47f. ebook).



Chief prosecuting attorney in the courtroom, Gideon Hausner

In the first two chapters of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt mostly discusses her critique of the prosecutors, and their strategy. She contends that they instrumentalised the trial for a political purpose. In her view, many of the points raised in the trial were not directly related to Eichmann. Instead, the trial was set up with the aim of state-building (Renz, 2021, p. 80 ebook). For Arendt, state politics and justice must, however, be separated. She strongly opposes Ben Gurion's effort to turn the trial into a history lesson and thus strengthen Jewish national identity. Arendt's understanding of justice is best captured by Aristotle's notion of corrective justice, that is, the burden of punishment in the legal sphere and the burden of guilt in the moral sphere (Arendt, 1994, p. 265 ebook).

Moreover, Arendt also criticises the exaggeration of Eichmann's role. According to her, the purpose of this exaggeration is again political: Ben Gurion did not want to jeopardize reconciliation with Germany by addressing the political responsibility of the German state as such. For Arendt, the trial was about Eichmann. She writes: "Justice demands that the accused be prosecuted, defended, and judged, and that all the other questions of seemingly greater importance – of 'How could it happen?' and 'Why did it happen?', of 'Why the Jews?' and 'Why the Germans?' of 'What was the role of other nations?' and 'What was the extent of co-responsibility on the side of the Allies?' of 'How could the Jews through their own leaders cooperate in their own destruction?' and 'Why did they go to their death like lambs to the slaughter?' – be left abeyance. For the sake of justice, the prosecution must focus solely on Adolf Eichmann, the son of Karl Adolf Eichmann [...]"

(Arendt, 2022, p. 59f. ebook). Arendt mentions his father's name to emphasise that a unique individual is on trial, not any Adolf Eichmann, but this man who stands before us. She goes on: "On trial are his deeds, not the sufferings of the Jews, not the German people nor mankind, not even anti-Semitism and racism... And justice... proves to be a much sterner master than the Prime Minister with all his power" (Arendt, 2022, p. 60 ebook).

With no end in sight to the big controversy, Arendt changed her stance and moved from non-engagement to intervention. In "Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship", she writes: "[a]s this went on, however, and as, especially in its later stages, there were more and more voices who not only attacked me for what I had never said but, on the contrary, began to defend me for it, it dawned on me that there might be more to this slightly eerie exercise than sensation or entertainment. It seemed to me also that more than 'emotions' were involved, that is, more than honest misunderstandings that in some instances caused an authentic breakdown of communication between author and reader – and more too than the distortions and falsifications of interest groups [...]. The controversy invariably raised all kinds of strictly moral issues, many of which had never occurred to me, whereas others had been mentioned by me only in passing. I had given a factual account of the trial, and even the book's subtitle, A Report on the Banality of Evil, seemed to me so glaringly borne out by the facts of the case that I felt it needed no further explanation. [...] I had somehow taken it for granted that we all still believe with Socrates that it is better to suffer than to do wrong. This belief turned out to be a mistake. There was a widespread conviction that it is impossible to withstand temptation of any kind" (Arendt, 2009a, p. 66f. ebook).

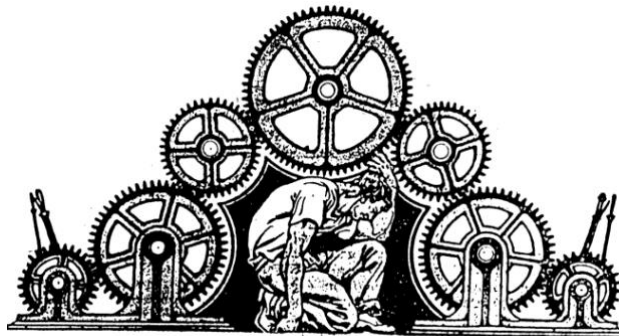
For Arendt, all pushback against her report on the trial of Eichmann indicates a crisis of judgement. She tries to make sense of this crisis by posing two questions: First, how can one judge an event from the past at which one was not present, and second, how can one tell right from wrong when everyone else believes in one answer? (Arendt, 2009a, p. 69 ebook)

Regarding the first question, Arendt contends that judging does not imply moral superiority because those who judge must not maintain that they would have done any better. However, the crisis does not only express itself in the conflation of judging with moral superiority. For Arendt, it has its primary source in the concept of collective guilt that Eichmann regularly appealed to in the trial (Arendt, 2009a, p. 72 ebook). According to Arendt, the concept of collective guilt is highly problematic because it tries to absolve the Nazi perpetrators from their personal responsibility. She argues "[w]here all are guilty, nobody is. Guilt unlike responsibility always singles out; it is strictly personal" (Arendt, 2009a, p. 290 ebook).

But this wasn't the first time Arendt expressed this idea. Eighteen years before the Eichmann trial, she had already attempted to conceptualise responsibility.¹ In "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility," she wrote: "Where all are guilty, nobody in the last analysis can be judged," and thus, justice cannot prevail (Arendt, 1994, p. 265 ebook).

The essay, which first appeared in the journal *Jewish Frontier*, starts with a stark warning. Arendt argues that since their military defeat was inevitable, the Nazis deliberately pursued a political strategy of claiming the support of all Germans in order to dilute their own personal responsibility. For her, this strategy was successful for three reasons. First, because the Nazis simultaneously waged a fierce killing campaign against all dissidents (Arendt, 1994, p. 259 ebook); second, because their control was so totalitarian that many individuals were coerced to commit the most heinous crimes; and third, because the Allies fell for this narrative and contributed to it with generalising slogans such as "Only a dead German is a good German" (Arendt, 1994, p. 260 ebook). After laying out the three reasons, she concludes: "These are the real political conditions which underlie the charge of collective guilt of the German people" (Arendt, 1994, p. 260 ebook).

In "Personal Responsibility under Dictatorship," Arendt contends that this notion of collective guilt is based on the "cog in the system" argument. She offers and discusses three different formulations. First, as everyone is merely a replaceable cog in the system, no one bears personal responsibility. Her response to the first formulation is as follows: if the accused appeals to the "cog in the system" argument, we must immediately ask "why did you become a cog?" (Arendt, 2009a, p. 89 ebook).



The second formulation is that, in dictatorships, all personal responsibility lies solely with the leader. Arendt also rejects this formulation, because dictatorships require obedience, and obedience is equal to tacit support. Those who do not oppose the curtailing of individual freedoms by dictators give them free reign. For her, dictators cannot achieve much without this tacit support of the masses (Arendt, 2009a, p. 117f. ebook).

¹ Throughout her work, Arendt develops various concepts of responsibility, including those discussed here: personal, collective, political, universal. A more comprehensive study of Arendt's conceptualisation of responsibility can be found in Loh's "Verantwortung bei Hannah Arendt" (See Loh, 2016).

Finally, the final and strongest version of the “cog in the system” argument is we are all victims of our circumstances (Arendt, 2009a, p. 70 ebook). Although Arendt acknowledges the relevance of circumstances for judgement, she argues that circumstances only mitigate, but do not eliminate, personal responsibility. Due to its focus on the personal dimension, Arendt considers legal judgements, if not politically hijacked, to be a good reference framework for moral judgements (Arendt, 2009a, p. 74 ebook).

To assess Eichmann’s individual deeds, Arendt therefore distinguishes collective from personal responsibility. She works out three necessary conditions for the former concept (Arendt, 2009a, p. 293 ebook): one bears collective responsibility, (1) if one did not commit the wrongdoing oneself, (2) is a member of the community that committed the wrongdoing and (3) cannot simply dissolve one’s membership.

For Arendt, collective responsibility is not only attributed to the community as a whole, and includes the community’s past actions (Arendt, 2009a, p. 84 ebook), it has also become a naturalised burden. Most of us bear this responsibility simply by being born. In a world of nation-states, only some are not part of a political community. The stateless cannot be held collectively responsible for anything (Arendt, 2009a, p. 295 ebook). While everyone else bears collective responsibility under Arendt’s conception, this does not make them guilty. For Arendt, guilt and personal responsibility can only be attributed to those who have actually committed a wrongdoing (Arendt, 2009a, p. 85 ebook).

Additionally, Arendt also identifies two forms of collective responsibility (Arendt, 2009a, p. 294 ebook): First, the political community assumes responsibility for the wrongdoing committed by a member. For example, Germany, when German soldiers commit crimes. Second, the political community assumes responsibility for what has been done in its name – Arendt is primarily interested in this second form. For example, Germany, when an individual or group claiming to act on behalf of all Germans commits a crime.

While all these explications are clear, there is a confusing passage in “Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility”. Here Arendt writes: “The number of those who are responsible *and* guilt will be relatively small. There are many who share responsibility without any visible proof of guilt. There are many more who have become guilty without being in the least responsible. Among the responsible in a broader sense must be included all those who continued to be sympathetic to Hitler as long as it was possible, who aided his rise to power, and who applauded him in Germany and in other European countries. Who dare to brand all these ladies and gentlemen of high society as war criminals? And as a matter of fact they really do not deserve such a title” (Arendt, 1994, p. 263 ebook). While Arendt’s distinction between personal and collective responsibility helps us understand how someone can be responsible *and* guilty, as well as responsible *without* being guilty, her claim that someone can be guilty without being responsible is highly puzzling. Whom does she have in mind? One may initially think of French

collaborators who were guilty of crimes but not collectively responsible since they did not belong to the German people. This reading, however, contradicts Arendt's subsequent statement that all Europeans who applauded the Nazis were responsible. Arendt seems to further distinguish indirect (impersonal) and direct (personal) responsibility here. The former can be understood to characterise a deed that would not render someone guilty in and of itself but only because it demonstrates support for someone who is guilty of a crime and therefore bears direct (personal) responsibility.

Based on these conceptual distinctions, Arendt identifies three ideal types: First, the guilty: e.g., Eichmann, who committed a wrongdoing by organising the transports to the concentration camps. Second, the innocent: e.g., Jaspers, who gave up his professorship in an act of non-participation instead of swearing allegiance to the Nazis. Third, the heroes: e.g., the Scholl siblings, who, as part of the 'White Rose', organised university students by distributing leaflets calling for active resistance.

While the first two belong to moral types, the latter is political. Arendt defines them more precisely by claiming that in totalitarian regimes, the individual is only free not to participate (Arendt, 2009a, p. 303 ebook). However, for her, non-participation does not equal resistance (Arendt, 2009a, p. 305 ebook); most of the time, those who do not participate simply need to remain passive. Their non-participation has moral, not political, reasons: they do not want to commit a wrongdoing themselves.

By not participating, one evades guilt and personal responsibility, but not collective responsibility. Arendt contends that no more can be morally demanded of individuals if they lack power (Arendt, 2009a, p. 306 ebook). However, those who possess power because they can be sure of support must, from a political perspective and in order to live up to their collective responsibility, engage in active resistance, even if this could mean their own death (Arendt, 2009a, p. 306 ebook).

While power is a prerequisite for active resistance, non-participation in wrongdoing lies entirely in one's own hands. For Arendt, it is not a question of intelligence or education, but of an inner dialogue with oneself (Arendt, 2009a, p. 307f. ebook). Referring to Socrates, Arendt argues that the standard for moral judgement is the self: if we follow our conscience, we morally reject killing because we do not want to live with a murderer (Arendt, 2009a, p. 113f. ebook). Following this principle, Arendt contends that the most morally reliable individuals are not those who follow every norm – for at the crucial moment they may be guided by a false norm – but rather those who are sceptics (Arendt, 2009a, p. 114f. ebook). Eichmann did not belong to this latter but to the former group. He participated; more than that, he blindly followed the Führer's commands, thereby making himself guilty. For Arendt, this made his evil banal. We will explore this idea further in our next lecture.

Bibliography

Arendt, H. (1951) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Schocken.

Arendt, H. (1955) 'Ideologies'. University of California, Berkeley.

Arendt, H. (1960a) 'Freedom and Politics: A Lecture', *Chicago Review*, 14(1), pp. 28–46.

Arendt, H. (1960b) 'Political Philosophy or Philosophy and Politics'. Columbia University.

Arendt, H. (1965) 'Machiavelli to Marx'. Cornell University.

Arendt, H. (1994) *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*. Schocken.

Arendt, H. (2003) "'What Remains? The Language Remains": An interview with Günter Gaus', in P. Baehr (ed.) *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. London; New York: Penguin Books.

Arendt, H. (2004) 'Philosophy and Politics', *Social Research*, 71(3), pp. 427–454.

Arendt, H. (2009a) *Responsibility and Judgment*. Edited by J. Kohn. Schocken.

Arendt, H. (2009b) *The Jewish Writings*. Edited by J. Kohn and R.H. Feldman. Schocken.

Arendt, H. (2022) *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. München: Piper Verlag.

Dolan, F. (2000) 'Arendt on Philosophy and Politics', in D. Villa (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 261–276.

Loh, J. (2016) 'Verantwortung bei Hannah Arendt: Die Geburt der doppelten Daseinsverantwortung', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 58, pp. 159–189.

Renz, W. (2021) *ad Hannah Arendt - Eichmann in Jerusalem: Die Kontroverse um den Bericht 'von der Banalität des Bösen'*. Hamburg: CEP Europäische Verlagsanstalt.